

**Fourth Global Civil Society Forum**  
**UNEP Headquarters, Nairobi**  
**February 1-2 2003**

**Declaration of the meeting, regarding the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the United Nations Environment Programme Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum**

We, the participants, comprising representatives of civil society organizations from 40 countries, of the Fourth Global Civil Society Forum, held from 1 to 2 February 2003 at UNEP Headquarters, Nairobi, Kenya, and hosted by UNEP,

Recognizing that civil society is diverse and multi-faceted, that not all civil society organizations were represented at the Forum, and that we do not have a mandate to speak on behalf of organizations not present,

Affirming that the present declaration serves to confirm our capacity and responsibility as world citizens to take the initiative in implementing strategies for sustainable development in the face of environmental challenges,

Recognizing the necessity of the partnership approach to sustainable development and the common but differentiated responsibilities of governments, UNEP and civil society,

Make the following declaration on the issues of the engagement of civil society in UNEP's work programme, the linkage between poverty and the environment, sustainable patterns of production and consumption, and cultural diversity for the environment.<sup>1</sup>

**1. With regard to the engagement of civil society in UNEP's work programme.**

Recalling the Plan of Action of the World Summit on Sustainable Development which recommends a stronger focus on regional and sub-regional realities and priorities, as well as stronger emphasis on partnerships and co-operation with the civil society,

Referring to the Policy Statement of the Executive Director of UNEP to the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Governing Council/ Global Ministerial Environment (UNEP/GC.22/9),

Referring to the Strategy Paper on Enhancing Civil Society Engagement in the Work of UNEP (UNEP/GC.22/INF/13),

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<sup>1</sup> Although the recommendations of the Fourth Global Civil Society Forum reflect, in general, the consensus of the participating organizations, two Major Groups noted that they were not in a position to accept the recommendations in their entirety.

Having considered the discussions during the Fourth Global Civil Society Forum prior to the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Governing Council of UNEP,

The Fourth Global Civil Society Forum recommends that the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Governing Council:

Endorse the above Strategy Paper, and give the mandate to UNEP to implement its provisions.

Reaffirm that Global Civil Society Forums are convened prior to each next session of the GC/GMEF, starting with the 8<sup>th</sup> Special Session of the GMEF to be held in Korea, as well as for the future GC/GMEF sessions in other regions respectively.

Call for preparatory consultations to be convened at sub-regional and regional level prior to the Global Civil Society Forum and the GMEF, and held at the national level as well. UNEP National Committees –where they exist – should play a substantial role in the preparation of national forums and bringing the national conclusions to sub regional and regional level. In cases where National Committees do not exist, their establishment should be considered (UNEP/GC.13/33 paragraph 2(f) from 1985, 15/1 paragraph III, and 15/42 paragraph 6).

Increase funding and support for the UNEP Regional Offices to develop and maintain regional and sub-regional outreach and partnership with civil society organisations; and enhance civil society's involvement in the development and implementation of UNEP's activities in the region.

Confer the possibility for nationally based CSOs to be accredited to UNEP, taking note of the need for UNEP to become instrumental on national level.

Call on UNEP and its regional offices to develop a Medium Term Action Plan for the implementation of the Revised Strategy Paper (UNEP/GC.22/INF/13) for the period 2003-2005 in co-operation with international NGOs and UNEP National Committees.

Establish as soon as possible the proposed CSO Advisory Panel to the UNEP Executive Director, as a complement to other forms of civil society involvement. Such a panel should be appointed by the Executive Director, based on the nominations made through the Regional Offices and major groups.

Employ a clear definition of civil society organisations, namely all groupings of individuals that fall outside the public and for-profit sectors, whether legally constituted or informally established (as per the definition used by the World Bank Group, UNCTAD, FAO and UNESCO) and support both civil society and multi-stakeholder dialogues.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The Local Authority Major Group noted that they were not in a position to support this recommendation.

**2. With regard to the Implementation of the Outcomes of WSSD regarding the linkage between poverty and the environment,**

Mindful of the need to provide better linkages between the Millennium Development Goals aimed at Poverty Eradication and environmental commitments and targets,

Recalling that UNEP has a Mandate from the 21<sup>st</sup> Governing Council/ Global Ministerial Environment Forum to promote the understanding of the linkages between poverty and the environment on poverty eradication,

Recognising that a partnership approach including civil society is fundamental to undertake the fight against poverty, including at the grassroots level,

The Fourth Global Civil Society Forum recommends to the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Governing Council that:

UNEP:

Further develop the understanding of the inter-linkages between poverty and environment at all levels based on UNEP's conceptual framework on poverty and ecosystems, including an assessment of the micro-macro linkages such as the impacts of globalization, and make recommendations to tackle these issues in the future.

Address the inter-linkages between poverty and environment from a socio-economic perspective that puts people first and recognizes CSO as agents of institutional transformation and policy change.

**Engage civil society in UNEP's on-going work on guidelines for policy options and responses and tools for implementation at local, national and regional levels and support greater grassroots engagement and harnessing of local knowledge of poverty and environmental linkages, including supporting initiatives by civil society.** Support the establishment of a legal framework for partnerships including adopting a multi-stakeholder process to ensure a formal and lasting system of partnership processes.

Governments:

Support an integrated ecosystem management approach to understanding poverty and environment linkages.

**Empower local communities through respecting and promoting the importance of local knowledge and supporting public participation, through such mechanisms as the National and Local Councils for Sustainable Development.**

**Sensitize and train local communities in sustainable development principles and issues through information and capacity building, as a necessity and social incentive of social transformation that will free minds and attitudes of marginalized and vulnerable communities.**

**Amend national Poverty Reduction Strategies and national plans to implement the international environmental agenda to better reflect the linkages between poverty and environment and ensure the active participation of civil society.**

**Transform current legal systems to incorporate issues of environmental rights, equity and the eradication of poverty within national and international agreements, especially MEAs, and establish a legal framework for partnerships.**

**Review economic production and growth models and make adjustments to existing strategies and tools that are inclusive of the environment and technology with emphasis on poverty eradication.**

Civil Society:

**Undertake an active role in the implementation of the WSSD Plan of Implementation, notably in the implementation and strengthening of programs and policies related to sustainable development and poverty eradication, including initiatives which promote community-based protection and sustainable use of biological diversity.**

Support government legislation and provide assistance to companies and organizations in complying with these agreements, such as through training and technology transfer.

Continue their key role in providing education, knowledge and awareness raising, through, *inter alia*, workshops and training programmes to enable the poor to better understand the linkages between poverty, the environment and human rights.

Should co-ordinate activities relating to poverty and environmental areas more effectively. For example, southern NGOs need to address the negative impacts of globalization on the poor more effectively.

Serve as a bridge between poor communities and public bodies and help to build trust between these groups by helping to present a more bottom-up approach in tackling poverty and environment issues.

And that together, UNEP, Governments and civil society:

Develop guidelines through partnerships between CSO, UNEP and governments. The many positive projects taking place at the grassroots level need to be transmitted and incorporated into the policy development process.

Further examine the relationship between poverty, environmental degradation and human rights violations and develop a rights-based approach to sustainable development and poverty eradication, in keeping with Paragraph 152 of the WSSD Plan of Implementation.

3. With regard to Implementation of the Outcomes of WSSD regarding **sustainable production and consumption patterns**, the Forum recommends that the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Governing Council:

Ensure that UNEP, working closely together with civil society, has a key role in developing and facilitating the implementation and monitoring of the ten-year framework of programmes to promote sustainable consumption and production patterns, in close co-operation with the Commission on Sustainable Development, bearing in mind the following key challenges to remove existing barriers, namely:

The need for clear political willingness and leadership at national and local level.

The establishment of multi-stakeholder involvement in decision-making.

Building capacity among key decision makers in developing countries to develop SPC systems that support job creation, decent livelihoods and value practices that are traditionally sustainable.

The need to develop an integrated approach for meeting human needs for critical services and fulfilling key functions, such as mobility, nutrition, shelter, clothing, health, knowledge, leisure and security.

The need to empower and strengthen the capacity of civil society as an ally in the development and implementation of SPC solutions.

Adopt the following policy initiatives for immediate implementation, taking into consideration the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities:

Set effective and efficient targets and timelines for SPC based on human needs. Policy frameworks should be established that will include the policies described below, keeping in mind the Millennium Development Goals and the need to find SPC solutions that also serve reduction.

Implement policies for cost internalisation to reflect environmental and social costs and benefits in consumer goods and services through:

Ecological tax reform: placing the tax burden on resource use and away from labor, with specific arrangements to avoid adding an extra burden to the poorer sectors of society

Subsidy reform: removing subsidies for harmful production processes and placing them in support of social adjustment schemes in sectors such as fossil fuels, fisheries, agriculture, transport

Implementing extended producer responsibility measures.

UNEP and CSD should be mandated to monitor this process, and provide guidance on the national level on how to do this correctly.

**Call on Governments to demonstrate their strong political commitment to increase accountability and take measures to:**

**Enhance corporate accountability through binding global frameworks.**

**Create an information environment to empower consumers, based on the Rio Principles 10 and 15, the precautionary principle and the principle on participation and access to information and justice.**

**Implement sustainable procurement for public authorities' consumption of goods and services at all levels, from local to global.**

**Implement the UN Guidelines for Consumer Protection.**

**Improve and enable UNEP's policies related to Major Groups' involvement with increased human and financial resources. This will enhance co-operation and improve partnerships with Major Groups to help carry out capacity building work and target setting.**

**The specific role of Consumer Organisations needs to be emphasised. Increase consumers' access to products and services that fulfil high social and environmental standards.**

**Improve mechanisms for knowledge sharing and information exchange at all levels**

**Establish and improve policies to promote a culture of SPC among consumers through:**

**Capacity building that should include education and training for public authorities at all levels for consumers and for NGOs including youth**

**Public information and awareness campaigns (on waste, energy, water, transport, leisure), education, public debate and participatory decision making processes (such as Local Agenda 21), support of voluntary citizen initiatives and partnerships involving a wide range of actors (private sector, and other major groups such as local authorities, women, youth)**

#### **4. With regard to Implementation of the Outcomes of WSSD regarding cultural diversity and the environment.**

Recalling the mandate given to UNEP during the GC/GMEF at Malmö to integrate respect towards cultural diversity, and the Millennium Declaration which calls for the achievement of the full protection and promotion of social and cultural rights for all people.

Recognising that peace, security and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development as well as the respect for cultural diversity, are essential for achieving sustainable development, as stated in the Introduction of the World Summit on Sustainable Development Plan of Implementation,

Stressing that biodiversity and cultural diversity are at a dramatic stage of reduction. Languages, the carriers of culture, knowledge and natural resources management are under great pressure. 2,500 languages in the world are in immediate danger of extinction. 60 % of the world food consumption depends today only on four species of the over 7,000 originally existent.

Acknowledging that strong evidences of linkages between biodiversity and cultural diversity exists, and that planning for sustainable management cannot disregard the relationship with the natural resource base,

Recognising that culture is not a luxury of our development, but a precondition, that it is not a prerogative of only a minority, but fundamental to all peoples,

Acknowledging the importance of ethics and respect in matters of cultural diversity,

Taking note of the outcomes of the UNEP-UNESCO joint high level roundtable on cultural diversity, biodiversity and sustainable development during the WSSD,

Appreciating the work already done by UNEP in this field, especially through the publication "*Cultural and Spiritual Values of Biodiversity*"

The Fourth Global Civil Society Forum recommends to the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Governing Council that:

UNEP:

Continue to integrate cultural aspects in all its programmes of work, in recognition that culture is a precondition of sustainability.

Assess the importance of cultural diversity and biodiversity, using an ecosystems mapping model, such as the Millennium Ecosystem approach, to protect cultural diversity.

Develop sample studies of remnant special ecological systems and life systems, in order to discover general principles for application in sustainable development.

Launch an Initiative on Cultural Diversity and Biodiversity and establish regional working groups to develop its work, in partnership with other institutions, such as FAO, UNESCO and UNCHR, and civil society.

Consider the development of an Internet portal to support and coordinate such an initiative.

Governments:

Give a clear mandate to UNEP to pursue the proposed Initiative on Cultural Biodiversity.

Promote the dynamic expression and creativity of diverse cultures, as well as the dialogue among these cultures. This promotion of culture should enrich debates in a global world, and not help to build barriers between cultures.

Address the need to educate people, especially Youth, to appreciate and valorize their own cultures, raising awareness of the value and potential of local knowledge, through education, capacity building and inclusion of cultural and biodiversity concepts in educational curricula.

Harmonize legal frameworks with article 8j of Convention of Biodiversity and the rights-based approach.

Civil society:

Strengthen existing programs for education, awareness raising and capacity building on cultural diversity and biodiversity, and develop new ones.

And that together, UNEP, governments and civil society:

Promote a programme of actions in field of cultural diversity and biodiversity, as for example the sustainable use of our ecosystem.

Develop regional model laws for the protection of the Rights of local communities, farmers and breeders and for the regulation of access to biological resources.

Bear in mind that culture for biodiversity must be considered in a holistic manner, based on ethical and spiritual values.

Recognise the impact of production and consumption patterns on different cultures and the need to change consumption behaviour at all levels.

Address the specific needs of urban cultures, which are a dynamic force with specific impacts and benefits.