

26 August 09

**Guidelines for Participation of
Major Groups and Stakeholders
in
Policy Design at UNEP.**

Table of contents

<i>INTRODUCTION</i>	4
<i>CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND</i>	5
1.1. Expectations	6
1.1.1. Major Groups Expectations from UNEP	6
1.1.2. UNEP Expectations from Major Groups	7
<i>CHAPTER 2: CREATING A BALANCED AND ACTIVELY FACILITATED FRAMEWORK FOR MANAGING MAJOR GROUP INPUT TO THE UNEP GOVERNANCE PROCESS</i>	8
2.1. The Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum (GMGSF): Engaging with the Governing Council	8
2.2. The Regional Consultative Meetings (RCM's)	8
2.3 The UNEP Major Groups Facilitating Committee (MGFC)	9
2.3.1. Background	9
2.3.2. Composition	9
2.3.3 Major Groups Facilitation Committee (MGFC): Terms of Reference.	10
2.3.4. Development of Policy Statements	11
2.3. Sponsorship to the GMGSF	12
2.4. Modalities of Engagement in the GC/GMEF	12
<i>CHAPTER 3: THE WAY FORWARD: POLICY AND PROGRAMME DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION</i>	12
3.1. Policy and programme design	12
3.2. Programme Implementation	13

Preface

Cooperation between the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Major Groups and Stakeholders spans more than three decades on a wide variety of levels, from technical cooperation through to policy development and governance. UNEP has consistently welcomed an ongoing dialogue and frank exchange of views with Major Groups and Stakeholders – as it has long been recognized that Major Groups and Stakeholders can be substantive contributors to improving our understanding of the environment, and to developing innovative solutions to environmental challenges. These organizations, in turn, have become increasingly mobilized to both influence and collaborate with the UNEP decision-making process.

This document specifically addresses cooperation between UNEP and Major Groups and Stakeholders in governance functions and policy formulation during UNEP policy processes. Interaction between Major Groups and Stakeholders and UNEP became more formalized in 2000, in light of the Malmoe Declaration which emphasized the inherent challenges to UNEP and Major Groups and Stakeholders, and has evolved into an annual process, including 6 regional Major Groups and Stakeholders Meetings and a global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum. These meetings are designed to air views related to key issues on the UNEP Governing Council agenda – and more importantly to develop coherent Major Groups and Stakeholders responses to these issues. To date, Major Groups and Stakeholders representatives accredited to ECOSOC or UNEP through their organizations are invited to participate in Governing Council discussions as well as similar processes.

Agenda 21, adopted by the U.N. Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), or “Earth Summit” in 1992, established the concept of the nine “Major Groups”: farmers, women, the scientific and technological community, children and youth, indigenous peoples and their communities, workers and trade unions, business and industry, non-governmental organizations, and local authorities. Several of these constituencies are well organized through representational membership organizations spanning national and global levels. Some Major Groups focus on well defined issues, while others address a much broader array of concerns. The challenge for both Major Groups and Stakeholder organizations and for UNEP is to develop a process that respects and gives voice to the diverse views of Major Group representatives while at the same time structuring Major Group input in such a way that it can effectively inform the inter-governmental process.

The Guidelines described in this document aim to create a balanced and actively facilitated framework for managing Major Groups and Stakeholders’ input to the UNEP governance processes. It is foreseen that the Major Groups Facilitating Committee (MGFC) be composed of two representatives from each Major Group, and be regionally and gender balanced. Organizations formally accredited with UNEP will be requested to tender their interest in facilitating dialogue within their Major Group on substantive Governing Council issues. UNEP staff will work closely with each of the Major Groups to ensure an equitable process of selection, with gender and geographical balance taken into consideration. Each organisation is expected to commit to this process for a period of 2 years.

Facilitating the development of coherent position papers on substantive Governing Council issues as well as helping “coordinating” or “facilitating” Major Group input and work during the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC/GMEF) will be primary tasks for each of the Major Group representatives to the MGFC. It will also be incumbent upon each Major Group representative to the MGFC to ensure a clear link in their final position papers of their Major Group to the outcomes of the regional Major Groups and Stakeholder discussions.

Introduction

1. “Engagement between UNEP and civil society is necessary, both for UNEP and for the protection of the planet’s fragile web of life. In this engagement lies the potential for resurgence of democracy and ecological awareness...”¹ There is indeed an opportunity for Major Groups and Stakeholders to continuously reassess and provide guidance on how to further civil society’s effective participation.
2. With the goal of providing a vision for how all nine Major Groups can collaborate in an effective Major Groups and Stakeholders process with common reference points, this document, “Guidelines for Participation of Major Groups and Stakeholders in Policy Design at UNEP” is contributing to this collaborative process.
3. Recalling Governing Council Decision 21/19, adopted in 2001 and Governing Council Decision SSVII.5, adopted in 2002, the vision of the following Guidelines should be to work for an integrated approach between UNEP and Major Groups and Stakeholders where both can play significant roles in shaping modern environmental policy. This approach should be regionally and gender balanced, and based on an interactive democracy. It should work to get the best-qualified organisations to participate actively in the policy processes at UNEP; bring the goals and visions of UNEP out to the general public’s awareness and understanding; enhance proficiency, the scientific base and promote capacity building, and solicit a wider public participation in the development and adoption of appropriate strategies for Major Groups and Stakeholders in the work for the environment in all its aspects. This paper is also aimed at securing a more balanced participation of the nine Major Groups.
4. Major Groups and Stakeholders are also implementers and opportunities exist in UNEP for partnerships that can increase the impact or profile of projects that meet shared goals. More specifically, business as well as other Major Groups have important resources and expertise that can contribute to a wide range of programme, policy and implementation activities across UNEP. These implementation aspects are not addressed in the present document which focuses on Major Groups’ participation at the Governance Level. However, there are important synergies between civil society participation at the governance level and in project implementation, with each having the potential to strengthen the other.
5. This document begins by recalling the existing framework of decisions within which the major groups and stakeholders operate. This discussion is followed by a summary of the expectations for civil society and UNEP on moving forward with enhancing their engagement. The Guidelines outline the role, representation, and regional engagement of the Major Group Facilitating Units (the MGFUs), and the Major Groups Facilitating Committee (the MGFC).
6. The first edition of the Guidelines adopted in February 2008 and approved by UNEP in March 2008, was to be revised after one year. This second edition has been presented to civil society for adoption by email consultation. After approval by the Executive Director of UNEP, the present 2009 Guidelines will be subject to a review after two years.

¹ Dr. Vandana Shiva, Founder of the Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology of India, in *Natural Allies: UNEP and Civil Society*, 2004, available on the web at: <http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=468&ArticleID=4622&l=en>.

Chapter 1: Background

7. Recalling that after nearly twenty years of encouraging UNEP's collaboration with Major Groups and Stakeholders through outreach and liaison services, the 1992 "Earth Summit" declared that the involvement of nine Major Groups was necessary to achieve sustainable development. The nine Major Groups recognized by the Earth Summit agreements are: farmers, women, the scientific and technological community, children and youth, indigenous peoples and their communities, workers and trade unions, business and industry, non-governmental organizations, and local authorities. For the purposes of this paper, the term civil society is used as an umbrella term covering all nine Major Groups.
8. Recalling both Governing Council Decision 21/19, adopted in 2001, calling on UNEP to submit a "draft strategy for the active engagement of the civil society, private sector and other major groups in the work of UNEP"; and Governing Council Decision SSVII.5, adopted in 2002, where Governments requested that the "Executive Director continue the current practice of convening a civil society forum that is regionally balanced and representative in conjunction with the meetings of the GC/GMEF in close consultation with civil society." It is the latter portion of this statement that this document seeks to implement by providing the Executive Director with recommendations on how to encourage greater regional balance and representation among the nine Major Groups through their membership to the UNEP Major Groups Facilitating Committee (MGFC), previously called the Global Civil Society Steering Committee. The name has been changed to underline this greater emphasis on Major Groups representation.
9. The UNEP strategy paper resulting from the initial call for action in 2001 established three principal pillars for engaging with Major Groups and Stakeholders: governance and policy formulation; programme implementation; and an institutional framework. A Draft Implementation Plan to enhance Major Groups' engagement in the work of UNEP was furthermore presented to participants at the 8th GCSF. By capitalizing on all three of these pillars, this document seeks to create a common reference document and a set of recommendations for how civil society will continue to strengthen its role within UNEP, at the GC/GMEF, through the Global Major Groups and Stakeholder's Forum (GMGSF) cycle. This document also goes one step further, and provides a vision for seeking greater participation among the nine Major Groups, recognizing that each Major Group has special interests that should be strengthened in a collaborative manner without sacrificing those unique interests within and among the Major Groups.
10. In order to fulfill its role as the lead UN organisation to the global environmental challenges and opportunities, UNEP developed a Medium-Term-Strategy (MTS) which was adopted in early 2008 and will reorient UNEP's Programme of Work in the years 2010-2013 around six thematic issue priorities: Climate Change, Disasters and Conflict, Ecosystems Management, Environmental Governance, Harmful Substances and Hazardous Waste, and Resource Efficiency and Sustainable Consumption and Production. The MTS defines the following roles as central to UNEP's mandate, namely to keep the world environmental situation under review; to catalyze and promote international cooperation and action; to provide policy advice and early warning information based upon sound science and assessments; to facilitate the development, implementation and evolution of norms and standards and to develop coherent interlinkages among international environmental conventions. Equally important is the role of capacity building and technology transfer which was already founded in 2005 through the adoption of the *Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building* (the Bali Strategic Plan). The objective of the Bali Strategic Plan is to strengthen technology support and capacity building, or human capital, in both developing countries and countries in economic transition. It provides a framework for cooperation between UNEP, multilateral environmental agreements, and other bodies engaged in environmental capacity building, including the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Major Groups, and other relevant stakeholders. The MTS also points out that there

is renewed focus on the future evolution of international environmental governance within the United Nations system itself, including calls for greater coherence within the United Nations system and an increased focus on the role of major groups and stakeholders, on being responsive to country level priorities, and on results-based management.

1.1. Expectations

11. This section briefly addresses Major Groups and Stakeholders and UNEP's expectations for engaging in UNEP processes and with delegates during the GC/GMEF.

1.1.1. Major Groups Expectations from UNEP

12. The initial expectations of the Major Groups in 2007 were to see a continuation of the progress made at the 8th GCSF and the 24th GC/GMEF held in Nairobi (2007). For the first time direct access to key decision makers on policy and substantive issues was provided. Three methods of engaging with UNEP and delegates were introduced or strengthened:
 - (a) An open exchange of information and viewpoints with UNEP's Executive Director;
 - (b) A dialogue with UNEP policy staff which served as an opportunity for Major Groups and Stakeholders to meet the authors of key UNEP proposals and share concerns; and
 - (c) The designation of twelve seats at the 24th Governing Council Ministerial Roundtables for Major Groups and Stakeholders representatives as participants, not observers, providing them direct access to ministers.
13. This was also the pilot year for the Global Civil Society Steering Committee comprised of representatives from the six UNEP regions to facilitate Major Groups and Stakeholders engagement with UNEP. Forum participants were supportive of the concept of such a Committee, noting that the primary role of such a Committee is to be a facilitator between UNEP and Major Groups and Stakeholders, and not to be a decision making body. This Committee was also seen as a useful contact point for Major Groups and stakeholders organizations wanting to learn more about engaging in UNEP processes, particularly because this year major groups and Stakeholders participants had access to the floor in the plenary sessions during both the GMEF and the Committee of the Whole. However, participants stressed the need to improve the GCSF cycle, especially requesting a more balanced composition of this Committee.
14. It is therefore expected that these levels of engagement continue and that further adjustments be made to the composition, definition, and role of the Global Civil Society Steering Committee which was renamed Major Groups Facilitating Committee (MGFC).
15. Similarly, it is also expected that in addition to dialogue with UNEP policy staff responsible for drafting various policy frameworks, this process will include the Major Groups and Stakeholders in policy implementation (and drafting) on specific themes. Enhanced ability to allow the Major Groups and Stakeholders to interact with UNEP policy formulation, speaking as Major Groups, would be useful as the Major Groups and Stakeholders try to organize themselves and their key messages.
16. As previously mentioned, the Major Groups and Stakeholders have the capacity to draw on expertise from within the Major Groups, but it becomes more difficult for the Major Groups and Stakeholders to mobilize the right level of expertise in time to assist UNEP's endeavours without a focus from UNEP on a narrower set of issues and clarity on what UNEP's priority areas are several months prior to each GMEF.
17. It is therefore expected that notice of the themes for each GC/GMEF will be available sufficiently in advance of each GC/GMEF, allowing the Major Groups and Stakeholders timely and to

increase interaction with UNEP policy staff responsible for drafting and implementing specific policy themes and frameworks.

18. Since information dissemination by the Major Groups and Stakeholders is also an important asset to UNEP process, enhanced facilitation for the same is duly expected from UNEP
19. UNEP should make every effort to ensure quick translation of relevant documents into UN languages to allow regional balance in views and representation.

1.1.2. UNEP Expectations from Major Groups

20. This section attempts to answer the question, “what is UNEP’s interest in strengthened major groups and stakeholders participation in the UNEP policy process?”
21. Both UNEP and Major Groups and Stakeholders share an interest in stronger and better international environmental policies, and are thus natural allies in working together to strengthen the environmental pillar of the United Nations. In addition to substantial political clout, major groups and stakeholder organizations possess information, technical expertise and practical experience that governments can benefit from in their deliberations and decision making at the GC/GMEF and in other policy forums. The decisions that result from these processes will enjoy greater support from civil society and the public if major groups and stakeholders views are taken into account from the beginning. Furthermore, open processes of political decision making with wider participation enhance transparency, foster coordination among diverse actors and strengthen accountability for implementation and results.
22. Major Groups and Stakeholders can be an asset to the UNEP process on a variety of levels including, but not limited to being, providers of substantive knowledge, drafters of creative solutions, disseminators of information to communities at the grassroots level, and advocates for specific issues. It is in these roles that Major Groups and Stakeholders stand to have a significant impact—as an outside voice working with UNEP to help strengthen the role of the environment within the United Nations system. Major Groups and Stakeholders also have greater capacity to draw on expertise from within the Major Groups delineations to provide representative perspectives potentially leading to a fuller contribution to international processes.
23. To maximize these important benefits of major groups’ and stakeholders’ participation in international environmental governance, major groups and stakeholder organizations must dedicate their most skilled and knowledgeable experts to participate in the UNEP policy processes based on the particular issues under discussion at any given time. Major groups and stakeholders should also organize their participation in the GC/GMEF to be as representative as possible, taking into account expertise, geographical origin, gender and other relevant criteria.

Chapter 2: Creating a balanced and actively facilitated framework for managing Major Group input to the UNEP governance process

2.1. The Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum (GMGSF): Engaging with the Governing Council

24. The purpose of the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum which previously was called the “Global Civil Society Forum”, is to increase major groups and stakeholders influence and inputs into decisions adopted by the GC/GMEF by informing the Major Groups (MGs) and relevant stakeholders about UNEP’s procedures and arrangements of the upcoming GC, providing information about the latest developments on substance, allowing the different Major Groups the opportunity to have an exchange of views, and to facilitate the development of possible common positions of the Major Groups related to the topics discussed at the GC/GMEF.

2.2. The Regional Consultative Meetings (RCM’s)

25. The Regional Consultation Meetings constitute the main platform for the Major Groups to engage with the Regional Offices of UNEP on an annual basis. Their purpose is to serve as opportunities for capacity building and networking for the Major Groups in the regions, as well as for the Regional Offices. And yet they have not fully served one of the purposes for which they were meant i.e. providing timely contributions to the GC/GMEF, because they take place when draft decisions are not yet known.

26. To address this problem, the following improvements will be implemented:

- a) The RCMs would be under the responsibility of the Regional Offices and held prior to or in conjunction with relevant major regional meetings, events or fora. They would be dedicated to discussing relevant programme issues and possible cooperative actions, and/or preparing of the Major Groups’ inputs into the relevant major regional meetings/events/fora.
- b) They would also serve as capacity building and networking exercises for the Major Groups in the regions, and constitute platforms for Regional Offices to engage with major groups and stakeholders on an annual basis. More flexibility would be given to the Regional Offices to organize workshops/meeting with a stronger regional focus in coherence with identified needs. This would in particular respond to the need for increasing and making more visible UNEP’s presence at regional level.
- c) The choice of the date, the setting of the agenda and the selection of the organizations to be invited to the RCM’s are the responsibility of the Regional Offices. The Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch of the Division of Regional Cooperation will assist the Regional Offices on these issues, and will consult the UNEP MGFC to do so. All the organizations that are accredited to UNEP’s Governing Council will be invited to the RCM of their region.
- d) The participants in each of the six Regional Consultative Meetings, the RCMs, are asked to nominate and elect two candidates to attend the GMGSF, paying attention to gender balance, who both have expert knowledge of the thematic issues to be dealt with at the upcoming GC/GMEF. These candidates shall serve for one year, until the next Regional Meeting, and also serve as observers on the MGFC. In case these candidates represent organizations not accredited to UNEP, then accreditation will have to be requested, and it’s approval by the UNEP Secretariat of Governing Bodies is a condition for their

participation as regional representatives to the GMGSF as well as observers to the MGFC.

2.3 The UNEP Major Groups Facilitating Committee (MGFC)

27. This section addresses the functions of the MGFC, previously named Global Civil Society Steering Committee. The name was changed to Major Groups Facilitating Committee to underline the higher emphasis on the Major Groups' criteria. As described in more details in sections 2.3.3 below, the role of the MGFC is to provide guidance and to coordinate the engagement of Major Groups in the GCSF cycle.
28. The MGFC consists of eighteen people, two appointed by each of the nine Major Groups Facilitating Units (see chapter 2.3.2.). The committee will also have twelve observers, two elected by each of the six Regional Consultative Meetings (paragraph 26). Recalling paragraph 13 of the Guidelines, the MGFC is "not a decision making body", but is set up "to facilitate Major Groups and Stakeholders engagement with UNEP".

2.3.1. Background

29. Effective preparation for and management of the Global Major Groups and Stakeholder Forum (GMGSF) cycle requires the dedicated work of a committee composed of two representatives of each of the nine Major Groups, in a gender and regionally balanced way. Twelve Regional Representatives, elected during the six Regional Consultative Meetings, will serve as observers in the committee. A number of fundamental principles of engagement shared between major groups and stakeholders organizations and UNEP must be at the basis of the work of this committee. These are:
 - a) Democratic values – the selection of major groups and stakeholders representatives will be founded on shared democratic values as expressed by the United Nations Charter;
 - b) Freedom of expression – while the MGFC will strive for consensus, individual Major Groups reserve the right to express their own positions and issue their own statements;
 - c) Freedom of engagement – while the MGFC and UNEP will strive for collaborative approaches for Major Groups and Stakeholders engagement, individual Major Group organizations and UNEP reserve the right of bilateral engagement;
 - d) Balance – to the extent feasible, all efforts will be made to ensure regional, gender, and Major Groups balance in the composition of the MGFC; and
 - e) Transparency of work and methodology – UNEP will seek to provide translation of documents in UN languages.

2.3.2. Composition

30. Each accredited organization or grouping of accredited organizations to UNEP is called to become the UNEP Major Groups Facilitating Unit (MGFU) of its Major Group. The UNEP Secretariat shall choose, in consultation with the related Major Group, the Major Group organisation in each of the nine bidding applications that in the best possible way demonstrates it can fulfil the requirements of the modalities expressed in this document.

31. In accordance with the principles expressed in this document, such as democratic values, freedom of expression, freedom of engagement as well as geographical and gender balance, each of the nine MGFUs will be responsible for organizing an internal selection process based on a system appropriate to that Major Group, in order to nominate two individuals, taking into account geographical and gender balance. These individuals will then be endorsed by the UNEP Secretariat.
32. In case no agreement can be reached in a particular Major Group related to the nomination of these individuals, the UNEP Secretariat will then directly ask the accredited organisations of this Major Group to nominate one or two representatives and will select the representatives based on these nominations.
33. These individuals, along with their home organisation, should function for a two-year period to represent that Major Group on the MGFC (for a total of eighteen representatives). Taking into account the particular circumstances of the different Major Groups, the maximum number of consecutive terms will normally be two.
34. Because the current nine Major Groups representatives in the MGFC are appointed until August 2010, the additional nine Major Groups representatives will be elected for a period of two years ending in 2011 securing a staggered representation. To avoid determining forever the gender and geographical origin of the members, each Major Group may decide after each year to replace its two representatives.
35. These individuals, with the support of their home organization, will be expected to facilitate engagement of organizations within that Major Group in the GMGSF and in other UNEP fora as appropriate.
36. Any major groups and stakeholders organisation accredited to UNEP regardless of where it is headquartered can make a bid for hosting the secretariat of the facilitating body, the MGFU, provided they meet the following formal requirements, on an overarching level:
 - a) Governance and multi-stakeholder processes;
 - b) Issues development, policy work, capacity building and lobbying;
 - c) Information dissemination;
 - d) Implementation and follow up; and
 - e) Preparation, participation, timing, travel and related logistical concerns.

2.3.3 Major Groups Facilitation Committee (MGFC): Terms of Reference.

37. Having established the MGFC, commitment to the process by its members must be made at a minimum over a two-year period to ensure consistency, along with development of a detailed plan of action on how to work to integrate each Major Group into the UNEP GC/GMEF. This entails securing the resources for this person and reasonable operating costs (along with the necessary fundraising for this).
38. Pending the available human and financial resources the work of the MGFC will fall under the following main categories:
 - a) Provide and develop logistics and process understanding so the Major Groups will be able to maximise their presence under the aegis of the rules of engagement and procedure that the UN and UNEP have set up.
 - b) Provide guidance and find expertise to develop policy positions representing the best from the Major Group constituencies relevant to the agenda points of the UNEP GC/GMEF.

- c) As the UNEP GC and GMEF are policy meetings, and the work of the Major Groups in this context is of that nature, the agendas of all the meetings, regional and central, will be that of the UNEP GC or GMEF.
 - d) The agenda of the GMGSF including the choice of the keynote speakers, and the names of the sponsored participants to the GMGSF will be decided by consensus between UNEP Secretariat and the MGFC.
39. More specifically, and while this might be a challenge for the Major Groups with a very large number of participating organizations, each of the Major Groups representatives must work to:
- a) Maximise participation of representatives of its Major Group worldwide in the UNEP GC/GMEF and its related meetings;
 - b) Promote a good representation of the Major Group at the regional meeting, and ensure that the participants have received the necessary information relating to the agenda beforehand;
 - c) Facilitate the involvement of Major Groups members with specific issue knowledge in UNEP related work, both in the local, national and regional contexts as well as at UNEP GC and the UNEP GMEF;
 - d) Foster balanced representation on the basis of gender, focus and region;
 - e) Mobilise knowledgeable representatives of the Major Groups to participate in the UNEP GC and/or UNEP GMEF;
 - f) Assist participating Major Group members in having access to information related to the agenda for the UNEP meetings and in participating fully in the GC/GMEF and its related meetings, and in having free and unfettered access to delegates;
 - g) Provide general information, training and capacity building on UNEP process in line with the expressed visions, goals and targets as found in the Bali Plan of Action;
 - h) Generate broad media-interest, as well as on-going educational programmes around the world;
 - i) Maintain a web-based information hub, issue based list-serves, as well as general informational sites;
 - j) Disseminate issue-based information from the Major Groups and Stakeholders focussing on these issues, to others not directly involved in those issue-networks; and
 - k) Coordinate the work of the Major Groups policy papers.
40. The MGFC shall also be responsible for coordinating their activities with the regional level in cooperation with their regional networks and with UNEP's Secretariat and Regional Offices. In particular, each of the Major Groups' representatives will help the UNEP Secretariat to:
- a) Foster the participation of organisations of their Major Group at the six regional meetings;
 - b) In regions where their Major Groups are under-represented, help to identify and involve emerging or newly-established Major Groups in the regional meetings;
 - c) Promote inter-regional exchange and coordination of inputs within their Major Group;
 - d) Facilitate the integration of regional concerns into the Major Groups policy statements; and
 - e) Actively participate in identification of skilled or specialised presenters or facilitators at meetings.

2.3.4. Development of Policy Statements

41. Developing an understanding of agenda points and key policy positions are of paramount interest and importance to the various Major Groups and relevant stakeholders. Producing position papers on the agenda points is therefore a primary task for the Major Groups representatives. In line with decisions taken throughout the UN system, and depending on the subject, national, sub-regional and regional concerns often constitute a key element of policy statements. These concerns must be brought to the GC or GMEF in a succinct and representative form.

42. Each of the nine Major Groups is given the opportunity to produce a document on the themes of the GC/GMEF. The documents must reflect the major concerns of each of the Major Groups relating to the agenda themes of the GC/GMEF. The documents must be written according to UNEP format, meet deadlines set by UNEP and, subsequently, sent as UN documents to all delegates as part of the official documents.

2.3. Sponsorship to the GMGSF

43. Sponsorship of GCSF: UNEP will ensure up to thirty sponsored participants with gender, Major Group and geographical balance, plus possibly additional sponsored participants from the host region. Participants to the GMGSF are invited as observers to the GC/GMEF according to UNEP's rules and procedures.

2.4. Modalities of Engagement in the GC/GMEF

44. The Rules of Procedures of the Governing Council provide for “international non-governmental organisations having an interest in the field of the environment” to attend “as observers at public meetings of the Governing Council and its subsidiary organs, if any.”
45. Taking this into account, UNEP Secretariat has devised the modalities for the engagement of accredited organisations in the proceedings of the GC/GMEF as listed here below.
46. Subject to approval of the President of the Governing Council, the accredited organisations are allowed, under the coordination of the MGFC:
- a) To participate in the Ministerial Round Tables of the GMEF;
 - b) To have 9 seats in each of the plenary sessions of the meeting (opening, closing, GMEF, Committee of the Whole);
 - c) To have the opportunity to submit their written input to the President;
 - d) To participate in the open-ended subsidiary organs and bodies of the meeting

Chapter 3: The Way Forward: Policy and Programme Design and Implementation

3.1. Policy and programme design

47. Further involvement of various Major Groups when UNEP develops internal policies, strategies, guidelines or standards would be beneficial to both UNEP and major groups and stakeholders.
48. Although UNEP regularly involve Major Groups in this type of work, the engagement tends to focus mainly on one or a few Major Groups at a time and the exchange among them seems limited. Greater use of multi-stakeholder dialogues and consultations could thus be useful. The Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) represents a best practice in this regard in terms of environmental policy development. Indeed, for the purpose of the rules of procedures of SAICM (SAICM/ICCM.1/6), a "participant" means any governmental, intergovernmental or non-governmental participant. All participants have the same rights concerning the participation in the sessions of the Preparatory Committee and any open-ended subsidiary body, the inclusion of specific items in the provisional agenda, the right to speak, the raising of a point of order and the introduction of proposals and amendments. The regional meetings of the Marrakesh Process and the annual UNEP Business and Industry Global Dialogue

are also good examples of stakeholders engagement. Building on similar experiences, UNEP should consider engaging further in multi-stakeholder dialogues, capitalizing on its unique position in the environmental arena and its relations with various Major Groups. In particular, there may be opportunities to convene multi-stakeholder dialogues sessions alongside the GC/GMEF.

49. Involving various Major Groups in a more systematic way on specific issues would bring a number of advantages to both UNEP and Major Groups and Stakeholders. It would allow UNEP to integrate Major Groups' views and expertise, on specific thematic areas (e.g. water, energy, etc.) from the beginning, hence improving the quality of the policies, strategies, guidelines or standards developed, and eventually facilitating their implementation. Based on specific issues, the approach would improve the quality of UNEP's interaction with Major Groups, and make the results of the consultations more tangible both for UNEP and for major groups and stakeholders.

3.2. Programme Implementation

50. Major Groups and Stakeholders are also implementers and opportunities exist in UNEP for partnerships that can increase the impact or profile of projects that meet shared goals. These implementation aspects are not addressed in the Guidelines which focus on enhancing the engagement of Major Group with UNEP at the governance level. However, it is our expectation that greater involvement of Major Groups in UNEP's policy process will also help to facilitate fuller involvement with programme implementation. A separate process is ongoing to that effect.