



**17<sup>th</sup> Working Group of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention (WGP 17)  
(Geneva, 26-28 February 2014)**

**Agenda Item 8(b): Strategic Plan for 2015 – 2020**

Contribution by the EU and its Member States

- (1) The EU and its Member States thank the Bureau for the preparation of the draft decision on the Strategic Plan for 2015-2020 and welcome the opportunity to comment on this draft.
- (2) The draft decision on the Strategic Plan has not taken on board a large number of the comments made by the EU and its Member States until the 21<sup>st</sup> of October 2013 and to a large extent those are repeated in the present paper and in the track changes on the draft decision. We will therefore make some concrete proposals below.
- (3) We request the deletion of the phrase “*which includes key elements such as poverty eradication, employment, social inclusion, corporate responsibility and gender equality*” in the para 6 because we think that the reference to Sustainable Development includes the aforementioned aspects.
- (4) We suggest the addition of the phrase “where this has not already been achieved” in para 8 in order not to underestimate the achievements to date.
- (5) We request the replacement of the words «*play an important role in supporting*» by «*could contribute as appropriate to*» and the deletion of the phrase «*such as through channelling information, coordinating and/or organizing activities, motivating important target groups and monitoring implementation*» in para.10. The aforementioned activities are beyond the competence of National Focal Points.
- (6) Further elaboration is requested on the following indicative activities or indicators of progress targets:
  - Objective I.1 – We request the amendment of the final sentence under the national heading in the first column to read: “*All activities are to be implemented through a participatory process such as a robust consultation in the preparation of the National Implementation Report*”. Accordingly, the second paragraph under the third column should be amended to read: “*A participatory mechanism, such as a*

*robust consultation in the preparation of the NIR, to monitor progress in the implementation of the Aarhus Convention is operational”.*

- Objective I.4 – We request the replacement of the word “*strives*” with the word “*endeavour*” .
  - Objective I.6 – we suggest the deletion of the words “*and distribute it to all local authorities*” as it is too prescriptive for a strategy document.
  - Objective I.7 – We request the replacement of the words «*procedures for encouraging*» with the word «*encourage*» because the word "procedures" may create more bureaucracy. Consequently, we suggest the removal of the indicator of progress which reads “*Procedures for encouraging proactive officials are in place.*”.
  - Objective I.8 (3rd column) / I.9 (1st & 3rd column) – We request the deletion of the words «*Financial and other*» because the word «*support*» includes financial support inter alia.
  - Objective I.9 – We request the deletion of the sentence: “*Studies on the impact of civil society’s contribution to environmental management, green economy and sustainable development and statistics on their use*” in the 1st and 3rd column accordingly, because the meaning of this sentence is not clear enough.
  - Focal Area III (introductory paragraph) - We request the addition of the of the word «*endeavour to*» after the word “*will*” and the deletion of the word “*as far as possible*”.
  - Objective III.5 - We request the deletion of the words «*further developed*», because we consider that the reference to further development of the provisions of the Convention relating to public participation in the preparation of plans, programmes and policies relating to the environment, as well as executive regulations and other generally applicable legally binding normative instruments, goes beyond the primary goal of securing effective implementation of the Convention.
  - Objective III.7 – We request the deletion of the sentence «*to contribute to the protection of the right of every person of present and future generations to live in an environment adequate to his or her health and well-being*», because there is no need to focus on one of the Convention’s Objectives.
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