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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

Meeting of the Parties to the Convention  
on Environmental Impact Assessment  
in a Transboundary Context  
Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment  
(First meeting, Geneva, 4-6 October 1999)

**PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE FIRST MEETING**

to be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
starting at 10 a.m. on Monday, 4 October 1999

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Election of officers.
3. Activities for promoting the implementation and ratification of the Convention (MP.EIA/WG.1/1999/3).
4. Work-plan (MP.EIA/WG.1/1999/4-11).
5. Preparation for the second meeting of the Parties (MP.EIA/WG.1/1999/12).
6. Cooperation with the ECE Committee on Environmental Policy.
7. Date and venue of the second meeting of the Working Group and other meetings of relevance to the Convention.
8. Other business.
9. Closing of the meeting.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

The Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment was established at the first meeting of the Parties by their decision I/2, as annexed below.

The first meeting of the Working Group is convened in accordance with the request by the Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties (MP.EIA/WG.1/1991/3). The agenda and its explanatory notes have been prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the Chairpersons of the Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties and of the Working Group.

### Item 1. Adoption of the agenda

In accordance with the Rules of Procedure adopted at the first meeting of the Parties, the President Mr. A. McGlone, will open the meeting.

The Meeting is expected to adopt its agenda as set out in the present document. The Meeting is also expected to discuss and agree upon its responsibilities as laid down in decision I/2, in particular paragraph 3.

### Item 2. Election of officers

The Meeting of the Parties elected Mr. A. McGlone (United Kingdom) as President of the Working Group (ECE/MP.EIA/2, para.21). In accordance with the Rules of Procedure, the Meeting is expected to elect its own vice-chairperson.

### Item 3. Activities for promoting the implementation and ratification of the Convention

Representatives of non-Parties will report on the steps that they are taking to become a Party to the Convention. Delegations will report on how they are implementing the Convention. The Working Group will consider the report of the first meeting of the Bureau (MP.EIA/WG.1/1999/3).

### Item 4. Work-plan

The Working Group will evaluate and agree upon the ongoing implementation of the work-plan, which is set out in appendix I to decision I/6 taken at the first meeting of the Parties, the timetable for which appears in appendix II (ECE/MP.EIA/2). The Working Group will make suggestions on how to continue and/or improve the following activities:

- (a) Reviews of strategies and policies

The secretariat will inform the Meeting of the preparation of the 1998-2000 biennial review, as included in item 1 of the work-plan, for consideration at the second meeting of the Parties. Parties and non-Parties are expected to submit information biennially on recent developments in their national strategies and policies for applying environmental impact assessment (EIA) in a transboundary context. The secretariat will prepare a draft biennial review based on the information provided by Parties and non-Parties

for discussion and possible adoption for publication at the second meeting of the Parties.

(b) Aspects of bilateral and multilateral cooperation

The delegation of the Netherlands, lead country for this activity, will present a progress report (MP.EIA/WG.1/1999/4). A draft compendium of existing bi- and/or multilateral agreements or arrangements will be prepared. A workshop will be held to help develop a report containing further guidance for bi- and/or multilateral agreements or arrangements to apply the obligations under the Convention.

(c) Practical application of the Convention

The delegations of Finland and Sweden, lead countries for this activity, will inform the Working Group about the outcome of the workshop on this issue which was held in Helsinki, 31 May-1 June 1999. Through a questionnaire information on the application of EIA in a transboundary context has been collected and analysed. The Working Group may wish, in particular, to discuss the conclusions and recommendations for finalization and subsequent adoption at the second meeting of the Parties (MP.EIA/WG.1/1999/5).

(d) Public participation in a transboundary context

The delegation of the Russian Federation, lead country for this activity, will present a progress report (MP.EIA/WG.1/1999/6). On the basis of existing legislation, guidelines and research documents and international and national experiences with public participation, draft guidance on this issue will be prepared with the participation of non-governmental organizations of different countries.

(e) Non-compliance guidelines

The delegation of the United Kingdom, lead country for this activity, will present a discussion paper outlining the possible framework and options for a non-compliance system under the Convention, based on relevant experience under other international agreements (MP.EIA/WG.1/1999/7).

(f) Recent EIA developments and links with other ECE conventions

The delegation of Italy, lead country for this activity, will present a progress report (MP.EIA/WG.1/1999/8), analysing recent developments in environmental impact assessment as well as links with other conventions in order to develop a report containing proposals for future work for finalization at the second meeting of the Parties.

(g) Database on environmental impact assessment

The delegation of Poland, lead country for this activity, will present a progress report (MP.EIA/WG.1/1999/9). A final report analysing the use of the database, will then be prepared for the second meeting of the Parties.

(h) Evaluation of the database

The delegation of Hungary, lead country for this activity, will inform the Working Group about the outcome of the first meeting of the Evaluation Group which took place from 17 to 18 May 1999 in Budapest (MP.EIA/WG.1/1999/10). The effectiveness of the database will be reviewed so that a recommendation on its need and its continuation can be presented at the second meeting of the Parties.

(i) Partnerships

The secretariat will inform the Meeting of possible support to countries in transition for the application of the Convention through partnerships between Parties and non-Parties.

(j) Subregional pilot workshop

The delegation of Bulgaria will inform the Working Group of the outcome of the workshop which was convened in Varna (Bulgaria) from 26 to 27 April 1999 (MP.EIA/WG.1/1999/11). The subregional workshop discussed the practical implementation of the Convention and the specific needs of countries in transition in the Balkan region and the Black Sea region.

Item 5. Preparations for the second meeting of the Parties

The delegation of Bulgaria will provide information, including financial information, on the organization of the second meeting of the Parties, which is expected to take place in Sofia (Bulgaria) from 9 to 11 October 2000. Since the first meeting of the Parties (Oslo, May 1998) few delegations had prepared credentials in accordance with the Rules of Procedure, the Bureau at its first meeting confirmed that the Rules of Procedure should be applied as adopted by the Parties (MP.EIA/WG.1/1999/3, para. 4 and 5). Mr. McGlone will inform the Meeting of the procedure for preparing and submitting credentials, so that this issue can be resolved before the second meeting of the Parties. Pursuant to paragraph 13 of the Oslo Ministerial Declaration (ECE/MP.EIA/2, annex IX), in which Parties were invited to consider possibilities for allowing non-ECE member countries to become a Party to the Convention, the Meeting will discuss a proposal on this issue prepared by Mr. McGlone (MP.EIA/WG.1/1999/12) in view of a possible amendment at the second meeting of the Parties.

Item 6. Cooperation with the ECE Committee on Environmental Policy

The Working Group will be informed of the preparations by the ECE Committee on Environmental Policy of a paper on current cooperation between ECE conventions and potential synergies aimed at improving their overall effectiveness. This paper could form the basis for a possible round-table discussion on the environmental conventions. The Working Group will also be informed about the outcome of the 1998 Aarhus Ministerial Conference of relevance to the Convention.

Item 7. Date and venue of the second meeting of the Working Group and other meetings of relevance to the Convention

The Working Group will be informed of the date and venue of its second meeting.

The delegation of the United Kingdom will inform the Working Group of the outcome of the third Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health (June 1999, London), in particular on its relevance to activities under the Convention.

Delegations are invited to inform the Working Group about meetings of relevance to the Convention.

Item 8. Other business

Delegations wishing to propose points under this item are requested to inform the secretariat as soon as possible.

Item 9. Closing of the meeting

The President will close the meeting by presenting the main decisions taken for adoption by the Working Group.

**ANNEX**

**DECISION I/2**

**MECHANISMS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION**

The Meeting,

Having considered the most appropriate ways of effectively implementing the Convention and successfully taking forward its work-plan,

1. Establishes a subsidiary body, called the Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment, to assist in the implementation of the Convention and the management of the work-plan;
2. Requests this subsidiary body to take the necessary steps to implement the work-plan agreed at the first meeting of the Parties, and to report to them at their second and subsequent meetings on progress in implementing the work-plan, and to ensure the efficient management of any work-plan which may from time to time be agreed by them;
3. Invites the subsidiary body, in the light of its experience with implementing the work-plan, to make recommendations for consideration at the second and subsequent meetings of the Parties on further work on, inter alia, legal, administrative and technical aspects, necessary to ensure the effective implementation of the Convention and international cooperation in environmental impact assessment in a transboundary context, bearing in mind the special needs of countries in transition;
4. Invites ECE member countries non-Parties to the Convention, governmental, non-governmental and other relevant international organizations and institutions to contribute fully as observers to the work undertaken by the subsidiary body to implement the Convention. (ECE/MP.EIA/2, annex II).