

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

Item 7 (c) of the provisional agenda

Programme of work and operation of the Convention: financial arrangements

Decision IV/7 on financial arrangements *

As adopted on 1 July 2011

The Meeting of the Parties,

Recalling article 10, paragraph 3, of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention), which states that the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention may, as necessary, consider establishing financial arrangements on a consensus basis,

Recalling also its decisions I/13, II/6 and III/7, through which an interim voluntary scheme of contributions based on a system of shares, open to contributions from Parties, Signatories and other States having opted to participate in it, has been established and maintained,

Recognizing the need to:

- (a) Ensure that sufficient resources are available for implementing the Convention's work programme;
- (b) Establish a voluntary scheme of financial contributions which is transparent and accessible to all Parties, Signatories and other States and organizations wishing to contribute;
- (c) Establish financial arrangements under the Convention based on the principles of a fair sharing of the burden, stable and predictable sources of funding, accountability and sound financial management,

Noting that the amounts contributed under the interim voluntary scheme have fallen short of the estimated costs of implementing the work programme and that the financial burden has not been evenly distributed, with significant numbers of Parties and Signatories not contributing at all,

Believing that the financial arrangements in place under the Convention will need to be kept under periodic review by the Meeting to ensure that they continue to meet the goals of stability, predictability and a fair sharing of the burden,

* The document was not formally edited.

1. *Maintains* an interim voluntary scheme of contributions aimed at covering the costs of activities under the work programme that are not covered by the United Nations regular budget, based on the following principles:

(a) The Parties should endeavour to collectively ensure that the costs of the activities of the work programme that are not covered by the United Nations regular budget are covered through the financial scheme;

(b) No Party or Signatory is expected to contribute less than 200 United States dollars;

(c) Contributions shall be made in cash and shall not be earmarked for a particular activity;

(d) Additional contributions may be made in cash or in kind and may be earmarked for a particular activity;

(e) Contributions in cash shall be made through the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Trust Fund for Local Technical Cooperation (Aarhus Convention project);

(f) Insofar as possible, and subject to the internal budgetary procedures of the Parties, contributions for a given calendar year should be made by the end of the preceding year, so as to secure staff costs for the smooth functioning of the secretariat, as a priority, and the timely and effective implementation of the priority activities of the respective programme of work;

2. *Requests* Parties to contribute each year towards the costs of activities under the work programme, in accordance with the scheme referred to in paragraph 1;

3. *Invites* Signatories, other interested States and organizations to contribute, in cash or in kind, towards covering the costs of the work programme;

4. *Encourages* Parties that have historically contributed generously to maintain, or return to, their previous levels of contribution;

5. *Also encourages* Parties that have so far not contributed, or have contributed significantly less than the amounts stipulated in paragraph 1 (d), to increase their contributions during the current and future budget cycles to the specified levels, and requests the Bureau to liaise with such Parties where appropriate concerning the achievement of this goal;

6. *Requests* the secretariat, in accordance with the financial rules of the United Nations, to monitor the expenditure of the funds and to prepare annual reports for review by the Working Group of the Parties in order to strive to ensure that the level of contributions matches the level of funding needed for the implementation of the work programme;

7. *Also requests* the Working Group of the Parties to consider, in the light of these annual reports, whether changes would be required in the content or time frame of the work programme, in the event that the level of actual and/or pledged contributions does not match the level of funding needed;

8. *Also requests* the Secretariat and the Working Group of the Parties to prepare an assessment of the current interim scheme of contributions and its relationship to the work of the Convention. This assessment, together with any budgetary constraints faced by Parties, shall be taken into account when preparing the decision on financial arrangements for adoption by the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties.

9. *Further requests* the secretariat to prepare a comprehensive report for each session of the Meeting of the Parties, including information on how much Parties and other

participating States and organizations have contributed to the budget of the Convention in cash and in kind, and on how the contributions were spent;

10. *Agrees* to review the operation of the scheme of financial arrangements at its fifth meeting.
