

**28th Meeting of the Working Group to the Aarhus Convention  
(2-4 July 2024)  
Agenda item 4 (a): Access to Justice**

**Norway**

Thank you Chair,

Norway would like to thank the Chair of the Task Force on Access to Justice and the panelists for raising pertinent issues and highlighting developments, challenges and possible solutions during this morning's thematic session. We also thank the Chair of the Task Force for the note and report, and for the work done to increase and spread knowledge on the rights of access to justice, their implementation, best practices and the challenges faced and ways to address them. We believe that the Task Force provides a valuable platform for these purposes and through its work contributes to effective public access to justice in accordance with the Convention.

Effective public access to justice is an important element in the increasingly urgent work to address the triple planetary crisis (climate change, biodiversity loss and pollutions), which is necessary for a successful implementation of a number of Sustainable Development Goals (specifically targeted by Goal 16).

We believe that the Task Force has had, and should continue to have a broad mandate. We also believe that it would be useful to focus on the priority issues for access to justice in environmental matters in the next intersessional period suggested by the Chair's note and main challenges with regard to these elements, as well as on new thematic issues of particular importance in this regard.

Given the continuing challenges for ensuring full implementation of the access to justice pillar, it is important to address systemic barriers, trends and solutions in this area. We therefore support to continue the horizontal focus on the key elements on access to justice in environmental matters, while at the same time focusing on challenges and solutions for access to justice in some specific areas

such as land use; forestry; environment-related product information; environmental damage and environmental crimes. We note the increasing number of litigation cases in certain areas such as for instance climate change, and support continued monitoring and assessment of further developments on access to justice in these areas. Promoting tools supporting effective access to justice, such as e-justice initiatives, use of digital technologies such as artificial intelligence should also be continued.

As for the work of the Task Force and the number and form of meetings, it would have to be considered in light of the resources available. We do however believe that the number of meetings during the next intersessional period should at least be the same as for the current period, and not be further reduced. We also believe that the thematic sessions in the meetings of the Working Group of the Parties provide added value and should be continued.

Thank you Chair.