

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

Task Force on Access to Information

Ninth meeting

Geneva, 7-8 November 2024

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Opening and adoption of the agenda

Annotated provisional agenda for the ninth meeting

To be held in Salle XXIV, Palais des Nations, Geneva
starting at 10 a.m. on Thursday, 7 November 2024

I. Provisional agenda

1. Opening and adoption of the agenda.
2. Thematic focus: Active dissemination of environmental information:
 - (a) The implementation of the updated Recommendations on the more effective use of electronic information tools;
 - (b) The use of modern technologies by the public.
3. Access to environment-related product information.
4. Stocktaking of recent and upcoming developments.
5. Activities under other international forums.
6. Other business.
7. Closing.

II. Annotations

The mandate of the Task Force on Access to Information under the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) was laid down by the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention through decision IV/1 adopted at its fourth session (Chisinau, 29 June - 1 July 2011)¹. It was further extended in time by the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention through decision VII/1 adopted at its seventh session (Geneva, 18-21 October 2021)². The work is also guided by the Strategic Plan 2022-2030³ and the Work Programme 2022-2025⁴.

The ninth meeting of the Task Force on Access to information (Geneva, 7-8 November 2024) will promote the exchange of information, case studies and good practices and discuss recent and upcoming developments focusing on active dissemination of environmental information. In particular, the Task Force will discuss (a) the implementation of the updated Recommendations on the more effective use of electronic information tools (ECE/MP.PP/2021/2/Add.2)⁵ adopted by the Meeting of the Parties at its seventh session through decision VII/1; and (b) the use of modern technologies by the public for assembling, exchanging and using environmental data and information. Additionally, the Task Force will take stock of recent and upcoming developments with regard to public access to information related to: (a) transparency of public authorities on environmental matters and the application of restrictions on access to information; and (b) the protection of whistle-blowers and other persons exercising their rights in conformity with the provisions of the Aarhus Convention. The Task Force will be also informed about recent activities of relevant international forums to promote public access to environmental information and the transparency of public authorities on environmental matters.

The outcomes of the meeting will support countries' efforts in implementing, monitoring and measuring environment-related Sustainable Development Goals, including SDG 3 (Health), SDG 6 (Water), SDG 11 (Resilient and Sustainable Cities), SDG 12 (Sustainable Consumption and Production), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 15 (Life on Land) and target 10 SDG 16 (Ensure Public Access to Information).

The background material for the meeting includes relevant information derived from 2021 national implementation reports⁶ and the synthesis report⁷ as well as the Implementation Guide⁸, relevant Compliance Committee findings of a systemic nature⁹ and the resources of the Aarhus Clearinghouse¹⁰. The Task Force on Access to Information continues its work based on the outputs of the previous meetings.

Each session will feature brief introductory presentation(s) sharing experiences of the Parties to the Convention and stakeholders related to the agenda items followed by contributors' interventions and interactive discussion. Delegates who are interested to make a presentation or statement at the meeting on the key developments, emerging issues or issues of a systemic nature regarding the implementation of the first pillar of the Convention are kindly invited to contact the secretariat ([public.participation\[at\]un.org](mailto:public.participation[at]un.org)) as soon as possible by **1 October 2024**, briefly outlining its focus in relation to the agenda items. The provisional programme of the meeting will be released shortly before the meeting.

¹ The text of decision is available from <https://unece.org/environmental-policy/events/fourth-session-meeting-parties>

² The text of decision is available from https://unece.org/environmental-policy/events/Aarhus_Convention_MoP7

³ The texts of decisions are available from https://unece.org/environmental-policy/events/Aarhus_Convention_MoP7

⁴ The text of decision is available from https://unece.org/environmental-policy/events/Aarhus_Convention_MoP7

⁵ See <https://unece.org/environment/documents/2022/02/updated-recommendations-more-effective-use-electronic-information>

⁶ 2021 national implementation reports are available from <https://aarhusclearinghouse.unece.org/national-reports/reports>

⁷ The synthesis report (ECE/MP.PP/2021/6) is available from <https://aarhusclearinghouse.unece.org/national-reports/reports>

⁸ The Implementation Guide is available from <https://unece.org/environment-policy/publications/aarhus-convention-implementation-guide-second-edition>

⁹ The Compliance Committee findings are available from <https://unece.org/env/pp/cc>

¹⁰ The Aarhus Clearinghouse is available from <https://aarhusclearinghouse.unece.org/>

1. Opening and adoption of the agenda

Timing: Thursday, 7 November, 10.00–10.10 a.m.

The Task Force will be invited to adopt the agenda as set out in the present document.¹¹

2. Thematic focus: Active dissemination of environmental information

(a) The implementation of the updated Recommendations on the more effective use of electronic information tools

Timing: Thursday, 7 November, 10.10 a.m.–1.00 p.m.

This session will focus on the implementation of the updated Recommendations on the more effective use of electronic information tools (ECE/MP.PP/2021/2/Add.2). Participants will be invited to share legislative and policy developments and case studies with regard to (a) types of information, its quality and accessibility; (b) tools and infrastructure; and (c) governance, institutional development and capacity-building. The discussion aims to identify existing challenges, good practices, current trends and further needs regarding the implementation of these Recommendations.

(b) The use of modern technologies by the public

Timing: Thursday, 7 November, 3–4.30 p.m.

This session will focus on the use of modern technologies by the public for assembling, exchanging and using environmental data and information. Participants will be invited to share recent policy and legislative developments and case studies in relation to the subject. The discussion aims to identify existing challenges, good practices, current trends and further needs and contribute to the implementation of the above mentioned Recommendations.

3. Access to environment-related product information

Timing: Thursday, 7 November, 4.30–6 p.m. and Friday, 8 November, 10–11.30 a.m.

Following up on the outcomes of the international workshop at the previous Task Force meeting¹², this session will continue to explore good practices of and possible means to improve access to environment-related product information (articles 5 (6) and (8) of the Convention). Participants will be invited to share recent policy and legislative developments and case studies with regard to (a) public access to sufficient product information, including on environmental footprint and use of chemicals, minerals and metals; and (b) development of respective digital product passports and other tools to support reporting on environment, social and governance (ESG) performance and prevent greenwashing.

4. Stocktaking of recent and upcoming developments

Timing: Friday, 8 November, 11.30 a.m.–1 p.m. and 3–4.30 p.m.

This session will take stock on recent and upcoming developments with regard to public access to information related to: (a) the transparency of public authorities on environmental matters and the application of restrictions on access to information; and (b) the protection of whistle-blowers and other persons exercising their rights in conformity with the provisions of the Aarhus Convention.

¹¹ All documentation for the meeting will be available from <https://unece.org/environmental-policy/events/ninth-meeting-task-force-access-information-under-aarhus-convention>

¹² See https://unece.org/environmental-policy/events/Aarhus_PP_8TFAI_API_workshop

5. Activities under other international forums

Timing: Friday, 8 November, 4.30 – 5.30 p.m.

Representatives of relevant international forums will be invited to inform about recent activities to promote public access to environmental information and the transparency of public authorities on environmental matters.

6. Other business

Timing: Friday, 8 November, 5.30 – 5.45 p.m.

Delegates wishing to suggest issues under this item are requested to inform the secretariat as soon as possible.

7. Closing

Timing: Friday, 8 November, 5.45 – 6 p.m.

The Chair will summarize the key outcomes of the meeting and close it.