

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

Twenty-fifth meeting

Geneva, 3 May and 7 and 8 June 2021

Item 16 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the outcomes

LIST OF DECISIONS AND MAJOR OUTCOMES¹

of the sessions of the twenty-fifth meeting of the Working Group of the Parties held on 3 May 2021, as
adopted by the Working Group

Slot I - 3 May 2021

1. Opening of the first slot and adoption of the agenda

The Working Group of the Parties:

- (i) Took note of the information provided by the Chair and of the statement by the representative of the European Union and its Member States;
- (ii) Adopted the provisional agenda of the meeting (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2021/1).

2. Thematic session on promotion of the principles of the Convention in international forums

A. Geoengineering

The Working Group:

- (i) Expresses its appreciation to the representatives of École polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne, ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity, and Heinrich Böll Foundation / European ECO Forum for their presentations and took note of the information provided;
- (ii) Noted challenges highlighted by speakers and recognised that serious efforts should be done to further transparency and effective public participation in international decision-making related to geoengineering.

B. Biosafety

The Working Group:

¹ This document was not formally edited.

- (i) Expressed its appreciation to the representatives of Finland, the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and Third World Network / European ECO Forum for their presentations and took note of the information provided;
- (ii) Welcomed positive examples and good practices, and noted challenges highlighted by speakers, recognizing in this regard that more efforts should be done to further transparency and effective public participation in international decision-making related to biosafety.

C. Concluding remarks by the Chair of the thematic session

The Working Group:

- (i) Welcomed achievements and good practices as presented by Parties and stakeholders;
- (ii) Took note of the issues, challenges and opportunities regarding the promotion of the principles of the Aarhus Convention in international forums dealing with biosafety and geoengineering matters as raised by Parties and stakeholders during the discussion;
- (iii) Encouraged Parties to continue promoting the Convention's principles in international forums and processes related to geoengineering and biosafety;
- (iv) Welcomed the progress made in promoting the Convention's principles in international forums but recognizes that more efforts should be done to further transparency and effective public participation in international environment-related decision-making;
- (v) Encouraged Parties to continue fulfilling their obligations under article 3, paragraph 7, of the Convention and to consider the results achieved at the next meeting of the Working Group;
- (vi) Reiterated that promotion of transparency and effective public participation in international decision-making on environmental matters is key for achievement of Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goals 16 and 17.

3. Reports by the Chairs of the task forces and other updates on recent developments in the areas of access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice

(a) Access to information

The Working Group:

- (i) Took note of the information provided by the Chair of the Task Force on Access to Information and of the Report of the seventh meeting of the Task Force on Access to Information (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2021/3);
- (ii) Expressed its appreciation for the work done;
- (iii) Took note of the statement by the representative of the European Union and its Member States.

(b) Public participation

The Working Group:

- (i) Took note of the information provided by the Chair of the Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-making and of the Report of the ninth meeting of the Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-making (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2021/4);

- (ii) Expressed its appreciation for the work done;
- (iii) Took note of the statement by the representative of the European Union and its Member States.

(c) Access to justice

The Working Group:

- (i) Took note of the information provided by the Chair of the Task Force on Access to Justice and of the Report of the thirteenth meeting of the Task Force on Access to Justice (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2021/5);
- (ii) Expressed its appreciation for the work done;
- (iii) Welcomed offer of Belgium to lead this work area in the next intersessional period;
- (iv) Took note of the statement by the representative of the European Union and its Member States.

4. Capacity-building and awareness-raising

The Working Group:

- (i) Took note of the information provided by the secretariat;
- (ii) Reiterated its appreciation to partner organizations for supporting the implementation of the Convention;
- (iii) Reiterated its call to national focal points to continue reaching out to authorities responsible for development assistance and technical cooperation to explore the possibility of integrating the Aarhus Convention in these programmes as critical enabler for sustainable development;
- (iv) Called on national focal points to liaise with officials supporting the work related to the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework to make sure that: the needs related to the Convention's implementation are addressed in the Framework; and the nexus approach to environment, human rights and good governance receives special attention in the Framework;
- (v) Took note of the statement by the representative of the European Union and its Member States.

5. Promotion of the Convention and relevant developments and interlinkages

The Working Group

- (i) Took note of the information provided by the secretariat and reiterated its appreciation to partner organizations for promoting synergy in assisting countries to further access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters;
- (ii) Welcomed the entry into force of the Escazu Agreement on 22 April 2021;
- (iii) Welcomed the interest of the Mediterranean countries in joining the Aarhus Convention;
- (iv) Took note of efforts undertaken by Parties, other States, international organizations and stakeholders to promote a possible global recognition of the right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment;
- (v) Encouraged Parties to promote the Convention and its Protocol at the upcoming session of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development under

Economic and Social Council (6-15 July 2021) that would discuss Sustainable Development Goals 1 (no poverty), 2 (zero hunger), 3 (good health and well-being), 8 (decent work and economic growth), 10 (reduced inequalities), 12 (responsible consumption and production), 13 (climate action), 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions), and 17 (partnerships) in depth;

- (vi) Took note of the statement by the representative of the European Union and its Member States.

6. Closure of the first slot

The Working Group took note of draft outcomes presented by the Chair as contained in this document. The draft outcomes will be considered at the meeting's sessions on 7-8 June 2021.