Supporting and Coordinating the Africa Region MGS engagement in UNEP

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The UNEP MGS, Africa

- Comprises all organizations of Africa with accreditation to the UNEP
- Currently: 230 (22% of all accredited organizations)
- Major Groups: All 9
- Also works with non-accredited
- Regional Facilitators: Ayman Cherkaoui & David N. Munene
Communication Channels

- In person (for both accredited and non-accredited depending on context)
- Via Email (Accredited organizations only)
- Via WhatsApp (Accredited and non-accredited)
Mobilization and Engagement of Constituents

- Communicate in good time
- Allocate roles to others (they are leaders in their own right!) e.g., working group leadership, rapporteuring, facilitation of sessions, expert presentations, agenda preparations
- Work with influential leaders within your constituencies such as Major Groups’ Facilitators, former regional facilitators
- Allow for self-organization
- Involve them in decision-making that concerns them including developing the RCM concept note and the agenda
- Allow for their input (including criticism) in regional statements, and interventions, etc.
- Encourage non-accredited organizations to be accredited
- Extend and share opportunities within and beyond the UNEP systems and encourage constituents to do so
Preparing for the RCM

- Identify dates of the RCM strategically (In Africa, we look at the dates of the subsequent African Ministerial Conference on the Environment – AMCEN)
- Understand the preparatory agenda of the target engagement (in Africa, we refer to the AMCEN agenda)
- Constitute a team to prepare a concept note in advance or critique your draft as RFs
- Engage UNEP (CSU regional focal point) for guidance, support, and expertise
- Engage your active constituents and leaders to take up roles
- Prepare the RCM agenda in line with the strategic meeting ahead
- Conduct pre-RCM engagements even virtually to get buy-in
- Look for partners to support your RCM activities
- Engage the host country leadership (In Africa, AMCEN host)
- Engage the Target meeting’s convenors (e.g., in Africa, AMCEN Secretariat)
- Engage suppliers (e.g., hotel, interpretation, media, etc.).
Running the RCM

- As much as possible, set up a hybrid RCM
- Invite UNEP Heads, Experts, Host Country Leadership/Government Representation, and relevant Secretariats (e.g., AMCEN Secretariat) to open and present
- Run the first day as an information-sharing day and capacity-building
- Use the subsequent day(s) to work in groups aligned to the agenda to develop a common position (we, RFs, do not facilitate or rapporteur in any working groups – we only share insights as may be required)
- Lead the consolidation of the final long statement
- Work with group thematic leads to develop the summary statement
At the Regional Forum of Ministers

- Participate actively in the meeting (in Africa, we engage in expert segment with member states)
- Organize bilateral meetings with key persons with your constituency members (e.g., UNEP Heads, Member States, Heads of Regional Ministers’ Secretariats, Presidents of Regional Ministers’ Forums)
- Continually engage with the Regional Forum’s Secretariat for updates on the agenda
- Consult and update your constituents on what is happening at the Forum (both those in-person and those away e.g., via WhatsApp
- Engage constituents in side events and events happening on the side (cocktails, dinners, etc.).
Post-RCM

- Share the outcomes (long and summary statements with your region, UNEP, and the public.
- Hold a post-RCM meeting (virtual)
- Write appreciation letters
- Think ahead about the next RCM and start engaging (e.g., with the regional meeting of ministers in your region, the leadership, UNEP regional focal point, etc.).
Post-RCM: Some Other Engagements

- World Environment Day
- INC Processes
- Open-Ended Working Groups
- Committee of Permanent Representatives
Challenges

- Not all accredited organizations engage
- Some accredited organizations do not understand their responsibilities and UNEP processes
- Some individuals/organizations do not understand our role as Regional Facilitators
- Inadequate resources (financial, human, time...)
- Language barriers (English, French, Arabic + some others)
Lessons Learnt

- Working in sync and collaboratively as Regional Facilitators is critical
- Our constituents are leaders, experts, and representatives in their own right – we will accord them all the respect they deserve and engage them consistently
- Understanding our role as facilitators and not chairpersons/presidents/UNEP representatives/if extremely vital
- Identify crucial members of your constituency and the most active one – engage them
- Engage early and plan properly (for RCM and all other meetings)
- The RCM is just one meeting – don’t just do the RCM
- Develop good relations and work closely and respectfully with the UNEP CSU (if only your focal point!)
- Work closely with your UNEP Regional Office and your region’s experts and organizations
- Engage with UNEP processes consistently
- Engage speakers, experts, partners, host government, and regional meeting secretariats early
Opportunities

- Engage, involve, and encourage active participation of all 200+ accredited organizations
- Strengthen working groups and task forces to increase engagement in processes
- Increase the pool of partners
- Bigger RCMs (more participants, more diversity, etc.).
- Several RCMs before the AMacen and a final one days ahead of the AMacen
Q&A