

**STATEMENT BY THE NORTH AMERICAN REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES
REGARDING UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL DRAFT DECISIONS.**

**Presented February 17, 2013
at the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum (GMGSF) in Nairobi**

It is the role of Regional Representatives to serve as stewards for the key messages emerging from each of the six regions, and to also support the engagement of civil society stakeholders at the regional and national levels.

In developing the North American Region's key messages for this year's Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum and Governing Council, a total of seven of the nine major groups (including Business and industry, Children and youth, NGO's, Science and Technology, Women, Farmers, and Workers and Trade Unions) all participated in our regional consultation.

The regional format also provides a structure for engagement and inclusion of civil society stakeholders that do not fit within the 9 Major Groups model. Stakeholder participants in regional discussions during the North American consultation and breakout group also included faith-based organizations, institutions of higher learning, educational organizations, and multi-stakeholder organizations.

Since the time limit for this presentation is only five minutes, instead of providing a complete overview of the key messages from civil society organizations in North America (which have already been mentioned by previous panels and speakers), we instead would like to highlight two specific areas:

- 1. Developing a narrative:** The current environmental narrative is a reactive and deficit-based approach focusing on tragedy and guilt, instead of a proactive and positive narrative emphasizing the beauty of collaboration and well-being for all on a finite planet. UNEP should facilitate the development of a new narrative that captures the urgency of the environmental challenges we face as opportunities for collaboration, inspires stakeholders to take action, creates new communal identities around environmental responsibility, and provides accessible terminology to the general public. UNEP has a central role to play in helping to develop this narrative, and should invite media and communications experts from various industries to support the initiative.

- 2. Clearly link environment and development:** The environment is critical to economic development. Sustainable human and economic development depends on sustainable use of the earth's natural resources, which are finite. This link needs to be better articulated and communicated to stakeholders and decision-makers. Integration versus fragmentation: While the concept of the three pillars of sustainable development aims to create a more comprehensive vision of development, in reality it contributes to a fragmented approach to sustainable development. A new concept of sustainable development is needed that acknowledges planetary limits and provides a truly integrated, systemic approach to development, which focuses on sustainable living systems and well-being. Better integration is also needed within policy development and governance processes, so that different U.N. agencies, government ministries, and Major Groups pursue common goals together rather than independently.