

**BRIEFING NOTE ON THE 14TH SESSION  
OF THE GLOBAL MAJOR GROUPS AND  
STAKEHOLDERS FORUM (GMGSF-14):  
16-17 FEBRUARY 2013**

The 14th session of the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum (GMGSF-14) was held from 16-17 February 2013, at the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. The forum was organized by UNEP and took place ahead of the First Universal Session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC/GMEF).

Approximately 270 representatives from the six UNEP regions and the nine Major Groups and stakeholders of civil society attended the forum. GMGSF-14 followed up outcomes of the Rio+20 conference held in June 2012, providing an opportunity for multi-stakeholder dialogue on the post-2015 development agenda, and civil society participation in a strengthened UNEP.

**SESSION 1: OPENING**

On Saturday morning, 16 February, Tomoko Nishimoto, Director, Division of Regional Cooperation (DRC), UNEP, welcomed participants and invited them to contribute their views on how future stakeholder engagement should occur within a strengthened UNEP.

Amina Mohamed, Deputy Executive Director, UNEP, assured participants of UNEP's commitment to forward-looking arrangements for transparency and civil society engagement. She highlighted UNEP's work on green economy, sustainable consumption and production, and agri-food themes.

**SESSION 2: POST RIO+20: MOVING FORWARD ON RIO OUTCOMES AND POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA**

Anabella Rosemberg, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), facilitated this session on Saturday morning.

Jürgen Friedrich, Division for Environmental Law and Conventions, UNEP, presented options associated with strengthening of UNEP, including: renaming its Governing Council as an "Environment Assembly" to reflect its universal membership; integrating high-level sessions into the Governing Council; expanding the Bureau; organizing a "Global Conference on the State of the Planet; and the strengthening of intersessional work. He outlined three dimensions of civil society participation: agenda setting; policy shaping; and implementation.

Sascha Gabizon, Executive Director, Women for our Common Future (WECF) International, recommended learning from the problems of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and urged Major Groups to take part in current thematic online consultations.

Neth Daño, Action Group on Erosion, Technology and Concentration (ETC), noted that Rio+20 and the UN General Assembly had mandated the establishment of an intergovernmental committee to propose options for a sustainable development financing strategy, and that the group had not yet formed. On the Rio+20 agreement for UN agencies to promote technology transfer, she considered the UN's plan for a series of one-day workshops on clean technology and development was insufficient.

Amina J. Mohammed, Secretary-General's Special Advisor on Post-2015 Development Planning, briefed participants on the UN work streams towards post-2015. She emphasized the importance of civil society engagement in the post-2015 processes, as well as ongoing conferences on migration, biodiversity, trade and other issues.

In the ensuing discussion, participants raised: the possibility of a treaty on human rights and the environment; complementarity of post-2015 processes with national sustainable development strategies; and translating the multilateral process to be relevant for grassroots communities.

**SESSION 3: INTRODUCTION TO THE UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL: STRUCTURE AND DECISIONS**

On Saturday morning, Fatou Ndoye, Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch, UNEP, explained how the GC/GMEF would be organized, and highlighted possible entry points for NGOs. She advised that due to universal membership, seating for civil society observers would be limited, and that access to Working Groups would be at the discretion of each group chair.

During the lunch break, participants formed nine breakout groups to further discuss their positions, to be reported back to plenary in the afternoon of the next day.

**SESSION 4: MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE ON MODELS OF PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT IN AN UPGRADED UNEP**

Lalanath de Silva, World Resources Institute, facilitated this session on Saturday afternoon.

Jan-Gustav Strandenaes, Stakeholder Forum, emphasized the value added to the multilateral system through enhanced civil society participation. He presented outcomes of earlier consultations and a Geneva meeting in January 2013, which recommended that UNEP should, *inter alia*: adopt an access to information policy; make better use of modern information technology; establish a mechanism to ensure full implementation of participation rights; and allocate a percentage of its core budget to support enhanced participation.

Jeremy Wates, European Environmental Bureau, proposed that civil society should have the same speaking rights as governments, and recommended stakeholder analysis as a



starting point. He highlighted that some NGOs represent abstract groups or concepts, such as “human rights” or “nature,” which should be taken into account in deciding who participates.

Participants discussed, *inter alia*: recognizing diversity; aiming for unity of purpose; consulting beyond own constituencies; recognizing regional perspectives; taking a human rights approach; and the need to include concerns of groups not specifically represented, such as people with disabilities, or the very poor.

De Silva put forward a joint draft of “Principles of Civil Society Participation in UNEP” and proposed an open-ended working group be formed to prepare a document for the GC on future processes.

#### **SESSION 5: DIALOGUE WITH ACHIM STEINER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, UNEP**

Kehkashan Basu, Youth Major Group, facilitated this dialogue session on Saturday afternoon in which Achim Steiner, Executive Director, UNEP, made opening remarks and responded to participants’ comments and questions. He suggested that the Rio+20 outcome was more transformative than many believed, highlighting that the current sustainable development agenda is not a debate over fundamentals, but on design. Noting rapid progress in implementation of the decision to strengthen UNEP, Steiner encouraged civil society to take advantage of new opportunities for agenda setting, including consideration of how UNEP’s rules of procedure should be rewritten.

Among many issues, participants discussed with Steiner: UNEP’s role in behavior change; lack of coherence between international and national levels in seeking access to environmental justice; and concerns over biofuels and forest policy. Steiner expressed hope that MEAs would progress from being seen as “soft law” to having “harder” commitments such as those being negotiated under the UNFCCC.

#### **SESSION 6: HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

Paul Quintos, IBON International, facilitated this session on Sunday morning opening with a briefing on elements of a human rights-based approach, distinguishing between substantive rights to life, health and property; procedural rights such as freedom of expression and association, information, and participation in decision making; and newer concepts such as rights of nature or Mother Earth.

Dan Magraw, John Hopkins University, provided an introduction to the work of the UN Expert on the Environment and described the evolution of ideas about the rights of nature and the rights of people to a healthy environment.

Luc Lavrysen, Ghent University, outlined recent examples of environmental jurisprudence, emphasizing the principle of non-regression.

Caroline Usikpedo-Omoniye, Niger Delta Movement, presented on the impacts of oil in the delta and related ECOWAS and Dutch court judgments.

Participants discussed: whether intergenerational equity can be a legal argument; and taking an international approach to supply chains for raw materials.

#### **SESSION 7: THE GREEN ECONOMY AND THE 10-YEAR FRAMEWORK OF PROGRAMMES ON SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION (10YFP)**

Tom Jacob, International Chamber of Commerce, facilitated this session on Sunday morning.

Asad Naqvi, UNEP, presented on the green economy and poverty reduction, highlighting the need to: stop burdening sustainable farming practices with additional organic and fair trade labeling costs; invest in natural capital as a source of growth and wellbeing, especially for farmers and poor communities; and for measurement tools that reflect reality.

Hans Herren, Millennium Institute, described current measurement approaches as “a corrupt system,” because higher health costs or costs to the environment can be reflected as increases in GDP. He said vested interests are promoting increases in agricultural productivity without tackling the issue of food waste, and warned of the need to respect planetary boundaries.

Oliver Greenfield, Green Economy Coalition (GEC), called for, *inter alia*: recovering public funds currently lost through tax avoidance, and redirecting these towards supporting global transformation; and adopting a unified development agenda.

In the discussion, participants talked about: integrating human rights into the green economy agenda; working with local and sub-national governments; and adopting a systemic approach to sustainable development policies, for example, addressing inequalities at the same time as pricing in the environmental costs of food production, so as to avoid adverse consequences for the poor.

Charles Arden-Clarke, UNEP, presented the 10-Year Framework of Programmes for Sustainable Consumption and Production, highlighting its mandate from Rio+20 and its first five programmes on: consumer information; sustainable lifestyles; sustainable public procurement; sustainable buildings and construction; and sustainable tourism, including ecotourism.

Luis Flores, Consumers International, discussed changing patterns of production and consumption in developing countries, and consumer protection issues.

In discussion, participants raised: integrating sufficiency arguments to the discourse; challenges faced in the 20 years leading to adoption of the 10YFP; competing claims regarding the efficiency of organic and other approaches to agriculture, including the global dominance of large agro-chemical and seed companies; and whether the for-profit status of industry actors is a barrier to participation in UNEP processes. Arden-Clark invited participants to propose ways the 10YFP can support their concerns, for example, sustainable economic enterprises that can benefit biodiversity, and promoting sustainable food systems.

#### **BREAKOUT GROUPS: REGIONAL CAUCUS GROUPS**

Prior to breaking for discussion, Maggie Comstock and Amna Ibrahim Hassan, Regional Major Group representatives for North America and West Asia respectively, presented outcomes and common themes from prior regional consultations, including: the need to: develop a “new environmental narrative”; acknowledge planetary boundaries; focus climate change negotiations not only on scientific knowledge but also on equity, equality and

the fundamental rights of vulnerable groups; and reinforce the importance of a human rights-based approach to achieving sustainable development. Participants then convened in six regional groups during the lunch break.

### **SESSION 8: TOWARDS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF INTERNATIONALLY AGREED SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

Mahmoud Raouf, Gulf Research Center, facilitated this session on Sunday afternoon.

Fatoumata Keita-Ouane, Head of the Scientific Assessment Branch, Division of Early Warning and Assessment, UNEP, presented the GEO-5 analysis of progress towards internationally agreed goals, highlighting significant gaps. She recommended considering: policy options for green growth; cooperation and knowledge sharing; integrated approaches to goal setting; and measurement and monitoring.

Yunus Arikan, ICLEI, presented successful local government policies from the GEO-5 for local development report, including Tokyo's urban cap and trade system, and Stockholm's low-emissions zone. He recommended integrating local government's efforts into the global process.

In the discussion, participants addressed: encouraging cities to adopt a "zero waste" concept; migration as a response to the lack of social protection, and the need to integrate social protection and job creation to the post-2015 agenda; adopting more ambitious targets for alleviating poverty; and changes in land use impacting food production.

### **SESSION 9: MAJOR GROUP POSITIONS REGARDING UNEP GC DRAFT DECISIONS**

Calvin James, Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Developments, facilitated this session on Sunday afternoon, in which Major Groups and Regional Groups reported back from their consultations.

Children and Youth called for sustainable jobs and education, training opportunities and mentorship to build youth capacity. They expressed support for the "Think, Eat, Save" campaign; and proposed a mechanism for informed consumer decisions and fair pricing.

Workers & Trade Unions called for "the strongest" regulatory options and investments to transform societies to live within planetary boundaries, emphasizing the urgency of the task.

Farmers welcomed the designation of 2014 as the Year of Family Farming and called for: funding of agricultural research to develop resilience of indigenous and local crops, while maintaining control of seed by local producers; enhancing extension services; the sharing of knowledge and practice; and a comprehensive assessment of new chemicals and technologies.

Science and Technology welcomed Rio+20's recognition of strengthening the science-policy interface and highlighted the Future Earth initiative launched at Rio+20.

NGOs advised that they had begun substantive discussions on six clusters: procedural rights and NGO participation (paragraph 88 of the Rio+20 Outcome Document); sustainable consumption

and production; sustainable development goals (SDGs) emphasizing convergence of goals; means of implementation; green economy; and chemicals and waste.

Business and Industry called for: maintaining safeguards for trade knowledge, and predictable regulatory frameworks; and supporting dedicated time at future GCs for government consultation with Major Groups.

Women referred to their position paper to be published on SDGs.

Indigenous Peoples and their Communities called for transparency and accountability of UN processes, and for information to be transmitted to indigenous peoples at the grassroots.

North America called for a new environmental narrative emphasizing collaboration, and pursuit of common goals.

West Asia proposed creating a green economy multi-stakeholder platform, and called for urgent attention to address the needs of communities in conflict zones.

Africa recommended increased representation from regional civil society organizations and greater engagement with UNEP in policy making and implementation; comprehensive research by UNEP and African governments on key environmental areas; and capacity building, supported by the necessary funding.

Europe called on UNEP to: spearhead work on a global Principle 10 agreement, on access to information, participation and access to justice; establish an ombudsperson for future generations; and mainstream the SCP in national consultations.

Asia Pacific called for: an Asia Pacific Convention on Principle 10; development and implementation of prior informed consent approaches; and improving implementation of MEAs.

Latin America and the Caribbean called on national governments to institute consultation processes so that Major Groups can participate in developing national positions and be on delegations.

Participants then discussed a draft of "Principles on Stakeholder Participation in UNEP," which had been developed on the sidelines of GMGSF. After discussion, plenary approved the document, with minor adjustments.

In the discussion of Major Group positions, participants addressed: how to involve scientists working for industry in the discussion; conflict of interest issues for both NGOs and business; and participation of other Major Groups in the NGOs' cluster discussion.

### **CLOSING SESSION**

On Sunday evening, Alexander Juras, UNEP, welcomed the involvement of government delegates in the discussion the previous day, and the proposal of the US delegate to integrate half a day into the GC for dialogue. He expressed hope that UNEP would lead the way for other UN agencies in their arrangements for stakeholder engagement and participation. He closed the meeting at 5:00 pm.



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Sustainable Development Policy & Practice is supported by Germany's Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) and the European Union (EU)



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