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United Nations Institute for Training and Research

PRTRs: MEASURING PROGRESS TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Global round table

19 November 2013
Geneva, Palais des Nations

Organised by

The secretariat of the UNECE Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (Protocol on PRTRs) to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention)
and
the Organization for Economic co-operation and Development (OECD)

in cooperation with

the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)

Chairs: Mr. Michel Amand (Belgium), Chair of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Pollutant Releases and Transfer Registers and Mr. Noriyuki Suzuki (Japan), Chair of the Task Force on Pollutant Releases and Transfer Registers under OECD

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

Background

1. The Protocol's Working Group of the Parties at its first meeting (28-29 November 2011) and the OECD PRTR Task Force at its 14th meeting (3-5 October 2011) agreed on the holding of back-to-back meetings and organizing a joint global round table on PRTRs to take place in 2013 under the auspices of OECD and UNECE. OECD PRTR Task Force at its 15th meeting (10-12 September 2012) and the Protocol's Working Group of the Parties at its second meeting (20-21 November 2012) discussed the matter further and entrusted their respective Bureaux to follow up on the preparations for the event. Given the extensive experience of UNITAR in pursuing activities on PRTRs in different regions, it has been invited to cooperate on the organisation of the event.
2. The round table is expected to take stock of successes and challenges in implementing the PRTR Protocol and PRTR systems to date in order to create a snapshot which can guide future activities towards implementation of new PRTRs, and enhancements to existing PRTRs. The output document will be the Chairs' summary on the main outcomes of the meeting, prepared with the assistance of the UNECE and OECD secretariats after the meeting.
3. The Chair of the Protocol's Meeting of the Parties and the Chair of the OECD Task Force on PRTRs will co-chair the event.
4. The Global round table will have the following format: The invited speakers-panellists from different regions (e.g. Latin America, Asia, North America, Australia, Africa and different subregions of UNECE) will be invited to make a short presentation (7 minutes), after which the debate will be opened to the floor. During the debate, panellists will have the opportunity to react to presentations of their fellow panellists and to respond to statements or questions from

the floor. To allow for more time for discussion, the number of panellists and the time for their opening statements will be limited.

10.00-10.30 **1. Opening**

A high-level official of the UNECE and a high-level official of a Government will deliver welcoming statements.

The two Chairs will deliver introductory statements.

10.30-12.00 **2. PRTRs: benefits and opportunities**

The session will address how PRTRs contribute to sustainable development highlighting the benefits and opportunities offered by this instrument. The discussion can include a number of issues, such as: (a) potential for PRTRs to show or be mash-uped with other data, including for example, use of resources (e.g., energy consumption) and data on waste minimisation; (b) how recent advances in information technology have impacted on the access to, quality and use of PRTR data; (c) the future needs of PRTR data users (d) use of PRTR data for estimating environmental impact of pollutant emissions; (e) how PRTRs can function as a single window for environmental reporting and compliance with international standards; (f) how the use of PRTR data can encourage or promote development of other national inventories; (g) the role of PRTRs in collecting data on green house gases; and (h) PRTR as a tool to communicate environmental information to the public.

12.00-13.00 and **3. Problematic areas and pathways for progress: good**
15.00-16.00¹ **practices in PRTRs implementation**

The session will provide an opportunity to share best practice and experiences in PRTR implementation highlighting lessons learned and suggestions for improvements. The discussion might address the following issues: (a) how to ensure effective involvement of enterprises, including foreign industrial facilities; (b) how the PRTRs data is managed (e.g. who pays for what, and who carries out what); (c) estimation techniques (e.g. for diffuse releases); and (d) role of stakeholders.

16.00-16.45 **4. Harmonised PRTRs**

The session will provide an opportunity to illustrate a number of regional examples of harmonised PRTRs. This might include e.g E-PRTR, regional PRTRs in Central and Latin America and regional PRTRs in North America.

16.45-17.40 **5. Joining efforts and looking for synergy: international**
forums dealing with PRTRs

The session will demonstrate experiences of different international forums dealing with PRTRs, highlighting geographical and substantive focus of their activities as well as tools and material which they can offer. These forums would include UNECE, OECD, UNITAR and UNEP. The session will also address their joint cooperation on PRTRs and potentials for strengthening synergies.

17.40-18.00 **6. Closing statements by the Chairs**

The Chairs will summarise key points derived from the discussions and will close the meeting.

¹ 13.00-15.00: *Lunch*