

**Access to Justice Regional Workshop for High-Level Judiciary
(South Eastern European Region)
17-18 November 2008**

Hotel Tirana International, Tirana, Albania

RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE PARTICIPANTS

The participants of the workshop,

Welcoming having had the opportunity to participate in the subregional workshop on access to justice for the higher levels of the judiciary and expressing gratitude to the UNECE and the OSCE for having organized the workshop, and also expressing gratitude to the Government of France for their financial contribution,

Recognizing that the Convention is a unique legal framework contributing to the protection of rights of each person to live in an environment adequate to his or her health and well-being,

Reiterating the Johannesburg Principles on the Role of Law and Sustainable Development that an independent judiciary is vital for the implementation, development and enforcement of environmental law in general and the Convention in particular,

Noting the findings in the national implementation reports and of the Compliance Committee that the implementation of the access to justice pillar is the most challenging to the Parties and recognizing that the judiciary has a important role in furthering the implementation of the Convention in general, and in particular the access to justice pillar,

Recognizing that sufficient knowledge of environmental law, including with respect to the Convention, amongst the members of the judiciary is a prerequisite for fulfilling the important role of the judiciary, as mentioned above,

Recognizing also the need for training in environmental law, including with respect to the Convention, for judges, public prosecutors, lawyers, advocates and public authorities,

Underlining the important role of the public in decision-making relating to environmental issues, and therefore stressing the importance of the awareness raising about the Convention, and noting the role of Aarhus Centres/Public Environmental Information Centres in this respect,

Noting the need for closer cooperation between judicial training centres and Public Environmental Information/Aarhus Centres to better promote synergies between the three pillars of the Convention,

Acknowledging the important contribution that individual citizens and non-governmental organizations can make in environmental protection and in triggering better implementation, and in this regard recognizing the important role of lawyers providing pro bono legal counsel,

1. Invite the Task Force on Access to Justice, and other relevant bodies and organizations to consider organizing further workshops and other capacity-building activities related to the Convention at the subregional and national levels,
2. Invite potential donors to support such capacity-building activities, including the organization of training of trainers to enable the relevant judicial training institutes to provide national level trainings, inter alia with the involvement of international experts,
3. Encourage the judicial training centres and similar institutions to, as appropriate, further include environmental law modules, including Convention-related issues, in their training curricula, and invite the Task Force on Access to Justice and other appropriate institutions to consider ways to support them in doing so,
4. Encourage the further cooperation and networking among judges in the field of environmental law in general and in relation to the Convention in particular, i.e. through sharing of experience and jurisprudence, and invite the Task Force on Access to Justice and other appropriate institutions and organizations to facilitate this process.