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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY**

Meeting of the Signatories to the
Convention on Access to Information,
Public Participation in Decision-making and
Access to Justice in Environmental Matters
Working Group on Genetically Modified Organisms

REPORT OF THE THIRD MEETING

1. The third meeting of the Working Group on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) took place in Geneva on 17-19 June 2002.
2. The meeting was attended by representatives from the Governments of Albania, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Italy, Republic of Moldova, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America and Uzbekistan.
3. The Commission of the European Communities was represented.
4. The following organizations were represented: European ECO Forum, GLOBE Europe, Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) and Slovenian Foundation for Sustainable Development (UMANOTERA).
5. The Chairperson of the Working Group, Mr. Helmut Gaugitsch (Austria) opened the meeting.

I. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

6. The Working Group adopted the agenda for the meeting as set forth in document CEP/WG.5/AC.3/2002/5.

II. DRAFT DECISION

7. Following the request by the Working Group at its second meeting (CEP/WG.5/AC.3/2002/2, para. 37), the secretariat, in consultation with the Bureau and taking account of the Working Group's discussion, had prepared a revised text of the draft decision for adoption by the Meeting of the Parties (CEP/WG.5/AC.3/2002/8), which was used as a basis for discussion by the Working Group.

8. The Working Group discussed the draft decision, agreed upon a number of amendments and decided to submit it as amended to the Meeting of the Parties for adoption.

9. Two delegations indicated a scrutiny reservation on the deletion of the words "explore the necessity", which originally appeared in CEP/WG.5/AC.3/2002/8, paragraph 3 (option II).

III. GUIDELINES

10. At its second meeting, the Working Group had invited its Chairperson, Mr. Helmut Gaugitsch, to prepare a new draft of the guidelines on access to information, public participation and access to justice with respect to GMOs, with the assistance of the secretariat and a small but representative ad hoc drafting group (CEP/WG.5/AC.3/2002/2, para. 36). The drafting group had met in Geneva on 18 – 19 March 2002. On the basis of the discussions, the Chairperson had prepared new draft guidelines (CEP/WG.5/AC.3/2002/7), which were presented to the Working Group as a basis for discussion.

11. The Working Group discussed the draft guidelines and agreed upon a number of changes and decided to submit them, as amended, to the Meeting of the Parties for adoption.

12. The United States dissociated itself from the consensus on the draft decision and the draft guidelines, noting that both documents addressed issues beyond "deliberate release of genetically modified organisms into the environment" (ECE/CEP/43/Add.1/Rev.1.)

IV. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT AND CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

13. The Working Group adopted the report. Noting that this was the last scheduled meeting of the Working Group, a vote of thanks was given to the Chairperson for his calm persistence and skilful chairing throughout the life of the Working Group. The Chairperson in turn thanked the Working Group for the constructive atmosphere and the secretariat for its efficient assistance throughout the process. He finally thanked the interpreters and closed the meeting.