



Earth Civil Society Forum

“Greater Access to Environmental and Societal Information”

December 11, 2011

Crowne Plaza Hotel, Yas Island, Abu Dhabi, UAE

BACKGROUND: The Eye on Earth Summit will be preceded by a Civil Society Forum (CSF) on December 11, 2011. The rationale for holding the Civil Society Forum is rooted in the fact that Major Groups and Stakeholders of civil society play an important role as an information source, an information interface with the general public and public authorities, a recipient of information, and a participant in decision making processes. They often use most of the available environmental information in their daily work and have an interest in comprehensive, reliable and adequate information and thus they constitute as representatives of the public and key decision makers, the most important recipient of environmental information.

AIM: The purpose of the CSF is to provide an opportunity for up to 150 Civil Society representatives from all Major Groups and regions to prepare and consolidate their inputs into the summit, to promote the international agenda for improved access and ability to use and leverage environmental data and information for the benefit of all communities of our global society. Participants to the Civil Society Forum will also participate in the Eye on Earth Summit.

The Forum is expected to solicit inputs of civil society in addressing the overall expected result of the Summit, and to help create a consensus on key areas of access to environmental and societal information, as well as to collaborate towards strengthening existing initiatives and filling gaps towards more informed policy making and a sustainable future.

DRAFT AGENDA

10.12.2011

7.00 – 8.30 Registration

8.30 – 9.15 **Opening Session**

1. Welcome remarks, by Cathrine Armour, Program manager, Abu Dhabi Global Data Initiative and Programme Director, Eye on Earth
2. Presentation of CSO Forum and Summit Objectives, by Alexander Juras, Chief, Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch, Division of Regional Cooperation, UNEP
3. Organization of the Forum and mapping out of civil society participants, by Lalanath De Silva, Director, The Access Initiative, Moderator of the Forum

The session will introduce the rationale for the Summit and present the expectations from the host country as well as from the partner organizations. The Moderator of the session will make a brief presentation on how the discussions will be organized and will, by show of hands, do the mapping of the different stakeholders attending the Forum, as well as their main field of expertise. Some participants will be invited to share their expectations of both the Forum and the Summit, to set a benchmark for evaluation of the Forum and Summit process at a later stage.

9.15 – 11.00

Session 1: Setting the Stage

1. Presentation of the outcomes of the Working Groups: key issues, recommendations and stream session, by:
 - WG1, Dr. Csaba Kiss, Director, Environmental Law and Management Association (Hungary)
 - WG2, Hala Yousry, Desert Research Institute Cairo
 - WG3, Mick Wilson, DEWA UNEP
 - WG4, Lucy Waruingi, African Conservation Centre
2. Key note address: **The critical role and importance of access to environmental and societal information in decision-making in sustainable development**, by Jeremy Wates, Secretary General European Environmental Bureau

This session will update participants on the outcomes of the working groups' set-up prior to the Summit and will highlight some of the main results of their work. This presentation will then be followed by a keynote address on the importance of environmental and societal information in decision-making in sustainable development, drawing the linkages between the importance of information in attaining the MDGs, and promoting sustainable development, linking the Summit to the Rio+20 process as well.

- 11.00 – 11.30 **Session 2: Introduction to the working groups.**
Participants will be provided with a brief presentation of the TORs of the working groups as well as logistical information.
- 11.30 – 11.45 Health break
- 11.45 – 13.00 **Session 2 - Continued: Simultaneous working groups on the Summit thematic issues**
- Working group 1: Policy, Governance and Institutional Networking, facilitated by Andrea Sanhuenza, Executive Director, *Corporacion Participa*
 - Working group 2: Content and User Needs, facilitated by Peter Veit, Regional Director for Africa, WRI
 - Working group 3: Technical Infrastructure, facilitated by Maria Christina Bueti, International Telecommunication Union, ITU
 - Working group 4: Capacity Building, Education and Awareness Building, facilitated by Viktor Lagutov, Head of Environmental Monitoring and Mapping, Central European University
- The goal of these working groups is to (a) provide input to the recommendations from the four working groups' white papers and (b) review the Summit Declaration. Each working group will address the challenges, opportunities and mechanisms to enhance access to environmental and societal information, and key recommendations to the Summit. Amendments to the Summit Declaration may also be discussed by the working groups. Each working group will be expected to have its conclusions in a two page document. All comments on the Draft Declaration should contain specific language for proposed revision of the Draft Declaration. A two-page summary will capture: 1. Challenges, 2. Opportunities, 3. Mechanisms, 4. Recommendations.
- 13.00 – 14.00 Lunch break
- 14.00 – 15.30 **Session 3: Opportunities for civil society engagement into the Summit and beyond**
- Civil Society participation and contribution into the Summit (process), by Benson Ochieng, Institute for Law and Environmental Governance (ILEG)
- The goal of this session is to build an understanding of civil society participation mechanisms into the Summit.
- Key note presentation by Svitlana Kravchenko, University of Oregon
- The key note speaker will focus on the origin and future of access to environmental information at the global, regional and local level beyond the EoE Summit.

- Nomination of delegates to engage in the negotiation of the EoE Declaration during the Summit and the Open sessions (Working Groups)

Participants will nominate delegates to take part in the negotiation of the EoE Declaration and the Open sessions (Working Groups) during the Summit, and will agree on a mechanism to feedback the CSF participants on the negotiations during the week (e.g. daily briefings on main events and how they influence the CSF outcomes and the way forward).

15:30 – 15:45	Health break
15:45 – 17:30	Session 4: Conclusions of the CSF: Presentations and feedback from the Simultaneous working groups This session will present the comments on the white papers, stream sessions and recommendations, as well as inputs into the Summit Declaration.
17.30 – 18.00	Closing remarks by civil society representative, Elenita Dano, Action Group on Erosion, Technology and Concentration (ETC Group)
18.00 – 19.30	Cocktail