

ENVIRONMENT



2019 HIGHLIGHTS

Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTRs

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- Through the Convention's work on access to justice governmental officials, judges and other judiciary strengthened the capacity to promote effective access to justice in environmental matters. The 2019 Judicial Colloquium considered the role of the Aarhus Convention and its linkages with other UNECE multilateral environmental agreements in enforcing environmental law in the context of environmental constitutionalism and sustainable development



- Judicial Colloquium and Twelfth meeting of the Aarhus Convention Task Force on Access to Justice | 27 February – 1 March 2019, Geneva



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- The Aarhus Convention Parties reaffirmed their commitment to promote effective and inclusive public participation in national, transboundary and international contexts with the focus on international financial institutions for the latter. Further, they reaffirmed their obligation to improve legal frameworks and practical arrangements as to ensure that persons exercising their environmental rights are not penalized, persecuted or harassed in any way for their involvement. A number of valuable examples on these topics were shared by Governments and stakeholders



- Twenty-third meeting of the Working Group of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention | 26 - 28 June 2019, Geneva



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- Through the Convention's work on access to information Governments and stakeholders strengthened their capacities on (a) how to effectively provide information to the public in the event of any imminent threat to human health or the environment; (b) on how to put in place effective legislative and practical measures enabling whistle-blowers and other environmental defenders to report violations in this regard; and (c) on how to effectively produce environmental information harnessing benefits of e-government, open data initiatives and the increased use of modern digital technologies by the public



- Sixth meeting of the Task Force on Access to Information under the Aarhus Convention | 2 - 4 October 2019, Geneva



Sharing lessons from the Aarhus Convention at UNFCCC PreCOP25 and First Meeting of Signatory Countries to the Escazu Agreement

- *At dedicated event taking place at the PreCOP25 in San José, Costa Rica, UNFCCC Parties, other interested States and stakeholders were trained by the Aarhus Convention's secretariat on how to handle effective and inclusive public participation in climate-related decision-making.*
- *The Signatories to the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazu Agreement), other interested States and stakeholders benefited from the advisory support of the Aarhus Convention secretariat provided at the Signatories' first meeting.*



- UNFCCC PreCOP25 and First Meeting of Signatory Countries to the Escazú Agreement | 8-12 October 2019, San Jose, Costa Rica



- Through the Protocol on PRTRs' work countries strengthened their capacities in establishing effective PRTR systems that meet common international standards and promoted modernisation of reporting by industry



- Seventh meeting of the Working Group of the Parties to the Protocol on PRTRs | 28 - 29 November 2019, Geneva



- The Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee assisted 14 Convention's Parties to improve their legislation and practice with regard to access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters. This assistance covered a broad range of topics, including environmental impact assessments, nuclear activities, energy plans, spatial planning, waste, water, nature and noise exemption permitting, legal aid, the costs for bringing court challenges in environmental cases and protection of environmental defenders
- The Protocol on PRTs Compliance Committee worked to assist Parties to further development of the Protocol and improve their legislative frameworks





- Through the work of the Aarhus Convention and the Protocol on PRTRs, countries furthered the environmental dimension of SDG 16 thereby contributing to the achievement of multiple Goals



- Empowering People to Protect the Planet: the environmental dimension of SDG 16 | Round Table at the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE region | 22 March 2019, Geneva



- Parties to the Aarhus Convention and to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety along with different stakeholders gathered to promote the transfer of knowledge and to foster environmental democracy in the context of LMOs/GMOs



- Joint Global Round Table on LMOs/GMOs | 16 - 18 December 2019, Geneva



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- Through years, the Convention and its Protocol proved to be instrumental in addressing the current challenges and conflicting priorities facing in the world, including addressing hot spot environmental issues, energy system transformation, transition towards green economy and infrastructure, promoting innovation and fighting the corruption.

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Thank you for all your efforts that helped to promote transparency, better decision-making and the rule of law for the benefit of people and nature!

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