

**Opening Remarks by Ms. Amina Mohamed, Deputy Executive
Director UNEP, to the 14th Global Major Groups and
Stakeholder Forum (GMGSF 14)**

Nairobi, 16 February 2013

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

It is again a pleasure for me to open the Global Major Groups and Stakeholder Forum.

I am glad to see in this room many representatives from Major Groups, Governments and UNEP colleagues.

Last year's Global Major Groups and Stakeholder Forum was a special one, because it was a key meeting of Major Groups before the Rio+20 Conference and it allowed all of us to consolidate our positions, sharpen our views and to be better prepared for the Rio+20 Conference.

This year's Forum is also special. It is the first forum in preparation for UNEP's Governing Council with universal membership.

On 21 December 2012, forty years after UNEP's establishment, the General Assembly of the United Nations in response to Rio+20 decided to 'strengthen and upgrade' UNEP and confirm it as the leading environmental authority that sets the global environment agenda. The General Assembly also provided for UNEP to receive Secure, Stable, Adequate and Increased

financial Resources and for UNEP donors to increase their voluntary contribution.

Strengthening of UNEP is a significant response to the still deteriorating state of the global environment as evidenced in the Global Environmental Outlook.

The latest edition of UNEP's Global Environment Outlook report, released in June 2012, assessed 90 of the most important environmental goals agreed by the international community, and found that significant progress had only been made in four.

If current trends continue, several critical thresholds may be exceeded, beyond which irreversible changes to the life-support functions of the planet could occur.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

The General Assembly Resolution also underlined the need for UNEP to work more closely with Major Groups and Stakeholders to make their participation at the UNEP Governing Council and in Global environmental decision-making better integrated.

By endorsing the Rio+20 outcome document 'The Future We Want' in July 2012, and adopting the new resolution on UNEP, the General Assembly also underlined the need for UNEP to work more closely with Major Groups: non-governmental

organizations, youth, women, indigenous peoples, local governments, business, and other interest groups, and to make their participation at the UNEP Governing Council and in global environmental decision-making better integrated.

We welcome the theme of the Global Major Groups and Stakeholder Forum - “Promoting Transparency and Effective Engagement of Major Groups and Stakeholders: Developing New Models of Participation in UNEP” and hope the next two days will give you the opportunity to sharpen your views on how UNEP could best respond to Paragraph 88 and in particular 88h of the Rio+20 outcome document. Paragraph 88h calls upon UNEP to “ensure 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.”

Having said that, let me confirm to you that Achim Steiner, UNEP’s Executive Director and I are 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.

Establishing more participatory internal procedures will ensure that the organization is able to build on the vast knowledge and expertise that exists among Major Groups and Stakeholders.

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.

Involving civil society has always presented a challenge to many countries and institutions given their national context and the diversity of views and perspectives from civil society. Models and mechanisms to be adopted will have to provide a larger space for civil society engagement not only in agenda setting, but also in decision-making and implementation. This however should not be construed to mean replacing the role of governments but complementing and building synergies for more sustainable responses to global development challenges.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

The next two days will also cover other topics which are relevant in the follow up to Rio+20 such as Green Economy, Sustainable Consumption and Production, the 10 year framework of programmes and capacity building and technical and financial assistance to developing countries.

The Rio+20 conference acknowledged Green Economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication as

an inspiring response to the inordinate opportunity for bringing together economic development and environmental sustainability with equity and the wellbeing of people.

With the Partnership for Action on the Green Economy (PAGE) initiative UNEP working with others including Major Groups will further the Green Economy agenda by providing targeted assistance and capacity building to countries.

Another important topic of our meeting is Sustainable Consumption and Production. In a separate resolution relating to another Rio+20 outcome, the General Assembly welcomed the adoption of the ten-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns (10YFP) to which UNEP provides the secretariat.

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.

The framework will support capacity building, and provide technical and financial assistance to developing countries. UNEP looks forward to work closely with Major Groups in Implementing the Ten Year Framework of Programmes.

UNEP is already moving on this on several fronts including in support of the agri-food theme.

In January this year, UNEP with the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization launched the Think-Eat-Save campaign aimed at reducing food waste and losses world-wide of an estimated 1.3 billion tonnes or at least a third of all food produced.

The level of food loss and food waste globally is an ethical, economic and environmental scandal taking into account the unsustainable usage of water, energy, land and other inputs for crops and livestock that are never consumed.

This remains an issue that unites farmers and consumers North and South—one that goes to the heart of our collective aspirations for a sustainable century.

UNEP would be keen to engage with Major Groups on this issue and I would encourage you visit the campaign website at <http://www.thinkeatsave.org/> to get on board.

Colleagues, two intensive days of work are in front of you and I do not want to take any more of your time.

I encourage you to use these days to work closely together and to develop positions and inputs that will enrich the discussions and more importantly the decision at the first UNEP Governing Council of universal membership.

Opportunities like this do not come around every day or every 40 years—let us be the architects and designers of a new and

exciting future for this institution and its ability to deliver on the hopes and aspirations of *seven* billion people, rising to over nine billion by 2050.

Thank you very much!