

## **Report on Kenyan Non-Governmental Stakeholder Consultative Workshop in preparation for the 2017 session of the United Nations Environment Assembly**

UN Environment held the briefing in partnership with the Friedrich-Ebert Foundation (FES), the NGO Council of Kenya, Transparency International - Kenya and Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA) on 25 September 2017. The NGO council of Kenya ensured that their members got the invitation for the workshop and briefed them on their trip to Nairobi. FES, PACJA and Transparency international were responsible for the transport, accommodation and meals for the participants while UN Environment ensured conference venue, security and experts on various topics. The attendees were mainly local based NGOs representing their respective counties in Kenya. The main aim of the workshop was to inform Kenyan NGOs about the role of the United Nations and UN Environment, with the objective to allow them to better benefit from the presence of these organizations in the country and to elaborate on the opportunities that the organizations have in participating in the UN Environment Assembly. The workshop had a total of 121 participants from across the country.



The workshop officially started at 9:00AM. Welcoming remarks were made by UN Environment Executive Director, Erick Solheim who discussed issues spanning from: the plastic ban in Kenya, the plight of lead poisoning to residents of Owino Uhuru slums in Mombasa County and the Lamu Coal Plant. He stated that UN Environment which is headquartered here in Kenya, will not support the Lamu Coal Plant given that the project will pollute the environment. Welcoming remarks were also made by the Director of UN Environment Regional Office for Africa, Dr. Juliette Biao, Pan African Climate Justice Alliance, Mr.

Mithika Mwenda, Transparency International – Kenya, Mr. Samuel Kimeu and the National Council of NGOs National Chairman, Mr. Stephen Cheboi.



During the morning session, Henry Ndede of UN Environment was among the first speakers to present on “Understanding the Role of UN Agencies – the United Nations in Kenya.” He gave a brief summary on the history of UN Environment, its engagement with the Kenyan Government and highlighted a report, “Kenya Wetlands Atlas” done by the UN Environment and the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources in 2012 that provides information on the state of wetlands in Kenya, which received increased interest from participants whose work lies in those fields. Mohamed Atani of UN Environment discussed on the roles and mandate of UN Environment in the global, African and Kenyan context. As the Africa Regional Focal Point for Civil Society at UN Environment, his presentation was based on the importance of UN Environment engaging not only with NGOs locally but also globally.



Mr. Jorge Laguna-Celis, the Secretary of Governing Bodies emphasized on how local Kenyan NGOs have an added advantage of engaging with UN Environment, as its headquarters are based in Nairobi. He also mentioned the various ways of engaging with UN Environment and highlighted on accreditation as a way of engaging with Member States especially during the run-up to the third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-3). Charlotte Ndakorerwa from the Civil Society Unit of UN Environment gave a presentation on the spaces for engagement and gave an in-depth explanation on the process of accreditation and the modalities for accreditation of Non-Governmental Organisations to the UN Environment. Questions raised by the participants were mainly based on accreditation. A representative from the NGO Council of Kenya mentioned how they can serve as a focal point for accreditation for local and grassroots NGOs if they are taken through training on accreditation. Mohamed Atani replied to this by giving reasons why accreditation had to place at the headquarters and the challenges that may arise by handing this responsibility to a non-UN Environment entity.



In the afternoon session, the Kenya Country Programmes Coordinator, Mr. Cyrille-Lazare Siewe of UN Environment moderated the panel that discussed, "Cooperation with Civil Society actors for enhanced engagement in the UNEA process; How can Foundations cooperate with Civil Society in Kenya; How can Civil Society better engage with the United Nations (and vice versa), example on the Friedrich-Ebert Foundation." A representative from the Friedrich-Ebert Foundation Kenya discussed how creation of partnerships has helped them better engage with UN Environment through the Civil Society Unit.



The last session was moderated by Mohamed Atani and the panel discussion was based on "Towards a Pollution-Free Planet," the theme of the 2017 Environment Assembly. The panel discussion was based on key thematic areas around UNEA. The panelists included Mr. Mithika Mwenda of the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance and a representative from Transparency International – Kenya. The panel discussed on the tenets that addressed the theme of the Assembly and how their respective organisations are carrying out their work in curbing pollution.

Vote of thanks was given by Alexander Juras, Chief, Civil Society Unit and the workshop closed at 5.00pm.

## Next steps

The chairman of the National council of NGOs, Mr. Stephen Cheboi echoed the importance of the workshop to the Kenyan based NGOs and the need to keep organizing such workshops even to the scale of regional level.

Chief of the Civil Society Unit, Alexander Juras in principle agreed to this suggestion subject availability of funding either from UN Environment and/or from partners.

If the UN Environment were to be successful in getting funding, it was proposed that a post UN Environment Assembly briefing be held on the first quota of 2018.