

Twenty-seventh meeting of the Working Group of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention, Palais des Nations, Geneva, 27 June, 2023

Thematic session on the promotion of the principles of the Convention in international forums; Agenda item 6, Panel III: Balanced and equitable participation and different modalities for engaging stakeholders in international decision-making

Intervention from the floor by Christiana Mauro

Dear Madame Chair,

Guta Association would like to thank CIEL for highlighting the importance of incorporating Almaty Guideline 15 principles into international participatory processes.

Broadened participation in debates about controversial technological and scientific matters can sometimes involve stakeholders who are actually industry players in decision making. But when stakeholders with a disproportionate economic influence have a disproportionate influence on policy, this threatens the public's faith in participatory processes.

Environmental NGOs are seeing an increase in the number of front groups writing scientific reports devoid of peer-reviewed science and indeed without even valid source references. This can result in an institutionalisation of greenwashing at the international level and must be actively guarded against with formal procedural safeguards if we are to see the spirit of the Convention achieve its intended function.

This would be one way to ensure that younger generations may "see what is being done rather than just hear what is intended", as we heard earlier today so passionately expressed by the child activist.

We therefore encourage the Working Group to highlight the importance of the risk that covert lobbying poses to equitable access to information and public participation, and consider a thematic session on engagement criteria or the commissioning of technical report on Almaty Guideline 15 as it pertains to participation in international forum processes.