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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

Meeting of the Parties 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
(First meeting, Geneva, 9-11 April 2003)

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE MEETING

to be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland,
starting at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, 9 April 2003

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Report on the activities of the Working Group on Genetically Modified Organisms established under the Committee on Environmental Policy.
4. Legally binding options for further developing the application of the Convention to genetically modified organisms.
5. Implementation of the Guidelines.
6. Any other business.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

At their first meeting (Lucca, Italy, 21-23 October 2002), the Parties to the Convention established the Working Group on Genetically Modified Organisms as an open-ended, ad hoc subsidiary body (decision I/4). According to this decision, the Working Group is to examine and build upon the preparatory work of the Working Group on GMOs established by the Committee on Environmental Policy. The task of the Working Group is to further explore what the options are for a legally binding approach to further developing the application of the Convention to GMOs, including through possible instruments, to select the most appropriate options and to develop these for consideration and possible decision or adoption by the Parties at their second meeting.

The Meeting of the Parties also adopted a set of Guidelines on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice with respect to GMOs (MP.PP/2002/6) and resolved to keep them under review, to monitor their implementation, and to consider the need for complementing them with a more detailed handbook.

Item 1 Election of officers

In its decision I/4, the Meeting of the Parties welcomed the offer of Austria to chair the new Working Group. Austria has nominated Mr. Helmut Gaugitsch, Chairperson of the former Working Group, to fulfil this task. The Working Group may wish to elect one or two vice-chairpersons.

Item 2 Adoption of the agenda

The Working Group is invited to adopt the agenda as set out in the present document.

Item 3 Report on the activities of the Working Group on Genetically Modified Organisms established under the Committee on Environmental Policy

The Chairperson of the former Working Group is expected to report on the activities of that Working Group towards further developing the application of the Convention to GMOs.

Item 4 Legally binding options for further developing the application of the Convention to GMOs

The Working Group is expected to consider and select the most appropriate option(s) for a legally binding approach to further developing the application of the Convention to GMOs. Furthermore, the Working Group is expected to consider how to further develop these options and to start preparatory work to this end.

To build upon the preparatory work of the former Working Group, including the draft amendment to the Convention, the Working Group may wish to take into consideration the analysis of the application of the Aarhus Convention to genetically modified organisms (CEP/WG.5/AC.3/2001/4) and the paper on labelling and product information related to

genetically modified organisms (CEP/WG.5/AC.3/2001/5). Furthermore, the Working Group may wish to pay attention to the reports and other documents of the former Working Group (in particular documents CEP/WG.5/AC.3/2001/2 and CEP/WG.5/AC.3/2002/2 and 4).

Item 5 Implementation of the Guidelines

According to paragraph 34 of the Guidelines, the Parties should monitor and keep under review the implementation of the Guidelines and report on their usefulness and the progress made in implementation to the Meeting of the Parties. The Parties rely on the Working Group to carry out preparatory work to this end and the Working Group may therefore wish to consider how to proceed with this task. The Working Group may also wish to consider whether there is a need for complementing the Guidelines with a more detailed handbook and, if so, how to proceed.

Item 6 Any other business

Delegates wishing to propose points under this item are requested to inform the secretariat as soon as possible.