

SUMMARY REPORT OF KEY 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.

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|--------------------------------|---|
| 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% |

Summary of the sessions with a focus on key outcomes

Opening of the international consultation

Welcome to the International Consultation from the Co-Chair Carmen Capriles:

- Thanks to EEB and WECF for helping organise this consultation.
- We are living in challenging times due to Covid-19. More than ever, we have identified the challenges: climate change, plastic pollution, biodiversity loss, pollutants and chemicals all around the globe with heavy metal and mercury pollution often impacting in particular on Indigenous areas.
- We need a shift and call for strong policies that are based on human rights, and we call for a human right to a healthy environment.

Welcome from Alexander Juras, Chief, Civil Society Unit, UNEP:

- Welcomes participants on behalf of UNEP. It has become a good practice to organise similar meetings with the joint retreat of the bureaus, and many participants were part of a similar exchange in June 2020.
- 50 years ago, we did not think about how climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution could threaten our environment.
- We have assessed the outcomes of UNEA 5.1 and are now busy with the preparations for UNEA 5.2. During the upcoming meeting of the bureaus, 90 min will be dedicated to an exchange with MGS and we will have the opportunity to present the outcomes of this consultation and ask questions to the Bureaus. Consultation is an opportunity for MGS to engage in the preparations of UNEA 5.2, and there will be other opportunities including a larger consultation to be held in September 2021, the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum, the thematic clusters, and training and capacity building sessions.

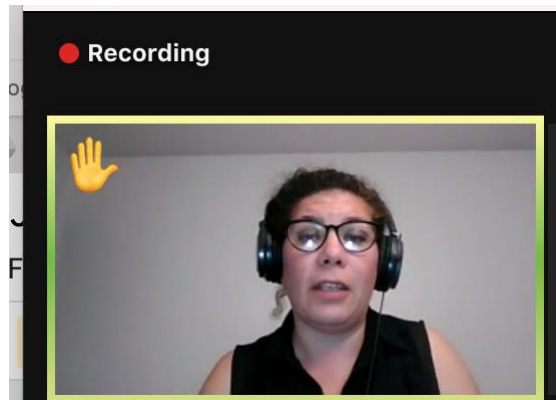
- Thanks to all the organisers and facilitators for organising this meeting.

Welcome note from Jenny H. Johanson, Adviser in the Unit for Environmental Research and Multilateral Cooperation, Norwegian Ministry of Climate and Environment:

- Pleasure to be here. We appreciate all the input received in the process so far.
- Presidency seeks to facilitate an inclusive and transparent preparation process.
- Preparations for UNEA 5.2: many things are still unclear. The ministerial declaration is one of the priorities for the presidency with high ambitions. Last year, the UNEA President shared a draft and received good feedback. Now it is time to move this forward.

Welcome to the International Consultation from Co-Chair Ingrid Rostad:

- Introduction to the agenda. This is a small and focused consultation based on a strategic decision to keep the input for the Bureau meeting concise.



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

Facilitator: Sascha Gabizon, Women MG

UNEP expert: Ulf Bjornholm, Deputy Director, Governance Affairs Office, UN Environment:

- There has been an assessment of the learnings of UNEA 5.1. Discussions are taking place now about what can be in person, hybrid or virtual. What is clear is that it will not be like UNEA 4 with thousands of delegates on the campus.
- During the Bureaus' retreat will discuss where we stand, MS will then formally adopt the format and agenda for UNEA.5.2. MS may accept online consultations as long as the end of the negotiations happen face to face in Nairobi.
- The hosting country decides on whether and to which extend in person meetings can happen. Different countries apply different rules for travelling to and from
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Kenya. We must make sure that all MS have the same opportunity to attend in person meetings.

- CP might be able to meet in person. UNEP is planning for a full in person meeting for the political outcomes. If it is not possible to offer representatives of MS to come to Nairobi it might be very difficult to decide on substance.
- We are becoming experts in online meetings. Maybe a limited number of representatives in a studio setting in Nairobi combine with virtual consultations. Positive aspect: reduced environmental footprint.
- Interactivity is important, we are aware of screen fatigue.
- Business Forum, Youth Forum etc. is still to be seen.
- The retreat will also discuss UNEP@50, the strategic plans and actions up to the commemoration. Regarding the political outcomes, the incoming bureau and president will provide guidance. The incoming countries are still to be identified.

Main outcomes of the session regarding the UNEA 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 negotiate 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

Objectives:

- Agree which key messages we want to deliver regarding the Ministerial Declaration during the meeting with the Bureaus (without necessarily agreeing on joint key messages from all MGS support)
- Discuss key message for Ministerial Declaration regarding the global plastics treaty as one of the main political opportunities of UNEA 5.2.

Short summary of input provided by the MGS and thematic clusters, Patrizia Heidegger, NGO MG and Regional Facilitator Europe:

- Reminder of the [DISCUSSION PAPER ON THE MINISTERIAL DECLARATION FROM UNEA-5](#) and the [Preparation of a UNEA-5 Ministerial Declaration](#). During UNEA 5.1, there was no further negotiation, no further progress.
- Food systems cluster has provided input through a shared documents before this consultation asking the UNEA Bureau should come up with a draft Ministerial Declaration as soon as possible.
- It should call for really “urgent and transformative” actions in line of its vision rather than just reaffirming past commitments. In particular attention should be paid to clear commitment towards food systems transformation as one of the three identified areas for intensified action (next to green recovery, healthy ecosystems and healthy people).
- It should reaffirm governments’ commitments towards eradication of poverty and hunger by 2030 in the light of covid 19 pandemic.
- UNEA should ask IPCC to assess the impact of economic/financial stimulus for recovery on SDGs and the Paris Agreement targets and how efforts need to be enhanced in the light of setback by covid 19 pandemic.
- The declaration should address the role that protecting and restoring nature can play in reducing security risks, in addressing environmental damage caused by conflicts and in conflict transformation.

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:

- Resolution 73/333 gives UNEA the mandate to issue a political Declaration on strengthening environmental governance and law. The co-chairs have drafted building blocks ([here](#)). It acknowledges that UNEP is the authority to strengthen environmental governance and law and is mandated by MS.
- We need a commitment from MS and UNEA included in this Declaration, to create the framework for the strengthening of environmental law and governance in the coming 3 to 4 years. A similar process when we developed the 2030 Agenda 2013-2015. The declaration does not need to address all binding points right now, but MS should agree to set up this framework in this Declaration. CSOs work together and unite in this process with the co-chairs of the working group. Everyone can be added to the existing WhatsApp group.

UNEP experts: Stadler Trengove, Legal Advisor, UN Environment:

- Working group has approved 30 recommendations. Consultations last year on draft elements for the declaration, online negotiations in July 2020, elements presented in October 2020. MS want to discuss in person and not online. If the UN compound is open in November, negotiations may resume then. In the meantime, informal workshops take place, the first in June, second one on 22 June, then on 7 July.
- Workshop on 22 June will touch upon the relationship between MEAs and UNEA, and the relationship with the COPs and also with IPPC.
- Some MS do not consider the declaration as the best instrument to build such a framework. Many MS are not keen to make more legally binding commitments, and there are varying levels of ambition among MS.

Main outcomes of the session regarding Resolution 73/333:

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.

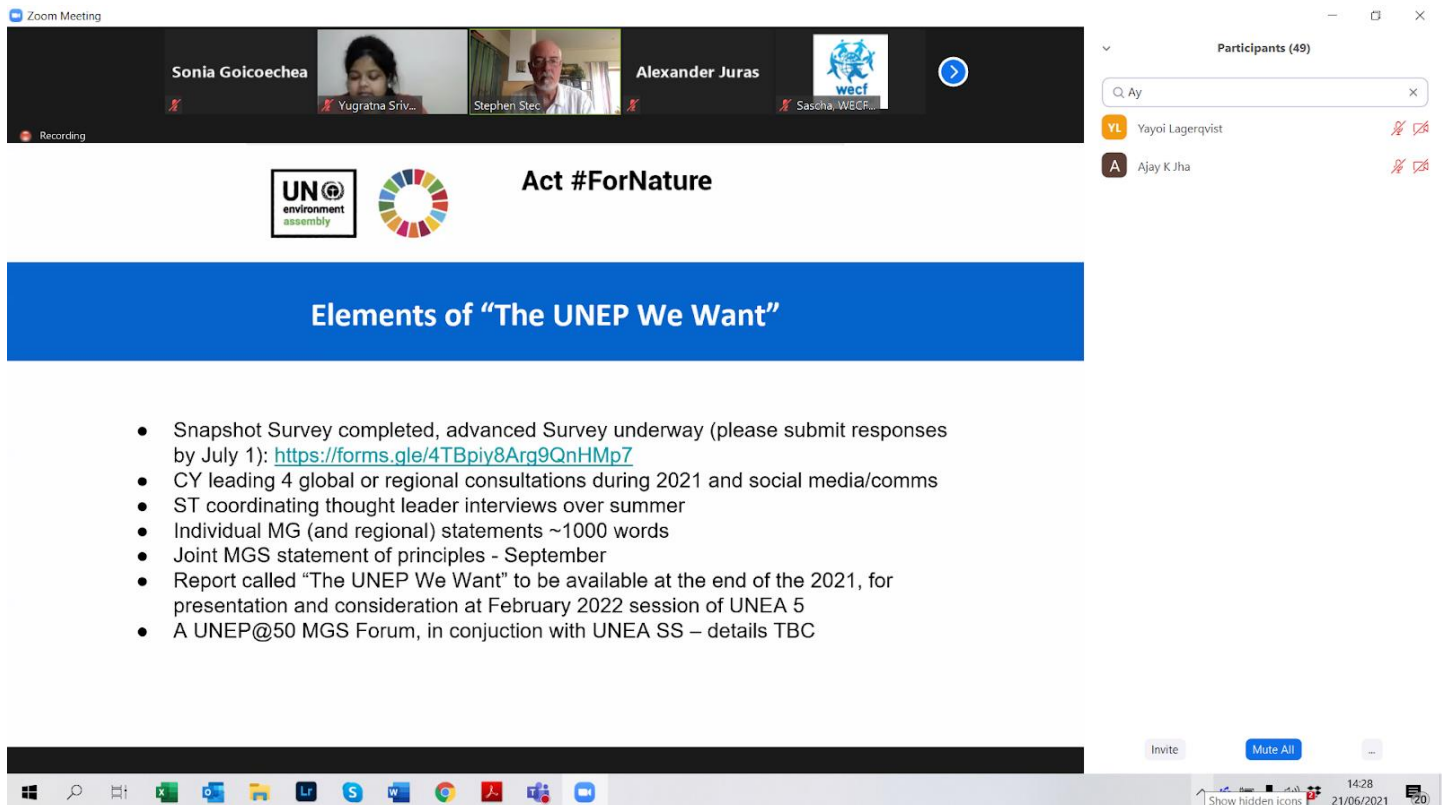
- acknowledge the need for environmental courts, for more jurists specialised in environmental matters, for environmental law to be more prominent in law schools, for more capacity building in the judicial systems.
- address the link between international environmental governance and accountability of 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

Kick off presentation: Stephen Stec, Science and Technology MG

- UNEP@50 led by MGs and the report “The Future we want”.
- Survey has been shared widely and all MGS are invited to answer the survey.
- See presentation.



The screenshot shows a Zoom meeting interface. At the top, there are video thumbnails for participants: Sonia Goicoechea, Yugratna Srivastava, Stephen Stec, Alexander Juras, and Sascha WECF. Below the thumbnails is a banner with the UN Environment Assembly logo, the text 'Act #ForNature', and a blue bar with the title 'Elements of “The UNEP We Want”'. To the right, a 'Participants (49)' list shows 'Yayoi Lagerqvist' and 'Ajay K. Jha'. At the bottom, a Windows taskbar is visible with various application icons and a system tray showing the time as 14:28 on 21/06/2021.

Elements of “The UNEP We Want”

- Snapshot Survey completed, advanced Survey underway (please submit responses by July 1): <https://forms.gle/4TBpiy8Arg9QnHMP7>
- CY leading 4 global or regional consultations during 2021 and social media/comms
- ST coordinating thought leader interviews over summer
- Individual MG (and regional) statements ~1000 words
- Joint MGS statement of principles - September
- Report called “The UNEP We Want” to be available at the end of the 2021, for presentation and consideration at February 2022 session of UNEA 5
- A UNEP@50 MGS Forum, in conjunction with UNEA SS – details TBC

UNEP expert: Alexander Juras, Chief Civil Society Unit, UN Environment

- Despite many efforts from MS, UNEP and CSOs and despite many successes, the state of the environment is declining. Time to have a critical look and identify what we are doing wrong and why we are not avoiding this negative trend.
- 50th anniversary will be held on 3-4 March 2022 in connection with UNEA 5.2.
- Similar format to UNEA 5.2 (most probably hybrid).
- The core mandates, the science interface and environmental governance need to be changed for the next 50 years, for example by strengthening UNEP and the global environmental agenda.
- The outcome of UNEP@50 is not yet defined. During the bureau meeting, we will know what the political outcome should be.
- UNEP will continue publishing the science outcomes.
- UNEP Comms team has started working on outreach with 50 voices for 50 years of UNEP.
- MGS have to develop their own plans and own contributions independently from MS. This is an opportunity to show ownership.
- For UNEP@50 everyone has the right to communicate and share at any time, not only in the formal event. Do not be limited to a commemoration, bring your demands.

UNEP expert: Ulf Bjornholm, Deputy Director, Governance Affairs Office, UN Environment:

- The incoming bureau will give more guidance. The organisation of UNEP@50 is MS led.
- UNEP can suggest dialogue with MGS to present recommendations.
- UNEP+50 is about strengthening the role within the UN system, environmental governance, and finance.
- Stockholm+50 broader and more visionary, can address true future challenges and how do we address challenges that were not around in 1972 such as SCP.
- New government from Swedish government, new political landscape.

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, we will 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 report has been prepared by:



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