

UNEA-Accredited Faith-based Organisations: Platform for Enhanced Coordination
Terms of Reference: Steering Committee
July 2022

Rationale: Building a Foundation to Foster Greater Collaboration between Accredited FBOs

As of June 2022, there are 58 accredited faith-based organisations to UNEA, classified within the NGO Major Group. Accredited FBOs account for approximately [10% of the total accredited organisations](#).

At the 'Faith for Earth Dialogue at UNEA 5.2' and through the Regional Multistakeholder Consultations of Stockholm+50, Faith-based Organisation (FBOs) called for greater integration and coordination among accredited FBOs and between Major Groups and Stakeholders.

UNEP Faith for Earth was therefore requested to facilitate the effective engagement of accredited FBOs before, during, and after UNEA and to harness the collective power of FBOs in environmental sustainability. The Steering Committee presents FBOs with a platform to also coordinate engagement and messages made via civil society mechanisms across the UN System, noting that they are active in several spaces, relevant to UNEP Faith for Earth's strategic objectives.

Outcomes of the Steering Committee

- Coordinate with the larger group of accredited FBOs to strengthen engagement before, during, and after UNEA:
 - Support FBOs seeking accreditation to UNEA.
 - Build capacity of accredited FBOs fostering greater engagement.
 - Leverage the respective capabilities of the Steering Committee in analyzing information on draft decisions, participate in policy debates that lead to an interfaith position to the draft text, and form strategic partnerships to achieve the outcomes of the Committee.
- Coordinate with facilitators of Major Groups and Stakeholders, in particular the Major Group of NGOs, Indigenous People and Local Communities, and Women for enhanced and integrated collaboration and partnership.
 - Strengthen relationships with Major Groups and Stakeholders.
 - Demonstrate that FBOs are major contributors to international diplomacy on environment and climate-related matters, in a collaborative spirit.
- Leverage the Multifaith Action Groups on Ecosystems, Biodiversity, Pollution, and other interfaith groups/mechanisms to support advocacy with science-based evidence.
 - Leverage this platform to build strategic partnerships, ensure coordination of accredited FBOs at UNEA and across the UN System.

The Role of UNEP [Faith for Earth](#)

UNEP Faith for Earth serves as a convenor of the Steering Committee and a facilitator of their Outcomes. The Initiative seeks to support the Outcomes of the Committee by providing them with a platform for a well informed and active engagement of FBOs at UNEPs governing body.

To achieve this UNEP Faith for Earth seeks to mobilise available knowledge resources for capacity-building opportunities, facilitate peer-to-peer support, and harness the specialist advice of the Multifaith Working Groups in lobbying representatives of Member States at the national and global levels.

Background: The Importance of Civil Society Engagement, particularly the Role of FBOs

Major Groups and Stakeholders play a critical role at the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) and in shaping UNEPs Programmed of Work through the [Medium-Term Strategy](#) (2022-2025) (MTS). Civil society engagement fosters transparency and inclusiveness in accordance with applicable rules and regulations.

Read: [Why Civil Society Matters](#)

The Agenda 21 adopted at the Earth Summit formalized nine sectors of civil society as the main channels through which broad participation is facilitated in the UN System.

The [MTS](#) highlights a distinctive role of faith actors, to strengthen the contribution of faith actors in policy dialogue through engaging with faith leaders, faith-based organizations, and faith actors to promote far-reaching, value-based perspectives on environmental sustainability that speak to billions of people around the world. FBOs, during the discussion of the Medium-Term Strategy, emphasized their commitment to strengthening collaboration with UNEP, at national, regional, and international levels.

Moreover, faith, values, and ethics promote good governance, reconciliation, peace building, safe, inclusive, and peaceful societies, and strong institutions through the lens of environmental sustainability. In this context, the UNEP identifies Faith-Based Organizations (FBO) as critical players in eradicating poverty, improving people's health, protecting the environment, and working toward sustainable development.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Steering Committee

1. Coordinate with UNEP Faith for Earth and other FBOs on drafting, implementation and presentation of statements, declarations, calls to action, and strategic documents of UNEP and UNEA
2. Co-organise webinars/seminars to build capacity on technical and substantive matters relevant to accredited FBOs.
3. Support strategically placed FBOs globally to gain accreditation.
4. Serve as liaison with UNEP Faith for Earth and Civil society unit.
5. Promote joint activities among accredited and unaccredited organizations
6. Provide advice to UNEP Faith for Earth on strategic issues including the Theory of Change and structure of the new project document.
7. Promote the Faith for Earth Coalition and engage in dialogue with its 4 councils.
8. Coordinate with Interfaith thematic working groups such as Climate Change, Ecosystems/Biodiversity and Pollution.
9. Conduct research/mapping to serve the purposes of the steering committee
10. Leverage the platform to coordinate efforts between FBOs engaged in civil society spaces across the UN System to lift up key messages

Organizational Structure of the Steering Committee

The Steering Committee will consist of 5-6 members with an equal gender balance and diverse religious representation. In this regard, it should also include youth representatives to ensure intergenerational dialogue.

Likewise, it will establish formal and structured coordination with other major groups, ensuring that the voices of faith actors are included in civil society discussions and outcomes.

Terms of service

The Accredited FBOs Steering Committee shall serve for two consecutive years, or from one UNEA session to the other.

On the other hand, it is important to note that a membership is revoked if a member fails to attend two consecutive meetings without a compelling reason.

Modalities on election

The first steering committee is tasked with developing election procedures for the incoming democratically elected committee.

The Committee will select/elect a chair and co-chair. This will help strengthening individual committee members' commitment and enthusiasm by ensuring committee's overall effectiveness and ability to achieve its goals.

Declaration

The Steering Committee will sign a code of conduct confirming each member's agreement to engage in all related activities while adhering to the Faith for Earth Principles and Faith for Earth Coalition.

This will serve as a commitment to being proactive in actualizing the objectives, contributions, and roles forward.

Code of Service

- Commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Respect for all spiritual and religious beliefs.
- Adoption of the principles of "Leave no one behind".
- Transparency in governance structure and decision-making.
- Interfaith collaboration with mutual acceptance and respect.
- Focus on the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, mainly those related to the environment
- Building bridges between existing knowledge and experience scientifically and spiritually.
- Perform actions that respect individual and communal beliefs.
- Aim at Transforming people's behaviors through their spiritual values.
- Respect the rules of the UN and do not cause harm to its reputation under any circumstances.
- Perform duties in accordance with the principles of the Faith for Earth Coalition.
- Understand that this is a limited assignment and might be withdrawn if an individual break any obligations.
- Commitment to be pro-active in advancing the agenda of the committee and the Coalition. If an individual is unable to actively engage, must inform the Secretariat of the circumstances for their review and consideration.