Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters

- Aarhus Convention -

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Aarhus Convention
Introduction

- **Adoption:** 1998, Aarhus, Denmark
- **Entry into force:** 30 October 2001
- **Parties:** 47 Parties (world’s lowest and highest GDPs; range of political and legal traditions; environmental activities and issues e.g., mining, oil and gas exploration, water pollution and shortages, nuclear and renewable energies, desertification)
- **Accession:** Global - any UN Member State
- **One Protocol:** Protocol on PRTRs
- **Amendment on GMOs**
Aarhus Convention
Developments and achievements

- **Built authorities’ capacities** to provide information and apply public participation and access to justice procedures; ensure no discrimination; and safety of environmental defenders
- **Built judiciary capacities** on access to justice
- **Enhanced transparency and public participation** in international decision-making
- **Fostered dialogue** among authorities, technical experts, NGOs and other stakeholders
- **Advisory services to countries** in and beyond the region and to international organizations
- **Facilitated political commitments** – Geneva Declaration and 30 decisions adopted in 2021
- **Recommendations, guidance material** and online information platforms
Access to information, public participation and access to justice
- universal principles guiding action and providing spill-over effects on other sectors

Provides a platform to share experiences and address challenges in achieving environmental dimension of SDG 16 and other Goals

Need to promote the Convention’s obligations in SDG decision-making

It is cheaper and resource efficient to engage the public in decision-making from the outset rather than pay to remedy the effects of unsustainable decisions

Public confidence in governmental decisions is also critical for promoting peace and security

Need for protection of environmental defenders

Need to foster effective inter-ministerial and intra-ministerial cooperation mechanisms

A benchmark for other processes and standards setter for other regions and in other sectors

Capacity-building: partner organizations have a significant role

Need to ensuring sustainability of Aarhus Centres as a platform to promote multi-stakeholder dialogue
• Continue providing effective platforms to share good practices and address the challenges, build authorities’ and judiciary capacities, and make joint commitments

Promote

• Inputs to the follow-up and review of implementation of the Goals, in particular Goal 16 in 2024

• Importance of measurable indicators of environmental dimension of SDG 16 and other relevant SDGs

• Understanding of benefits of public engagement

• Accession of interested Member States
  - to drive development of national legislation and practice;
  - help countries to implement Agenda 2030, especially SDG 16

• Political support to pursuing international decision-making using Convention’s principles and approaches
  - in particular transparency and effective public participation
Thank you!

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