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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
(Sixth meeting, Geneva, 5–7 April 2006)
(Item 14 of the provisional agenda)

**PROCEDURE FOR PREPARING A LONG-TERM
STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE CONVENTION**

Prepared by the Bureau with the assistance of the Secretariat

I. Background

1. Decision II/8, adopted by the Parties at their second meeting, mandates development of a strategic plan for the Convention covering a five-year period starting the year following the third meeting of the Parties. The strategic plan should contain the following elements:
 - (a) Vision or mission
 - (b) Focal areas and their specific goals and objectives
 - (c) Indicative types of activity
 - (d) Implementing partners
 - (e) Framework for implementation.
2. The Working Group of the Parties was requested to establish a procedure for the preparation of the strategic plan and to monitor its preparation in order for the plan to be ready for consideration and adoption at the third ordinary meeting of the Parties.

II. Objectives and Targets

3. It is proposed that an expert group be established to develop elements for a long-term strategic plan for the Convention in accordance with the modalities set out in decision II/8. The expert group will consist of 8 to 12 experts, each of whom will have a general understanding of the principles and philosophy of the Convention, and who will collectively have knowledge and expertise in specific areas important for the processes and mechanisms established under the Convention. The members of the expert group should be drawn from different backgrounds (e.g. government, NGOs, academia, etc.) but should serve in a personal capacity and should not formally represent any government or organization. The Chair of the expert group as well as the experts themselves will be appointed by the Bureau and will serve in their personal capacity. The group is expected to work largely by e-mail.

4. The expert group will focus on the strategic planning process, which will be integrated with the preparation of work programmes covering three-year intersessional periods. The work programmes will provide a valuable operational context for the expert group as it seeks to articulate strategic directions and commitments. In the course of its work, the expert group will engage in a consultative process with a wide range of stakeholders, including by posting documents on the Convention's website and enabling the public to comment on the process in order to ensure that the process of preparing the elements for the plan is as open and inclusive as possible. The expert group will report regularly to the Bureau.

5. The following tasks are envisaged for the expert group during this process:

Task 1 - Develop a Vision or Mission

By prioritizing needs and identifying challenges, the expert group will establish a set of goals and measurable objectives for the strategic plan that will complement the more specific goals and objectives set out in the Convention's work programme. Based on these goals and objectives, the expert group will then define a clear and concise vision that will help to shape the strategic plan and will serve as an important benchmark for the remainder of the planning process.

Task 2 - Prepare a List of Implementing Partners

At the onset of the planning process, the expert group will identify all stakeholders within the UNECE region having an interest in the strategic plan and will compile an initial list comprising, but not limited to, the following potential implementing partners: public authorities; intergovernmental organizations; non-governmental organizations; and academia and research communities.

Task 3 - Develop Elements for Strategic Plan

The purpose of this task is to decide on the focal areas, their specific goals and objectives and, to the extent possible, specific activities that will be included in the strategic plan. It should also address how the strategic plan will be implemented. The plan will include recommendations on the

implementation mechanism as well as the required institutional arrangements and the respective roles and responsibilities of each implementing partner involved.

Task 4 - Establish Performance Criteria

The expert group will establish performance criteria for each goal and objective of the strategic plan. The expert group may also identify, where applicable, both quantitative and qualitative criteria to objectively evaluate the effectiveness of implementation of the plan. It may also identify potential institutional barriers to the implementation of the strategic plan, incorporate these and associated issues into discussions with the implementing partners and make recommendations on how to address these concerns.

Task 5 - Develop Framework for Implementation

Upon completion, the strategic plan will function as a living document that requires refinement and updating over time. The expert group will develop an action plan for ongoing monitoring through implementation and subsequent performance evaluation. The assessment of implementation of the strategic plan will be based on the performance criteria developed under Task 4.

Task 6 - Final Report

Under this task, the expert group will bring the strategic planning to a close with a final report that will consist of elements for a draft strategic plan and a summary of findings and recommendations. The final report will be submitted to the Bureau.

6. On the basis of the expert group's work, the Bureau will draw up the draft strategic plan and submit it for review to the Working Group of the Parties with a view to having it ready for consideration and adoption by the Meeting of the Parties at its third meeting.

III. Time Schedule

7. The overall timeframe for the preparation of the strategic plan is April 2006 – June 2007. The time schedule will include the following milestones:

April 2006	Procedure approved by the Working Group of the Parties
June 2006	Expert group established/Chair appointed
April 2007	Expert group finalizes report, including elements for strategic plan, and submits it to Bureau
June 2007	Draft plan drawn up by Bureau
Autumn 2007	Draft plan submitted for consideration by the Working Group
Spring/summer 2008	Strategic plan submitted for consideration and adoption to the Meeting of the Parties

The expert group will develop a more specific time schedule specifying key dates for specific activities to be completed.