

**2017 Environment Assembly Preparatory Retreat
Windsor Golf Hotel & Country Club in Nairobi
27 – 28 October 2016**

**Discussion Paper for Session 2: Partnerships with Stakeholders
(Civil Society and the Private Sector)**

Way forward on Stakeholders Engagement Policy – possible scenarios

Background

The UN Environment Assembly can only fulfil its mandate if it succeeds to engage the entire range of stakeholders who work on environmental protection and sustainable development globally in an inclusive, practical and effective manner. To achieve this, Member States had put in place a process to agree on a new Stakeholder Engagement Policy for UNEP that clearly reflected the intentions of participatory civil society engagement as agreed upon in “The Future We Want”.¹ However, neither at the first session of the Environment Assembly, nor at the second session, Member States were able to reach an agreement on a new policy. This does not mean that the UN Environment Programme has no Stakeholder Engagement Strategy in place. The UN Environment Programme will continue to apply current rules and procedures which are largely regarded as already very open and participatory.

The Way Forward

New Stakeholder Engagement Policy and the third session of the UN Environment Assembly

It is proposed that under the leadership of the UN Environment Assembly’s President, *informal* consultations among Member States on a new Stakeholder Engagement Policy continue. A new draft of the policy will however be earliest tabled at the fourth session of the Environment Assembly - if there are strong indications that there is a realistic chance towards an agreement.

Applying Current Rules and Procedures

In the meantime, the UN Environment Programme will continue to apply current rules and procedures², but strive to reflect – within applicable rules - the consensus that was achieved among Member States on elements of a new stakeholder engagement policy:

1. Organisations that work on environment *and/or sustainable development* and that meet the other accreditation criteria will be granted accreditation.
2. The Economic and Social Council accreditation will be considered as evidence for having an international scope of work.

¹ In follow up to Paragraph 7 of decision 27/2 of the UNEP Governing Council on the implementation of paragraph 88 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, adopted by the Governing Council at its first universal session in February 2013.

² For details see UNEP’s Stakeholder Engagement Handbook: goo.gl/URUfrX

3. Working with international partners, including from the UN, will be considered as international scope of work. Non-governmental organizations will not necessarily need to prove to have a physical presence (e.g. office) in more than one country.

Outreach

UN Environment will continue its efforts to reach out to civil society, in order to ensure a strong and meaningful participation in UN Environment and also in the implementation of UN Environment's Programme of Work. A focus will be on reaching out to faith-based organizations and Major Groups that have been underrepresented so far, for instance farmers, science and technology. In addition, the UN Environment Programme will:

- continue the "Perspectives" publication that allows civil society to present their views, possibly with translation into more languages
- organize in preparation for the UN Environment Assembly's regional and sub-regional multi-stakeholder consultations in all UN Environment regions³, in collaboration with Regional Offices, relevant partners and all divisions
- increase the use of social media for reaching out to civil society and engage in an exchange of good practices, also in view of a successful implementation of the UN Environment Assembly's resolutions
- engage all divisions of the UN Environment Programme to ensure mainstreaming stakeholder engagement into the Programme of Work
- allow for e-participation of accredited observer organizations in meetings of the Committee of Permanent Representatives and its subcommittees
- provide assistance in the creation of a civil society liaison office that will engage with the Committee of Permanent Representatives in Kenya
- increase efforts to raise funds for civil society participation

Drafted by the Governance Affairs Office

³ A first consultation of this type took place on September 21 and 22 in Nairobi, targeting stakeholders from Eastern and Southern Africa