

**Statement by Justice and Environment at the 26<sup>th</sup> Working Group of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention concerning Agenda Item 7: Implementation of work programmes**

We thank the European Union for their statement, and echo their appreciation to Austria and Ireland for their contributions to support the newly-created Rapid Response Mechanism. This is a truly remarkable development in the history of the Convention and we thank these two Parties for their leadership roles.

We also echo the statement of Switzerland on the need for the amounts to be paid by the Parties as contributions reflecting equitable principles, rather than a uniform approach establishing a minimum contribution for all. The simple fact, obvious to us all, is that some could pay more; in some cases, much more, and that this not only would truly be equitable, but also enable the successful and reliable implementation of the work programmes in a manner never reached before. Now, we NGOs have been arguing for these changes, presenting evidence of the flaws, inefficacy, and ultimately infeasibility of the current approach to fund the work programmes, for probably 20 years now.

Thus, there is no need for further evidence, there is no need for further studies and policy briefs. What is needed is just a clear commitment to change the status quo. Change is needed now.

Thank you.