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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

Third meeting
Riga, 11–13 June 2008

**ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR
THE THIRD MEETING OF THE PARTIES**

to be held at the Reval Hotel Latvija, Riga,
starting at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, 11 June 2008

I. PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Opening, including a welcome address by the Minister of the Environment of Latvia.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Status of ratification of the Convention, the amendment to the Convention and the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers.
4. Interpretation of article 14, paragraph 4, of the Convention on the conditions for entry into force of amendments.

5. Substantive issues:
 - (a) Pollutant release and transfers registers;
 - (b) Genetically modified organisms;
 - (c) Electronic information tools and the clearinghouse mechanism;
 - (d) Public participation in strategic decision-making;
 - (e) Access to justice;
 - (f) Public participation in international forums.
6. Procedures and mechanisms facilitating the implementation of the Convention:
 - (a) Reports on implementation;
 - (b) Compliance mechanism;
 - (c) Capacity-building activities;
 - (d) Financial arrangements.
7. Programme of work and operation of the Convention:
 - (a) Implementation of the work programme for 2006–2008, including financial aspects;
 - (b) Long-term strategic plan;
 - (c) Work programme for 2009–2011.
8. Relevant developments and interlinkages:
 - (a) Synergies between the Convention and other relevant multilateral environmental agreements;
 - (b) Global and regional developments on issues related to principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development.
9. Report on credentials.

HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

Opening ceremony.

10. Celebrating the first 10 years: achievements, lessons learned and future challenges.
11. Global and regional initiatives to promote principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development.
12. Special session on the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers.
13. Review and adoption of decisions.
14. Discussion and adoption of the Riga Declaration.

15. Election of officers and other Bureau members.
16. Date and venue of the fourth ordinary meeting.
17. Any other business.
18. Adoption of the report.
19. Close of the meeting.

II. ANNOTATIONS TO PROVISIONAL AGENDA WITH INDICATIVE TIMETABLE

TIME	ITEM	ACTION	EXPLANATORY NOTES	DOCUMENTS ¹
Wednesday, 11 June 2008				
10.00 - 10.15	<u>Item 1:</u> Opening		Welcome address by the Latvian Minister of the Environment. The Chair of the Meeting of the Parties will formally open the meeting.	
10.15 - 10.20	<u>Item 2:</u> Adoption of the agenda	Decision	The Meeting of the Parties will be invited to adopt the agenda of the meeting as set out in the present document.	Provisional agenda
10.20 - 10.35	<u>Item 3:</u> Status of ratification of the Convention, the amendment to the Convention and the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers	Information	The secretariat will inform the Meeting of the Parties about the status of ratification, acceptance, approval and accession with respect to the Convention, the amendment to the Convention and the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs). It will also provide information about any declarations made by the Parties upon the deposit of their instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession. Delegates from States or regional economic integration organizations not yet party to the Convention, the amendment to the Convention or the Protocol will be offered an opportunity to briefly inform the Meeting of their plans to ratify, accept, approve or accede.	Report
10.35 - 10.50	<u>Item 4:</u> Interpretation of article 14, paragraph 4, of the Convention on the conditions for entry into force of amendments	Decision	Through decision II/1, the Meeting of the Parties adopted an amendment to the Convention on the issue of genetically modified organisms. The Meeting is expected to consider and provisionally adopt a draft decision aimed at clarifying the conditions for entry of force of the amendment and any future amendments to the Convention.	Draft decision III/1
	<u>Item 7:</u> Programme of work and operation of the Convention			

¹ A detailed list of official documentation for the meeting will be produced as an addendum to the annotated provisional agenda (ECE/MP.PP/2008/1/Add.1).

TIME	ITEM	ACTION	EXPLANATORY NOTES	DOCUMENTS ¹
10.50 - 11.20	(a) Implementation of the work programme for 2006–2008, including financial aspects	Information	<p>Through decision I/11, the Parties decided, at their first meeting, that a work programme covering the period up to and including the next meeting of the Parties would be prepared for adoption at each meeting of the Parties, including an estimation of the costs. Through decision II/7, they adopted a specific work programme for 2006–2008.</p> <p>The Meeting of the Parties will be invited to review, on the basis of a report prepared by the secretariat, the implementation of the work programme for 2006–2008 and the use of the funds contributed for the period 2006–2007.</p>	Report
11.20 - 11.40	**Coffee break**			
	Item 6: Procedures and mechanisms facilitating the implementation of the Convention			
11.40 - 13.00	(a) Reports on implementation	Information Decision	<p>At their first meeting, the Parties adopted decision I/8 setting out the requirements on the Parties to report on their implementation of the Convention. The reporting mechanism was further developed through decision II/10, and the Compliance Committee subsequently drew up guidance on implementation of the reporting requirements that was endorsed by the Working Group of the Parties.</p> <p>The Meeting of the Parties will be invited to review the implementation of the Convention on the basis of the national implementation reports submitted by the Parties and the synthesis report prepared by the secretariat. It is also expected to take note of any reports submitted by the Signatories and other States not Party to the Convention, as well as reports prepared by international, regional and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The Meeting will be invited to discuss the main trends, challenges and solutions emerging from the reports, which will be further discussed during the high-level segment. It will also be invited to discuss the experience gained with the procedure for compiling reports, including the experience with NGOs and other stakeholders, and to decide upon</p>	National implementation reports Synthesis report Draft decision III/5

TIME	ITEM	ACTION	EXPLANATORY NOTES	DOCUMENTS ¹
			possible ways of improving the process in the future, if needed, taking into account any views of the Compliance Committee on the functioning of the reporting mechanism. In this regard, it is expected to consider, revise as necessary and provisionally adopt a draft decision on the topic.	
13.00 - 15.00	**Lunch**			
15.00 - 15.40	(b) Compliance mechanism	Decision Election	<p>The Chair of the Compliance Committee will report on the Committee's activities since the second meeting of the Parties and present any findings and recommendations of the Committee with respect to compliance by specific Parties.</p> <p>The Meeting of the Parties will be invited to take note of the Committee's report, including any general recommendations contained therein, as well as any findings and recommendations of the Committee with respect to compliance by specific Parties, and to consider, revise as necessary and provisionally adopt a draft decision or draft decisions on compliance issues.</p> <p>Taking account of decision II/5, through which it was decided to expand the membership of the Committee to nine, the Meeting of the Parties is also expected to elect five members of the Committee in accordance with the procedure set out in decision I/7.</p>	<p>Report of the Compliance Committee</p> <p>Recommendations of the Committee with respect to specific Parties</p> <p>Draft decision III/6 on general issues of compliance</p> <p>Supplementary draft decisions concerning specific cases of non-compliance</p>
15.40 - 16.20	(c) Capacity-building activities	Information Provide guidance	<p>The secretariat will present a report on some of the main capacity-building activities undertaken during the intersessional period to promote more effective implementation of the Convention, as well as on the measures taken to coordinate the various activities through the capacity-building coordination framework. International and regional organizations engaged in capacity-building activities will be invited to elaborate on those activities. Representatives of Governments and organizations, in particular those from countries with economies in transition, will be invited to share their views on outstanding needs for capacity-building.</p> <p>The Meeting of the Parties will be invited to review the activities undertaken, the efforts made to coordinate these activities and the outstanding capacity-building needs. The Meeting is expected to provide feedback on</p>	Report

TIME	ITEM	ACTION	EXPLANATORY NOTES	DOCUMENTS ¹
			the activities undertaken and to provide guidance on the direction of future activities so as to ensure that capacity-building needs are met. This theme will be taken up during the high-level segment under agenda item 10.	
16.20 - 16.40	**Coffee break**			
16.40 - 17.10	(d) Financial arrangements	Decision	<p>Through decision II/6, the Meeting of the Parties agreed to extend the interim voluntary scheme of financial contributions established through decision I/13 and mandated the Working Group of the Parties to explore and develop as appropriate one or several options for establishing stable and predictable financial arrangements for the Convention based on the United Nations scale of assessment or other appropriate scales and to make recommendations for consideration by the Meeting.</p> <p>The Meeting of the Parties will be invited to take note of the work undertaken by the Working Group and to consider, revise as necessary and provisionally adopt a draft decision on financial arrangements.</p>	Draft decision III/7
	Item 5: Substantive issues			
17.10 - 17.20	(a) Pollutant release and transfer registers	Information Provide guidance	<p>At their first extraordinary meeting, the Parties to the Convention adopted the Protocol on PRTRs and established the Working Group on PRTRs to carry out activities in preparation for the entry into force of the Protocol and the first session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol.</p> <p>The Chair of the Working Group on PRTRs will report on its activities, including steps taken to prepare technical guidance, draft rules of procedure of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol and a compliance mechanism for the Protocol. The Meeting of the Parties to the Convention will be invited to take note of the progress achieved and to consider and provide guidance on what further measures are required to promote the entry into force and effective implementation of the Protocol.</p> <p>Some elements of this agenda item will be taken up within the Special session on the Protocol on PRTRs.</p>	

TIME	ITEM	ACTION	EXPLANATORY NOTES	DOCUMENTS ¹
17.20 - 18.00	(b) Genetically modified organisms	Information Discussion	<p>Parties, Signatories and other stakeholders will be invited to provide information on activities relating to the implementation of the Convention with respect to genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and/or to the application of the amendment to the Convention and of the Guidelines on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice (Almaty Guidelines) with respect to GMOs.</p> <p>The secretariat will present an oral report on the outcome of the workshop on GMOs scheduled to take place in Cologne, Germany, on 19 and 20 May 2008. A representative of the secretariat to the Convention on Biological Diversity will be invited to report on activities undertaken or planned under the auspices of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety relevant to the work on GMOs under the Aarhus Convention.</p> <p>The Meeting of the Parties will be invited to take note of the progress achieved and to consider possible further work in this area, notably through promoting ratification and implementation of the amendment.</p>	
Thursday, 12 June 2008				
10.00 - 10.40	(c) Electronic information tools and the clearinghouse mechanism	Information Decision	<p>The Chair of the Task Force on Electronic Information Tools established through decision I/6 will report on the activities of the Task Force since the second meeting of the Parties, including capacity-building workshops and steps taken to monitor the implementation of the recommendations adopted through decision II/3. The secretariat will provide a demonstration of the Aarhus Clearinghouse for Environmental Democracy. Other selected demonstrations of innovative uses of electronic tools will be given. The Meeting of the Parties will be invited to take note of these activities and to consider, revise as necessary and provisionally adopt a draft decision providing direction for the further work in this area.</p>	Draft decision III/2

TIME	ITEM	ACTION	EXPLANATORY NOTES	DOCUMENTS ¹
10.40 - 11.20	(d) Public participation in strategic decision-making	Information Provide guidance	<p>The Meeting of the Parties will be invited to discuss the outcomes of a workshop on public participation in strategic decision-making held in Sofia in December 2007 with the participation of experts from the respective bodies under the Aarhus and Espoo² Conventions and the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment to the Espoo Convention.</p> <p>The Meeting of the Parties will be invited to review the work undertaken and to consider and provide guidance on possible directions for further work in this area.</p>	
11.20 - 11.40	**Coffee break**			
11.40 - 12.20	(e) Access to justice	Decision	<p>The Chair of the Task Force on Access to Justice established through decision II/2 will report on the activities of that Task Force, including the holding of a workshop for senior members of the judiciary and a mini-conference. The Meeting of the Parties will be invited to review the work undertaken and to consider, revise as necessary and provisionally adopt a draft decision providing direction for the further work in this area.</p>	Draft decision III/3
12.20 - 13.00	(f) Public participation in international forums	Decision	<p>Through decision II/4, the Meeting of the Parties adopted the Almaty Guidelines on Promoting the Application of the Principles of the Aarhus Convention in International Forums and established the Task Force on Public Participation in International Forums. The Task Force was mandated to consult with relevant international forums over the Almaty Guidelines.</p> <p>The Chair of the Task Force on Public Participation in International Forums will report on its activities, notably the outcome of the consultation process and the meeting of representatives of international forums and the feedback from Parties, Signatories and other stakeholders on their experiences with Almaty Guidelines. The Meeting of the Parties will be invited to take note of the work undertaken and to consider and provisionally adopt a draft decision providing direction for the further work in this area.</p>	Draft decision III/4

² The Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context.

TIME	ITEM	ACTION	EXPLANATORY NOTES	DOCUMENTS ¹
13.00 - 15.00	**Lunch**			
	Item 8: Relevant developments and interlinkages:			
15.00 - 15.10	(a) Synergies between the Convention and other relevant multilateral environmental agreements	Information Discussion	<p>The secretariat will provide summary information on ongoing or planned activities under other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) having relevance to those under the Convention. Representatives of these MEAs will be provided the opportunity to present supplementary information.</p> <p>The Meeting of the Parties will be invited to explore ways of further promoting synergies between the Convention and other MEAs, taking into consideration the outcomes of the work related to the promotion of the principles of the Aarhus Convention in international forums and the Almaty Guidelines.</p>	
15.10 - 15.20	(b) Global and regional developments on issues related to principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development.	Information Discussion	<p>The secretariat will provide summary information on activities related to the implementation of principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development in other regions and at the global level. Representatives of bodies involved in those activities will be provided the opportunity to present supplementary information.</p> <p>The Meeting of the Parties is expected to review these developments and may wish to consider ways of providing appropriate support in accordance with decision II/9. The matters raised may be discussed further within the high-level segment under agenda item 12.</p>	
	Item 7: Programme of work and operation of the Convention (cont.)			

TIME	ITEM	ACTION	EXPLANATORY NOTES	DOCUMENTS ¹
15.20 - 16.20	(b) Long-term strategic plan	Decision	<p>Through decision II/8, the Meeting of the Parties requested the Working Group of the Parties to develop a strategic plan for consideration and adoption at the third meeting of the Parties. The Working Group prepared a draft plan based upon a proposal from the Bureau, which in turn was based upon draft elements prepared by an ad hoc expert group.</p> <p>The Meeting of the Parties is expected to consider, revise as necessary, and provisionally adopt the draft plan prepared by the Working Group of the Parties.</p>	Draft decision III/8
16.20 - 16.40	**Coffee break**			
16.40 - 17.50	(c) Work programme for 2009–2011, including financial aspects	Decision	<p>The Meeting of the Parties is expected to consider a draft decision containing the proposed work programme for 2009–2011, revise it as necessary, and provisionally adopt it. The draft decision is expected to indicate the estimated costs of the activities contained in the work programme as well as the expected sources of funding, in accordance with the draft decision on financial arrangements (see agenda item 6 (d)).</p> <p>It is expected that Parties, Signatories and other interested States will have informed the secretariat in advance of the meeting of their intention to contribute to the financial resources of the Convention under the scheme of contributions envisaged in the draft decision.</p> <p>The secretariat will make the information received available to the Meeting of the Parties and delegations will be invited to provide any supplementary information.</p>	Draft decision III/9
17.50 - 18.00	Item 9: Report on credentials	Approval	The Meeting of the Parties will be invited to approve the report on the credentials, presented by the officers in accordance with rule 17 of the rules of procedure.	

TIME	ITEM	ACTION	EXPLANATORY NOTES	DOCUMENTS ¹
HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT				
Friday, 13 June 2008				
The Chair of the Meeting of the Parties will invite a high-level official from the host country to chair the high-level segment.				
9.30 - 9.50	Opening ceremony		Welcome address by the UNECE Executive Secretary. Welcome address by a high-level official from the host country.	
9.50 - 11.20	Item 10: Celebrating the first 10 years: achievements, lessons learned and future challenges	Debate	Following a keynote speech or speeches, there will be a panel discussion involving Ministers and NGOs, followed by a general debate centring on the long-term strategic plan. Reference documents will include the two sets of national implementation reports and the respective synthesis reports, the capacity-building report and the draft long-term strategic plan (for further details, see ECE/MP.PP/2008/1/Add.2 ³).	
11.20 - 11.40	**Coffee break**			
11.40 - 13.00	Item 11: Global and regional initiatives to promote principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development	Debate	Following a keynote speech or speeches, there will be a panel discussion involving ministers and/or other senior political figures, as well as leading representatives of the NGO community, from both inside and outside the UNECE region, followed by a general debate. The debate is expected to focus on how the experience in developing and implementing the Convention in the region can be used to promote progress in implementing principle 10 of the Rio Declaration in other regions (for further details, see ECE/MP.PP/2008/1/Add.2).	

³ This document will include an elaborated programme for parts of the high-level segment, indicating discussion themes, topics of presentations and names of speakers.

TIME	ITEM	ACTION	EXPLANATORY NOTES	DOCUMENTS ¹
13.00 - 15.00	**Lunch**			
15.00 - 16.00	Item 12: Special session on the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers	Debate Adoption	Following a keynote speech or speeches, there will be a panel discussion involving ministers and NGOs followed by a general debate centering on a draft statement on the Protocol on PRTRs prepared by the Working Group of the Parties. Reference documents will include the reports and other documents of the Working Group on PRTRs and the draft statement. Ministers and Heads of delegation of Parties, Signatories and other States, as well as international, regional and non-governmental organizations and other representatives of civil society will be invited to consider, revise as necessary and adopt the statement (for further details, see ECE/MP.PP/2008/1/Add.2).	Draft statement
16.00 - 16.20	Item 13: Review and adoption of decisions	Adoption	The Meeting of the Parties will be invited to review the draft decisions and to adopt them.	Draft decisions
16.20 - 16.40	**Coffee break**			
16.40 - 17.30	Item 14: Discussion and adoption of the Riga Declaration	Adoption	Ministers and Heads of delegation of Parties, Signatories and other States, as well as international, regional and non-governmental organizations and other representatives of civil society will be invited to consider and adopt a declaration based on a draft text prepared by the Working Group of the Parties.	Draft declaration
17.30 - 17.35	Item 15: Election of officers and other Bureau members	Election	The Meeting of the Parties is expected to elect a Chair and two Vice-Chairs from among the representatives of the Parties present at the meeting in accordance with rule 18. It is also expected to elect the remaining members of the Bureau from among the representatives of the Parties in accordance with rule 22, paragraph 1 (b). NGOs established for the purpose of, and actively engaged in, promoting environmental protection and sustainable development are expected to appoint a representative to attend the meetings of the Bureau, as an observer, in accordance with rule 22, paragraphs 2 and 4.	

TIME	ITEM	ACTION	EXPLANATORY NOTES	DOCUMENTS¹
17.35 - 17.40	<u>Item 16: Date and venue of the fourth ordinary meeting</u>	Decision	The Meeting of the Parties is expected to make a preliminary decision with respect to the date and venue for its fourth ordinary meeting. Parties and prospective Parties are invited to consider hosting the meeting and to inform the secretariat in advance of any proposals that they may intend to make in this regard.	
17.40 - 17.45	<u>Item 17: Any other business</u>		Delegations wishing to propose points under this item are requested to inform the secretariat as soon as possible.	
17.45 - 17.55	<u>Item 18: Adoption of the report</u>	Adoption	The Meeting of the Parties will be invited to adopt a draft report of its third meeting.	Draft report of the meeting
17.55 - 18.00	<u>Item 19: Close of the meeting</u>		The Chair of the high-level segment will close the meeting.	
