

United Nations  Nations Unies
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM MEMORANDUM INTERIEUR

TO: Ms. Olga Algayerova
A: Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission
for Europe

22/12/2022

THROUGH:

S/C DE:



REFERENCE:

FROM: Johannes Huisman, Director
DE: Programme Planning and Budget Division, OPPFB

SUBJECT: **Oral Statement of programme budget implications arising from draft
decision on Implementation of the rapid response mechanism for the
protection of environmental defenders under the Convention on
Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and
Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention)**

I would be grateful if the text of the attached oral statement could be read and distributed prior to adoption of the draft decision on "Implementation of the rapid response mechanism for the protection of environmental defenders under the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention)".

cc: Mr. Ramanathan
Mr. Sylver

**Oral Statement by the Secretariat in connection with the draft decision on
Implementation of the rapid response mechanism for the protection of
environmental defenders under the Convention on Access to Information, Public
Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters
(Aarhus Convention)**

1. This statement is made in accordance with rule 153 of the Rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

A. Request contained in the draft resolution

2. Under the terms of operative paragraph 1 of the draft decision xx (70) on Implementation of the rapid response mechanism (RRM) for the protection of environmental defenders under the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention), the Commission would:
 - (a) request the Secretary-General to strengthen the ECE secretariat's capacity to facilitate the implementation of the rapid response mechanism for the protection of environmental defenders under the Aarhus Convention.

B. Relationship of the request to the proposed programme budget

3. The request contained in the draft decision [xx](#) (70) on Implementation of the rapid response mechanism (RRM) for the protection of environmental defenders under the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) falls under the overall programme of work of ECE. In particular, the request is relevant to subprogramme 1 Environment, to its Aarhus Unit which provides the secretariat for the Aarhus Convention.

C. Activities by which the request would be implemented

4. Background of the request:

The background to the request is set out in the preambular paragraphs of the draft decision xx (70). Relevant mandates include also [Decision VII/9](#) of the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention establishing a rapid response mechanism for the protection of environmental defenders contained in the report on its seventh session and its addendum (ECE/MP.PP/2021/2, Add.1).

5. The activities by which the request would be implemented are the following. In accordance with the new extended mandate, there will be a need to service the rapid response mechanism to protect environmental defenders by:
 - (a) assisting the Special Rapporteur in his work, including through preparing the required legal and other documents, provide legal advice, contribute to preparation of meetings of the Convention's subsidiary bodies, support missions, promote cooperation and synergy with relevant UN entities and other organizations, and coordinate and implement capacity building and awareness raising activities;

- (b) assisting Parties and other interested UN Member States in promoting safe, effective and inclusive access to information, public participation in decision making and access to justice in environmental matters thereby supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in particular Goal 16;
- (c) supporting development of concrete tools and guidance for strengthening capacity of Parties and other interested UN Member States to promote enabling and safe conditions for activities of environmental defenders.

D. Financial implications of the request

6. The implementation of the request contained in the draft decision would have additional cost implications for the proposed programme budget of the United Nations for 2024. These requirements total \$251,700, of which \$237,100 are recurrent, and \$14,600 are one-time requirements, and comprise:

Recurrent requirements:

- a. Additional resources for one post of Legal Affairs Officer at the P-3 level, in the amount of \$174,900; travel of staff in the amount of \$35,000; consultant services in the amount of \$20,000; office and IT supplies in the amount of \$5,000, to be funded under Sect. 20: Economic development in Europe of the programme budget.
- b. Additional resources, in the amount of \$2,200 for utilities and maintenance to be funded under section 29E: Administration, Geneva of the programme budget.

Non-recurrent requirements

- a. Additional resources, in the amount of \$1,900 for acquisition of office automation equipment to be funded under Sect. 20: Economic development in Europe of the programme budget.
- b. Additional resources, in the amount of \$12,700 for alteration of premises (\$8,400) furniture (\$4,300) to be funded under section 29E: Administration, Geneva of the programme budget.

E. Summary

7. Should the Commission approve the draft decision, the Economic and Social Council would be requested to endorse the decision, after which additional programme budget appropriations for the year 2024, amounting to \$237,100 (recurrent) and \$14,600 (non-recurrent) would be requested in the context of the report of the Secretary-General on revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions of ECOSOC adopted during its 2023 session.
8. An additional amount of \$18,100 would arise under section 36, Staff assessment, and would also be requested in the context of the report of the Secretary-General on revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions of ECOSOC adopted during its 2023 session, to be offset by an equivalent amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment.
