

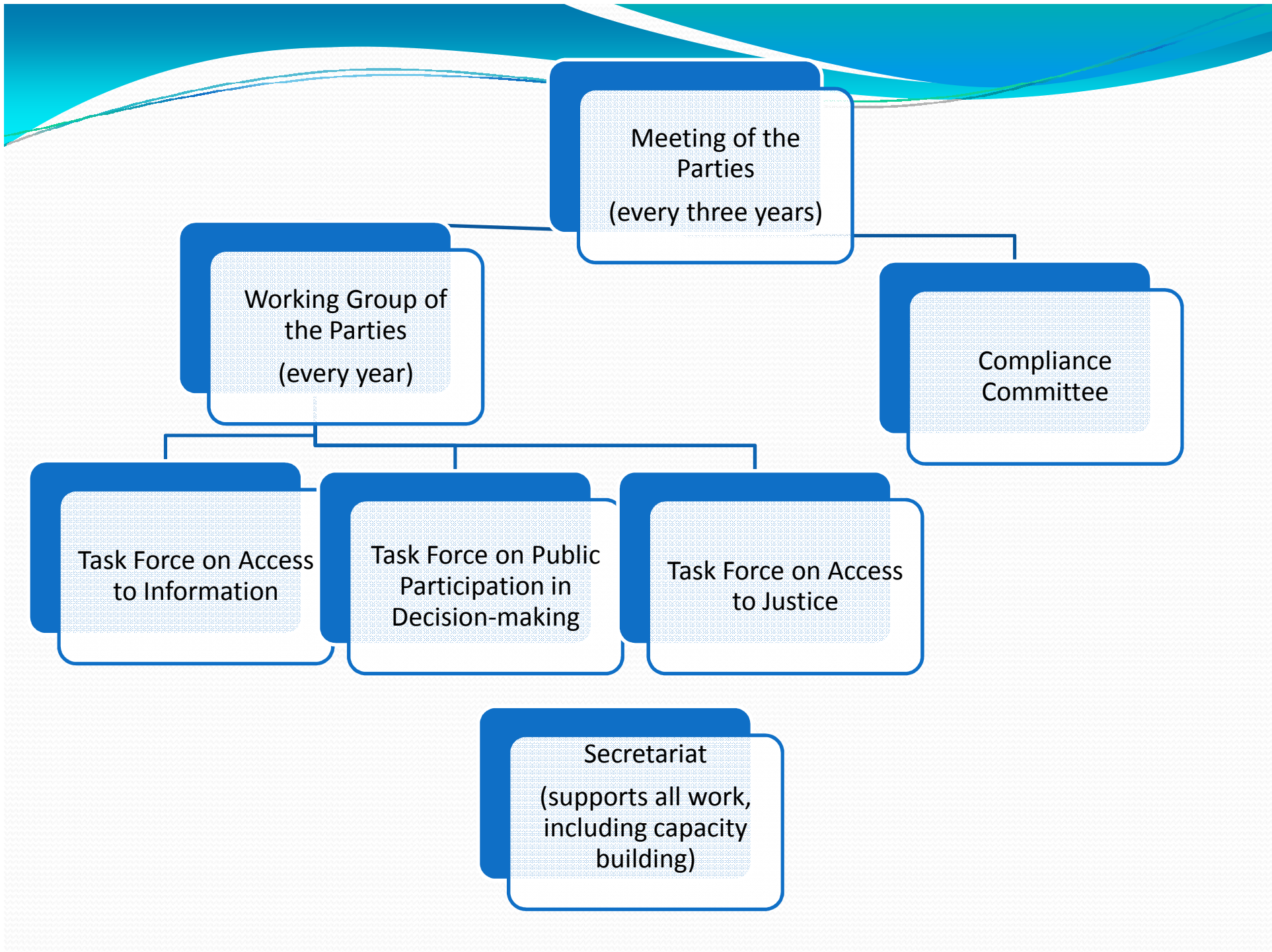
The task forces and working groups of the Aarhus Convention: Generating progress

Fiona Marshall
Aarhus Convention secretariat

Second meeting of the Focal Points of the signatory countries of the Declaration on the application of Principle
10 in Latin America and the Caribbean, Guadalajara, Mexico, 16-17 April 2013



- 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





- 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:

Website : <http://www.unece.org/env/pp/welcome.html>

Email: public.participation@unece.org