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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-eighth meeting

Geneva, 2–4 July 2024

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

Annotated provisional agenda for the twenty-eighth meeting

To be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, starting at 10 a.m. on
Tuesday, 2 July 2024

Introduction

The twenty-eighth meeting of the Working Group of the Parties will be held in Geneva, on 2–4 July 2024.

Working hours:

- Tuesday 2 July, 10 a.m.–1 p.m. and 3–6 p.m.
- Wednesday 3 July, 10 a.m.–1 p.m. and 3–6 p.m.
- Thursday 4 July, 9.30 a.m.–12.30 p.m. and 2.30–5.30 p.m.
- Lunch breaks: 1–3 p.m. on Tuesday and Wednesday; and 12.30–2.30 p.m. on Thursday
- Coffee breaks (time permitting)

I. Provisional agenda

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda.
2. War in Ukraine and implementation of the Convention.
3. Status of ratification.
4. Substantive issues:
 - (a) Thematic session on access to justice;



- (b) Access to information;
 - (c) Public participation in decision-making;
 - (d) Genetically modified organisms.
5. Thematic session on the promotion of the principles of the Convention in international forums.
6. Procedures and mechanisms:
- (a) Compliance mechanism;
 - (i) Compliance Committee;
 - (ii) Special Rapporteur on environmental defenders;
 - (b) Reporting mechanism;
 - (c) Capacity-building and awareness-raising.
7. Preparations for the eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties:
- (a) Future work programme;
 - (b) Future financial arrangements;
 - (c) Agenda of the eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties;
 - (d) Hosting of the eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties.
8. Promotion of the Convention and other relevant developments and interlinkages.
9. Implementation of the work programme for 2022–2025, including financial matters.
10. Other business.
11. Adoption of outcomes.

II. Annotations

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

Timing: Tuesday 2 July, 10–10.10 a.m.

The Working Group of the Parties to 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 twenty-eighth meeting, as set out in the present document.¹

2. War in Ukraine and implementation of the Convention

Timing: Tuesday 2 July, 10.10–10.40 a.m.

Representatives of Ukraine will be invited to share updates on challenges facing their country in implementing the Convention due to the war launched by the Russian Federation against Ukraine and any other relevant information in that regard. Delegations may wish to make statements, as appropriate.

¹ All documentation for the meeting will be made available on a dedicated web page on the Convention's website (<https://unece.org/info/Environmental-Policy/Public-Participation/events/387372>).

3. Status of ratification

Timing: Tuesday 2 July, 10.40–10.50 a.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 and the amendment thereto. Delegations will be invited to report on any recent or anticipated developments concerning ratification, acceptance, approval or accession with respect to those instruments. The Working Group is expected to take note of any developments.

4. Substantive issues

(a) Thematic session on access to justice

Timing: Tuesday 2 July, 10.50 a.m.–1 p.m. and 3–4 p.m.

The item will be comprised of a thematic session on access to justice (10.50 a.m.–1 p.m. and 3–3.10 p.m.) and a discussion on the future work in the next intersessional period (3.10–4 p.m.). The thematic session will be organized in the format of panel presentations, followed by a general discussion. The topics for discussion are based on decision VII/3 on promoting effective access to justice (ECE/MP.PP/2021/2/Add.1), adopted by the Convention's Meeting of the Parties at its seventh session (Geneva, 18–21 October 2021), and the key outcomes of the work of the Task Force on Access to Justice. The Working Group will be invited to focus its discussion on: (a) access to justice to challenge violations of laws relating to the environment; and (b) the role of collective redress in environmental matters. The Working Group will also consider synergies with relevant activities under other international forums and cooperation between ministries of the environment and ministries of justice. Representatives of ministries of justice, judges, other judiciary and environmental public interest lawyers will be invited to join the session. The provisional programme for the thematic session will be made available on the meeting web page in due course.

Furthermore, the Working Group is expected to consider the future activities in this area, including the priority issues for the next intersessional period.

Documentation

Report on the outcomes of the survey on measures to enable effective access to justice in environmental matters (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2024/11)

Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2022–2025 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2024/4)

Note by the Chair of the Task Force on Access to Justice (AC/WGP-28/Inf.3)

Provisional programme of the thematic session on access to justice (AC/WGP-28/Inf.5)

(b) Access to information

Timing: Tuesday 2 July, 4–4.45 p.m.

The Working Group will be informed about the outcomes of the eighth meeting of the Task Force on Access to Information (Geneva, 9–10 November 2023) and preparations for the ninth meeting of said Task Force. Delegations will be invited to provide additional information on relevant developments. The Working Group is expected to take note of the information provided and consider the future activities in this area, including the priority issues for the next intersessional period.

Documentation

Report of the eighth meeting of the Task Force on Access to Information (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2024/3)

Note by the Chair of the Task Force on Access to Information (AC/WGP-28/Inf.1)

Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2022–2025 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2024/4)

(c) Public participation in decision-making

Timing: Tuesday 2 July, 4.45–5.30 p.m.

The Working Group will be informed about the preparations for the eleventh meeting of the Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-making (Geneva, 12–13 December 2024). 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 consider the future activities in this area, including the priority issues for the next intersessional period.

Documentation

Note by the Chair of the Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-making (AC/WGP-28/Inf.2)

Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2022–2025 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2024/4)

(d) Genetically modified organisms

Timing: Tuesday 2 July, 5.30–6 p.m.

The secretariat will inform the Working Group about the status of ratification, acceptance, approval and accession with respect to the amendment to the Convention providing for public participation in decisions on the deliberate release into the environment and placing on the market of genetically modified organisms. Delegations will be invited to report on any recent or anticipated developments in this regard. The Working Group will be informed about the outcomes of the Fourth Joint Aarhus Convention and Convention on Biological Diversity Round Table on Public Awareness, Education, Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice regarding Living Modified Organisms/Genetically Modified Organisms (Geneva, 11–12 December 2023). The Working Group is expected to take note of the information provided and consider the future activities in this area.

Documentation

Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2022–2025 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2024/4)

Report on the Fourth Joint Aarhus Convention and Convention on Biological Diversity Round Table on Public Awareness, Education, Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice regarding Living Modified Organisms/Genetically Modified Organisms (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2024/6)

5. Thematic session on the promotion of the principles of the Convention in international forums

Timing: Wednesday 3 July, 10 a.m.–1 p.m. and 3–3.30 p.m.

The item will be comprised of a thematic session on the promotion of the principles of the Convention in international forums (10 a.m.–1 p.m.) and a discussion on the future work in the next intersessional period (3–3.30 p.m.).

The thematic session on the promotion of the principles of the Convention in international forums will be organized in the format of panel presentations, followed by a general discussion. The topics for discussion are based on decision VII/4 on promoting the application of the principles of the Convention in international forums (ECE/MP.PP/2021/2/Add.1), adopted by the Meeting of the Parties at its seventh session, and the outcomes of the previous thematic sessions. The current session will focus on the

promotion of the principles of the Convention in international forums related to: climate change and energy; carbon trading and other market-based mechanisms; and new or emerging technologies, including geoengineering. Additional topics will include: a relevant update on public participation in the work of the International Seabed Authority; stakeholder engagement in international financial institutions; stakeholder engagement and access to information policies of the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Environment Assembly; and stakeholder engagement and the Sustainable Development Goal-related processes. It is expected that the issue of conflict of interest in the context of international decision-making will be addressed throughout the discussions. The provisional programme for the thematic session will be made available on the meeting web page in due course.

Furthermore, the Working Group is expected to discuss the future work in the next intersessional period.

Documentation

Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2022–2025 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2024/4)

Provisional programme of the thematic session on the promotion of the principles of the Aarhus Convention in international forums (AC/WGP-28/Inf.6)

Note by the Chair of the thematic session on the promotion of the principles of the Aarhus Convention in international forums (AC/WGP-28/Inf.4)

6. Procedures and mechanisms

(a) Compliance mechanism

(i) Compliance Committee

Timing: Wednesday 3 July, 3.30–4.15 p.m.

The Working Group will be informed about the outcomes of the recent meetings of the Compliance Committee and other relevant matters since the twenty-seventh meeting of the Working Group of the Parties (Geneva, 26–28 June 2023). The Working Group is expected to take note of the information provided.

Documentation

Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2022–2025 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2024/4)

Reports of the meetings of the Compliance Committee since the twenty-seventh meeting of the Working Group of the Parties²

Note on the membership of the Compliance Committee (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2024/9)

(ii) Special Rapporteur on environmental defenders

Timing: Wednesday 3 July, 4.15–5.10 p.m.

The Working Group will be informed about the recent activities carried out by the Special Rapporteur on environmental defenders under the rapid response mechanism for the protection of environmental defenders and other relevant matters since the twenty-seventh meeting of the Working Group of the Parties (Geneva, 26–28 June 2023), as well as future plans in this area. Delegations will be invited to contribute additional information on relevant

² Available at <https://unece.org/environment-policy/public-participation/aarhus-convention/compliance-committee-meetings>.

developments. The Working Group is expected to take note of the information provided and consider the planned activities.

Documentation

Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2022–2025 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2024/4)

(b) Reporting mechanism

Timing: Thursday 4 July, 11.30–11.50 a.m.

The secretariat and delegations will provide information on the status of submission of national implementation reports since the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties and on the preparation of national implementation reports for the eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties.

Documentation

Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2022–2025 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2024/4)

(c) Capacity-building and awareness-raising

Timing: Thursday 4 July, 11.50 a.m.–12.30 p.m.

The Working Group is expected to take note of the information provided by the secretariat and delegations on capacity-building activities carried out since the last meeting of the Working Group and to discuss the future work in this area.

Documentation

Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2022–2025 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2024/4)

7. Preparations for the eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties

(a) Future work programme

Timing: Wednesday 3 July, 5.10–6 p.m.

The Working Group is expected to consider draft elements of the work programme for 2026–2029. It is expected that the draft document will be finalized, as appropriate, in the light of the comments to be provided at the meeting and thereafter, for submission and approval at the twenty-ninth meeting of the Working Group of the Parties, with a view to its possible adoption at the eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties.

Documentation

Draft elements of the work programme for 2026–2029 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2024/7)

(b) Future financial arrangements

Timing: Thursday 4 July, 9.30–10.15 a.m.

The Working Group is expected to consider draft elements of possible financial arrangements under the Convention. It is expected that the draft document will be finalized, in the light of the comments to be provided at the meeting and thereafter, for submission and approval at the twenty-ninth meeting of the Working Group of the Parties, with a view to its possible adoption at the eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties.

Documentation

Draft elements of possible financial arrangements under the Convention (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2024/8)

Accompanying document for the draft elements of possible financial arrangements under the Convention (AC/WGP-28/Inf.9)

(c) Agenda of the eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties

Timing: Thursday 4 July, 10.15–11 a.m.

The Working Group of the Parties is expected to consider draft elements of the provisional agenda of the eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties. It is expected that the draft document will be finalized, in the light of the comments to be provided at the meeting and thereafter, for submission and approval at the twenty-ninth meeting of the Working Group of the Parties, with a view to its possible adoption at the eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties.

Documentation

Draft outline of the provisional agenda of the eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2024/10)

Note on the indicative preparatory timeline for the eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention and the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (AC/WGP-28/Inf.8)

(d) Hosting of the eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties

Timing: Thursday 4 July, 11–11.30 a.m.

The Working Group will be informed about matters regarding the hosting of the eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties.

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

Timing: Thursday 4 July, 2.30–3 p.m.

The Working Group is expected to take note of the information provided by the secretariat and delegations regarding promotion of the Convention in other regions and cooperation with other organizations on relevant subjects.

Documentation

Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2022–2025 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2024/4)

9. Implementation of the work programme for 2022–2025, including financial matters

Timing: Thursday 4 July, 3–3.55 p.m.

The Working Group is expected to take note of the reports by the secretariat on the implementation of the work programme for 2022–2025 and on contributions and expenditures in relation to the implementation of the work programme, taking into consideration the discussion under the preceding agenda items. Delegations will be encouraged to notify the Working Group of their planned financial contributions.

Documentation

Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2022–2025 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2024/4)

Report on contributions and expenditures in relation to the implementation of the Convention's work programme for 2022–2025 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2024/5)

Note on contributions and pledges (AC/WGP-28/Inf.7)

10. Other business

Timing: Thursday 4 July, 3.55–4 p.m.³

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

11. Adoption of outcomes

Timing: Thursday 4 July, 4.30–5.30 p.m.⁴

The Working Group will discuss and adopt the outcomes of its twenty-eighth meeting.

III. Organization of work

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Item No.</i> | <i>Agenda item</i> |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|---|
| Tuesday 2 July | | |
| 10–10.10 a.m. | 1 | Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda |
| 10.10–10.40 a.m. | 2 | War in Ukraine and implementation of the Convention |
| 10.40–10.50 a.m. | 3 | Status of ratification |
| | 4 | Substantive issues |
| 10.50 a.m.–1 p.m. and 3–4 p.m. | 4 (a) | Thematic session on access to justice |
| 4–4.45 p.m. | 4 (b) | Access to information |
| 4.45–5.30 p.m. | 4 (c) | Public participation in decision-making |
| 5.30–6 p.m. | 4 (d) | Genetically modified organisms |

³ There will be a 30-minute break to prepare the list of outcomes and decisions.

⁴ With a view to ensuring equal opportunities for English-, French- and Russian-speaking delegations and reducing the amount of paper used for printing the draft report, the meeting will result in a list of decisions and outcomes that will be projected onto the screen around one hour before the close of the meeting, and presented by the Chair verbally, thereby allowing for interpretation. The list will be distributed to participants by email after the meeting.

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Item No.</i> | <i>Agenda item</i> |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|---|
| Wednesday 3 July | | |
| 10 a.m.–1 p.m. and 3–3.30 p.m. | 5 | Thematic session on the promotion of the principles of the Convention in international forums |
| | 6 | Procedures and mechanisms |
| | 6 (a) | Compliance mechanism |
| 3.30–4.15 p.m. | 6 (a) (i) | Compliance Committee |
| 4.15–5.10 p.m. | 6 (a) (ii) | Special Rapporteur on environmental defenders |
| | 7 | Preparations for the eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties |
| 5.10–6 p.m. | 7 (a) | Future work programme |
| Thursday 4 July | | |
| 9.30–10.15 a.m. | 7 (b) | Future financial arrangements |
| 10.15–11 a.m. | 7 (c) | Agenda of the eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties |
| 11–11.30 a.m. | 7 (d) | Hosting of the eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties |
| | 6 | Procedures and mechanisms (continued) |
| 11.30–11.50 a.m. | 6 (b) | Reporting mechanism |
| 11.50 a.m.–12.30 p.m. | 6 (c) | Capacity-building and awareness-raising |
| 2.30–3 p.m. | 8 | Promotion of the Convention and other relevant developments and interlinkages |
| 3–3.55 p.m. | 9 | Implementation of the work programme for 2022–2025, including financial matters |
| 3.55–4 p.m. | 10 | Other business (followed by 30-minute break to prepare the list of outcomes and decisions) |
| 4.30–5.30 p.m. | 11 | Adoption of outcomes |