

The 12th Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum

Joint Statement

All 9 Major Groups, Children & Youth, Indigenous Peoples, Trade Unions & Workers, Women, NGOs, Science, Business & Industry, Local Authorities and Farmers, have worked during their 2-day Major Groups & Stakeholders Forum to prepare their input to the environmental ministers at the 26th UNEP GC/GMEF. Together, as all sectors of Civil Society, they present the following recommendations to ministers in addition to the individual statements by each of the major groups.¹

In light of the urgent and serious problems that face the world's environment, including the impacts on human health, we the Major Groups and stakeholders welcome UNEP's strong engagement in the preparations for Rio+20. We believe UNEP will make a substantial contribution to advance the environmental aspects of sustainability, green economy and international environmental governance (IEG).

In keeping with UN General Assembly resolution A/C.2/64/L.59 (adopted 24 Dec. 2009), all UNEP activities in preparation for Rio + 20, including those with respect to IEG and the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, must be transparent and enable full opportunity for public participation. MGS will strongly support efforts that fulfil this requirement.

We encourage all governments to engage strongly and constructively in Rio+20 in order to take advantage of the extremely important and timely opportunity it offers to address the multiple crises now facing human society. We urge heads of state and governments to attend Rio+20, and to provide leadership during and after the conference.

International Environmental Governance

Transparency, public participation and accountability are foundational and essential elements of sound environmental governance, both at international and domestic levels, and must be fully incorporated and realized in environmental governance systems. This principle should be formally recognized by the 26th GC/GMEF, for example in a Governing Council resolution.

¹ Individual Major Group and Stakeholders statements are available at:
<http://www.unep.org/gc/gc26/information-docs.asp>

IEG reform needs to achieve and strengthen environmental justice at all levels. There is a lack of implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). To enhance the effectiveness of MEAs at the global level improved coherence and increased participation of countries needs to be enhanced at the global level also.

We call for an upgrading of the United Nations Environment Programme, including universal membership.

The Nairobi-Helsinki Outcome² does not make any mention of a compliance and enforcement mechanism to ensure implementation and monitoring of MEAs and environment obligations under national and international law. This is a major omission in the report. There are a variety of compliance mechanisms which could be considered, including:

- (1) reporting to the General Assembly, or to an upgraded UNEP;
- (2) peer review;
- (3) independent evaluation and reporting;
- (4) strengthened and new dispute settlement mechanisms; and
- (5) specific incentives and funding for countries with respect to compliance.

In this context, the issue of financial constraints to implementation in developing countries must be addressed as a way of enhancing implementation.

We support strengthening the science-policy interface within UNEP, with the full and meaningful participation of developing countries ensuring access to deliberations to all Major Groups and Stakeholders. This must also include channels to consider credible, robust and accessible natural and social sciences from all stakeholders, and also local and indigenous knowledge. We also emphasize the need to strengthen the science base and policy interface through supporting the developing countries' capacity building and scientific research to support their effective participation.

The Green Economy

A green economy should provide an integrated response for achieving sustainable development, including economic prosperity, equity and environmental protection, within the carrying capacity of one planet.

We encourage governments to incorporate new indicators for measuring wellbeing and progress, based on work by groups such as the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission.

A green economy should be based on international cooperation towards greening economies, creating decent jobs and livelihoods and seeking to green all elements of society. It should be a tool for delivering on internationally agreed principles and objectives for sustainable development at all levels of government.

² UNEP/GC.26/18

Sufficient safeguards should be put in place so as to ensure that the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities are protected during the formulation and implementation of the green economy agenda, in accordance with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples including rights to land and resources, and free, prior and informed consent.

The green economy has to be inclusive, providing opportunities and improving livelihoods and wellbeing for all. The world's rural poor must be engaged in an equitable and participatory manner, if sustainable development and poverty eradication are to be realized.

Green economy is a shared responsibility that requires collaborative action beyond governments, across all actors in society.

In order to realise its full potential for people, the economy and the environment, the green economy needs an enabling framework which is based on a broad policy mix and facilitates a just transition, including when phasing out unsustainable policies and practices.

We encourage governments to define national and sub-national roadmaps based on their specific legal obligations and economic, social and environmental circumstances and objectives, in consultation and cooperation with all Major Groups and Stakeholders.

We also encourage strengthening enabling programs and mechanisms at all levels to promote green economy.

A green economy needs strong international environmental governance and the engagement of all environmental, economic, and social institutions, in order to make all their goals and activities mutually reinforcing. Furthermore current practices of IFIs should be reviewed in the light of green economy goals.

Achieving sustainable consumption and production and realizing the green economy are mutually reinforcing goals.

Strengthening UNEP Regional Offices and regional stakeholders participation

We stress the need for UNEP to strengthen Regional Offices, and improve the engagement of the regional Major Groups and Stakeholders, for example by ensuring representation and involvement of all Major Groups in the regional consultation meetings (RCMs), building capacity and facilitating regional participation in the Rio+20 process and in the implementation of the green economy and IEG.