

## **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

### **Working Group of the Parties**

#### **Seventeenth meeting**

Geneva, 26–28 February 2014

Item 11 of the provisional agenda

#### **Adoption of outcomes**

### **LIST OF KEY DECISIONS AND OUTCOMES**

as adopted by the Working Group at its seventeenth meeting <sup>1</sup>

#### **Item 1. Adoption of the agenda**

The Working Group of the Parties adopted its agenda as set out in the document  
ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2013/1.

#### **Item 2. Status of ratification of the Convention and the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers**

The Working Group:

- i. took note of the information provided by the secretariat on the status of ratification of the Convention, its amendment and the Protocol on PRTRs.
- ii. welcomed ratification of the Protocol on PRTRs by the Republic of Moldova.
- iii. welcomed the completion of national procedure regarding the ratification of the Convention by Switzerland and its intention to become a Party before the next session of the Meeting of the Parties;
- iv. took note of information on recent or anticipated relevant developments presented by other delegations.

#### **Item 3. Substantive issues**

##### **(a) Access to information**

The Working Group:

- i. took note of the report on the second meeting of the Task Force on access to information (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2014/4) presented by the representative of the Republic of Moldova, on behalf of the Chair of the Task Force, and of recent developments related to access to information provided by other delegations.

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<sup>1</sup> This document was not formally edited. The decisions and outcomes contained in the paper will be incorporated in the report of the meeting. Statements delivered at the meeting, as made available to the secretariat by presenters, will be uploaded on the webpage of the meeting.

- ii. revised and approved, as amended at the meeting, the Draft decision on access to information (AC/WGP-17/CRP.1) and requested the secretariat to submit it to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration at its fifth session.

**(b) Public participation in decision-making**

The Working Group:

- i. took note of the information provided by delegations on recent developments related to public participation in decision-making.
- ii. revised and approved, as amended at the meeting, the Draft decision on public participation in decision-making (AC/WGP-17/CRP.2) and requested the secretariat to submit it to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration at its fifth session.

**(c) Access to justice**

The Working Group:

- i. took note of the report on the latest meeting of the Task Force on Access to Justice presented by the Chair of the Task Force; and of the information provided by delegations on recent developments related to access to justice.
- ii. revised and approved, as amended at the meeting, the Draft decision on promoting effective access to justice (AC/WGP-17/CRP.3) and requested the secretariat to submit it to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration at its fifth session.

**(d) Genetically modified organisms**

The Working Group:

- i. took note on the report (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2014/6) by the secretariat on the round table on access to information, public participation and access to justice regarding living/genetically modified organisms (Geneva, 16-17 October 2013);
- ii. called upon the following Parties, whose ratification of the GMO amendment would count towards its entry into force: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, France, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Malta, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkmenistan and Ukraine, to take serious steps towards ratification and requested the above Parties to report at the fifth session Meeting of the Parties on the progress achieved.
- iii. Approved the respective section in the Draft decision on the work programme for 2015-2017 (AC/WGP-17/CRP.6).

**Item 4. Procedures and mechanisms**

**(a) Compliance mechanism**

The Working Group:

- i. took note of the information provided by the secretariat on the outcomes of the Compliance Committee on its forty-first, forty-second and forty-third meetings (ECE/MP.PP/C.1/2013/6; ECE/MP.PP/C.1/2013/8; and ECE/MP.PP/C.1/2013/11);
- ii. approved the respective section in the Draft decision on the work programme for 2015-2017 (AC/WGP-17/CRP.6).

**(b) Capacity-building and awareness-raising**

The Working Group:

- i. took note of the report of the eighth capacity-building coordination meeting (AC/WGP-17/Inf.3) and of information related to the subject area presented by delegations.
- ii. approved the respective section in the Draft decision on the work programme for 2015-2017 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2014/L.6).

**Item 5. Accession by non-ECE States and promotion of the Convention's principles in other regions**

The Working Group:

- i. welcomed the progress in developing a regional instrument on the application of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, as reported by Chile and ECLAC and reiterated its support to this important initiative.
- ii. welcomed the recommendations to Moroccan authorities to consider possible accession to the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTRs, which were included in the report on the Environmental Performance Review of Morocco.

**Item 6. Implementation of the work programme for 2012–2014, including financial matters**

The Working Group:

- i. took note of the (1) the Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2012–2014 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2014/3); (2) the Overview of contributions and expenditures in relation to the implementation of the Convention's work programme for 2012–2014 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2014/7); and (3) the Note on the ratio of extrabudgetary contributions vis-à-vis regular budget contributions for environmental activities in the UNECE (AC/WGP-17/Inf.2), and information provided by the secretariat on human resource situation of the secretariat.
- ii. took note of the pledges provided by delegations of their planned financial contributions and called upon Parties to proceed with making financial contributions as soon as possible.
- iii. welcomed the synergies with partner organizations that helped the effective implementation of the work programme.
- iv. recognized the urgent need for allocating resources from the United Nations regular budget to support the work of the Aarhus Convention.

**Item 7. Promotion of the principles of the Convention in international forums**

The Working Group:

- i. revised and approved, as amended at the meeting, the Draft decision on promoting the application of the principles of the Convention in international forums (AC/WGP-17/CRP.4) and requested the secretariat to submit it to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration at its fifth session.

- ii. welcomed the written updates provided by EBRD and EIB regarding their recent and upcoming activities to review their environmental and social policies.
- iii. took note of the statement by the European ECO Forum expressing its strong concern that EBRD's draft revised environmental and public information policies weakened EBRD's current requirements on information disclosure and public engagement
- iv. welcomed the written updates provided by UNDESA and UNFCCC and encouraged Parties to continue promoting the Convention's principles in these forums.
- v. welcomed the progress reported by UNEP regarding preparation of its new Stakeholder Engagement policy and the prospect of making public participation broader and more inclusive.
- vi. welcomed the positive experiences and took note of the challenges in promoting the Convention's principles in UNECE MEAs rules, procedures and practices.
- vii. recognised opportunities for further exchange of experiences and good practices between the UNECE MEAs in order to enhance coherence regarding the respect of the Convention's principles under other MEAs.

The Working Group took note of the following conclusion of the Chair of the thematic session. The Chair:

- i. encouraged Parties to continue promoting the Convention's principles in the negotiations on the above UNEP policy and invited Parties to report on the results achieved to the Meeting of the Parties (fifth session, Maastricht 2014).
- ii. encouraged Parties to promote the Convention's principles in the current policy reviews at the EBRD, EIB and the World Bank.
- iii. encouraged Parties to continue fulfilling their obligations under article 3, paragraph 7.

**Item 8. Other substantive preparations for the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties**

**(a) Agenda of the fifth session**

The Working Group:

- i. approved the Draft provisional agenda for the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2014/L.9) and requested the secretariat to finalise it in consultation with the Chair and submit it to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration at its fifth session.
- ii. took note of information provided by the host country on the outcomes of the discussion held within the Bureaux of the Convention and the Protocol and the vision of the host country with regard to the key aspects of the thematic session of the joint high-level segment; and of the information provided by delegations.
- iii. agreed to invite Parties and stakeholders to submit possible comments with regard to the themes of the session to the secretariat before 10 March 2014.

iv. mandated the Bureau to finalise the programme for the high-level segment in cooperation with the Bureau of the Protocol on PRTRs.

**(b) Strategic plan for 2015–2020**

The Working Group:

- i. took note of the overview of the implementation of Strategic Plan 2009-2014 (AC/WGP-17/Inf.1).
- ii. revised and approved, as amended at the meeting, the Draft decision on the Strategic Plan for 2015–2020 (AC/WGP-17/CRP.5) and requested the secretariat to submit it to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration at its fifth session.

**(c) Programme of work for 2015–2017**

The Working Group revised and approved, as amended at the meeting, the Draft decision on the work programme for 2015-2017 (AC/WGP-17/CRP.6) and requested the secretariat to submit it to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration at its fifth session.

**(d) Financial arrangements under the Convention**

The Working Group revised and approved, as amended at the meeting, the Draft decision on financial arrangements under the Convention (AC/WGP-17/CRP.7) and requested the secretariat to submit it to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration at its fifth session.

**(e) Reporting requirements**

The Working Group:

- i. took note of the information provided by the secretariat on the status of submission of national implementation reports for the 2014 reporting cycle.
- ii. called upon those Parties that failed to submit their reports to date, Cyprus, Czech Republic, European Union, Iceland, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkmenistan to proceed with their submissions urgently, so as to ensure that national implementation reports would be taken into consideration during the preparation of the synthesis report.
- iii. welcomed the good practice of Germany for submitting their 2014 national implementation report in all three ECE languages; of Kazakhstan and Tajikistan for submitting their reports in two ECE languages; as well as of Bosnia and Herzegovina for producing the report also as a publication in English and the country national languages.
- iv. approved the Draft decision on reporting requirements (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2014/L.10) and requested the secretariat to finalise it in consultation with the Bureau and submit it to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration at its fifth session.

**(f) Declaration**

The Working Group revised and approved, as amended at the meeting, the Draft of the joint declaration (AC/WGP-17/CRP.8) and mandated the Convention Bureau to finalize it in cooperation with the Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, and submit it for consideration by Parties to both instruments at the joint high-level segment.

**Item 9. Practical preparations for the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties**

The Working Group took note of the information provided by the host country regarding preparations for the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties.<sup>2</sup>

**Item 10. Other business**

No items were discussed.

**Item 11. Adoption of outcomes**

The Working Group adopted the major outcomes and decisions presented by the Chair at the meeting (as contained in this document) and requested the secretariat, in consultation with the Chair, to finalize the report and incorporate these adopted outcomes and decisions.

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<sup>2</sup> See [www.aarhusmaastricht.org](http://www.aarhusmaastricht.org)