

MAIN OUTCOMES

Online International Consultation for Major Groups and Other Stakeholders

before the Retreat of the UNEA and CPR Bureaus on 25 June 2021

21 June 2021, 11:00-16:30 GMT+3

Background

The Major Groups Facilitating Committee (MGFC) decided to hold an international consultation for Major Groups and Stakeholders through an online format before the [joint retreat of the Committee of Permanent Representatives \(CPR\) and UNEA Bureaus](#) on 24 June 2021. The main objective of the consultation was to prepare questions and input for the 90-minute exchange between the MGFC and members of the Bureaus held as part of the joint retreat on 24 June 2021, one milestone along to the path to the 5th UN Environment Assembly (UNEA 5.2) and UNEP@50 in February/March 2022. The agenda of the consultation was therefore structured around the thematic agenda points of the joint retreat in order to provide focused input for the exchange with the Bureaus.

The MGFC mandated a Consultation Preparation Team to prepare and facilitate the consultation on 21 June. All Major Groups as well as the thematic clusters were asked to identify members to join the Consultation Preparation Team. The team was supported by Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF) and the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) who facilitated the team meetings, set up a shared space for online documents, took minutes, drafted the invitation and programme for the consultation, took care of the registration of participants and hosted the online event.

Participants

The invitation was shared with all UNEP accredited organisations with the support of the Civil Society Unit. It was further shared through the channels of the Major Groups and its members' wider network. While the dissemination of the invitation focussed on accredited organisations, the consultation was open to other organisations with a legitimate interest in the UNEA process.

Registered participants	188
Unique participants	99
Youth (under 30)	27/99 = 27%
Major Groups present	Children & Youth MG 28 NGOs MG: 38 Women MG: 11 Farmers MG: 5 Science & Technology MG: 5 Business/Industry: 1 Indigenous Peoples MG: 1 Workers/Trade Unions: 0 Local Authorities: 1
Local/Grassroots organizations	11/99 = 11%

Main outcomes of the sessions

Session 1: Feedback to UNEA 5.1 and suggestions for the arrangements of 5.2

- MGS welcome that UNEA 5.2. is not only digital, but hybrid to allow for personal meetings. However, MGS are **concerned about civil society participation and the negotiation path**: Will we be able to have MG input for the negotiations if we are not there physically? How can we negotiate line by line in online sessions? What are the contingency plans if many stakeholders cannot participate to negotiation in person?
- In general, we need to maintain and defend the **importance of civil society engagement**.
- MGS welcome that UNEP is looking into **hybrid side event options**.
- We advise not to use the term social distancing, but 'physical distancing' instead.
- During virtual meetings it is even more difficult for MGS to grasp the attention of delegates. During UNEA 5.1. we have seen a long chain of statements with one very short slot for MGS after hours of online meetings. What is the impact? How can we ensure there is actual dialogue? We suggest **new and increased opportunities for MGS to engage**. All MGs should be allocated time slots for their own interventions instead of one time slot for a general statement on behalf of all MGS as this reduces the opportunity to share unique perspectives and knowledge from each MGS. Meetings must be made **more interactive**.
- One possibility is to have civil society organisations co-host sessions in the main programme, or to have speaking slots right after the presidency to make our messages more heard.

- MGS also need to increase their engagement during the open-ended CPR, possibly have statements from each MGs.
- MGS welcome to appointment of MEA champions which should include different constituencies

Session 2: Key message regarding the Ministerial Declaration

Facilitator: Wali Haider, Farmers MG

Main outcomes of the session regarding the Ministerial Declaration

- We call for **urgent, transformative action based on human rights**. We need systemic change, not only the reaffirmation of past action. Put more focus on the impact of the economic system on the environment. The objective must be zero pollution and the full phase out of harmful practices. We need to end subsidies for fossil fuels. We ask for a focus on *financing* the transition. We need accountability and legal obligations on polluters. We want a commitment not to support false or short-term technological solutions. Climate solutions cannot compromise other environmental objectives, such as biodiversity protection.
- We need an **ecosystem approach for policy coherence**: not “nature-based solutions”, but a long-term ecosystem-based approach protecting and restoring nature to reduce environmental risks to human security.
- **Follow up of Res 73/333**: We need a global framework for environmental rule of law and stronger environmental governance. We need synergies between different environmental processes and better policy coherence (See also Session 3)
- **Meaningful participation of underrepresented groups and focus on equality** is essential. Continued and increased engagement with Major Groups and Stakeholders is key. Importance of engaging young people more in environmental and climate negotiations and environmental policymaking. Ensure meaningful participation of Indigenous People. A renewed gender-focus is needed given the persistent gap between men and women. Digital inequality gap keeps on growing.
- **Plastic Pollution Treaty**: a legally binding instrument is necessary and must address the full life cycle. The treaty must focus on curbing production in the first place, and addresses a just transition including socio-economic perspectives. There is no more time to lose.
- **Sustainable food system**: the Food Systems Summit was a missed opportunity and it was very controversial; we need a reaffirmation of objective to eradicate hunger and poverty, pandemic is putting this objective at risk but cannot be an excuse; need to ensure food security and food sovereignty, commitment to agroecology, industrial agriculture is destroying planet and putting human rights at risk, in particular indigenous people’s rights; responsibilities and obligations of producers must be extended; agree on limitation on unsustainable food consumption such as red meat consumption.

- **Use of highly hazardous pesticides/chemicals needs to be stronger regulated globally**, producers need to stop export of hazardous chemicals which are banned for use where they are based. The entire production of the chemicals supply chains must change.
- We are concerned about the **weak language around Stockholm +50**. From a 3-days high level conference the format was downsized to a 2-day meeting. 1972 was the beginning of international environmental governance with CSOs part of the plenary meeting.
- We are **not achieving the SDGs**. The pandemic has set many countries back. SDGs are not an independent agenda but must be fully synchronized with the environmental agenda. We must bring back that legacy of Stockholm.

Clarification regarding the next steps from Ingrid Rostad, MGFC Co-Chair:

- This consultation informs the MGFC's meeting with the Bureaus on 24 June. So today we should stay focused on the meeting with the Bureaus.
- The thematic clusters will hold meetings and there will be further consultations.
- We will have several opportunities to communicate regarding the Ministerial Declaration. This is not the final session.

Session 3: Key messages regarding resolution 73/333

Facilitator and short presentation: Leida Rijnhout:

The declaration regarding Res 73/333 needs to:

- be ambitious and forward-looking. We need to strengthen environmental governance and accountability under the coordination of UNEP.
- formulate a clear commitment from MS to strengthen international environmental governance with a follow up process that is included in the declaration so that the declaration is not the end but a starting point. come with concrete objectives, targets and timelines.
- clarify means of implementation: what kind of incentives are being discussed to finance MEAs and national implementation?
- address how to improve the relationship between the different MEAs.
- reaffirm Principle 10 and all Rio Principles. present proposals for better enforcement, compliance and monitoring.
- acknowledge the need for environmental courts, for more jurists specialised in environmental matters, for environmental law to be more prominent in law schools, for more capacity building in the judicial systems.
- address the link between international environmental governance and accountability of the business and banking sector.
- make suggestions of how to create a level playing field globally, as levels of ambition vary among MS which creates double standards, (e.g., regarding import/export of chemicals).
- identify issues where legally binding agreements are necessary.

Session 4: Key message regarding UNEP@50, the UNEP we want

Facilitator: Yugratna Srivastava, Youth and Children MG

Main outcomes of the session regarding UNEP@50:

- UNEP@50 is **about strengthening UNEP**: strengthen its finances, its role in the UN system, in SDG implementation, the science policy interface, strengthen its independence, address new and emerging issues.
- **Stockholm legacy is not fully grasped by MSs**: Stockholm brought environmental law & science together, environmental diplomacy/governance were born in 1972.
- **Opportunity to acknowledge the important role that UNEP is playing**: defending (women) Environmental Human Rights Defenders; for environmental
- accountability, integrity, for international environmental governance and guidance for Member States on implementation and domestic legislation, for the engagement of civil society (Major Groups)
- **Call for urgency**: In the last 50 years, many things have happened, but despite all efforts from MS, UNEP and civil society the state of the environment is declining. It is time to have a very critical look and acknowledge what we do wrong. We do not have the next 50 years to solve the crisis that we are facing. We have 5 years of time left to avoid irreversible climate change. We need to address biodiversity loss with the same sense of urgency.
- UNEP@50 must be **essentially forward-looking**, and the process cannot stop at the UNEP@50 commemoration: follow-up necessary.
- **Importance of civil society engagement**: youth, indigenous communities, scientific community.
- MGS are developing their own plans and own contributions independently from MS: establishment of the UNEP+50 task Force, preparation of joint MGS statement of principles in September.
- Report “**The UNEP we want**” will be available at the end of 2021 for presentation and consideration in February 2022.
- We intend to present the “UNEP we Want” report at a special in-session, not limit our proposals to the limited agenda and ensure a diversity of civil society speakers.
- We are asking for dedicated space in the program for MGs, for every MG to provide their own statement. Civil Society could co-host sessions or have speaking slots right after the presidency to make our messages more heard.

Session 5: Wrap up and agreement of key message for opening part of meeting with Bureaus

Facilitator: Ingrid Rostad, NGO MG, Co-Chair MGFC

Based on the outcomes of each session, the MGFC will present to the Bureaus' meeting the main recommendations coming out from this consultation.

This summary has been prepared by:



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