



# UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement      Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Medio Ambiente  
Программа Организации Объединенных Наций по окружающей среде      برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة

联合国环境规划署



## **Modalities for Accreditation of civil society organizations**

**at the**

### **United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA)**

### **of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**

UNEP owes a great deal to non-governmental organizations. Its creation in 1972 during the Stockholm Conference can largely be attributed to the pressure and commitment of civil society (all the major groups as defined by the Rio Summit in 1992). Most of the well-known multilateral environment agreements (Basel Convention, Montreal Protocol, Kyoto Protocol, and Cartagena Protocol, among others) exist because of the hard work of your organizations.

The purpose of accreditation is to provide non-governmental organizations with observer status to the UNEA, according to [Rule 69 of the rules of procedure of the Governing Council of UNEP](#).

Rule 69, in its Chapter XIII "Observers of international non-governmental organizations", paragraph 2, stipulates, that the civil society organization (CSO) should:

1. Be an International Non-Governmental Organization:

"International non-governmental organizations having an interest in the field of the environment, referred to in section IV, paragraph 5, of General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII), may designate representatives to sit as observers at public meetings of the Governing Council and its subsidiary organs, if any. The Governing Council shall from time to time adopt and revise when necessary a list of such organizations. Upon the invitation of the President or chairman, as the case may be, and subject to the approval of the Governing Council or the subsidiary organ concerned, international nongovernmental organizations may take oral statements on matters within the scope of their activities."

2. Have an interest in the field of environment:

"Written statements provided by international non-governmental organizations referred to in paragraph 1 above, related to items on the agenda of the Governing Council or of its subsidiary organs, shall be circulated by the secretariat to members of the Governing Council or of the subsidiary organ concerned in the quantities and in the languages in which the statements were made available to the secretariat for distribution."

UNEA replaces the Governing Council, which was established as a 58-member body in 1972 to promote international environmental cooperation and coordinated environmental activities within the UN system.

Forty years later, at the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), the international community decided to strengthen and upgrade UNEP including through the establishment of universal membership in the Governing Council. As a follow up to this decision, the Governing Council held its first session with universal membership in February 2013, where countries agreed to rename the Governing Council as the “United Nations Environment Assembly of the UNEP” (UNEA). Subsequently, the General Assembly adopted a resolution formally changing the designation to UNEA (67/251).

### **Accreditation request submission**

The civil society organization seeking accreditation should forward a set of documents to the UNEP Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch. A complete application for accreditation should include the following:

1. Letter requesting accreditation
2. Copy of constitution/charter and/or statutes/by-laws and amendments to those documents, and list of affiliates
3. Copy or certificate of registration
4. Proof of non-profit-making status
5. Proof of interest in the environment: annual reports; conference and seminar reports; recent press releases and copies of media statements; newsletters and other periodicals. The organization should have at least an account of two years of activities in the field of environment.
6. Detailed account of the international scope of its activities (such as headquarters and regional offices in different countries ; projects or programmes that are taking place in other countries ; activities that have international implication: for example international water management, desertification on trans-boundary areas, waste management of estuaries that affects a region). Please note that a proof of participation in an intergovernmental meeting is good to mention but is not sufficient to demonstrate the international scope of work. Similarly, agreements with another organization or membership of an international network are good to be mentioned but are not sufficient.

In addition, civil society organizations can send a copy of their accreditation to other United Nations bodies and agencies, including the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to support their application at UNEP. The ECOSOC accreditation is however not a precondition to become accredited to UNEP. The documents can be sent in hard copy or electronic version (preferred) to the below address.

**Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch, Secretariat of Governing Bodies and Stakeholders**

**United Nations Environment Programme**

**P.O. Box 30552 Nairobi, Kenya**

**Please send the application, together with the supporting documents by email to  
Accreditation.CivilSociety@unep.org**

## **Accreditation review by UNEP**

The accreditation review process comprises the following steps:

1. The Secretariat of Governing Bodies and Stakeholders (SGBS) will review the application and requests missing documents or further clarifications, as the case may be.
2. The SGBS notifies the civil society organization of its decision.
3. The SGBS revises its database to include the name and contacts of the newly accredited organizations. An email notification is sent to the accredited organization.

## **RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE ACCREDITED ORGANIZATIONS**

### Immediate advantages to accreditation:

In the process leading up to sessions of the UNEA the accredited civil society organizations have the possibility:

1. To receive unedited working documents of the UNEA at the same time as the Committee of the Permanent Representatives;
2. To submit to the UNEP Secretariat written contributions to these unedited working documents of the UNEA for distribution to the Governments;

### During the session of the UNEA accredited civil society organizations have the opportunity:

1. To attend the plenary, the Committee of the Whole and the Ministerial Consultations as observers;
2. To circulate written statements to Governments through the UNEP secretariat;
3. To make oral statements during the discussions of the UNEA at the invitation of the chairperson.