

Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director UNEP & Under Secretary General
of the UN;
Y.E. Ambassador Chan-Woo Kim, Chair of the Committee of Permanent
Representatives
Members of the Bureau of the CPR
Representatives of States in the CPR
Colleagues from UNEP
Colleagues from the Major Groups and Regional Representatives
Ladies and Gentlemen, Good Morning

My name is Marcos Orellana, with the Center for International
Environmental Law (CIEL). I am the Representative of the NGO Major
Group and Co-Chair of the Major Groups Facilitating Committee. On
behalf of all Major Groups and Stakeholders, I have the privilege of
thanking you for joining today's Consultations on Stakeholder
Engagement.

Please allow me to first congratulate the Committee of Permanent
Representatives for hosting these consultations. This dialogue shows
once again how UNEP has been a leader in the field of stakeholder
engagement. In 1972 UNEP became the first UN unit to welcome civil
society in its work. Over the years UNEP rules and practices have
enabled a substantive exchange with civil society that has greatly
contributed to enhancing UNEP's capacity to deliver on its mandate.
Today UNEP makes history again, as to my knowledge, these
consultations mark the first time that the CPR is having a consultations
with civil society.

Stakeholder engagement has a clear link with international environmental governance. It is thus key to the new UNEP, as envisaged in the Rio+20 Outcome Document, including its ability to set the international environmental agenda.

The Rio+20 UN Conference on Sustainable Development reaffirmed the fundamental values of openness and transparency in institutional governance. Rio+20 also underscored the critical importance of meaningful stakeholder participation. For example, public participation contributes knowledge, energy and ideas that improve the quality of policy discussions and agenda-setting. Stakeholder engagement is also crucial to the effective implementation of decisions and projects. In addition, stakeholder engagement reflects transcendent values that are central to legitimacy and effectiveness, as so clearly was articulated by you in the Rio+20 Outcome Document.

These messages have been carried forward, for example, by the General Assembly resolution that creates the High Level Political Forum on sustainable development. This Forum contemplates that major groups and other relevant stakeholders will be allowed to: attend all official meetings of the forum; have access to all official information and documents; intervene in official meetings; submit documents and present written and oral contributions; make recommendations; and organize side events. These developments set an important precedent that highlights the key role of partnerships between civil society and international institutions.

Now the focus of attention is on UNEP and its ability to design a new Stakeholder Engagement Policy. The CPR will play a vital role in this regard, and we as civil society stand ready to contribute to your work. This said, there is also real need for UNEP to support civil society, in order to build capacity and enable meaningful public participation, especially from organizations in developing countries.

There is a real interest in, and clear need for a new Stakeholder Policy that provides for meaningful public participation in the new UNEP. Last February, in response to the Rio+20 Outcome Document, UNEP's Governing Council adopted Decision 27/2 asking UNEP to put in place new mechanisms for stakeholder engagement. Also last February, all Major Groups and Stakeholders participating in this year's Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum adopted a set of 11 Principles on Stakeholder Participation in UNEP. These Principles were prepared to promote UNEP's mandate and improve its effectiveness in light of Rio+20, including paragraph 88(h) of The Future We Want.

At the same time, UNEP's current rules and practices provide a solid baseline for making further progress. While there is much to be done, there is much to build upon and ensure continuous forward motion.

An area where further progress can be made is in the work of the CPR, as this body evolves in light of broader institutional changes. There is no legal impediment to engaging civil society in CPR meetings, only

practical considerations of how to do it. For example, the CPR would make an important statement if it were to welcome Major Groups and other stakeholders to its sessions.

Today's Consultations between the CPR and Major Groups and Stakeholders give expression to a long-standing request by civil society. Today once again UNEP is making history in regard to institutional governance. But the real significance of this step will become apparent in June 2014, when it is expected that the UN Environmental Assembly will adopt a new stakeholder engagement policy. The CPR will play a decisive role in getting us there.

We as civil society come to offer our energy and expertise to strengthen UNEP and so to face, from a position of strength, the serious environmental challenges of our time. The magnitude of the environmental threats facing our planet is daunting, but as Achim Steiner often reminds us, these problems can be solved. Addressing the formidable challenges effectively, however, requires a strong UNEP, as envisaged in the Rio+20 Outcome Document. Today civil society comes to the CPR to offer a partnership, to work together precisely to strengthen UNEP and the environmental pillar of sustainable development.

I very much look forward to today's conversation, and on behalf of all Major Groups and Stakeholders, I thank you once again for hosting this dialogue.