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Ms Fiona Marshall  
Secretary to the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee  
UN Economic Commission for Europe  
Environment Division  
Palais des Nations  
CH-1211 Geneva 10  
Switzerland

26 July 2022

Dear Ms Marshall,

## **Re: Communication ACCC/C/2017/150**

We write with respect to the above Communication, and further to our exchange of emails on 15 July 2022 in which we confirmed that the UK wishes to be represented at the hearing of the above complaint.

As you will no doubt be aware, the last substantive stage in this matter took place in November 2018, when Friends of the Earth Ltd (the “Communicant”) submitted its response to the Observations provided by the UK Government in June 2018. Thereafter, the UK Government did not receive any communication from the Committee until 27 June 2022, some 3 years and 7 months later, inviting the UK Government and Communicant to participate in a hearing in Geneva on 14 September 2022.

On 1 July 2022, the Committee provided a list of fourteen detailed questions to the UK Government (and two to the Communicant), including on specific factual matters (for example Question 5), and sought a response within four weeks - by 29 July 2022 (the “July 2022 Questions”).

Since this issue was last dealt with in November 2018, the Department for Exiting the EU (DExEU) has been dissolved. DExEU was the part of government responsible for many of the matters on which the Committee is now asking questions about. Despite our best efforts, it is not possible to respond to the Committee’s detailed questions in the short time frame allowed. The intervening 3 and half years since the last exchanges on this matter, and in particular the two and half years since DExEU was dissolved, are presenting challenges to undertaking the enquiries necessary to respond to the Committee’s detailed questions in the permitted time frame.

Accordingly, we are writing to ask that the UK Government be given until 30 September to respond to the questions raised, and that the hearing of this Communication be moved to the Seventy-seventh meeting of the Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee scheduled for 13-16 December 2022. This will provide sufficient time to return a full response to the Committee's questions.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Justine', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Justine Solomons-Moat  
UK Focal Point  
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
UK Government