

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 7-8 June 2021, as
adopted by the Working Group

Slot II – 7 and 8 June 2021

7. Opening of the second slot and adoption of procedures to facilitate remote participation and decision-making in the meeting

The Working Group of the Parties:

- (i) Took note of the information provided by the Chair and participants;
- (ii) Revised and adopted, as amended at the meeting, the draft operating procedures to facilitate remote participation and decision-making (AC/WGP-25/CRP.1).

8. Status of ratification of the Convention

The Working Group of the Parties:

- (i) Took note of the information on the status of ratification of the Convention, its amendment and the Protocol on PRTRs, provided by the secretariat.

9. Preparations for the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties

(a) Access to information

The Working Group:

- (i) Took note of the information provided by the Chair and participants;
- (ii) Welcomed offer of the Republic of Moldova to lead this work area in the next intersessional period;

¹ This document was not formally edited.

- (iii) Revised and approved, as amended at the meeting, the Draft updated recommendations on the electronic information tools (AC/WGP-25/CRP.2), and requested the secretariat to submit the document to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration at its seventh session;
- (iv) Revised and approved, as amended at the meeting, the Draft decision on promoting effective access to information (AC/WGP-25/CRP.3), and requested the secretariat to submit the document to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration at its seventh session.

(b) Public participation

The Working Group:

- (i) Took note of the information provided by the Chair and participants;
- (ii) Revised and approved, as amended at the meeting, the Draft decision on promoting effective public participation in decision-making (AC/WGP-25/CRP.4), and requested the secretariat to submit the document to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration at its seventh session.

(c) Access to justice

The Working Group:

- (i) Took note of the information provided by the Chair and participants;
- (ii) Revised and approved, as amended at the meeting, the Draft decision on promoting effective access to justice (AC/WGP-25/CRP.5), and requested the secretariat to submit the document to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration at its seventh session.

(d) Application of the principles of the Convention in international forums

The Working Group:

- (i) Took note of the information provided by the Chair and participants;
- (ii) Welcomed offer of France to lead this work area in the next intersessional period;
- (iii) Revised and approved, as amended at the meeting, Draft decision on promoting the application of the principles of the Convention in international forums (AC/WGP-25/CRP.6), and requested the secretariat to submit the document to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration at its seventh session.

(e) Rapid response mechanism to deal with cases related to article 3 (8) of the Convention

The Working Group:

- (i) Took note of the information provided by the Chair and participants;
- (ii) Revised and approved, as amended at the meeting, Draft note on a rapid response mechanism to deal with cases related to article 3 (8) of the Convention

(AC/WGP-25/CRP.7), and requested the secretariat to submit the document to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration at its seventh session.

(f) Accession by Guinea-Bissau

The Working Group:

- (i) Took note of the information provided by the Chair and participants;
- (ii) Revised and approved, as amended at the meeting, Draft decision on accession by Guinea-Bissau (AC/WGP-25/CRP.8), and requested the secretariat to submit the document to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration at its seventh session.

(g) Work programme for 2022–2025

The Working Group:

- (i) Took note of the information provided by the Chair and participants;
- (ii) Approved Draft decision on the work programme for 2022–2025 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2021/8) and requested the secretariat to submit the document to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration at its seventh session.

(h) Strategic Plan for 2022–2030

The Working Group:

- (i) Took note of the information provided by the Chair and participants;
- (ii) Revised and approved, as amended at the meeting, Draft decision on the Strategic Plan for 2022–2030 (AC/WGP-25/CRP.9), and requested the secretariat to submit the document to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration at its seventh session.

(i) Declaration

The Working Group:

- (i) Took note of the information provided by the Chair and participants;
- (ii) Revised and approved, as amended at the meeting, Draft declaration (AC/WGP-25/CRP.10), and requested 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.

(j) Financial arrangements

The Working Group:

- (i) Took note of the information provided by the Chair and participants;
- (ii) Approved Draft decision on financial arrangements (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2021/9), and requested the secretariat to submit the document to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration at its seventh session.

(k) Agenda of the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties

The Working Group:

- (i) Took note of the information provided by the Chair and participants;
- (ii) Approved Draft agenda of the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2021/10), and requested the Bureau to finalise the document and submit it to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration at its seventh session.

(l) Venue of the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties

The Working Group took note of the information provided by the Chair.

10. Compliance mechanism

The Working Group:

- (i) Took note of the information provided by the Chair of the Compliance Committee and expressed its appreciation to the Chair and to other outgoing members of the Committee for their dedication and to the Committee for its valuable work;
- (ii) Took note of the information provided by the Chair of the Working Group, the secretariat and by participants.

11. Reporting mechanism

The Working Group:

- (i) Took note of the information provided by the secretariat on the status of submission of national implementation reports for the 2021 reporting cycle. The Working Group called upon those Parties that failed to submit their reports, Azerbaijan, European Union, Iceland, Italy, Malta, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Sweden, Tajikistan, and Ukraine, to date 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;
- (ii) Welcomed the good practice of Germany of submitting their 2021 national implementation report in all three official languages of the Convention as well as of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to submit it in two official languages;
- (iii) Approved Draft decision on reporting requirements (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2021/19), and requested the secretariat to finalise the document and submit it to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration at its seventh session;
- (iv) Took note of the information provided by participants.

12. Implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021, including financial matters

The Working Group:

- (i) Took note of the Report on the implementation of the work programme for 2018–2021 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2021/6) and Report on contributions and expenditures in relation to the implementation of the Convention's work programme for 2018–2021 (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2021/7), and the information provided by the secretariat and delegations;
- (ii) Called upon the Parties to proceed with making financial contributions as soon as possible and expressed its concern over the fact that contributions are still arriving late in the year;
- (iii) Expressed appreciation for the work done by the secretariat and recognized the difficulties posed by limited and unpredictable funding.

13. Thematic session on genetically modified organisms

The Working Group:

- (i) Expressed its appreciation to the representatives of Serbia, Tunisia, the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, KROK University and European ECO Forum for their presentations and took note of the information provided;
- (ii) Encouraged Governments and stakeholders to use the recently completed Pocket Guide as informal training and learning tool to strengthen capacity in providing effective access to information and public participation in decision-making processes regarding LMOs/GMOs;
- (iii) Reiterated that promotion of awareness, education, transparency and effective public participation in GMO/LMO-related related decision-making is key for achievement of Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goals 2 (zero hunger), especially targets related to food security, improved nutrition and sustainable agriculture; SDG 15 (life on land) and SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions).
- (iv) Recognised that the joint efforts by Parties, the treaties' bodies and the two secretariats help supporting countries' efforts to achieve these SDGs; and that enhanced cooperation at national and international level serves Parties to both instruments
- (v) Acknowledged the importance of the following actions needed to be taken by Parties:
 - (a) Establish or enhance the implementation of effective procedures and mechanisms for effective access to information, public awareness and for enabling effective and inclusive public participation in decision-making and access to justice with regard to LMOs/GMOs.
 - (b) Continue strengthening coordination and cooperation between national focal points of the Aarhus Convention and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

14. Any other business

No issues were discussed.

15. Roll call to establish the presence of Parties

The Working Group took note of the information provided by the Chair confirming the presence of a majority of Parties established through a roll call and concluding that the necessary quorum was reached with more than 24 Parties present.

16. Adoption of outcomes

The Working Group adopted the major outcomes and decisions of the meeting, including of the session held on 3 May 2021 as revised at the meeting (see AC/WGP-25/Inf.2/Rev.1), and requested the secretariat, in consultation with the Chair, to finalize the report and incorporate these adopted outcomes and decisions.
