Category: Obligation to Make Environmental Information Public

Sub-Category: Online Tools

Name of Good Practice: UN Economic Commission for Europe, **Aarhus Clearinghouse for Environmental Democracy**

Key Words: Aarhus Convention, Access to Information, Access to Justice, Internet, Participation, Principle 10, Right to a Healthy Environment, Rio Declaration,

Implementing Actors: International Organisation: UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

Location: Global

Description: The Aarhus Clearinghouse is a forum to provide information on good practices relevant to the public’s right to access environmental information, participate in environmental decision-making, and achieve justice on environmental matters, areas that are covered by the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters and Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration. The Clearinghouse disseminates information through an easy-to-use website where users can search for information through four search options. The first is by “which type of resource” and includes many categories such as events, legislation, jurisprudence, policy, funding, procedures, training materials, and projects. The second option is to search by “what is the purpose” and includes as categories, among others, access to justice, access to information, convention compliance, public participation, and electronic tools. The third option is to search by “who is the source” and includes as categories Aarhus centres, academia, courts, government, international organisations, and non-governmental organisations. The final option is to search by “where in the world” and lists specific countries and regions. In addition, users can search practices on the Clearinghouse through a resource directory. As of December 2014, the Clearinghouse had 1633 practices.

For example, recent postings on the Clearinghouse include: a call for proposals by the European Commission to fund judicial training projects; links to the outcomes of the global symposium on environmental rule of law hosted by the UN Environment Programme; a call for public input to provide the Independent Expert Advisory Group (IAEG) established by the UN Secretary General with recommendations on how to achieve a data revolution for sustainable development; a call for the submission of abstracts to the 3rd UNITAR-Yale Conference on Environmental Governance and Democracy; and a recent decision by the French Constitutional Court on the ban of hydraulic fracking. In addition, the Clearinghouse contains all national implementation reports to the Aarhus Convention by State Parties, which also include good practices relevant to meeting State Party obligations under the treaty.

 Further Information: The Clearinghouse’s website: <http://aarhusclearinghouse.unece.org/>.