

Agenda Item 4.4: Note on Engagement of Major Groups and Stakeholders and the Private Sector in the Preparatory Process for the fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly

Background

Major Groups and Stakeholders, represented by the nine Major Groups and the Private Sector, are crucially important partners for governments to foster the environmental agenda and to implement the outcomes of UN Environment Assembly meetings and the UN 2030 Agenda.¹

This note summarizes UN Environment Programme's activities in engaging Major Groups and the Private Sector towards the 2019 Assembly.

Engagement of Major Groups in the Preparatory Process for the Assembly

In line with existing rules and regulations, including the Rules of Procedure of the UN Environment Assembly and UN Environment Programme's Access to Information Policy, Major Groups accredited to UN Environment Programme may participate in all public meetings of the Assembly subsidiary bodies, such as the Committee of Permanent Representatives. Accredited representatives also participate through remote means and through the Resolutions Platform and the video-conferencing facility provided for public meetings.

Since the establishment of the Environment Assembly in 2014, Major Groups have actively used available opportunities to contribute to the strengthening of the Assembly and to the relevance of its outcomes. The growing number of duly accredited organizations is an indicator of growing interest from various stakeholders (<https://goo.gl/Y8oqnP>).

Building on recommendations set out by the Bureau of the Committee and of the Assembly the role of major groups and stakeholders has been strengthened through the following innovations:

- Meetings of the Committee of Permanent Representatives are held in public, allowing for active participation of Major Groups and Stakeholders
- Remote participation and access to relevant documentation including draft resolutions;
- Contributions to the process of development of the ministerial outcome documents;
- Involvement in the development of the background reports of the Executive Director for the Assembly;
- Contributed to the joint retreat of the Assembly and Committee of Permanent Representatives Bureaux, held in Nairobi in 2018
- Created coalitions of accredited organizations, such as the Global Business Alliance for the Environment;
- The Multi-Stakeholder Dialogues during the Assembly

¹ Business and Industry, Children and Youth, Farmers, Indigenous Peoples, Local Authorities, NGOs, Scientific and Technological Community, Women, Workers and Trade Unions,

Forthcoming activities involving Major Groups and Stakeholders

In March 2018, Major Groups.

Furthermore, the UN Environment Programme, in close cooperation with its Regional Offices, is organizing Regional Consultative Meetings for Stakeholders in all regions, in preparation for the Assembly and often back to back with regional ministerial fora, such as the Special Session of the African Ministerial Conference on Environment, (17-19 September in Nairobi), the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean (9-12 October 2018 in Buenos Aires), and the 3rd Asia Pacific Ministerial Forum on the Environment in Singapore on 5–9 January, 2019.

On 3-4 September 2018, a consultation for stakeholders from the pan-European region will take place in Tallinn, Estonia. Dates for consultations on West Asia and North America are not yet set. The meetings will bring together accredited and non-accredited organisations. They usually result in joint statements from the regional stakeholders related to the theme of the Assembly.

Major Groups participation at the 2019 Assembly

All Major Groups accredited to UN Environment Programme may participate in all meetings at the Assembly and provide oral and written input. Prior to the Assembly, a 2-day Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum will be organized (date tbc), which will allow Major Groups to consolidate their positions and to prepare their input to the agenda of the Assembly. Major Groups will also contribute to the meeting of the Open-Ended meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, prior to the Assembly.

Funding status to support

In order to better enable Major Groups and Stakeholders to engage with UN Environment, the Executive Director has considerably increased the contribution of the Environment Fund to the budget of the Civil Society Unit in 2018. Nevertheless, additional extra-budgetary resources are needed to ensure a meaningful participation of Major Groups from all regions to the Assembly preparatory process and the Assembly itself (see below).

Activity	Amount secured	Amount for which voluntary contributions are welcomed
Major groups participation in the preparatory process for the 2019 Assembly	220,000 USD	170,000
Support major groups attendance during the 2019 Assembly	110,000 USD	130,000 USD

Engaging with the Private Sector

The UN Environment Programme recognizes that partnerships between the public and private sector are pivotal to achieving solutions to our global and interconnected environmental challenges. Governments, civil society and private sector increasingly realize global, regional and national solutions to many of the environmental challenges can only be effectively addressed by working together in partnerships.

Public-private partnerships have the capacity to promote and spur innovation and leverage new technologies that can then be scaled up or replicated for wider impact. The UN Environment Programme is uniquely positioned to provide a global platform to engage policy-makers and leaders of the private sector around sustainability challenges. This has become evident in consultations with members States, which have specifically requested a strengthened engagement with the private sector entities that can

contribute with, for example, innovation, financial resources and interest to address environmental challenges.

The private sector is also critical to creating innovative and technological solutions and fostering markets for sustainable products and services, thereby contributing to sustainable economic development and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The UN Environment Programme has been working with the private sector through projects such as the Finance Initiative; the Global Programme of Action for Protection of the Marine Environment; the Partnership for Action on Green Economy; the Global Fuel Economy Initiative; and the 10-Year Framework of Programme on Sustainable Consumption and Production.

Private Sector Engagement in the UN Environment Assembly

The 2017 UN Environment Assembly engaged with private sector representatives an unprecedented level. Almost 300 private sector representatives, including Chief Executive Officers and Chief Sustainability Officers, participated, including in the following events:

- **2017 Sustainable Innovation Expo**, which provided 43 companies with the opportunity to exhibit their innovative solutions to tackle pollution. The *Expo* included a networking space for “Pop Chats” providing participants with an opportunity to identify transformative actions at the global, regional, national and local levels to tackle pollution.
- **Leaders’ Luncheon**, brought together Heads of State, Ministers, leading policy-makers and private sector leaders to discuss pollution beyond the normative narrative.
- **Global Science-Policy-Business Forum on the Environment**, which identified and promoted opportunities for green investment, driven by advances in science and technology.
- **Business Symposium**, organized by the co-chairs of the Business and Industry Major Group.
- **Leadership Dialogues**, provided participating ministers with an opportunity to intensify high-level engagement with private sector and civil society leaders, and to discuss and articulate solutions and contributions towards a pollution-free planet

In preparation for the 2019 Assembly, the UN Environment Programme will continue to organize high-level events that bring together senior policy-makers and leaders of private sector in the margins of major global conferences, such as (i) the seventh special session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment on 17-19 September in Nairobi; (ii) the 2018 UN Biodiversity Conference to be held in November 2018 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt; and (iii) the 2019 PAGE Ministerial Conference to be held in January 2019 in Cape Town - South Africa.

Private Sector participation in the 2019 Assembly

At the next Assembly, the UN Environment Programme will organize the *2019 Sustainable Innovation Expo*, which will bring together Ministers; other senior policymakers; civil society and the business community to discuss critical environmental challenges and possible sustainable and resource-efficient solutions. It is expected that participants at the *Expo* will make commitments or decide on collaborative action on innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production. Moreover, the next Global Science-Policy-Business Forum on the Environment will be organized in conjunction with the next Assembly.