

25th Meeting of the Working Group to the Aarhus Convention

(7-8 June 2021)

Agenda item 9 (h): Strategic Plan for 2022-2030

Norway

Thank you Chair,

Norway would like to thank the Bureau and the Secretariat for the draft decision on the future strategic plan.

We support the draft as originally proposed.

It is important to highlight the contributions of the Convention to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. Given the increased challenges that environmental human rights defenders face and the priority Norway gives to their protection, it is also important to highlight the need for effective measures for their protection in the new strategic plan. The increased focus on implementation of Compliance Committee's findings and recommendations and the subsequent decisions taken by the Meeting of the Parties is also important. The advancement and increased use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and digital transformation bring both new opportunities and challenges for the promotion of environmental democracy. This, including the implementation of relevant e-Government, open Government and open Government data initiatives, are therefore also important issues for the next period.

We have the following comments to the proposals made by ECO Forum:

Objective I.7 on page 12: We support the proposal as amended by the proposal presented by the EU and its Member States in the meeting.

Objective I.12 (c) on page 17: ECO Forum has proposed to add a reference to vulnerable and marginalised groups in the second last line. Norway supports this proposal.

Objective III.7 on page 28: ECO Forum has proposed to add other identified focus areas and priority needs in the third line. Norway does not consider the addition to be necessary as it follows from the use of "*inter alia*" in the text that the mentioning of specific issues are only examples. It is also not clear to us whether it refers to focus areas and priority needs identified in the decision on access to justice or otherwise. If all identified focus areas and priority needs are mentioned, the question is whether it would make sense to keep this as examples or to delete "*inter alia*". If this is clarified, Norway could support the proposal.

Thank you Chair