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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-fifth meeting

Geneva, 3 May and 7 and 8 June 2021

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Opening of the first slot and adoption of the agenda

Annotated provisional agenda for the twenty-fifth meeting*

To be held on 3 May (in online format) and on 7 and 8 June (in hybrid format, combining online and in-person participation)**

Introduction

Due to restrictions associated with the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the availability of facilities for remote interpretation, the twenty-fifth meeting of 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 held in two slots: (a) items of an informational nature will be considered in an online format on 3 May 2021, with no decision-making except the adoption of the agenda for the meeting; and (b) items requiring decision-making will be considered on 7 and 8 June 2021 in a hybrid format (combining online and in-person participation). The draft outcomes of the first slot will be presented to the Working Group for consideration and adoption during the second slot of the meeting.

Working hours:

- 3 May – Monday (online), 10 a.m.–noon and 2–4 p.m. (due to availability of interpretation for remote participation)
- 7 and 8 June – Monday and Tuesday (hybrid), 10 a.m.–1 p.m. and 3–6 p.m.

* This document was scheduled for publication after the standard publication date owing to circumstances beyond the submitter's control.

** Information on registration for the meeting and other practical arrangements will be made available at <https://unece.org/environmental-policy/events/aarhus-convention-wgp-25>.



- Lunch breaks: noon–2 p.m. on 3 May, and 1–3 p.m. on 7 and 8 June
- Coffee breaks if/as time permits

I. Provisional agenda

1. Opening of the first slot and adoption of the agenda.
2. Thematic session on promotion of the principles of the Convention in international forums.
3. Reports by the Chairs of the task forces and other updates on recent developments in the areas of access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice.
4. Capacity-building and awareness-raising.
5. Promotion of the Convention and relevant developments and interlinkages.
6. Closure of the first slot.
7. Opening of the second slot and adoption of procedures to facilitate remote participation and decision-making in the meeting.
8. Status of ratification of the Convention.
9. Preparations for the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties:
 - (a) Access to information;
 - (b) Public participation in decision-making;
 - (c) Access to justice;
 - (d) Application of the principles of the Convention in international forums;
 - (e) Rapid response mechanism to deal with cases related to article 3 (8) of the Convention;
 - (f) Accession by Guinea-Bissau;
 - (g) Work programme for 2022–2025;
 - (h) Strategic Plan for 2022–2030;
 - (i) Declaration;
 - (j) Financial arrangements;
 - (k) Agenda of the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties;
 - (l) Venue of the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties.
10. Compliance mechanism.
11. Reporting mechanism.
12. Implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021, including financial matters.
13. Thematic session on genetically modified organisms.
14. Any other business.
15. Roll call to establish the presence of Parties.
16. Adoption of outcomes.

II. Annotations

Slot I: Monday, 3 May 2021

1. Opening of the first slot and adoption of the agenda

Timing: Monday, 3 May, 10–10.10 a.m.

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 twenty-fifth meeting, as set out in the present document.¹

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

Timing: Monday, 3 May, 10.10 a.m.–noon and 2–2.30 p.m.

The thematic session will be organized in a format of panel presentations and round table discussion. The topics for discussion will include biosafety² and geoengineering³ (based on decision VI/4 (ECE/MP.PP/2017/2/Add.1) adopted by the Meeting of the Parties at its sixth session (Budva, Montenegro, 11–14 September 2017) and outcomes of the twenty-fourth meeting of the Working Group (Geneva, 1–3 July 2020).

The agenda for the thematic session on the promotion of the principles of the Convention in international forums will be developed in close cooperation with the Chair of the thematic session.⁴

Documentation

Provisional programme of the thematic session on the promotion of the principles of the Convention in international forums (AC/WGP-25/Inf.1)

Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2021/6)

3. Reports by the Chairs of the task forces and other updates on recent developments in the areas of access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice

Timing: Monday, 3 May, 2.30–3.10 p.m.

The Working Group of the Parties will be informed by the tasks force Chairs of the outcomes of: (a) the seventh meeting of the Task Force on Access to Information under the Aarhus Convention (Geneva (online), 16 and 17 November, 2020); (b) the thirteenth meeting of the Task Force on Access to Justice under the Aarhus Convention (Geneva, 15 and 16 February 2021); (c) the ninth meeting of the Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-making under the Aarhus Convention (Geneva, 1 and 2 March 2021); and (d) the work done in these

¹ All documentation for the session will be made available on a dedicated web page on the Convention's website (<https://unece.org/environmental-policy/events/aarhus-convention-wgp-25>).

² See document AC/WGP-24/Inf.4, para. 7, available at https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/pp/wgp/WGP_24/AEC/Inf.4_Chair_s_Note_PPIF.pdf.

³ See document AC/WGP-24/Inf.21, item 8 (viii), available at https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/pp/wgp/WGP_24/WGP-24_List_of_outcomes_28-29_October_session_as_adopted_-_Copy.pdf.

⁴ The programme for the thematic session will be made available on the meeting web page in due course.

areas since its twenty-fourth meeting. Delegations will be invited to contribute additional information on relevant developments.

Documentation

Report of the seventh meeting of the Task Force on Access to Information (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2021/3)

Report of the ninth meeting of the Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-making (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2021/4)

Report of the thirteenth meeting of the Task Force on Access to Justice (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2021/5)

Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2021/6)

4. Capacity-building and awareness-raising

Timing: Monday, 3 May, 3.10–3.30 p.m.

The Working Group is expected to take note of the information provided by the secretariat, delegations and other organizations on capacity-building activities carried out since its twenty-fourth meeting.

Documentation

Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2021/6)

5. Promotion of the Convention and relevant developments and interlinkages

Timing: Monday, 3 May, 3.30–3.50 p.m.

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

Documentation

Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2021/6)

6. Closure of the first slot

Timing: Monday, 3 May, 3.50–4 p.m.

The Chair will close the first slot of the meeting.

Slot II: Monday, 7 and Tuesday, 8 June 2021

7. Opening of the second slot and adoption of procedures to facilitate remote participation and decision-making in the meeting

Timing: Monday, 7 June, 10–10.15 a.m.

The Working Group will consider and adopt operating procedures to facilitate remote participation and decision-making in the meeting.

Documentation

Draft operating procedures to facilitate remote participation and decision-making in the twenty-fifth meeting of the Convention's Working Group of the Parties due to extraordinary circumstances (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2021/20)

8. Status of ratification of the Convention

Timing: Monday, 7 June, 10.15–10.20 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, its amendment and its Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers. Delegations will be invited to report on any recent or anticipated developments concerning ratification, acceptance, approval or accession with respect to these instruments in their countries. The Working Group is expected to take note of these developments.

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

Timing: Monday, 7 June, 10.20 a.m.–1 p.m. and 3–6 p.m., and Tuesday, 8 June, 10–10.30 a.m. and (continued as needed) noon–1 p.m.

(a) Access to information

Timing: Monday, 7 June, 10.20–11 a.m.

The Working Group will be invited to consider and approve the draft decision on promoting effective access to information and the updated recommendations on the electronic information tools, with a view to their submission for consideration and adoption by the Meeting of the Parties at its seventh session (to be held from 18 to 21 October 2021).

Documentation

Draft updated recommendations on the electronic information tools (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2021/13)

Draft decision on promoting effective access to information (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2021/14)

(b) Public participation in decision-making

Timing: Monday, 7 June, 11–11.40 a.m.

The Working Group will be invited to consider and approve the draft decision on promoting effective public participation in decision-making, with a view to its submission for consideration and adoption by the Meeting of the Parties at its seventh session.

Documentation

Draft decision on promoting effective public participation in decision-making (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2021/15)

(c) Access to justice

Timing: Monday, 7 June, 11.40 a.m.–12.20 p.m.

The Working Group will be invited to consider and approve the draft decision on promoting effective access to justice, with a view to its submission for consideration and adoption by the Meeting of the Parties at its seventh session.

Documentation

Draft decision on promoting effective access to justice (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2021/16)

(d) Application of the principles of the Convention in international forums

Timing: Monday, 7 June, 12.20–1 p.m.

The Working Group will be invited to consider and approve the draft decision on promoting the application of the principles of the Convention in international forums, with a view to its submission for consideration and adoption by the Meeting of the Parties at its seventh session.

Documentation

Draft decision on promoting the application of the principles of the Convention in international forums (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2021/17)

(e) Rapid response mechanism to deal with cases related to article 3 (8) of the Convention

Timing: Monday, 7 June, 3–4 p.m.

The Working Group will be invited to consider and approve the draft decision on a rapid response mechanism to deal with cases related to article 3 (8) of the Convention, contained in the draft note on the subject matter, with a view to its submission for consideration and adoption by the Meeting of the Parties at its seventh session.

Documentation

Draft note on a rapid response mechanism to deal with cases related to article 3 (8) of the Convention (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2021/12)

(f) Accession by Guinea-Bissau

Timing: Monday, 7 June, 4–4.30 p.m.

The Working Group will be invited to consider and approve the draft decision on accession by Guinea-Bissau, with a view to its submission for consideration and adoption by the Meeting of the Parties at its seventh session.

Documentation

Draft decision on accession by Guinea-Bissau (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2021/21)

(g) Work programme for 2022–2025

Timing: Monday, 7 June, 4.30–5.15 p.m.

The Working Group will be invited to consider and approve the draft decision on the work programme for 2022–2025, also considering outcomes of the discussions under previous agenda items, with a view to its submission for consideration and adoption by the Meeting of the Parties at its seventh session.

Documentation

Draft decision on the work programme for 2022–2025 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2021/8)

(h) Strategic Plan for 2022–2030

Timing: Monday, 7 June, 5.15–5.40 p.m.

The Working Group will be invited to consider and approve the draft decision on the Strategic Plan for 2022–2030, with a view to its submission for consideration and adoption by the Meeting of the Parties at its seventh session.

Documentation

Draft decision on the Strategic Plan for 2022–2030 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2021/11)

(i) Declaration

Timing: Monday, 7 June, 5.40–6 p.m.

The Working Group will be invited to consider and approve the draft declaration on environmental democracy for sustainable, inclusive and resilient development prepared by the Bureaux of the Meetings of the Parties to the Convention and the Protocol. The Working Group will be invited to mandate the Convention's Bureau to finalize the draft declaration in cooperation with the Protocol's Bureau, with a view to its submission for consideration and adoption by the Parties to both instruments at the joint high-level segment of the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on 21 October 2021.

Documentation

Draft declaration on environmental democracy for sustainable, inclusive and resilient development (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2021/18)

(j) Financial arrangements

Timing: Tuesday, 8 June, 10–10.15 a.m.

The Working Group will be invited to consider and approve the draft decision on financial arrangements, with a view to its submission for consideration and adoption by the Meeting of the Parties at its seventh session.

Documentation

Draft decision on financial arrangements (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2021/9)

(k) Agenda of the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties

Timing: Tuesday, 8 June, 10.15–10.25 a.m.

The Working Group will be invited to consider and approve the draft provisional agenda prepared by the Bureau for the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention. The Working Group is expected to mandate the Bureau to finalize the provisional agenda for submission to the Meeting of the Parties at its seventh session.

Documentation

Draft agenda of the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2021/10)

(l) Venue of the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties

Timing: Tuesday, 8 June, 10.25–10.30 a.m.

The secretariat will update the Working Group on the venue of the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties.

10. Compliance mechanism

Timing: Tuesday, 8 June, 10.30–11.20 a.m.

The Working Group will be informed of the outcomes of the sixty-seventh, sixty-eighth, sixty-ninth and seventieth meetings of the Compliance Committee (respectively, Geneva (online) 6–10 July 2020, Geneva (online) 23–27 November 2020, Geneva (online) 25–29 January 2021 and Geneva (online) 12–16 April 2021) and other relevant developments. The Working Group is expected to take note of the information provided.

Documentation

Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2021/6)

11. Reporting mechanism

Timing: Tuesday, 8 June, 11.20–11.40 a.m.

The Working Group will be informed of the status of submission of national implementation reports. The Working Group will also be invited to consider and approve the draft decision on reporting requirements, with a view to its submission for consideration and adoption by the Meeting of the Parties at its seventh session.

Documentation

Draft decision on reporting requirements (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2021/19)

12. Implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021, including financial matters

Timing: Tuesday, 8 June, 11.40 a.m.–noon

The Working Group is expected to take note of the report on the implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021, prepared by the secretariat, taking into consideration the discussions under the previous 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 2018–2021 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2021/6)

Report on contributions and expenditures in relation to the implementation of the Convention's work programme for 2018–2021 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2021/7)

13. Thematic session on genetically modified organisms

Timing: Tuesday, 8 June, 3–4.15 p.m.

The thematic session will be organized in the format of a panel discussion followed by a general discussion. The agenda for the thematic session will be developed in close cooperation with the Chair of the Joint Round Table on Public Awareness, Access to Information and Public Participation regarding Living Modified Organisms/Genetically Modified Organisms.⁵

Documentation

Provisional programme of the thematic session on genetically modified organisms (AC/WGP-25/Inf.2)

Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2021/6)

14. Any other business

Timing: Tuesday, 8 June, 4.15–4.20 p.m.

⁵ The programme for the thematic session will be made available on the meeting web page in due course.

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

15. Roll call to establish the presence of Parties

Timing: Tuesday, 8 June, 4.20–5 p.m.

A roll call will be organized by the secretariat to establish the presence of Parties connected remotely. At the same time, the Chair with the support of the secretariat will finalize the draft outcomes of the meeting.

16. Adoption of outcomes

Timing: Tuesday, 8 June, 5–6 p.m.

The Working Group will be informed of the results of the roll call and is expected to consider and adopt the outcomes of its twenty-fifth meeting.
