Economic Commission for Europe

Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters

Working Group of the Parties

Nineteenth meeting
Geneva, 17-19 June 2015

Item 1 of the provisional agenda
Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

Annotated provisional agenda for the nineteenth meeting

To be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, starting at 3 p.m. on Wednesday, 17 June 2015*

I. Provisional agenda

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda.

* As part of the accreditation procedures for delegates attending meetings at the Palais des Nations, delegates are requested to register online before 3 June 2015 through the following link: https://www2.unece.org/uncdb/app/ext/meeting-registration?id=s6Luby. Participants requiring a personal invitation letter for visa purposes should click on the “visa required” option and register for the meeting as early as possible, taking into account the period required to obtain the visa. Participants that are applying for financial support should register before 27 April 2015 and submit the completed financial support form to the secretariat by e-mail (public.participation@unece.org) before the same date. On their way to the meeting, delegates should obtain an identification badge at the Pass and Identification Unit of the United Nations Office at Geneva Security and Safety Section, located at the Pregny Gate, 14, Avenue de la Paix (see the map on the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe website, http://www.unece.org/meetings/practical.html). In case of difficulty, please contact the Convention secretariat by telephone at +41 22 917 2650.
3. Substantive issues:
   (a) Access to information;
   (b) Public participation in decision-making;
   (c) Access to justice;
   (d) Genetically modified organisms.

4. Procedures and mechanisms:
   (a) Compliance mechanism;
   (b) National implementation reports;
   (c) Capacity-building and awareness-raising.

5. Promotion of the principles of the Convention in international forums.


7. Financial matters:
   (a) Contributions and expenditures;
   (b) Future funding of the Convention.

8. Promotion of the Convention and relevant developments and interlinkages.

9. Preparations for the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties.

10. Other business.

11. Adoption of outcomes.

II. Annotations

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

   Timing: Wednesday, 17 June, 3–3:10 p.m.

   The Chair will make an introductory statement. The Working Group of the Parties under the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) will be invited to adopt the agenda for its nineteenth meeting as set out in the present document.¹

2. Status of ratification of the Convention and the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers

   Timing: Wednesday, 17 June, 3:10–3:15 p.m.

   The secretariat will provide the Working Group with an overview of the status of ratification, acceptance, approval and accession with respect to the Aarhus Convention, the amendment to the Convention and the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (Protocol on PRTRs). Delegations will be invited to report on any recent or anticipated developments concerning ratification, acceptance, approval or accession with respect to these instruments. The Working Group is expected to take note of these developments.

¹ All documentation for the session will be made available on a dedicated webpage on the Convention’s website http://www.unece.org/env/pp/aarhus/wgp19#. 
3. Substantive issues

(a) Access to information

Timing: Wednesday, 17 June, 3:15–3:45 p.m.

The Working Group will be informed about the outcomes of the third meeting of the Task Force on Access to Information (Geneva, 3–5 December 2014). Delegations will be invited to contribute additional information on developments in this area. The Working Group is expected to take note of the information provided and may offer further guidance on the planned activities.

Documentation

Report of the third meeting of the Task Force on Access to Information (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2015/3)


(b) Public participation in decision-making

Timing: Wednesday, 17 June, 3:45–4:15 p.m.

The Working Group of the Parties will be informed about the outcomes of the fifth meeting of the Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-making (Geneva, 23–24 February 2015). Delegations will be invited to contribute additional information on relevant developments in this area. The Working Group is expected to take note of the information provided and may offer further guidance on the planned activities.

Documentation

Report of the fifth meeting of the Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-making (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2015/4)


(c) Access to justice

Timing: Wednesday, 17 June, 4:15–4:45 p.m.

The Working Group will be informed about the outcomes of the eighth meeting of the Task Force on Access to Justice (Geneva, 15–17 June 2015). Delegations will be invited to contribute additional information on relevant developments. The Working Group is expected to take note of the information provided and may offer further guidance on the planned activities.

Documentation


(d) Genetically modified organisms

Timing: Wednesday, 17 June, 4:45–5 p.m.

The Working Group will consider relevant developments with regard to genetically modified organisms (GMOs) since the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties
(Maastricht, the Netherlands, 30 June–2 July 2014). In particular, it will discuss the issue of ratification of the amendment to the Convention providing for public participation in decisions on the deliberate release into the environment and placing on the market of GMOs. The Working Group is expected to take note of the information provided and may discuss future activities in this area.

Documentation


4. Procedures and mechanisms

(a) Compliance mechanism

Timing: Wednesday, 17 June, 5–5:15 p.m.

The Working Group will be informed about the outcomes of the recent meetings of the Compliance Committee. The Working Group is expected to take note of the information provided.

Documentation

Reports of the Compliance Committee on its forty-fifth, forty-sixth, forty-seventh and forty-eighth meetings (ECE/MP.PP/C.1/2014/7, ECE/MP.PP/C.1/2014/11, ECE/MP.PP/C.1/2014/14 and ECE/MP.PP/C.1/2015/2) (forthcoming)


(b) National implementation reports

Timing: Wednesday, 17 June, 5:15–5:20 p.m.

The secretariat and delegations will provide information on the status of submission of national implementation reports since the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties. The Working Group is expected to take note of the information.

(c) Capacity-building and awareness-raising

Timing: Wednesday, 17 June, 5:20–6 p.m.

The secretariat and delegations will provide information on capacity-building activities carried out since the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties. The Working Group is expected to take note of the developments and may discuss the future work in this area.

Documentation


5. Promotion of the principles of the Convention in international forums

Timing: Thursday, 18 June, 10 a.m.–1 p.m. and 3–4:30 p.m.

A thematic session on the promotion of the principles of the Convention in international forums will be organized in the format of panel presentations and round-table discussions.
The session will focus primarily on the promotion of public participation in the lead up to and at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Paris, 30 November–11 December 2015). Participants will also consider stakeholder engagement in the United Nations Environment Programme processes. Other issues for discussion include the promotion of the universal application of the Convention’s principles when developing, implementing and monitoring the sustainable development goals and in international trade negotiations. The detailed agenda for the thematic session will be developed in close cooperation with the session Chair.2

**Documentation**


**Timing:** Thursday, 18 June, 4:30–5 p.m.

The Working Group is expected to take note of the report by the secretariat on the implementation of the work programmes for 2012–2014 and 2015–2017, taking into consideration the discussion under the previous agenda items.

**Documentation**


### 7. Financial matters

**Timing:** Thursday, 18 June, 5–6 p.m. and Friday, 19 June, 10–11 a.m.

**(a) Contributions and expenditures**

Working Group is expected to take note of the report on contributions and expenditures in relation to the implementation of the Convention’s work programmes for 2012–2014 and 2015–2017. Delegations will be encouraged to notify the Working Group of their planned financial contributions.

**Documentation**


**(b) Future funding of the Convention**

The Working Group is expected to consider a draft proposal, prepared by the Bureau at the request of the Meeting of the Parties, on the estimation of the operational costs needed for the effective functioning of the Convention.

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2 The programme for the session will be made available on the meeting web page in due course.
8. Promotion of the Convention and relevant developments and interlinkages

*Timing: Friday, 19 June, 11–11:20 a.m.*

The secretariat and delegations will update the Working Group on efforts to promote the Convention, in particular in connection with accession to the Convention by States beyond the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region, including relevant developments and interlinkages. The Working Group is expected to take note of the information provided.

**Documentation**


9. Preparations for the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties

*Timing: Friday, 19 June, 11:20–11:40 a.m.*

The Working Group will consider possible date for the sixth ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties and potential proposals by Parties willing to host the sixth session.

10. Other business

*Timing: Friday, 19 June, 11:40–11:45 a.m.*

Delegates wishing to propose points under this item are requested to inform the secretariat as soon as possible.

11. Adoption of outcomes

*Timing: Friday, 19 June 12:15–1 p.m.*

The Working Group will discuss and approve the outcomes of its nineteenth meeting.

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3 To ensure equal opportunities for English-, French- and Russian-speaking delegations while saving paper, the draft text of the meeting decisions and outcomes will be projected on a screen around 30 to 40 minutes before the close of the meeting, and will be presented by the Chair verbally, thereby allowing for interpretation. There will then be a coffee break between 11:45 a.m. and 12:15 p.m. to finalize the list of decisions, which will be distributed to participants by e-mail after the meeting.