

Children and Youth Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) Discovery Session on 19 August 2020

Summary prepared by the Civil Society Unit, UNEP, 6 September 2020

Background:

The Programme and Policy Division (PPD) and the Civil Society Unit of the Governance Affairs Office (CSU/GAO) organized this discovery session to collect ideas from UNEP-accredited organizations under the Children and Youth Major Group, on UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2022-2025.

33 participants registered and 24 participants joined the meeting. List of participants can be found at the end of this document.

Summary:

1. What systemic changes do you see necessary to enable your group/organization to engage in transformational societal shifts towards more sustainable outcomes?

Communication:

- There is a lack of data for most organizations and it would be very helpful to have a **platform for data sharing**.
- **Accreditation** with UNEP is difficult for many organisations.
- **Accessibility** to the movement in general to address the three pillars of UNEP focus. It needs to be expanded to youth groups so for more clarity and engagement with other languages other than English and the typical UN-major languages.
- **Help** youth organizations understand UNEP's work so that youth organizations can engage in UNEP's work better.

Capacity building and awareness:

- Small **skill programmes** for students to increase knowledge.
- Lack of **awareness and knowledge** to understand the issues.
- Youth participation has completely gone up. That is amazing and now we need to find out how to build the capacity and involve them for the greater good.

Representation and engagement:

- Lack of support to the youth constituency and need to further **mainstream engagement** of the small youth groups in the important process.
- **Greater representation** of stakeholder groups and other grassroots organizations needed.
- UNEP needs to **engage with everyone** and not have preferential engagement of stakeholders.
- Youth engagement and voices need to be **mainstreamed** directly in both programmatic work and intergovernmental processes, government processes and integrate it in the main system.
- Implementing **student-based campaign with monitoring** for increasing knowledge regarding climate action.

Finance:

- Importance of **money and budget** to small groups for transformational change, small NGOs or groups that are not even an NGO but want to work and volunteer on this.

Eco-centric approach:

- There is increasing risk and vulnerability due to increasing globalization, need more **eco centric approach** to preserve and use natural resources.

Private sector:

- Addressing the approach of **private sector** is important.

2. What would you expect from UNEP to contribute to that shift?

Mechanism and structure:

- Make a **separate structure to support the youth** especially at the administrative part. How UNEP can have a structure to support the grassroot organizations, on administration , education, budget management, etc.
- Systematic change needs to be a specific economic downturn due to the current global pandemic that has pushed young people more into poverty. Post COVID-19 recovery must address young people. It should not be in the vacuum. There is a wealth of ideas coming from young people mainly from Africa but it is ignored and **needs a mechanism** to identify these good ideas and amplify it further.
- UNEP MTS needs to have the **fourth cross-cutting priorities - youth and children**. UNEP needs to reflect youth people's engagements and need to be involved in its daily operation and business.
- We need to work in the spirit of “**one UNEP**” - increase coherence in its work across divisions of UNEP and end silo-ed work.
- The creation of Major Groups was a great start, but it is not implemented consistently. It is important to bring a **greater diversity** of people more consistently. Furthermore, it is important to bring organizations to new projects from day 1 onwards. MGCY needs to be involved from the very start in all major strategies (good example: the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration).
- Youths are the voice right now and can contribute to **empowerment of the vulnerable population**. Youth-led organizations can act as agents to advancement of the vision of the sustainable development goals. Convening their role can contribute to the environment and people's lives around it.

Communication:

- UNEP needs to improve its **communication** strategy especially how they communicate to young people and about young people. UNEP communicates more about its side track work and not its core mandate. Champions awards of UNEP is more known than MEAs.
- UNEPs work needs to be **more understandable** for young people. (Simplification of scientific language used).

Implementation and M&E:

- UNEP is doing a lot of work on outreach, but we need **proper monitoring and evaluation system** to identify the knowledge gaps.
- UNEP has to engage youth organizations more in the **implementation and monitoring** on the local level. The global-local connection is crucial and can support local support of global policy.

Resources:

- Youth organizations lose energy as they do not have constant support → provide them **resources**.

3. How could your organization work with UNEP to contribute to that shift?

Accessibility and understanding:

- Different youth organizations have **different access**: youth groups in Africa contribute differently than those in the Silicon Valley.
- We have to give young people's technology, financial access and other **resources** so that they can meaningfully engage and contribute.
- Different youth organizations have different access: the way an organization interacts with UNEP is dependent on **accessibility of knowledge and technology**.
- Identify **knowledge gaps** and youth problems in the engagement with UNEP.

Resources and support:

- Most youth NGOs and movements are voluntary in nature, so they cannot “contribute” so much. However, the potential of young people needs to be harnessed further and they need to be **supported** in their work.
- Facilitate green organizations to participate in the African Continental Free Trade Area.
- Ensure that youth organizations can receive cooperation with UNEP and donors.
- Young people specially from the vulnerable population can be helped in their own term and capacity including giving inputs and solidarity to what the organization is doing in regards to young people.
- Facilitate the NGO collective work peer to peer.

Other:

- Need to further mainstream participation of **Indigenous Youth**.
- Youth constituency provides a lot of ideas and **policy advocacy on emerging issues** - MGCY is already doing that.
- Organizations can support in **monitoring** the progress on MEAs implementation.

List of participants:

(24 participants from below joined the session)

Surname	First Name	Email	Organisation Represented
Abu Taha	Zahra Ibrahim Salem	zahra1471990@gmail.com	Children and Youth International
Alfaro Morales	Alvaro	alvaro.alexis.am@gmail.com	Children and Youth International
Arora	Rohan	rohanarora.business@gmail.com	Children and Youth International
Bagge	Stina	stina.bagge@unmgcy.org	Children and Youth International
Burman	Sromona	sromonaburman17@gmail.com	Children and Youth International
Cascante	Kyara	kycascante@icloud.com	Children and Youth International
Cazeau	Pierrette J	info@hcrff.org	Haiti Cholera Research Funding Foundation Inc
Chimhandu	Kudzana	kudzanaicy@gmail.com	Children and Youth International
Dandadzi	Tafara	tafara@cynesa.org	Catholic Youth Network for Environmental Sustainability in Africa (CYNESA)

Domenico	Vito	dome.vito@gmail.com	Children and Youth International
Elrefaey	Sherif	sherif.abdelkader2017@feps.edu.eg	Children and Youth International
Fahim	Faezur	faezurrahmanfahim@gmail.com	Children and Youth International
García	Laura	laura.garcia@aegee.eu	Children and Youth International
Gasimova	Sabina	s.gasimova@ideacampaign.org	International Dialogue for Environmental Action (IDEA)
Kar Gupta	Annesha	anneshakargupta@gmail.com	Children and Youth International
Lakhani	Heeta	heeta.lakhani@gmail.com	Children and Youth International
Luwedde	Juliet Grace	julietgracey21@gmail.com	Children and Youth International
Mandal	Shantanu	ecoshanti@brahmakumaris.com	Children and Youth International
Mishra	Aditi	aditi.mishra@ifsa.net	Children and Youth International
Mossae	Barkha	barkha.mossae@gmail.com	Children and Youth International
Munene	David Ngigi	ngigimunene@gmail.com	Catholic Youth Network for Environmental Sustainability in Africa (CYNESA)
Méténier	Nathan	nathan.metenier@gmail.com	Youth and Environment Europe (YEE)
Oberhauser	Teresa	teresa.oberhauser@posteo.net	Children Youth International
Ogene	Jude	ogeneogbodo@gmail.com	Children Youth International
Oghenechovwen	Oghenekevwe Christopher	chrischovwen@gmail.com	Children and Youth International
Ottaro	Allen	ottaro@cynesa.org	Catholic Youth Network for Environmental Sustainability in Africa (CYNESA)
Peeva	Ena	ena@eduactive.eu	Children and Youth International
Santoso	Vania	vaniastartic@gmail.com	Children and Youth International
Shrestha	Anish	anish@yfeed.org	Children and Youth International
Srivastava	Yugratna	yugratna@gmail.com	Children and Youth International
Targa	Jhanice	targajhanice05@gmail.com	Children and Youth International
Udeh	Chiagozie	chiagozieudeh94@gmail.com	Children and Youth International
Zakour	Christianne	czakour@hotmail.com	Children and Youth International