



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
22 July 2021

Original: English

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

Seventh session

Geneva, 18–20 October 2021

Item 8 (a) of the provisional agenda

**Promotion of the Convention and relevant developments
and interlinkages: accession to the Convention by States from
outside the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region**

Draft decision VII/10 on accession by Guinea-Bissau to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters

Prepared by the Bureau

Summary

The present document sets out a draft decision on the accession of Guinea-Bissau to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention). The document is prepared pursuant to decision IV/5 on accession to the Convention by non-United Nations Economic Commission for Europe member States (ECE/MP.PP/2011/2/Add.1) adopted by the Convention's Meeting of the Parties at its fourth session (Chisinau, 29 June–1 July 2011) and to the note on the expression of intention by Guinea-Bissau to accede to the Convention (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2020/12) submitted by the secretariat to the Working Group of the Parties to the Convention at its twenty-fourth meeting (Geneva, 1–3 July and 28 and 29 October 2020).

There were opportunities for open-ended consultations among national focal points and stakeholders on the present draft document after the twenty-fourth meeting of the Working Group. The Bureau revised the draft document thereafter in the light of the comments received and submitted it to the Working Group for consideration and approval at its twenty-fifth meeting (Geneva, 3 May and 7 and 8 June 2021), with a view to its subsequent submission to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration at its seventh session.

At its twenty-fifth meeting the Working Group revised and approved, as amended at the meeting, the draft decision on the accession of Guinea-Bissau to the Convention (AC/WGP-25/CRP.8) and requested the secretariat to submit it to the Meeting of the Parties for consideration at its seventh session.



The Meeting of the Parties,

Recalling article 19 (3) of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, which provides for the possibility of States from outside the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) region becoming Parties to the Convention upon approval by the Meeting of the Parties,

Recalling also that, over the years, the Parties to the Convention have expressed their support for accession to the Convention by States from outside the ECE region,

Recalling further decision IV/5 on accession to the Convention by non-ECE member States,¹ adopted by the Meeting of the Parties at its fourth session,

Acknowledging a note by the secretariat on the expression of intention by Guinea-Bissau to accede to the Convention,²

1. *Welcomes and approves* the accession of Guinea-Bissau to the Convention;
2. *Requests* the secretariat to inform the Treaty Section of the Office of Legal Affairs of this approval so that the appropriate arrangements can be made;
3. *Calls upon* Parties, international financial institutions, international organizations and other interested actors to support the implementation of the Convention in Guinea-Bissau;
4. *Expresses* its firm belief that being a Party to the Convention brings tangible positive changes with regard to legislation and practice, with multiple benefits not only for environmental protection but also for the social and economic aspects of people's lives;
5. *Encourages* other interested States to explore accession to the Convention;
6. *Calls on* Parties, international financial institutions, international organizations and other interested actors to strengthen cooperation with and support non-ECE countries interested in acceding to the Convention, with a view to promoting the mutual exchange of experience, as well as the application of the Convention beyond the ECE region.

¹ See ECE/MP.PP/2011/2/Add.1.

² See ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2020/12.