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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

Eleventh meeting
Geneva, 8–10 July 2009
Item 17 of the provisional agenda

PROPOSED PROCEDURE FOR DEVELOPING A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Proposal submitted by the Bureau

1. At its third session, the Meeting of the Parties adopted the work programme for 2009–2011 for the Convention¹. Activity III of annex I of the work programme addresses awareness-raising and promotion of the Convention and the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers. (PRTRs), including through a communication strategy. The Parties assigned the development of such a strategy to the secretariat, an expert group on a communication strategy and the Working Group of the Parties.
2. This note addresses a procedure for developing a communication strategy, to complement the Strategic Plan for 2009–2014 for the Convention² adopted by the third session of the Meeting of the Parties. An annex to the note presents a draft terms of reference for a future expert group on a communication strategy.

¹ ECE/MP.PP/2008/2/Add.17.

² ECE/MP.PP/2008/2/Add.16.

3. Such a communication strategy should promote raising awareness of the Convention and the Protocol on PRTRs and further the achievement of strategic goals and objectives by crafting key messages and targeting constituencies considered to be essential for their effective implementation. It should also provide a framework for adopting the most effective means of communication, tailored to specific audiences, in a cost-effective manner. Furthermore, the communication strategy should provide the secretariat with guidance on the concrete activities which could be undertaken during implementation of the Convention's work programme for 2009–2011, in particular with respect to awareness-raising and capacity-building activities. The strategy should also highlight actions that could be undertaken by partner organizations in support of implementation of the Convention and/or the Protocol.

4. The Strategic Plan for 2009–2014 covers three focal areas – implementation, expansion and development – and lists in total 30 objectives under these areas. The Strategic Plan's framework for implementation provides indicative types of activity and implementing partners for each objective. A communication strategy should further identify:

- (a) Priority messages;
- (b) Methods and means of communicating key messages;
- (c) Targeted constituencies or audiences to whom key messages would be addressed for each objective adopted in the Strategic Plan.

5. At its eleventh meeting, the Working Group of the Parties will be invited to consider a proposed procedure for establishment of the expert group and its terms of reference for development of a communication strategy.

6. An ad hoc committee of experts on strategic communication would be established with a time-limited mandate to draft a communication strategy for adoption by the Working Group of the Parties at its twelfth meeting. The ad hoc expert group would be called the "Strategic Communications Expert Group."

7. Parties and Signatories to the Convention and/or Protocol and recognized capacity-building partner organizations and non-governmental organizations would be invited to nominate experts for the expert group drawn from the different functional areas of the Convention's work programme.

8. The Convention's Bureau would finalize the selection of the expert group's members, taking into account the nominations received from the Parties and Signatories, capacity-building partner organizations and non-governmental organizations, as well as representation of the areas of the work programme, geographical representation, expertise in the field of communication, and the principle of public participation in the implementation of the Convention. The expert group should have no more than 15 members.³

³ The work programme for 2009–2011 estimated the total cost of the expert group to be within the range of \$8,000 to \$16,000. The cost of engaging an expert communication consultant was to be no greater than \$5,000.

9. The Working Group is requested to consider whether the secretariat should be requested to contract with an expert consultant in strategic communications to facilitate the deliberations of the expert group and to assist with the development of its outputs.

10. The Working Group is further requested to consider whether a chairperson should be nominated by the Working Group of the Parties in advance of the first meeting of the expert group.

Annex

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS EXPERT GROUP

The Working Group of the Parties:

1. Establishes a strategic communications expert group under the authority of the Working Group of the Parties;
2. Requests the expert group, with the assistance of the secretariat and subject to the availability of resources:
 - (a) To draft a clear and simple statement of objectives in communicating the work programme and the Strategic Plan for 2009–2014, including principles to underpin the communication strategy;
 - (b) To develop a motto or brand promise for the Convention that provides instant recognition of its value to its constituents;
 - (c) To elaborate some clear and simple messages and model how these might work in different contexts, e.g. a press release, a report, a newspaper article, an academic article, and a webpage;
 - (d) To prepare a list of all the relevant communications activities, developed into a project plan with deadlines and responsibilities, including key deadlines, milestones and review points, and evaluation measures to gauge success in meeting communication objectives;
 - (e) To document and share expertise, experience and best practices concerning communication, including through the clearing-house mechanism and other types of electronic exchange of information;
 - (f) To draft a communication strategy, including a project plan, taking into account:
 - (i) Prioritization of target audiences and user groups according to their importance and influence relative to the objectives of the Strategy Plan;
 - (ii) External perceptions of the work programme among potential target audiences;
 - (iii) Actual and preferred channels the Convention's target audiences might use and identification of those which would deliver maximum impact;
 - (iv) An estimate of the time and money involved, so as to ensure cost-effectiveness by focusing on high-impact/low-cost activities;
 - (v) Synergies and possibilities for cooperation with relevant organizations and processes, including with the European Commission, European ECO-Forum, the regional environmental centres, the Aarhus Centres sponsored by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and the secretariats of relevant multilateral environmental agreements;

- (vi) Work being undertaken by Governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, research institutes and other stakeholders in the field of communication, in order to benefit from this work and avoid duplication;

3. Further requests the expert group to present the outcome of its work to the Working Group of the Parties with a view to the consideration and adoption of the communication strategy, as appropriate, by the Working Group of the Parties at its twelfth meeting.
