This presentation will address:

- Current structure of Convention
- Task forces and working groups: now and in the past
- Activities
- Working methods
- Capacity building coordination
- Role of civil society
- Some closing thoughts
Meeting of the Parties (every three years)

Working Group of the Parties (every year)

Task Force on Access to Information

Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-making

Task Force on Access to Justice

Compliance Committee

Secretariat (supports all work, including capacity building)
Current working group and task forces:

- Working Group of the Parties

Task Forces on:

- Access to Information
- Public participation in decision-making
- Access to justice
Some past working groups:

- **Working Group on Compliance and Rules of Procedure and the Task Force on Compliance**
  - Rules of Procedure and decision on compliance review mechanism adopted at MOP1

- **Working Group on PRTRs**
  - Protocol on PRTRs adopted at extra-ordinary session of Meeting of the Parties in 2003

- **Working Group on Genetically Modified Organisms**
  - GMO amendment adopted at MOP2
• **What the current task forces do:**

• Examples of task force activities:
  
  • Provide forums for exchanging national experiences – both good and bad

  • Opportunities for participants to hear from experts generating innovation and new ideas

  • Undertake research to support progress at the national and regional level

  • Allow for a deeper focus on certain high priority issues, and to build synergies with other international processes working on that issue

  • Consider the further development of the Convention, including preparing new legal instruments
• **Methods of working:**

  • Aarhus Convention Rules of Procedure apply
    • Open and participatory rules and procedures
      • All meetings open
      • All documents, including drafts, available to governments and civil society beforehand
      • Chairs will usually invite speakers to speak in order flags are raised

  • Diverse methods of work, designed so as to generate the most productive exchange, eg:
    • Presentations followed by open discussion
    • Panels followed by open discussion
    • Small group discussions on particular themes and issues, with reports back to the plenary
    • Open consultations in plenary

  • Informal, collaborative and lively meetings
• **Capacity building coordination meetings**

  • One meeting per year

  • Brings together all key partner organizations, the secretariat and civil society together in one place

  • Important tool for identifying priorities, build synergies and to prevent duplication in capacity-building efforts
Role of civil society:

- Key role in all task forces and working groups
- Bringing national experiences to the task forces and working groups, disseminating good practices learned back through networks at the national level
- Identifying key challenges in implementation = priorities for work
- Build relationships with government that continue at the national level
- Help to make civil society’s expectations realistic
- Increase acceptance of government’s subsequent action at the national level
Some closing thoughts:

- If the Meeting of the Parties is the steering wheel, the task forces and working groups are the engine providing the «driving-force»

- Tools to drive progress at the national and regional level

- The more the governments, civil society and experts engage, the richer the outcomes are for everyone
Thank you!

For further information:
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