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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 to the Convention

Ninth meeting
Geneva, 13–15 February 2008
Item 3 of the provisional agenda

PREPARATIONS FOR THE THIRD ORDINARY MEETING OF THE PARTIES

**DRAFT ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR
THE THIRD MEETING OF THE PARTIES¹**

Draft by the secretariat in consultation with the Bureau

1. Opening, including a welcome address by the Minister of the Environment of Latvia.
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Status of ratification of the Convention, the amendment to the Convention and the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers

¹ This document was submitted on the above date for technical reasons.

4. Interpretation of article 14, paragraph 4, of the Convention on the conditions for entry into force of amendments
5. Substantive issues:
 - (a) Pollutant release and transfers registers;
 - (b) Genetically modified organisms;
 - (c) Electronic information tools and the clearinghouse mechanism;
 - (d) Access to justice;
 - (e) Public participation in international forums;
 - (f) Public participation in strategic decision-making.
6. Procedures and mechanisms facilitating the implementation of the Convention:
 - (a) Reports on implementation;
 - (b) Compliance mechanism;
 - (c) Capacity-building activities;
 - (d) Financial arrangements.
7. Programme of work and operation of the Convention:
 - (a) Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2006–2008.
 - (b) Long-term strategic plan
 - (c) Work programme for 2009–2011.
8. Relevant developments and interlinkages:
 - (a) Synergies between the Convention and other relevant multilateral environmental agreements;
 - (b) Global and regional developments on issues related to principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development.
9. Communication strategy
10. Report on credentials

HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

Opening ceremony

11. Celebrating the first 10 years: achievements, lessons learned and future challenges
12. Global and regional initiatives to promote principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development
13. Special session on the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers

14. Review and adoption of decisions
15. Discussion and adoption of the Riga Declaration
16. Election of officers and other Bureau members
17. Date and venue of the fourth ordinary meeting
18. Any other business
19. Adoption of the report
20. Close of the meeting

| TIME | ITEM | ACTION | EXPLANATORY NOTES | DOCUMENTS |
|--------------------------------|--|-------------|---|----------------------|
| Wednesday, 11 June 2008 | | | | |
| 10.00-10.15 | <u>Item 1: Opening</u> | | <p>Welcome address by the Latvian Minister of the Environment.</p> <p>The Chair of the Meeting of the Parties will formally open the meeting.</p> | |
| 10.15-10.20 | <u>Item 2: Adoption of the agenda</u> | Decision | The Meeting of the Parties will be invited to adopt the agenda of the meeting as prepared by the Working Group of the Parties [and set out in the present document]. | Provisional agenda |
| 10.20-10.35 | <u>Item 3: Status of ratification of the Convention, the amendment to the Convention and the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers</u> | Information | The secretariat will inform the Meeting of the Parties about the status of ratification, acceptance, approval and accession with respect to the Convention, the amendment to the Convention and the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs). It will also provide information about any declarations made by the Parties upon the deposit of their instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession. Delegates from States or regional economic integration organizations not yet party to the Convention, the amendment to the Convention or the Protocol will be offered an opportunity to briefly inform the Meeting of their plans to ratify, accept, approve or accede. | Report |
| 10.35-10.50 | <u>Item 4: Interpretation of article 14, paragraph 4, of the Convention on the conditions for entry into force of amendments</u> | Decision | Through decision II/1, the Meeting of the Parties adopted an amendment to the Convention on the issue of genetically modified organisms. The Meeting is expected to consider and provisionally adopt a draft decision aimed at clarifying the conditions for entry of force of the amendment and any future amendments to the Convention. | Draft decision III/1 |

| TIME | ITEM | ACTION | EXPLANATORY NOTES | DOCUMENTS |
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| 10.50-11.20 | <p>Item 7: Programme of work and operation of the Convention</p> <p>(a): Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2006–2008</p> | Information | <p>Through decision I/11, the Parties decided, at their first meeting, that a work programme covering the period up to and including the next meeting of the Parties would be prepared for adoption at each meeting of the Parties, including an estimation of the costs. Through decision II/7, they adopted a specific work programme for the period 2006–2008.</p> <p>The Meeting of the Parties will be invited to review the implementation of the work programme for 2006–2008 and the use of the funds contributed for the period 2006–2007 on the basis of a report prepared by the secretariat.</p> | Report (including financial report) |
| 11.20-11.40 | **Coffee break** | | | |
| | <p>Item 6: Procedures and mechanisms facilitating the implementation of the Convention</p> | | | |
| 11.40-13.00 | (a) Reports on implementation | Information Decision | <p>At their first meeting, the Parties adopted decision I/8 setting out the requirements on the Parties to report on their implementation of the Convention. The reporting mechanism was further developed through decision II/10, and the Compliance Committee subsequently drew up guidance on implementation of the reporting requirements that was endorsed by the Working Group of the Parties.</p> <p>The Meeting of the Parties will be invited to review the implementation of the Convention on the basis of the national implementation reports submitted by the Parties and the synthesis report prepared by the</p> | <p>National implementation reports</p> <p>Synthesis report</p> <p>Draft decision III/6</p> |

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| | | | <p>secretariat. It is also expected to take note of any reports submitted by the Signatories and other States not Party to the Convention, as well as reports prepared by international, regional and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The Meeting will be invited to discuss the main trends, challenges and solutions emerging from the reports, which will be further discussed during the high-level segment. It will also be invited to discuss the experience gained with the procedure for compiling reports, including the experience with NGOs and other stakeholders, and to decide upon possible ways of improving the process in the future, if needed, taking into account any views of the Compliance Committee on the functioning of the reporting mechanism.</p> | |
| 13.00-15.00 | **Lunch** | | | |
| 15.00-15.40 | (b) Compliance mechanism | Decision Election | <p>The Chair of the Compliance Committee will report on the Committee's activities since the second meeting of the Parties and present any findings and recommendations of the Committee with respect to compliance by specific Parties.</p> <p>The Meeting of the Parties will be invited to take note of the Committee's report, including any general recommendations contained therein, as well as any findings and recommendations of the Committee with respect to compliance by specific Parties, and to consider and provisionally adopt a draft decision or draft decisions on compliance issues.</p> <p>Taking account of decision II/5, through which it was decided to expand the membership of the Committee to nine, the Meeting of the Parties is also expected to elect five members of the Committee in accordance with the procedure set out in decision I/7.</p> | <p>Report of the Compliance Committee</p> <p>Recommendations of the Committee with respect to specific Parties</p> <p>Draft decision III/7 on general issues of compliance</p> <p>Supplementary draft decisions concerning specific cases of non-compliance</p> |

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| 15.40-16.20 | (c) Capacity-building activities | Information Decision | <p>The secretariat will present a report on some of the main capacity-building activities undertaken during the intersessional period to promote more effective implementation of the Convention, as well as on the measures taken to coordinate the various activities through the capacity-building coordination framework. International and regional organizations engaged in capacity-building activities will be invited to elaborate on those activities. Representatives of Governments and organizations, in particular those from countries with economies in transition, will be invited to share their views on outstanding needs for capacity-building.</p> <p>The Meeting of the Parties will be invited to review the activities undertaken, the efforts made to coordinate these activities and the outstanding capacity-building needs. The Meeting is expected to provide feedback on the activities undertaken and to provide guidance on the direction of future activities so as to ensure that capacity-building needs are met. This theme will be taken up during the high-level segment under agenda item 11.</p> | Report |
| 16.20-16.40 | **Coffee break** | | | |
| | <u>Item 5:</u> Substantive issues | | | |
| 16.40-16.50 | (a) Pollutant release and transfer registers | Information | <p>At their first extraordinary meeting, the Parties to the Convention adopted the Protocol on PRTRs and established the Working Group on PRTRs to carry out activities in preparation for the entry into force of the Protocol and the first session of the Meeting of the Parties.</p> <p>The Chair of the Working Group on PRTRs will report on its activities, including steps taken to prepare technical guidance, draft rules of procedure of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol and a compliance mechanism for the Protocol. The Meeting of the Parties to the Convention will be invited to take note of the progress achieved and to</p> | |

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| | | | <p>consider what further measures are required to promote the entry into force and effective implementation of the Protocol.</p> <p>Some elements of this agenda item will be taken up within the Special session on the Protocol on PRTRs.</p> | |
| 16.50-17.20 | (b) Genetically modified organisms | Information | <p>Parties, Signatories and other stakeholders will be invited to provide information on activities relating to the implementation of the Convention with respect to genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and/or to the application of the amendment to the Convention and of the Guidelines on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice with respect to GMOs.</p> <p>The secretariat will present an oral report on the outcome of the workshop on GMOs scheduled to take place in Cologne, Germany, on 19 and 20 May 2008. [A representative of the secretariat to the Convention on Biological Diversity will be invited to report on activities undertaken or planned under the auspices of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety relevant to the work on GMOs under the Aarhus Convention².]</p> | [Draft decision] |
| 17.20-18.00 | (c) Electronic information tools and clearinghouse mechanism | Information Decision | <p>The Chair of the Task Force on Electronic Information Tools established through decision I/6 will report on the activities of the Task Force since the second meeting of the Parties, including capacity-building workshops and steps taken to monitor the implementation of the recommendations adopted through decision II/3. The secretariat will provide a demonstration of the Aarhus Clearinghouse for Environmental Democracy. Other selected demonstrations of innovative uses of electronic tools will be given. The Meeting of the Parties will be invited</p> | Draft decision III/2 |

² Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters.

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| | | | to take note of these activities and to consider, revise as necessary, and provisionally adopt a draft decision providing direction for the further work in this area. | |
| Thursday, 12 June 2008 | | | | |
| 10.00-10.40 | (d) Public participation in strategic decision-making | Decision | <p>The Meeting of the Parties will be invited to discuss the outcomes of a workshop on public participation in strategic decision-making held in Sofia in December 2007 with the participation of experts from the respective bodies under the Aarhus and Espoo³ Conventions and the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment to the Espoo Convention.</p> <p>The Meeting of the Parties will be invited to review the work undertaken and to consider, revise as necessary and provisionally adopt a draft decision providing direction for the further work in this area.</p> | Draft decision III/3 |
| 10.40-11.20 | (e) Access to justice | Decision | The Chair of the Task Force on Access to Justice established through decision II/2 will report on the activities of that Task Force, including the holding of a workshop for senior members of the judiciary and a mini-conference. The Meeting of the Parties will be invited to review the work undertaken and to consider and provisionally adopt a draft decision providing direction for the further work in this area. | Draft decision III/4 |
| 11.20-11.40 | **Coffee break** | | | |

³ The [Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context](#).

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| 11.40-12.10 | (f) Public participation in international forums | Decision | <p>Through decision II/4, the Meeting of the Parties adopted the Almaty Guidelines on the Application of the Principles of the Aarhus Convention in International Forums and established the Task Force on Public Participation in International Forums. The Task Force was mandated to consult with relevant international forums over the Almaty Guidelines.</p> <p>The Chair of the Task Force on Public Participation in International Forums will report on its activities, notably the outcome of the consultation process and the meeting of representatives of international forums and the feedback from Parties, Signatories and other stakeholders on their experiences with Almaty Guidelines. The Meeting of the Parties will be invited to take note of the work undertaken and to consider and provisionally adopt a draft decision providing direction for the further work in this area.</p> | Draft decision III/5 |
| | Item 8: Relevant developments and interlinkages: | | | |
| 12.10-12.20 | (a) Synergies between the Convention and other relevant multilateral environmental agreements | Information | <p>The secretariat will provide summary information on ongoing or planned activities under other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) having relevance to those under the Convention. Representatives of these MEAs will be provided the opportunity to present supplementary information.</p> <p>The Meeting of the Parties will be invited to explore ways of further promoting synergies between the Convention and other MEAs, taking into consideration the outcomes of the work related to the Almaty Guidelines.</p> | |

| TIME | ITEM | ACTION | EXPLANATORY NOTES | DOCUMENTS |
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| 12.20-12.30 | (b) Global and regional developments on issues related to principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. | Information | <p>The secretariat will provide summary information on activities related to the implementation of principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development in other regions and at the global level. Representatives of bodies involved in those activities will be provided the opportunity to present supplementary information.</p> <p>The Meeting of the Parties is expected to review these developments and consider ways of providing appropriate support in accordance with decision II/9. The matters raised may be discussed further within the high-level segment under agenda item 12.</p> | |
| | Item 6: Procedures and mechanisms facilitating the implementation of the Convention | | | |
| 12.30-13.00 | (d) Financial arrangements | Decision | <p>Through decision II/6, the Meeting of the Parties agreed to extend the interim voluntary scheme of financial contributions established through decision I/13 and mandated the Working Group of the Parties to explore and develop as appropriate one or several options for establishing stable and predictable financial arrangements for the Convention based on the United Nations scale of assessment or other appropriate scales and to make recommendations for consideration by the Meeting.</p> <p>The Meeting of the Parties will be invited to take note of the work undertaken by the Working Group and to consider, revise as necessary and provisionally adopt a draft decision on financial arrangements.</p> | Draft decision III/8 |

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| 13.00-15.00 | **Lunch** | | | |
| | Item 7: Programme of work and operation of the Convention (cont.) | | | |
| 15.00-16.20 | (b) Long-term strategic plan | Decision | <p>Through decision II/8, the Meeting of the Parties requested the Working Group of the Parties to develop a strategic plan for consideration and adoption at the third meeting of the Parties. The Working Group prepared a draft plan based upon a proposal from the Bureau, which in turn was based upon draft elements prepared by an ad hoc expert group.</p> <p>The Meeting of the Parties is expected to consider, revise as necessary, and provisionally adopt the draft plan prepared by the Working Group of the Parties.</p> | Draft decision III/9 |
| 16.20-16.40 | **Coffee break** | | | |
| 16.40-17.40 | (c) Work programme for 2009–2011 | Decision | <p>The Meeting of the Parties is expected to consider a draft decision containing the proposed work programme for 2009–2011, revise it as necessary, and provisionally adopt it. The draft decision is expected to indicate the estimated costs of the activities contained in the work programme as well as the expected sources of funding in accordance with the draft decision on financial arrangements (see agenda item 6 (d)).</p> <p>It is expected that Parties, Signatories and other interested States will have informed the secretariat in advance of the meeting of their intention to contribute to the financial resources of the Convention under the scheme of contributions envisaged in the draft decision.</p> <p>The secretariat will make the information received available to the Meeting of the Parties and delegations will be invited to provide any</p> | Draft decision III/10 |

| TIME | ITEM | ACTION | EXPLANATORY NOTES | DOCUMENTS |
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| | | | supplementary information. | |
| 17.40-17.50 | Item 9: Communication strategy | Decision | The Meeting of the Parties will be invited to consider developing a communication strategy for the Convention. | |
| 17.50-18.00 | Item 10: Report on credentials | Approval | The Meeting of the Parties will be invited to approve the report on the credentials, presented by the officers in accordance with rule 17 of the rules of procedure. | |
| HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT | | | | |
| Friday, 13 June 2008 | | | | |
| The Chair of the Meeting of the Parties will invite a high-level official from the host country to chair the high-level segment. | | | | |
| 9.30-9.50 | Opening ceremony | | Welcome address by the UNECE Executive Secretary. Welcome address by a high-level official from the host country. | |
| 9.50-11.20 | Item 11: Celebrating the first 10 years: achievements, lessons learned and future challenges | Debate | Following a keynote speech or speeches, there will be a panel discussion involving Ministers and NGOs followed by a general debate centring on the long-term strategic plan. Reference documents will include the two sets of national implementation reports and the respective synthesis reports, the capacity-building report and the draft long-term strategic plan. [To be further elaborated in an annex.] | |
| 11.20-11.40 | **Coffee break** | | | |

| TIME | ITEM | ACTION | EXPLANATORY NOTES | DOCUMENTS |
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| 11.40-13.00 | Item 12: Global and regional initiatives to promote principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development | Debate | Keynote speech(es), followed by panel discussion and general debate [to be further elaborated in an annex] | |
| 13.00-15.00 | **Lunch** | | | |
| 15.00-16.00 | Item 13: Special session on the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers | Debate Adoption | Following a keynote speech or speeches, there will be a panel discussion involving ministers and NGOs followed by a general debate centering on a draft statement on the Protocol on PRTRs prepared by the Working Group of the Parties. Reference documents will include the three sets of reports and other documents of the Working Group on PRTRs and the draft statement on the Protocol. Ministers and Heads of delegation of Parties, Signatories and other States, as well as international, regional and non-governmental organizations and other representatives of civil society will be invited to consider and adopt the statement based on a draft text prepared by the Working Group of the Parties. | Draft statement |
| 16.00-16.20 | Item 14: Review and adoption of decisions | Adoption | The Meeting of the Parties will be invited to review the draft decisions and adopt them. | Draft decisions |
| 16.20-16.40 | **Coffee break** | | | |
| 16.40-17.30 | Item 15: Discussion and adoption of the Riga Declaration | Adoption | Ministers and Heads of delegation of Parties, Signatories and other States, as well as international, regional and non-governmental organizations and other representatives of civil society will be invited to consider and adopt a declaration based on a draft text prepared by the Working Group of the Parties. | Draft declaration |

| TIME | ITEM | ACTION | EXPLANATORY NOTES | DOCUMENTS |
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| 17.30-17.35 | <u>Item 16:</u> Election of officers and other Bureau members | Election | The Meeting of the Parties is expected to elect a Chair and two Vice-Chairs, both from among the representatives of the Parties present at the meeting in accordance with rule 18. It is also expected to elect the remaining members of the Bureau from among the representatives of the Parties in accordance with rule 22, paragraph 1 (b). NGOs established for the purpose of, and actively engaged in, promoting environmental protection and sustainable development are expected to appoint a representative to attend the meetings of the Bureau, as an observer, in accordance with rule 22, paragraphs 2 and 4. | |
| 17.35-17.40 | <u>Item 17:</u> Date and venue of the fourth ordinary meeting | Decision | The Meeting of the Parties is expected to make a preliminary decision with respect to the date and venue for its fourth ordinary meeting. Parties and prospective Parties are invited to consider hosting the meeting and to inform the secretariat in advance of any proposals that they may intend to make in this regard. | |
| 17.40-17.45 | <u>Item 18:</u> Any other business | | Delegations wishing to propose points under this item are requested to inform the secretariat as soon as possible. | |
| 17.45-17.55 | <u>Item 19:</u> Adoption of the report | Adoption | The Meeting of the Parties will be invited to adopt a draft report of its third meeting. | Draft report of the meeting |
| 17.55-18.00 | <u>Item 20:</u> Close of the meeting | | The Chair of the high-level segment will close the meeting. | |
