

**7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention**

Item 7 (d)<sup>[17]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub> Procedures and mechanisms facilitating the implementation of the Convention:  
capacity-building (19 October 2021, 5.20-6 p.m.)

Georgia welcomes the report on capacity-building activities and the accompanying document prepared by partner organizations and the secretariat of the Aarhus Convention according to the work programme for 2018–2021 for the Aarhus Convention. We appreciate the work done and carried out activities during the intercessional period by the partner organizations, the secretariat, Parties, Signatories and other interested States.

One main point in the report, that should be underlined, is that capacity-building activities support not only the implementation of the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTRs, but contributes, among others, to promote good governance and effective implementation of SDGs.

Based on the presented documents and experience gained at the national level, it is clear for us that international assistance and co-operation, and multi-partner capacity-building activities is crucial, especially nowadays, when we all are facing the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Exchange of experiences, lessons learned and best practices, continuity of capacity-building programmes, implementation of pilot projects, development of e-learning courses, conduct training, create networks for different stakeholders, and many other activities, listed in the report, are essential for the effective implementation of the Aarhus Convention.

Along with the development of relevant regulations, enforcement mechanisms, and appropriate institutional arrangements, advancement of additional tools for the implementation of the Aarhus Convention in practice, we consider as one of the priority directions of capacity-building activities. We believe that the Aarhus and other relevant Centres are the best examples of such practical implementation tools. We acknowledge as well the importance of the Aarhus and other relevant Centres, as one of the main instruments to support the governments in the implementation of the Convention, and provide a platform for stakeholders in co-operation on environmental issues. Therefore, we express the full support to the formulation stipulated in the report, that the Aarhus Centres “*remained a backbone for the Convention’s capacity-building framework...*”.

In Georgia, Environmental Information and Education Centre under the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, actively supports the implementation of the Aarhus Convention and works as well on other Aarhus related topics. The Center conducts different activities, including training, awareness-raising and educational campaigns, implements several programmes and projects, develops electronic information systems, supports the implementation of respective SDGs, promotes education for sustainable development, facilitates public access to environmental information and public participation in decision-making, etc.

Based on the mentioned above, we consider that along with the widely recognized key target groups for capacity-building activities, such as public authorities and members of the public, including NGOs, special attention should be paid to the Aarhus and other relevant Centres. In addition, to support the effective implementation of the Aarhus Convention, and thus contribute to the fulfillment of many other national and international obligations as well, it is important that capacity-building activities are consistent and planned based on the comprehensive assessment of the needs, capacities and abilities of co-operation of the target groups, are conducted in different ways and approaches, are strongly result-oriented, and the synergy between the activities are considered.

We see the important role of the partner organizations in this direction. Their coordinated efforts and close co-operation with the Aarhus Convention Secretariat we consider of utmost importance.