



UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement

Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Medio Ambiente

Программа Организации Объединенных Наций по окружающей среде

برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة

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From Colombia to Indonesia, From Indigenous Peoples to Trade Unionists, Major Groups and Stakeholders Call for Full Participation Ahead of UNEP's First Governing Council with Universal Membership

Nairobi, Kenya, 18 February 2013 In their concluding statement to the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum (GMGSF-14), which ended on 17 February 2013 at the Headquarters of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), participants called for the right to the full and effective participation of civil society in the agenda setting, policy and decision-making and implementation of all UNEP activities and processes.

"Full participation shall mean participation by all stakeholders representing interests that might be affected by UNEP's activities and processes, including elements of civil society outside the major groups and on a regional or local basis," said the final statement entitled *Principles on Stakeholder Participation in UNEP*.

Held under the theme "Promoting Transparency and Effective Engagement of Major Groups and Stakeholders", and on the eve of the opening of the first-ever meeting of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC/GMEF) under universal membership, the two-day meeting in Kenya brought together nearly 200 participants from business and industry, children and youth, farmers, indigenous peoples, local authorities, non-governmental organizations, women and workers and trade unions.

Among other pressing and emerging issues discussed in the Forum were the new UNEP institutional arrangements of universal membership, the strengthening the science-policy interface in UNEP, an update on the Green Economy, the Ten Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (10YFP) and the role and opportunities for involvement and engagement of civil society in the post-Rio+20 processes, i.e. the Sustainable Development Goals and the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The 10YFP is a global framework of action to enhance international cooperation on accelerating the shift towards sustainable consumption and production in developed and developing countries.

It was at the historic UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) last June in Brazil, when Heads of State and governments decided to strengthen and upgrade UNEP, that they also called for closer collaboration between UNEP and civil society under paragraph 88 (h) of the outcome document, *The Future We Want*. That insert ensured "the active participation of all relevant stakeholders drawing on best practices and models from relevant multilateral institutions and exploring new mechanisms to promote transparency and the effective engagement of civil society".

This endorsement was given a boost at the UN General Assembly meeting in New York last December, when there was again a call for UNEP to work more closely with the Major Groups of civil society and to improve the integration of their participation at the UNEP Governing Council and in global environmental decision-making.



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UNEP has long recognized the importance of engaging Major Groups and Stakeholders as partners, appreciating the perspectives they bring to the table, the valuable research and advocacy functions they perform and their role in helping foster long-term, broad-based support for UNEP's mission.

UNEP is committed to provide all assistance needed to ensure that the UNEP of the 21st Century is forward looking in terms of its mechanisms for stakeholder engagement and transparency, said Ms. Amina Mohamed, UNEP's Deputy Executive Director, in her speech at the opening of the Forum. "More transparency will allow Major Groups to fully understand UNEP's activities and approaches and to make sound decisions on their involvement, based on all relevant information. Indeed increased participation will lead to more partnerships allowing UNEP to better implement its global mandate and programmes," she added.

Notes to the Editor: UNEP and Major Groups

In 1999, UNEP created a Major Group & NGOs Unit in its Policy Branch to provide Major Groups with a chance of broad participation in environmental decision-making. Five years later it created the Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch to enhance the participation of Major Groups and other Stakeholders in its work. According to its mandate, the Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch engages with organized constituents such as not-for-profit organizations, networks and associations in contrast to single businesses or individuals.

Further Resources:

For more information on the Forum, see: <http://www.unep.org/civil-society/GlobalFora/GMGsf-14/tabid/105390/Default.aspx>

For more information on UNEP and Major Groups and Stakeholders see:
<http://www.unep.org/civil-society/>
