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## **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**

#### **Twenty-fourth meeting**

Geneva, 1–3 July 2020 (virtual/online) and 28-29 October 2020 (on-site/hybrid at the Palais des Nations in Geneva)  
Item 8 of the provisional agenda:

#### **Thematic session on the promotion of the principles of the Convention in international forums**

### **Promotion of the principles of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) in international forums<sup>1</sup>**

**Provisional programme for the thematic session<sup>2</sup>**  
to be held on Thursday, 29 October, 12.00 a.m.–1 p.m. and 3–4.40 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Laura Michel

#### **Introduction**

*Timing: 12.00-12.10*

The Chair of the session will introduce organization of work during the thematic session and the main topics for discussion. The thematic session on the promotion of the principles of the Aarhus Convention in international forums will include panel presentations and round table discussion on:

- (a) Promoting the principles of the Aarhus Convention in the international trade negotiations; and
- (b) Promoting the principles of the Aarhus Convention in International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) processes.

The list of speakers will be made available in due course.

In addition, the Working Group will consider any recent developments (e.g. related to the issue of geoengineering and implications linked to COVID-19 pandemic)<sup>3</sup>. Further, based on written submissions, the Working Group will consider any updates with regard to items discussed at previous thematic sessions, including:

- (a) Climate-related processes with the focus on lessons learnt from the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP-25) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and preparations for COP-26;
- (b) Policies on access to information and on stakeholder engagement of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme;
- (c) Policies and activities of international financial institutions;
- (d) Sustainable Development Goals-related processes.

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<sup>1</sup> This document was not formally edited.

<sup>2</sup> Background information on work area on promoting the principles of the Convention in international forums is available from: <https://www.unece.org/env/pp/ppif.html>.

<sup>3</sup> See statements by non-governmental organizations on agenda item 8 (tab: PPIF session):  
<https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=54526>

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## **I. Promotion of the Convention's principles in the international trade negotiations**

*Timing: 12.10-13.00 p.m. and 15.00-15.20 p.m.*

This item will be organized in the format of a panel presentation and round-table discussion. The focus of this session is to review the promotion of the Convention's principles in the international trade negotiations. The Working Group will consider in this regard a number of issues, including how Aarhus Parties have promoted the principles of the Convention in the international trade negotiations; what are the benefits of public participation at national and international level; ways to increase transparency of the processes and good available practices that could be used as model examples for improving ongoing or future negotiation processes; as well as possible challenges. The discussion is expected to address issues related to national and international levels of trade negotiations; and national coordination mechanisms and other measures by Parties in the context of international trade negotiations.

## **II. Promotion of the Convention's principles in the International Civil Aviation Organization processes**

*Timing: 15.20 – 16.00 p.m.*

This item will be organized in the format of a panel presentation and round-table discussion. The focus of this session is to review the promotion of the Convention's principles in the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) processes. During this session, the Working Group will consider: how Aarhus Parties have promoted the principles of the Convention in the ICAO processes; what are ways to increase transparency of the processes, and what are good practices and possible challenges in this regard.

## **III. Update on items considered at previous thematic sessions and consideration of recent developments**

*Timing: 16.00-16.30 p.m.*

The Working Group will review any recent developments brought to its attention by participants (e.g. related to the issue of geoengineering and implications linked to COVID-19 pandemic). Based on the written submissions, the Working Group will be also informed about updates on the promotion of the Convention principles in international forums with the focus being on: the lessons learnt from COP-25 to the UNFCCC and preparations for COP-26; policies on access to information and on stakeholder engagement of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme; policies and activities of international financial institutions; and Sustainable Development Goal-related processes.

## **IV. Concluding remarks by the Chair of the thematic session**

*Timing: 16.30-16.40 p.m.*

The Chair of the thematic session will make concluding remarks.

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