

## **Video-conference Statement to the Meeting of the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee**

Mr Chairman,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

The Republic of Belarus attaches great significance to the implementation of international environmental protection agreements.

The Aarhus Convention, as an overarching instrument for access to environmental information and public participation in environmental decision-making, holds special significance for us.

At the present time, work is ongoing in the Republic of Belarus to implement the recommendations received by Belarus at the Fourth Session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention.

In compliance with those recommendations:

- amendments have been made to national legislation;
- an action plan to implement the recommendations is being put into effect;
- a draft Law of the Republic of Belarus has been in preparation to introduce amendments and additions to some laws of the Republic of Belarus with regard to public participation in environmentally significant decision-making.

The Ministry of the Environment has submitted a proposal, under the established procedure, to the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus and the National Centre for Legislation and Legal Research of the Republic of Belarus for inclusion of the above-mentioned Law in the draft 2014 Plan for the Preparation of Draft Laws, which will be confirmed in December this year.

Included in the package of proposals was a short Concept Note on the draft Law, prepared on the basis of the draft amendments and additions drawn up in the framework of the joint European Union and United Nations Development Programme project 'Support to the development of a comprehensive framework for international environmental cooperation in the Republic of Belarus'. This draft of amendments and additions has been subject to public discussion and was also sent to the Aarhus Convention Secretariat for consultation.

It is planned to introduce the draft Law into Cabinet in May 2014.

With regard to specific points of Decision IV/9b, we would like to inform you of the following.

Point 4a) - taken into account in the draft Law.

Point 4b) - amendments inserted into Resolution No. 755 of the Cabinet of Ministers of 19 May 2010, point taken into account in the draft Law.

Point 4c) - amendments inserted into Resolution No. 755 of the Cabinet of Ministers of 19 May 2010, point adopted in Technical Code of Practice 17.02-08-2012, taken into account in the draft Law.

Point 4d) - addition inserted into Resolution No. 755 of the Cabinet of Ministers of 19 May 2010.

Point 4e) - amendments inserted into Resolution No. 755 of the Cabinet of Ministers of 19 May 2010, point taken into account in the draft Law.

Point 4f) - taken into account in the draft Law;

Point 4g) - taken into account in the draft Law;

Point 4h) - taken into account in the draft Law.

In addition, a range of legislation has been adopted, strengthening the public's right to participate in decision-making on individual types of environmental activities.

So, for example, Resolution No. 1426 of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus of 25 October 2011 and Resolution No. 46 of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus of 3 November 2011, which regulate the conduct of public consultation on the issue of planned removal, transplant of flora, have been adopted.

Resolution No. 687 of the Council of Ministers of 1 June 2011 approved Regulations on the Conduct of Public Discussions in the field of Architectural, Urban Planning and Construction Activity.

Work is being carried out to disseminate information on implementation of the provisions of the Aarhus Convention. 76 items on this topic were published in various mass information media over the period 2011-2012.

For the purposes of improving practical application of the law in implementing the provisions of the Aarhus Convention, consultative measures are constantly being taken for state organisations and bodies.

The Aarhus Centre of the Republic of Belarus functions with the comprehensive support of the Ministry of the Environment.

Decision IV/9b has been carried out in the case concerning access to information and public participation in the decision-making process for the hydropower plant project on the Neman River.

This was one of the reasons for creating the first regional Aarhus Centre, in Grodno.