

**STATEMENT BY WORKERS AND TRADE UNION MAJOR GROUP
MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT
FIRST UNIVERSAL UNEP GC MEETING
22ND FEBRUARY 2013
UNEP HEADQUARTERS, GIGIRI NAIROBI KENYA**

Mr President,

The Workers and Trade Union Major Group appreciates your willingness to hold this meeting with representatives from a wide cross – section of the Major Groups constituency.

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) wishes to submit to you the views and expectations of millions of workers across the globe on the following:

i. Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste

- We support all three elements of the approach proposed by UNEP EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, namely mainstreaming of sound chemicals and waste management into development planning; industry involvement; and dedicated external financing. This will go a long way in protecting workers against occupational exposure to hazardous substances.

ii. Enhancing stakeholder coordination and participation in UNEP.

- One way of achieving this is to establish clear procedures within UNEP for involvement of Major Group representatives in agenda setting and policy making, opening up of closed meetings, allowing Major Groups to receive meeting documents and make submissions or interventions during meetings.
- The right approach of enhancing engagement is through continuation of the Major Groups system as decided in 1992 while allowing for participation of Regional representatives.

iii. Response to country needs

- We call for the expansion of the concept to include UNEP response to the needs of workers, communities and others and not only the need of states.

- We support strengthening UNEP regional and sub - regional offices in order to allow UNEP to carry out responses in a timely and cost effective manner using expertise from regions where regional or sub regional offices are located.
- We feel that the proposal to subsume UNEP staff under UNDP or any other such institution as proposed by some Parties as a way of enhancing responsiveness will undermine the role of UNEP and roll – back achievements made over the past decade.

iv. Science policy interface

- While enhancing science policy interface due attention should be accorded to social issues particularly when carrying – out research
- We support proposal to increase synergies between IPCC and IPBES and the use of UNEP GEO as the centre for the science-policy interface. This will avoid duplication and overhead costs.

v. Enhancing the role of UNEP

- In order to enhance the role of UNEP increased financial resources is un - avoidable based on mandate given to UNEP by the international community. We support the call to increase UNEP’s donor base and move away from earmarked funding. This would not only make funding more predictable but also strengthen UNEP as suggested. Different ways of raising financial resources including the Financial Transactions Tax should be operationalized without further delay.

Shukran Rais