

Mr. Chair, excellences, dear colleagues,

Norway would like to thank the Secretariat for its efforts, and the Bureau, the Working Group and the Implementation Committee for its important work under the Convention and Protocol.

As you may be aware, Norway has strongly supported the Convention since it was first proposed in Warsaw back in 1989, and entered into force at the first Meeting of the Parties, which Norway had the honor of hosting in Oslo in 1997. Norway also had the privilege of chairing the negotiations that resulted in the SEA Protocol. We have also been one of the main financial contributors to the work under the Convention. Norway is happy that we also can contribute in the Bureau during this intersessional period.

These instruments are now at a stage where they every day must prove their value in real terms, also in the case of Norway. The importance of these instruments in avoiding or solving transboundary environmental issues between neighboring states must not be underestimated.

It is important that the Meeting of the Parties keep in mind that the Espoo Convention and its protocol are environmental instruments. By integrating environmental concerns into development activities, they help facilitate environmentally sound and sustainable development.

Norway takes this opportunity to especially thank the Implementation Committee for their continued efforts to contribute to ensuring that the obligations of the Convention are adhered to by the Parties. The Committee does this by thoroughly considering general issues, submissions and communications through transparent and fair procedures and reporting their conclusions and recommendations to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration. We encourage the Parties to engage and respect the outcomes from the implementation committee in line with long-standing and consistent practice.

The Government of Norway will continue to give backing, both financially and politically, to the work under the Convention and Protocol. We look forward to continue successful and fruitful discussions and exchanges.

Thank you very much.