

## **GUIDELINE FOR PARTICIPATING IN E-DISCUSSIONS**

### **What is an e-discussion?**

An e-discussion is an electronic discussion to promote and stimulate debate on a particular topic. It is a tool for a group of people, in any geographic location, to exchange ideas and resources and is particularly useful for advancing understanding of key issues, methodologies and good practices, and identifying common obstacles and challenges.

### **The Benefits of e-discussion**

The e-discussions have the ability to bring together a larger and more diverse group of people than most other learning events, as well as their extended duration, which permits a level of sustained interaction and reflection on the chosen subject that is often not possible with face-to face meetings.

### **General Features of Thematic e-discussions**

E-discussions are held to promote and stimulate debate on a chosen topic, such as a particular challenge for national machineries or an upcoming theme of an inter-governmental process. Their extended duration permits a level of sustained interaction and reflection and they can therefore be useful for national machineries to advance their understanding of key issues, methodologies and good practices, and identify common obstacles and challenges. They also bring together a diverse group of stakeholders, including national machineries, line ministries, NGOs and academia etc., in order to promote collaboration and cooperation. National machineries are responsible for actively publicizing upcoming e-discussions and encouraging relevant stakeholders to take part.

E-discussions for the e-network will be held every 4 months (3 per year), for duration of 6 weeks, on relevant topics identified by national machineries. They will operate via email. In the initial phase (1-2 years) one e-discussion will be led by ECA; one by DAW; and one by national machinery or an invited NGO/academic institution.

The thematic e-discussions will operate in the same way as the general discussion list and can be accessed through both an existing email accounts and also through a web-based version via a link on the information portal.

## **Participation Guidelines**

When the e-discussion is announced in advance, detailed instructions on how to sign up will be provided.

The thematic e-discussions of the e-network will be open to all stakeholders, including staff of national machineries, line ministries, NGOs, donors and academia, in order to promote collaboration and cooperation. The e-discussion will operate in both English and French.

## **Accessing the e-discussions**

Access to the thematic e-discussions is email based and participants can send and receive messages directly from their existing email accounts. It is also possible to access a web-based version of the discussion list via a link on the information portal. The web-based interface for the discussion list is in English and French. From here, members can view message archives as well as a list of members belonging to the e-discussion. They can also edit their own profile and change their password.

If you are not receiving any e-discussion emails, please check your spam or junk mail folder. If messages are being sent there, please add [the](#) e-discussion email address to your address book.

## **Etiquette for posting messages**

See the information on the general discussion lists for etiquette in posting messages. These guidelines should also be followed for e-discussions.

In particular, note that whereas the general discussion list is restricted only to staff of national machineries in Africa, the e-discussions will be open to all stakeholders, including national machineries, line ministries, NGOs, academia etc.

## **Suggested content for e-discussion postings**

Only information directly related to the e-discussion topic should be sent to the list. Any other information that you wish to share should be sent to the general discussion list for national machineries. If you wish to send a personal message to another e-discussion member, send a separate email to that person's personal email address and not to the e-discussion address.

At the beginning of the e-discussion, a moderator will send a 6-week outline of the e-discussion to the list. The moderator will also send a set of specific sub-topics and questions at the beginning of each week. You can participate in the e-discussion by:

- Responding to the moderator's weekly questions or to questions from other participants. You can share your opinion or experience and/or share related resources that may be of interest to other participants.
- Raising new questions or comments, related to the e-discussion topic.

