

Aarhus Convention, MOP-5

Agenda Item 6 Promotion of the Convention and relevant developments and interlinkages

(e) Synergies between the Convention and other relevant multilateral environmental agreements and organizations

Intervention by Christine von Weizsäcker, Ecoropa, Women in Europe for a Common Future and European ECO-Forum

Tuesday, 1st July 2014

Thank you, Chair, for giving me the floor. I am speaking on behalf of Ecoropa, Women in Europe for a Common Future and the European ECO-Forum. Let me address the “Promotion of the Convention and relevant developments and interlinkages, focusing on emerging synergies.”

As was pointed out yesterday, the synergies between the Aarhus Convention and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety are obvious and joint workshops address and strengthen them, but additional ratifications of the GMO Amendment are needed to firmly establish them.

Let me point to an additional emerging synergy: A milestone resolution was adopted last Thursday, 26 June 2014, by the United Nations Human Rights Council. It started the process for the “Elaboration of an international legally binding instrument on Transnational Corporations and other Business Enterprises with Respect to Human Rights”. Human rights and environmental rights share many cross-cutting issues. Corporations already benefit from international legally binding protection of their interests whilst they commit themselves to voluntary guidelines, only. Victims of harmful corporate activities often still are lacking access to legal protection. Some of the harm inflicted is clearly environmental.

As this new international legally binding instrument under the UN Human Rights Council is being negotiated, attention of the Aarhus Convention should be given to emerging synergies regarding the establishment and/or strengthening of the public’s rights, especially on access to justice for a healthy environment.