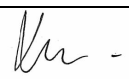




## MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

|                                   |   |            |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|------------|---|
| <b>Evaluation Title:</b>          | Self-evaluation of the activities serviced by UNECE under the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making, and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) and its Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (Protocol on PRTRs) |            |   |
| <b>Period of Review:</b>          | 2018 - 2021   |            |   |
| <b>Date of Evaluation Report:</b> | 30/01/2023  |            |   |
| <b>Approved by</b>                | Chief, a.i., PMU<br>Nicolas Dath-Baron  | Date       | Signature   |
|                                   |   | 03/04/2023 |  |
| <b>Cleared by:</b>                | Director of Division<br>Marco Keiner  | 03/04/2023 |  |
| <b>Prepared by:</b>               | Environmental Affairs Officer<br>Ella Behlyarova  | 03/04/2023 |  |

### **Recommendation 1:**

Continue to encourage a participatory approach by engaging Parties, NGOs, and other stakeholders in activities and preparing work programmes containing budgets and other documents for decision-making to maximize the commitments and possibility of mobilizing adequate resources.

**Management Response:** UNECE accepts the recommendation.

### **Follow up actions and responsibilities:**

The secretariat of the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTRs will continue encouraging that Parties, NGOs and other relevant stakeholders: (a) have effective opportunity to share their good practices and challenges by liaising with the respective Chairs on allocation of a prominent speaking place at treaties' meetings, in particular as panellists; (b) have opportunity to comment work programmes containing budgets and other documents for decision-making by making those documents and the comments received available online in advance of the documents' adoption, and notifying Parties, NGOs and other relevant stakeholders accordingly.

Responsibility: Ella Behlyarova, Secretary to the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTRs, Environment Division

Timeline: 31 December 2024 for (a); 31 December 2025 for (b)

### **Recommendation 2:**

Liaise with OSCE to explore its possible interest in designing a regional program to support Aarhus Centres that have been left behind in fulfilling their responsibilities. Communicate this issue to Parties, other interested Members States, relevant UN organisations, and their regional and development partners with similar agendas and interests.

**Management Response:** UNECE accepts the recommendation.

**Follow up actions and responsibilities:**

The secretariat of the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTRs will: (a) liaise with OSCE to explore its possible interest in designing a regional program to support Aarhus Centres; (b) communicate this issue to Parties, other interested Members States, relevant UN organisations, and their regional and development partners with similar agendas and interests, through addressing it in formal reports on implementation of the treaties' work programmes (which will be translated in ECE official languages) and submitting them for the attention of the Working Group of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention and the Working Group of the Parties to the Protocol on PRTRs in 2023.

Responsibility: Ella Behlyarova, Secretary of the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTRs, Environment Division,  
Timeline: 31 December 2023

**Recommendation 3:**

Encourage Member States to allocate an adequate budget to:

- a) Adjust the organisation's human, technical, and financial resources to address the ongoing political and economic demands.
- b) Support newly established mechanism for environmental defenders.
- c) Adjust the organisation's culture to support evaluation, including a greater awareness of the benefits and importance of accountability.

**Management Response:** UNECE accepts the recommendation.

**Follow up actions and responsibilities:**

(a) The secretariat will bring the issue of lack of resources to the attention of the Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention and the Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on PRTRs and will assist the Bureaux in preparing the work programmes for the Aarhus Convention and for the Protocol on PRTRs encouraging to address the required resources in those work programmes.

(b) Pursuant to the adoption of decision VII/9 by the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention (Geneva, 21 October 2021), the secretariat of the Aarhus Convention will seek additional resources for appropriation in 2024 as to support newly established rapid response mechanism for environmental defenders by submitting a decision on this subject matter for consideration by ECE Commission in 2023.

(c) The secretariat of the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTRs will raise awareness of the benefits and importance of accountability promoted through evaluations among Parties and stakeholders by (a) notifying Parties and a wide range of stakeholders about availability of this evaluation online and (b) addressing the current evaluation in formal reports on implementation of the treaties' work programmes (which will be translated in ECE official languages) and submitting them for the attention of the Working Group of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention and the Working Group of the Parties to the Protocol on PRTRs in 2023.

Responsibility: Ella Behlyarova, Secretary of the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTRs, Environment Division  
Timeline: 31 December 2023 for (b) and (c); 31 December 2024 for (a).

#### **Recommendation 4:**

Subject to resources, plan and budget for impact evaluation to assess the implementation of the three pillars of the Aarhus Convention in the region. ECE may also consider the possibility of assessing the effectiveness and impact of the Compliance Committees and Special Rapporteur on Environmental Defenders.

**Management Response:** UNECE partially accepts the recommendation.

#### **Follow up actions and responsibilities:**

The secretariat of the Aarhus Convention will assess feasibility of conducting an impact evaluation on the implementation of the three pillars of the Aarhus Convention and will bring the issue for attention of the Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention for its consideration.

Responsibility: Ella Behlyarova, Secretary of the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTRs, Environment Division

Timeline: 31 December 2024

#### **Recommendation 5:**

Continue enhancing synergies among relevant international instruments, organisations, and processes, including those related to the issue of environmental defenders.

**Management Response:** UNECE accepts the recommendation.

#### **Follow up actions and responsibilities:**

The secretariat of the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTRs will continue enhancing synergies among relevant international instruments, organisations, and processes, including those related to the issue of environmental defenders by: (a) exchanging relevant information with them; (b) promoting the treaties obligations and activities in other relevant processes; and (c) inviting representatives of other relevant international instruments, organisations, and processes to participate in the treaties' meetings and other activities.

Responsibility: Ella Behlyarova, Secretary of the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTRs, Environment Division

Timeline: 31 December 2024

#### **Recommendation 6:**

Continue encouraging gender considerations and a human rights-based approach in the activities under the two treaties and monitor the participation of women and people with disability in the Parties' and stakeholders' delegations and in senior management positions in governing and subsidiary bodies.

**Management Response:** UNECE accepts the recommendation.

#### **Follow up actions and responsibilities:**

The secretariat of the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTRs will continue: (a) encouraging gender considerations and a human rights-based approach in the activities under the two treaties, including at dedicated thematic sessions of the treaties' bodies and through conducting a survey regarding groups in vulnerable situations and (b) monitor the participation of women and people with disability in the Parties' and stakeholders' delegations and in senior management positions in governing and subsidiary bodies.

Responsibility: Ella Behlyarova, Secretary of the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTRs, Environment Division

Timeline: 31 December 2024

**Recommendation 7:**

Strive to ensure that the UNECE Secretariat's activities conform to the accessibility standards for people with disabilities, as well as that the outputs are produced and generated in an appropriate manner (e.g., sign language, etc.) and strive to allocate the required budget and technical assistance for this purpose.

Report on the extent to which gender equality is being streamlined and monitor it periodically. As opposed to focusing on gender-disaggregated participation data, it is more appropriate to focus on gender representation in decision-making roles within the Party's delegations.

**Management Response:** UNECE accepts the recommendation.

**Follow up actions and responsibilities:**

The secretariat of the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTRs, in consultation with relevant units of ECE and UNOG, will prepare a proposal for organising next sessions of the Meetings of the Parties aiming to conform to the accessibility standards for people with disabilities and will bring the issue to the attention of the Bureaux of the Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention and of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on PRTRs for their consideration.

Responsibility: Ella Behlyarova, Secretary of the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTRs, Environment Division

Timeline: 31 December 2024