

## Aarhus Convention Task Force on Access to Justice

Geneva, 15-16 February 2021

Request to speak by UNECE:

“We were wondering if you are interested to join the meeting and present good work UNDP is doing on monitoring access to justice. It could be a great opportunity to encourage countries to follow a survey approach and draw lessons learned from the received outcomes”.

### STATEMENT

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen.

It is an honour to speak on one of the recent developments related to the Sustainable Development Goals. As you might be aware, last year, in March a new indicator to monitor the SDGs was added to the Statistical Framework by the United Nations Statistical Commission to provide a holistic understanding of access to justice, namely access to civil justice. The new indicator **SDG 16.3.3** calls for countries to measure the *Proportion of the population who have experienced a dispute in the past two years and who accessed a formal or informal dispute resolution mechanism, by type of mechanism*. This is a significant step forward in recognizing the importance of data collection on a range of civil matters, including related to access to justice for environmental issues. The indicator focuses on people’s perspectives on their ability access and receive just resolution over disputes from a range of mechanisms, including for disputes related to “Environmental damage (land or water pollution, waste dumping, etc.)”.

The inclusion of the indicator in the framework is only the first step and the co-custodians, UNDP, OECD and UNODC, have been working to develop a survey module to be included as part of a broader survey instrument on SDG 16. Following extensive consultations on the methodology, the SDG 16 survey has now completed the first phase of cognitive testing in three countries and piloting has been initiated in 8 countries where the access to civil justice module will be tested alongside the other modules on Governance, Corruption, Violence, Discrimination and Trafficking in Persons.

The fact that the module is inside this broader survey will also give us the unique opportunity not only to collect the indicator but also to assess possible interlinkages with the other modules. The survey instrument will be finalized and will be ready for implementing in the middle of this year enabling, for the first time, to begin to have globally comparable data to better understand the situation of people’s ability access justice and resolve disputes for civil matters. We remain

available for any enquires related to the indicator and its measurement, and we encourage member states to support the operationalization of the SDG 16 Survey instrument once it is finalized.