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КОМИССИЯECONOMIC 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

Task Force on Access to Information

First meeting

Geneva, 7 and 8 February 2013

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Opening and adoption of the agenda

Annotated provisional agenda for the first meeting

To be held in Salle VIII, Palais des Nations, Geneva
starting at 10am on Thursday, 7 February 2013

I. Provisional agenda

1. Opening and adoption of the agenda.
2. Public access to environmental information: key messages from the region.
3. Effective use of electronic information tools in the Convention's implementation: addressing challenges and sharing good practices.
4. Building capacities in providing access to environmental information: regional, subregional and national activities and their coordination.
5. Activities under other international forums dealing with access to environmental information.
6. "Environmental information on products: making public access work" - International workshop under the auspices of the Task Force on Access to Information under the Aarhus Convention.
7. Other business.
8. Approval of the key outcomes of the meeting.

II. Annotations

The mandate of the Task Force on Access to Information under the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental matter (Aarhus Convention) was laid down by the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention through decision IV/1 adopted at its fourth session (Chisinau, 29 June - 1 July 2011)¹ and pursuant to the Strategic Plan 2009-2014 adopted by the Meeting of the Parties at its third session (Riga, 11-13 June 2008)².

The work of the Task Force on Access to Information will be built on the outputs delivered by the Task Force on Electronic Information Tools, such as Recommendations on the more effective use of electronic information tools to provide public access to environmental information adopted through decision II/3 adopted by the Meeting of the Parties at its second session (Almaty, Kazakhstan, 25-27 May 2005)³. The work will strive to strengthen implementation of the Convention's provisions on access to information, including through promoting exchange of experiences, challenges and good practices concerning the subject matter. It will also address inter alia the issue of public accessibility of environmental information on products and environmental information held by private sector.

1. Opening and adoption of the agenda

Timing: Thursday, 7 February, 10–10.10 a.m.

The Task Force will be invited to adopt the agenda as set out in the present document.⁴

2. Public access to environmental information: key messages from the region

Timing: Thursday, 7 February, 10.10–11.15 a.m.

This session will set the scene regarding the issue of public access to environmental information, including accessibility of environmental information held by the private sector, based on the key messages derived from the experiences of Parties through reporting mechanism, work of the Convention's Compliance Committee, and knowledge of non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders. Delegates will be invited to consider the related challenges and achievements and debate possible regional and subregional priorities for facilitating public access to environmental information.

3. Effective use of electronic information tools: addressing challenges and sharing good practices

Timing: Thursday, 7 February, 11.15–1p.m.

This session will address, inter alia, recent developments in establishing and developing public registers, information centres and national nodes; innovative applications of electronic information tools in support of the Convention; and the role of the Aarhus Clearinghouse for Environmental Democracy in promoting access to environmental information.

¹ The text of decision is available at: http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/pp/mop4/Documents/ece_mp_pp_2011_2_add.1_eng.pdf

² The text of decision is available at: http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/pp/mop3/ODS/ece_mp_pp_2008_2_add_16_e_StPI.pdf

³ The text of decision is available at: http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2005/pp/ece/ece.mp_pp.2005.2.add.4.e.pdf

⁴ All documentation for the meeting will be available at: <http://www.unece.org/environmental-policy/treaties/public-participation/meetings-and-events/public-participation/public-participation/2013/envpptfairst-meeting/docs.html>

4. Building capacities in providing access to environmental information: regional, subregional and national activities and their coordination

Timing: Thursday, 7 February, 3.00–3.45 p.m.

Delegates will be informed about the key outcomes of the seventh meeting of Aarhus Convention capacity-building coordination and invited to exchange information about the capacity building initiatives at the regional, subregional and national levels.

5. Activities under other international forums dealing with access to environmental information

Timing: Thursday, 7 February, 3.45–4.30 p.m.

Representatives of international organizations will be invited to inform about the recent activities relevant to the matter of access to environmental information. Parties' and other countries' representatives will be invited to consider possible ways of strengthening coordination among national focal points for various forums in their countries.

6. “Environmental information on products: making public access work” International workshop under the auspices of the Task Force on Access to Information under the Aarhus Convention.

Timing: Thursday, 7 February, 4.30–6.00 p.m.

Timing: Friday, 8 February, 09.30 a.m. – 4.00 p.m.

A thematic workshop will be organized in the format of panel presentations followed by an interactive discussion. The workshop will consider good practices, needs and challenges regarding accessibility of environmental information with regard to products from perspectives of government, private sector and the public; information needs of the public, including regarding potential environmental risks in new products; and smart ways of informing public. Delegates will be invited to discuss regional and subregional priorities in this area.

7. Other business

Timing: Friday, 8 February, 4.00–4.05 p.m.

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

8. Approval of the key outcomes of the meeting

Timing: Friday, 8 February, 4.05–4.30 p.m.

The Task Force is expected to approve the key outcomes of the meeting to guide its future work.

The Chair will close the meeting.