

Organizational session of the Ad hoc open-ended working group, established by General Assembly resolution 72/277 of 10 May 2018

5- 7 September 2018

Information Note

1. Overview

By General Assembly resolution 72/277, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its seventy-third session in 2018, a technical and evidence-based report that identifies and assesses possible gaps in international environmental law and environment-related instruments with a view to strengthening their implementation.

The General Assembly decided to establish an ad hoc open-ended working group, under its auspices. The working group is mandated to consider the Secretary-General's report and to discuss possible options to address possible gaps in international environmental law and environment-related instruments, as appropriate, and, if deemed necessary, the scope, parameters and feasibility of an international instrument, with a view to making recommendations, which may include the convening of an intergovernmental conference to adopt an international instrument.

The President of the General Assembly has appointed H.E. Amal Mudallali, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Lebanon and H.E. Francisco António Duarte Lopes, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Portugal as Co-Chairs of the ad hoc open-ended working group.

The Co-Chairs are convening the organizational session of the process from **Wednesday, 5 September to Friday, 7 September 2018** at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

2. Opening and plenary

The opening meeting will feature statements by the President of the General Assembly, and the Co-Chairs of the ad hoc open-ended working group.

The provisional agenda of the organizational session is available at [A/AC.289/1](#).

The organizational session will only have plenary meetings. It will include statements by States Members of the United Nations and Members of the specialized agencies, and Observers of the General Assembly.

A list of speakers for the plenary meetings will be established in accordance with customary protocol, and the time limits for these statements will be three minutes for individual delegations and five minutes for statements made on behalf of a group of States.

Member States are encouraged to submit their requests for inscription to the list of speakers through the e-Speakers system. The e-Speakers system is accessible at <https://delegate.un.int>. An automated e-mail acknowledgement will be sent within one hour of receipt of request for inscription.

Observers wishing to speak during the plenary segment are kindly requested to inscribe with the list of speakers. Please send an e-mail to Ms. Isabel Alejandrino (e-mail: alejandrino@un.org).

PaperSmart Services will be available for the plenary segment. Delegations are kindly requested to submit electronic versions of their statements for posting on the PaperSmart portal to papersmart@un.org. The title and the date of the meeting should be indicated in the subject line of the e-mail.

Seating for Member States and Members of the specialized agencies will follow the English alphabetical order.

3. Attendance of other stakeholders

The United Nations system, including funds, programmes and specialized agencies, are invited to participate in the organizational session, as appropriate.

As far as non-governmental organizations are concerned, the General Assembly decided that attendance as observers at the sessions of the ad hoc open-ended working group will be open to relevant non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, as well as to those that were accredited to relevant conferences and summits. In referring to relevant conferences and summits the General Assembly made reference to the non-governmental organizations that were accredited to the following relevant conferences and summits: The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda.

Registration for non-governmental organizations is required by filling in the form at <https://bit.ly/2AAErBT>

The deadline for registration is 28 August 2018.

Registration will be on a first come first served basis.

4. Registration of members of official delegations

Missions/offices are requested to register the names of representatives, alternate representatives and advisers attending the organizational session through the e-List of Participants module on the e-deleGATE portal at <https://delegate.un.int>.

An e-mail setting out the list of delegation should also be sent to the New York Office of the United Nations Environment Programme at environmentny@un.org.

5. Access arrangements

Access for Member States and Observers, UN Funds and Programmes, Specialized Agencies and other UN Entities

A valid United Nations grounds pass is needed to access the UN premises.

Members of official delegations of Member States or observers, who are not in possession of a UN grounds pass, must coordinate with their respective permanent missions in New York for proper registration to the meeting via the eAccreditation system in order for a UN grounds pass to be issued. Upon approval by the Protocol office, VIP passes (for cabinet ministers and above) will be issued by the Protocol Office (Room S-0200) and regular UN grounds passes will be issued by the Pass and Identification Unit (320 East 45th Street, Ground Floor).

Delegations wishing to obtain information on the system may refer to the updated “Guidelines on eAccreditation” and “Frequently asked questions” sections posted on the Protocol and Liaison Service website (<http://protocol.un.org>). It should be noted that all requests for badges, including requests for VIP passes, must be submitted through the eAccreditation system.

Access for NGOs and other stakeholders

As far as the registration process for representatives of non-governmental organizations is concerned, the applicant should receive a confirmation email. Once the process has been completed he or she should expect to receive a further email with details on time, date and location at which the special event ticket is to be collected.

Members of non-governmental organizations who are invited to attend the organizational session will be required to be in possession of government-issued identification and a special event ticket (indicating a specific meeting, date and time), at all times.

It should be noted that access to the United Nations will be denied to anyone who is not in the above-listed categories and who is not in possession of a valid grounds pass or special event ticket.

6. Assistance to developing countries

The General Assembly, by resolution 72/277, has requested the Secretary-General to establish a special voluntary trust fund for the purpose of assisting developing countries, in particular, the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, in attending the sessions of the ad hoc open-ended working group, including daily subsistence allowance, in addition to defraying the costs of economy-class travel for one delegate per State for each session.

Those Governments who have decided to avail themselves of this financial support and have submitted a nomination letter and form to the United Nations Environment Programme and also received a confirmation e-mail confirming that they are indeed eligible and approved, as well as an airline ticket, may collect their daily subsistence allowance from 4 September from the New York Office of the United Nations Environment Programme which is located on the 8th floor of DC2 at 1st Avenue at 44th Street. (2 UN Plaza). Delegates will be required to provide their passports and boarding passes when receiving their daily subsistence allowance. Should delegates have any questions they may contact Sarah Muchiri at sarah.muchiri@un.org.

7. Documentation, Statements and Non-official language interpretation

Statements made in any of the six official languages of the General Assembly are interpreted into the other official languages. Any speaker may also make a statement in a language other than the official languages. In such cases, in accordance with rule 53 of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly, the delegation in question must provide either an interpreter from the non-official language into an official language, or a written text of the statement in one of the official languages to be read out by a United Nations interpreter. On the basis of this interpretation or the written text which is accepted by the Secretariat as representing the official text of the statement, it will be interpreted into the other official languages by United Nations interpreters.

When a written text is provided, the delegation concerned should make available to the interpreter someone who knows the language in which the statement is to be delivered and the official language into which it has been translated, to guide the interpreter through the translated text and to ensure synchronization between the speaker and the interpreter.

Detailed arrangements for interpretation from non-official languages, including access by non-United Nations interpreters to the interpreter booths in the conference room, must be made in advance through the Meetings Management. The interpreter or the guide provided by the delegation should be brought by the delegation to the conference officers' desk in the conference room 30 minutes prior to the delivery of the statement.