

5. The secretariat shall convene the first session of the Meeting of the Parties in conjunction with the first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention that is scheduled after the date of the entry into force of this Protocol. Subsequent ordinary sessions of the Meeting of the Parties shall be held every year and in conjunction with ordinary sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, unless otherwise decided by the Meeting of the Parties.
6. Extraordinary sessions of the Meeting of the Parties shall be held at such other times as may be deemed necessary by the Meeting of the Parties, or at the written request of any Party, provided that, within six months of the request being communicated to the Parties by the secretariat, it is supported by at least one third of the Parties.
7. The United Nations, its specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency, as well as any State member thereof or observers thereto not party to the Convention, may be represented at sessions of the Meeting of the Parties as observers. Any body or agency, whether national or international, governmental or non-governmental, which is qualified in matters covered by this Protocol and which has informed the secretariat of its wish to be represented at a session of the Meeting of the Parties as an observer, may be so admitted unless at least one third of the Parties present object. The admission and participation of observers shall be subject to the rules of procedure adopted by the Meeting of the Parties.
8. Without prejudice to paragraphs 1 to 7 above, the Parties to this Protocol may meet at any time they deem necessary.

Article 15

1. The secretariat established by Article 8 of the Convention shall serve as the secretariat of this Protocol.
2. The functions of the secretariat under Article 8.2 and arrangements made for its functioning under Article 8.3 of the Convention shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to this Protocol. The secretariat shall also exercise the functions assigned to it under this Protocol.
- [3. To the extent that they are distinct, the costs of secretariat services for this Protocol shall be met by the Parties thereto.]

Article 16

1. The Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation of the Convention shall serve as the Subsidiary Body for Scientific