



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
19 August 2011

Original: English

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

Fourth session

Chisinau, 29 June–1 July 2011

Report of the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties

Contents

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction.....	1–8	3
A. Attendance.....	2–5	3
B. Organizational matters.....	6–8	3
II. Status of ratification of the Convention and the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers.....	9–10	4
III. Substantive issues.....	11–20	4
A. Genetically modified organisms.....	11–12	4
B. Access to information, including electronic information tools.....	13–14	5
C. Public participation in decision-making.....	15–16	5
D. Access to justice.....	17–18	5
E. Public participation in international forums.....	19–20	6
IV. Procedures and mechanisms.....	21–33	6
A. Reports on the status of implementation of the Convention.....	21–22	6
B. Compliance mechanism.....	23–29	7
C. Reporting requirements.....	30	8
D. Implementation Guide.....	31	8
E. Capacity-building.....	32–33	8

V.	Promotion of the Convention and relevant developments and interlinkages	34–39	9
A.	Accession to the Convention by States from outside the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region.....	34–36	9
B.	Awareness-raising activities and communication.....	37	9
C.	Synergies between the Convention and other relevant multilateral environmental agreements	38	9
D.	Update on United Nations Environment Programme initiatives on access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters	39	10
VI.	Programme of work and operation of the Convention	40–43	10
A.	Implementation of the work programme for 2009–2011, including in relation to the Strategic Plan 2009–2014.....	40	10
B.	Work programme for 2012–2014	41	10
C.	Financial arrangements	42	11
D.	Future strategic plan	43	11
VII.	Report on credentials.....	44	11
VIII.	High-level segment	45–46	11
A.	Opening ceremony.....	45	11
B.	Thematic session: ‘The role of the Aarhus Convention in promoting sustainable development’	46	11
IX.	Discussion and adoption of the Chisinau Declaration.....	47	12
X.	Election of officers and other members of the Bureau.....	48–49	12
XI.	Date and venue of the fifth ordinary session.....	50	12
XII.	Adoption of decisions and close of the meeting.....	51–54	12

For practical reasons, the following documents adopted by the Meeting of the Parties at their fourth session are being issued in addenda to the present report:

- Chisinau Declaration and decisions adopted by the Meeting of the Parties (ECE/MP.PP/2011/2/Add.1);
- Communication Strategy (ECE/MP.PP/2011/2/Add.2)
- Chair’s summary of the thematic session of the high-level segment on the role of the Aarhus Convention in promoting sustainable development (ECE/MP.PP/2011/2/Add.3).

I. Introduction

1. The fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) was held from 29 June to 1 July 2011 in Chisinau, at the invitation of the Government of the Republic of Moldova.

A. Attendance

2. The fourth session was attended by delegations from the following Parties and Signatories to the Convention: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The European Union (EU), represented by the European Commission, was also present.

3. Delegations from Uzbekistan and the Russian Federation also attended.

4. In addition, representatives of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the secretariats of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), as well as the Executive Coordinator of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), attended the meeting.

5. Representatives of Aarhus Centres, regional environmental centres, international financial institutions and business, professional, research and academic organizations, were also present, as were representatives of international, regional and national environmental organizations, many of whom coordinated their input within the framework of the European ECO Forum.¹

B. Organizational matters

6. The Meeting of the Parties took note of the opening remarks by Mr. Iurie Leancă, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova, as well as of the welcoming remarks by Mr. Georghe Salaru, the Minister of Environment of the Republic of Moldova, and by the Director of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Environment Division. The Chair of the Meeting of the Parties formally opened the meeting.

7. The Meeting of the Parties adopted the agenda as set out in the annotated provisional agenda (ECE/MP.PP/2011/1).

8. The Chair informed the Meeting that, with a view to ensuring equal opportunities for English-, French- and Russian-speaking delegations, the session would result in a list of decisions that would be projected on a screen and presented by the Chair verbally, thereby

¹ A list of participants will be made available online at <http://live.unece.org/env/pp/mop4.html>.

allowing for interpretation. The list of decisions would be distributed to the delegates by e-mail after the session and would be incorporated in the formal report of the session.

II. Status of ratification of the Convention and the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers

9. The secretariat reported on the status of ratification of the Convention, the amendment to the Convention and the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (Protocol on PRTRs). Since the previous ordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties, the number of Parties to the Convention had increased from 41 to 44, through ratification by Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia. The number of Parties to the amendment to the Convention had risen from 16 to 26 following its ratification by Belgium, Cyprus, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and the United Kingdom. The number of Parties to the Protocol on PRTRs had increased from 8 to 27, thereby bringing about the entry into force of the Protocol, through ratification by Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Hungary, Lithuania, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the United Kingdom.

10. The Chair reported that, at the request of the Bureau, he had written to those Parties whose ratification of the Convention's amendment would count towards its entry into force, encouraging them to ratify the amendment. Delegations reported on recent and anticipated developments concerning ratification. Serbia stated that it planned to ratify the Protocol on PRTRs by the end of 2012. The Meeting of the Parties took note of the information provided.

III. Substantive issues

A. Genetically modified organisms

11. The Meeting of the Parties took note of the keynote addresses² on the topic of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) by representatives of Austria and the European ECO Forum, as well as of the information provided by delegates and the secretariat, including with regard to ratifications needed for the amendment to enter into force. Participants welcomed the efforts of the 26 Parties that had ratified the GMO amendment thus far, while noting that the Republic of Moldova was the only State from Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia to have done so, and called upon those Parties to the Aarhus Convention which had not yet ratified the amendment to do so in order that it might enter into force as soon as possible. Participants also reminded those Parties that had ratified the amendment of the need to transpose its provisions into their national legislation and to take practical steps to apply its provisions pending its entry into force. Support was expressed for the activities of the Convention secretariat in further developing the dialogue and building synergies with the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

² The text of the statements delivered and other meeting documents can be found at <http://live.unece.org/env/pp/mop4.html>.

12. The Meeting agreed on the proposed activities related to GMOs in decision IV/6 on the work programme for 2012–2014 (ECE/MP.PP/2011/L.6, as amended).³

B. Access to information, including electronic information tools

13. A representative of the United Kingdom, speaking on behalf of the Chair of the Task Force on Electronic Information Tools, reported on the activities of the Task Force since the third session of the Meeting of the Parties. Delegations provided other relevant information. The Meeting of the Parties took note of this information. The Chair thanked the United Kingdom for its leadership of the Task Force.

14. The Meeting of the Parties provisionally adopted decision IV/1 on access to information (ECE/MP.PP/2011/L.1), welcoming the offer of the Republic of Moldova to lead the Task Force on Access to Information and amending paragraph 9 accordingly. It also agreed on the proposed activities related to access to information in draft decision IV/6 on the work programme for 2012–2014.

C. Public participation in decision-making

15. The Chair of the Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-making reported on the activities of the Task Force since the second extraordinary session of the Meeting of the Parties (Geneva, 19-22 April and 30 June 2010). Delegations provided other relevant information. The Meeting of the Parties took note of the report and information provided.

16. The Meeting of the Parties decided to extend the length of the mandate of the Task Force and to endorse the proposed workplan for it, as contained in document ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2011/5. It also agreed on the proposed activities related to public participation in draft decision IV/6 on the work programme for 2012–2014, thanking Ireland for its leadership in that area of work and welcoming Ireland's offer to continue leading the Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-making.

D. Access to justice

17. A representative of Norway and a senior judge from Armenia delivered keynote addresses on the topic of access to justice. The Chair of the Task Force on Access to Justice reported on the activities of the Task Force, and delegations provided other relevant information. The following issues were addressed: standing for non-governmental organizations (NGOs); costs and mechanisms to reduce costs in accessing justice in environmental matters; and injunctive relief. Participants highlighted the importance of the work realized in the context of the Task Force to promote exchange of experiences, especially with regard to the integration of the jurisprudence database in the Aarhus Clearinghouse of Environmental Democracy, and the analytic studies. Participants also emphasized that, while legislative changes were necessary, focus should be placed on

³ The final texts of the Chisinau Declaration and all decisions adopted by the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties can be found in the first addendum to the present report (ECE/MP.PP/2011/2/Add.1). The Chisinau Declaration and certain draft decisions were amended during the course of the session and adopted in their revised version. Where such revisions have been made the reference herein to the symbol of the draft document will be annotated to show, "as amended".

awareness-raising and capacity-building. The Meeting of the Parties took note of the reports and information presented.

18. The Meeting provisionally adopted decision IV/2 on promoting access to justice (ECE/MP.PP/2011/L.2), and agreed on the proposed activities related to access to justice in draft decision IV/6 on the work programme for 2012–2014. It thanked Sweden for its leadership in that area of work and welcomed its offer to continue leading the Task Force on Access to Justice.

E. Public participation in international forums

19. Representatives of Italy and the UNFCCC secretariat delivered keynote addresses on public participation in international forums. The Chair of the Task Force on Public Participation in International Forums reported on the activities of the Task Force, and delegations provided other relevant information. The following issues were addressed: the growing interest globally in the issue of public participation in international forums, also reflected in the new mandate to the Working Group of the Parties on that issue; and the ongoing need for national focal points to coordinate with their colleagues involved in other international processes (including officials from other ministries such as foreign affairs) to promote the principles of the Convention. A suggestion was made to evaluate the Almaty Guidelines' impact on public participation procedures under existing instruments and with regard to the negotiation of new instruments. The UNFCCC secretariat welcomed the continuing exchange with the Aarhus Convention and shared a message to the Meeting of the Parties from the Chair of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Body on Implementation. Aarhus Convention Parties acting collectively had made an important contribution to moving the issue forward in that forum and a number of their recommendations had been taken up. The Meeting of the Parties took note of the reports and information presented.

20. The Meeting provisionally adopted decision IV/3 on promoting the application of the principles of the Convention in international forums (ECE/MP.PP/2011/L.3, as amended) and agreed on the proposed activities related to the promotion of the Almaty Guidelines and awareness-raising in draft decision IV/6 on the work programme for 2012–2014. It thanked France for its leadership of the Task Force and welcomed its offer to continue leading in that area of work.

IV. Procedures and mechanisms

A. Reports on the status of implementation of the Convention

21. The Chair presented the synthesis report on the status of implementation of the Convention (ECE/MP.PP/2011/7). He noted that the report was based on the information provided by Parties and did not reflect the findings of the Compliance Committee, which were presented separately in the Committee's report. The Chair invited delegations to review the implementation of the Convention on the basis of the reports submitted by the Parties and the synthesis report prepared by the secretariat, as well as to take note of the reports submitted by NGOs. Delegations provided other relevant information.

22. The Meeting of the Parties took note of the reports and information presented and discussed trends and challenges in implementation. The Meeting recognized the need for timely submission of national implementation reports in order to ensure a good quality of the synthesis report and its timely submission for translation. The Meeting noted with regret that the majority of Parties had not submitted their reports by the deadline; Parties that had not yet submitted their national implementation reports were urged to do so by 20

September 2011. The Meeting expressed its gratitude to Belgium for providing an in-kind donation in the form of a translation of the synthesis report into French.

B. Compliance mechanism

23. The Chair of the Compliance Committee presented the report of the Compliance Committee (ECE/MP.PP/2011/11 and addenda) and reported on the Committee's activities since the third session of the Meeting of the Parties, including regarding the functioning of the compliance mechanism and findings and recommendations of the Committee with respect to compliance by specific Parties. Delegations provided other relevant information. The Meeting took note of the report and information presented and expressed its gratitude and appreciation to the Chair and the two members of the Committee who would step down from the Committee after the session.

24. Issues of non-compliance relating to individual Parties included the following: Armenia (adoption of decrees modifying land use designation and zoning — several provisions of the Convention; and mining activities — public participation); Belarus (construction of a hydropower plant — public participation); Kazakhstan (nuclear waste — access to information; construction of a high-voltage power line and construction of a cement factory — public participation; and failure to enforce domestic environmental law — access to justice); Republic of Moldova (contracts for rent of forest lands — access to information); Slovakia (update of permits for the construction of a nuclear power plant — public participation); Spain (urban planning and modification of a protected area to residential — several provisions of the Convention; operation of wine distillery and construction of an oil refinery — public participation and access to justice/legal aid for non-governmental organizations); Turkmenistan (law on public associations — general provisions of recognition and support of public associations promoting environmental protection); Ukraine (protected wetland area — public participation), and United Kingdom (access to justice with respect to costs and remedies).

25. The Meeting of the Parties agreed on the proposed activities related to the compliance mechanism in draft decision IV/6 on the work programme for 2012–2014 and provisionally adopted decision IV/9 on general issues of compliance (ECE/MP.PP/2011/L.11, as amended); decision IV/9a on compliance by Armenia (ECE/MP.PP/2011/L.12); decision IV/9b on compliance by Belarus (ECE/MP.PP/2011/L.13); decision IV/9c on compliance by Kazakhstan (ECE/MP.PP/2011/L.14); decision IV/9d on compliance by the Republic of Moldova (ECE/MP.PP/2011/L.15, as amended); decision IV/9e on compliance by Slovakia (ECE/MP.PP/2011/L.16); decision IV/9f on compliance by Spain (ECE/MP.PP/2011/L.17, as amended); decision IV/9g on compliance by Turkmenistan (ECE/MP.PP/2011/L.18); decision IV/9h on compliance by Ukraine (ECE/MP.PP/2011/L.19, as amended); and decision IV/9i on compliance by the United Kingdom (ECE/MP.PP/2011/L.20).

26. During the negotiations, several Parties took the floor to object to the text of some draft decisions. After discussions and clarification, all Parties present endorsed the Committee's findings and adopted all decisions by consent, despite the decisions' at times strict nature.

27. When adopting decision IV/9f, the Parties agreed that the second sentence of paragraph 117 of the first addendum to the report of the twenty-sixth meeting of the Compliance Committee (ECE/MP.PP/C.1/2009/8/Add.1), regarding communication ACCC/C/2008/24 concerning Spain, was not a finding, and it was therefore not endorsed as such by the Meeting of the Parties.

28. The Meeting of the Parties elected by consensus the following three new members of the Compliance Committee: Mr. Pavel Černý, nominated by the European ECO Forum; Mr. Ion Diaconu, nominated by the EU and its member States; and Ms. Haghine Hakhverdyan, nominated by the Government of Armenia. It also re-elected by consensus Mr. Jerzy Jendroska, nominated by the EU and its member States, to serve for another term of office.

29. Recalling the report of its second extraordinary session — and in particular the establishment of an official mandate for Compliance Committee documentation — the Meeting of the Parties mandated the secretariat, in consultation with the Compliance Committee, to:

(a) Contact the relevant United Nations services in order to request an extension of the current waiver on the rules regarding the translation by the United Nations of the Compliance Committee's reports and findings until the next session of the Meeting of the Parties;

(b) Explore alternative options for the translation of the Compliance Committee's reports and findings, while respecting the equal treatment of the three official languages of UNECE;

(c) Report back on the above to the Meeting of the Parties at its next session.

C. Reporting requirements

30. The Meeting of the Parties provisionally adopted decision IV/4 on reporting requirements (ECE/MP.PP/2011/L.4, as amended).

D. Implementation Guide

31. The Chair informed delegations that the current working draft of the revised Implementation Guide was available online, noting that it was envisaged that both the English and Russian versions of the revised Guide would be published in electronic format by the end of 2011, following a third brief commenting round. The hard-copy editions would follow as soon as possible. The Meeting of the Parties took note of that information and looked forward to the publication of the revised Implementation Guide as a valuable tool to facilitate the Convention's implementation.

E. Capacity-building

32. The Chair presented the report on capacity-building prepared by the secretariat and partner organizations (ECE/MP.PP/2011/8); he also brought to the attention of the participants the sections concerning capacity-building, promotion and awareness-raising of the report on the implementation of the work programme for 2009-2011 (ECE/MP.PP/2011/9). Delegations then shared information on their respective capacity-building activities.

33. Participants addressed various needs for capacity-building, such as lack of expertise related to the procedural and technical requirements for the proper implementation of the Convention in the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and in South-Eastern Europe, particularly in relation to environmental impact assessment. The Meeting of the Parties took note of the report and information presented and agreed on the proposed activities related to capacity-building in draft decision IV/6 on the work programme for 2012–2014.

V. Promotion of the Convention and relevant developments and interlinkages

A. Accession to the Convention by States from outside the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region

34. The secretariat reported that it had received a letter from the Head of the Office of the President of Mongolia addressed to the UNECE Executive Secretary, stating that Mongolia was interested in acceding to the Convention and would like to be informed about how to proceed with the accession and about the obligations it would have as a Party. It also requested the secretariat to explore whether it would be possible to arrange a mission of experts to Mongolia to advise the country on that matter.

35. The Meeting of the Parties took note of the report by the secretariat and provisionally adopted decision IV/5 on accession to the Convention by States from outside the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region (ECE/MP.PP/2011/L.5, as amended). It also agreed to consider inviting prospective parties as observers to the next session of the Meeting of the Parties. The Working Group of the Parties, with the assistance of the secretariat and the Bureau, was requested to monitor the application of decision IV/5, taking into account progress towards achievement of the relevant objective of the Strategic Plan 2009–2014 (ECE/MP.PP/2008/2/Add.16), and to report on its effectiveness, so that the Meeting of the Parties could have an informed debate at its fifth session and to take any action considered relevant in order to further encourage the accession of non-UNECE member States.

36. The European ECO Forum expressed regret that the Meeting of the Parties was not willing to commit to amending the Convention at its fifth session to remove the requirement that accession to the Convention by non-UNECE States be subject to approval by the Meeting of the Parties, but indicated its hope that such an amendment would nonetheless be adopted at that session.

B. Awareness-raising activities and communication

37. Belgium delivered a keynote address, introducing the Communication Strategy for the Convention and its Protocol (ECE/MP.PP/2011/L.10). Delegations provided other information concerning awareness-raising. The Meeting of the Parties took note of the strategy and the information provided. It endorsed the Communication Strategy as it was presented, requesting the secretariat to publish the final version of the document and ensure the proper formatting of its first annex, and agreed on the proposed activities related to awareness-raising in draft decision IV/6 on the work programme for 2012–2014.

C. Synergies between the Convention and other relevant multilateral environmental agreements

38. The Meeting of the Parties took note of the information provided by delegations and the secretariat concerning cooperation with other multilateral environmental agreements, including the statement of a representative of the CBD secretariat. It was noted that all Parties to the Aarhus Convention were also Party to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, which provided a unique opportunity for joint implementation and mutual supportiveness of the two instruments at the national, regional and international levels. The Aarhus Convention and CBD secretariats had established a strong collaborative relationship in recent years, undertaking a number of successful joint activities at the international level.

Ways to enhance synergies in the implementation of the two instruments at the national level might include, inter alia, the establishment of closer linkages between their clearing-house mechanisms; the preparation of joint guidance and training materials on various relevant topics of mutual interest; the organization of further workshops and trainings for specific target groups and joint information sessions at other relevant international processes; and the organization of online forums (e.g., e-discussion groups and real-time online conferences) on various topics.. The Meeting agreed on the proposed activities in draft decision IV/6 on the work programme for 2012–2014 with regard to relevant interlinkages with other multilateral environmental agreements.

D. Update on United Nations Environment Programme initiatives on access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters

39. A UNEP representative reported on activities to promote the implementation of the UNEP Guidelines for the Development of National Legislation on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, also sharing information on the Eye on Earth Summit (Abu Dhabi, 12–15 December 2011), focused on improving access to and use of environmental data. The Meeting of the Parties took note of that information and agreed that the Task Force on Access to Information and relevant bodies under the Protocol on PRTRs should engage to the extent possible with the preparatory process for the Eye on Earth Summit, participate in the Summit and continue to engage with relevant post-Summit initiatives.

VI. Programme of work and operation of the Convention

A. Implementation of the work programme for 2009–2011, including in relation to the Strategic Plan 2009–2014

40. The Meeting of the Parties took note of the report on the implementation of the work programme for 2009–2011, including in relation to the Strategic Plan 2009–2014 (ECE/MP.PP/2011/9). It expressed appreciation for the work done by the secretariat and noted the difficulties posed by United Nations administrative requirements and limited and unpredictable funding, which especially impacted the management of human resources.

B. Work programme for 2012–2014

41. The Meeting of the Parties provisionally adopted decision IV/6 on the work programme for 2012–2014. It took note of the information provided by delegations concerning financial contributions contained in the report on implementation of the work programme 2009–2011, as announced by the Chair, regarding contributions and pledges made between 22 March and 17 June 2011 by Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. The Meeting also took note of the following statements concerning additional contributions:

(a) Recognizing the need for stability, predictability and fair burden sharing in financial matters, the EU confirmed that it would maintain its annual pledge of €100,000 until that amount would become 2.5% of the total estimated costs of activities under the work programme not covered by the United Nations regular budget. That percentage represented the usual EU contribution to multilateral environmental agreements, and was

also reflected in the financial arrangements for the Protocol on PRTRs, as adopted by the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol in 2010. That commitment was subject to annual endorsement by the budgetary authorities of the EU and without prejudice to the arrangements for State Parties.

- (b) Austria had contributed €10,000 for 2011.
- (c) The Czech Republic would contribute \$15,000 for 2012.
- (d) Croatia intended to continue its annual contribution of \$6,000 in the coming years.

C. Financial arrangements

42. The Meeting of the Parties provisionally adopted decision IV/7 on financial arrangements (ECE/MP.PP/2011/L.7, as amended).

D. Future strategic plan

43. The Meeting of the Parties provisionally adopted decision IV/8 on strategic planning (ECE/MP.PP/2011/L.8).

VII. Report on credentials

44. The Meeting of the Parties approved the report on credentials presented by one of the Vice-Chairs of the Bureau, who noted that 35 Parties had submitted credentials and thus a quorum had been reached.

VIII. High-level segment

A. Opening ceremony

45. At the start of its high-level segment, the Meeting of the Parties took note of a welcome address delivered by Mr. Mihai Moldovanu, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova, and a message on behalf of the United Nations Secretary-General delivered by the Executive Secretary of UNECE. It also took note of an address delivered by Mr. Salaru, Minister of Environment of the Republic of Moldova.

B. Thematic session: “The role of the Aarhus Convention in promoting sustainable development”

46. The thematic session on the role of the Aarhus Convention in promoting sustainable development was chaired by Mr. Salaru, assisted by the Chair of the Meeting of the Parties. The Meeting of the Parties took note of the presentations by panellists and held a thematic discussion on the role of the Aarhus Convention in promoting sustainable development and Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration. It agreed to send a strong message to Rio+20, offering

the region's experience within the framework of the Aarhus Convention as an inspiration for delivery on Principle 10 beyond the UNECE region.⁴

IX. Discussion and adoption of the Chisinau Declaration

47. The Meeting of the Parties adopted the Chisinau Declaration (ECE/MP.PP/2011/L.9, as amended), which draws attention to the achievements of the Convention and provides guidance and inspiration for the way forward, in particular in relation to environmental governance and the green economy:

X. Election of officers and other members of the Bureau

48. The Meeting of the Parties elected by consensus Mr. Peters (Netherlands) as Chair and elected Ms. Dall'Ora (Italy) and Mr. Narkevitch (Belarus) as Vice-Chairs from among the representatives of the Parties present at the meeting, in accordance with rule 18 of its rules of procedure. It also elected by consensus the following members of the Bureau from among the representatives of the Parties in accordance with rule 22, paragraph 1 (b): Mr. Pokorny (Czech Republic), Mr. Legoupil (France), Mr. Brakeland (EU), and Ms. Petkovic (Serbia).

49. Mr. Wates (European Environmental Bureau) was appointed by the European ECO Forum to attend the meetings of the Bureau as an observer, in accordance with rule 22, paragraphs 2 and 4.

XI. Date and venue of the fifth ordinary session

50. Ukraine expressed a preliminary interest in hosting the next session of the Meeting of the Parties. The Meeting of the Parties took note of that information and mandated the Working Group of the Parties to consider at its next meeting a possible date and venue for the fifth ordinary session, taking into account the proposal by Ukraine.

XII. Adoption of decisions and close of the meeting

51. Based on the discussions under the preceding agenda items, the Meeting of the Parties formally adopted the following decisions with the agreed amendments by consensus:

- (a) Draft decision IV/1 on access to information (ECE/MP.PP/2011/L.1);
- (b) Draft decision IV/2 on promoting effective access to justice (ECE/MP.PP/2011/L.2);
- (c) Draft decision IV/3 on promoting the application of the principles of the Convention in international forums (ECE/MP.PP/2011/L.3, as amended);
- (d) Draft decision IV/4 on reporting requirements (ECE/MP.PP/2011/L.4, as amended);

⁴ The Chair's summary of this thematic session can be found in a third addendum to the present report (ECE/MP.PP/2011/2/Add.3).

- (e) Draft decision IV/5 on accession to the Convention by States from outside the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region (ECE/MP.PP/2011/L.5, as amended);
- (f) Draft decision IV/6 on the work programme for 2012–2014 (ECE/MP.PP/2011/L.6, as amended);
- (g) Draft decision IV/7 on financial arrangements (ECE/MP.PP/2011/L.7, as amended);
- (h) Draft decision IV/8 on strategic planning (ECE/MP.PP/2011/L.8);
- (i) Draft decision IV/9 on general issues of compliance (ECE/MP.PP/2011/L.9, as amended);
- (j) Draft decision IV/9a on compliance by Armenia with its obligations under the Convention (ECE/MP.PP/2011/L.12);
- (k) Draft decision IV/9b on compliance by Belarus with its obligations under the Convention (ECE/MP.PP/2011/L.13);
- (l) Draft decision IV/9c on compliance by Kazakhstan with its obligations under the Convention (ECE/MP.PP/2011/L.14);
- (m) Draft decision IV/9d on compliance by the Republic of Moldova with its obligations under the Convention (ECE/MP.PP/2011/L.15, as amended);
- (n) Draft decision IV/9e on compliance by Slovakia with its obligations under the Convention (ECE/MP.PP/2011/L.16);
- (o) Draft decision IV/9f on compliance by Spain with its obligations under the Convention (ECE/MP.PP/2011/L.17, as amended);
- (p) Draft decision IV/9g on compliance by Turkmenistan with its obligations under the Convention (ECE/MP.PP/2011/L.18);
- (q) Draft decision IV/9h on compliance by Ukraine with its obligations under the Convention (ECE/MP.PP/2011/L.19, as amended);
- (r) Draft decision IV/9i on compliance by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland with its obligations under the Convention (ECE/MP.PP/2011/L.20).

52. The Meeting of the Parties also adopted the other major outcomes presented by the Chair at the meeting, as contained in document ECE/MP.PP/2011/CRP.11, and requested the secretariat, in consultation with the Chair, to finalize the report and incorporate the adopted outcomes and decisions in it.

53. The Chair thanked the participants for their contributions, the interpreters and the secretariat for their support, and the host country and its people for a very warm welcome and an excellent organization of the event.

54. The Minister of Environment of the Republic of Moldova thanked UNECE for its cooperation and the Moldovan Parliament for offering the meeting venue. He also thanked the partner organizations UNDP and OSCE, all ministers and deputy ministers and heads of delegations, and in particular NGOs and international organizations, for their participation. Noting that the Moldovan Ministry of Environment had organized compensation of carbon dioxide emissions caused by the session, he also thanked logistical support partners and the management of the meeting venue, after which he closed the meeting.