

Mechanisms for Stakeholder Engagement with UNEP in Light of the Rio + 20 Outcome

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- Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration from 1992
- Major Groups and Stakeholder Involvement at UNEP
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Principle 10



“Environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level. At the national level, each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available. Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy, shall be provided.”

Major Groups and Stakeholder Involvement at UNEP

- Rule 69 of the rules of procedures of UNEP's Governing Council:
 - 1. International non-governmental organizations having an interest in the field of the environments ... may designate representatives to sit as observers at public meetings of the Governing Council and its subsidiary organs, if any. The Governing Council shall from time to time adopt and revise when necessary a list of such organizations. Up the invitation of the President of Chairman, as the case may be, and subject to the approval of the Governing Council or of the subsidiary organ concerned, international non-governmental organizations may make oral statements on matters within the scope of their activities.
 - 2. Written statements provided by international non-governmental organization ... related to items on the agenda of the Governing Council or of its subsidiary organs, shall be circulated by the secretariat to members of the Governing Council or of the subsidiary organ concerned in the quantities and in the languages in which the statements were made available to the secretariat for distribution.

Note: the *practice* of Major Groups and Stakeholder involvement in UNEP goes far beyond Rule 69

Major Groups and Stakeholder Involvement at UNEP II

- Guidelines for Participation of Major Groups and Stakeholders (MGS) in Policy Design at UNEP
 - 9 Major Groups Approach
 - Major Groups Facilitating Committee (MGFC)
 - Regional Representatives
 - Global Major Groups and Stakeholder Forum (GMGSF)
 - Regional Consultative Meetings (RCM's)
 - Observer Status for Major Groups
 - Accreditation as condition
- Major Groups and Stakeholder Branch UNEP (MGSB)
 - Role: to *facilitate* MGS involvement in UNEP at the programmatic and policy level
 - 4 professionals, 1 assistant
 - Civil Society Focal Points in Regional Offices (part time)
 - MGS Accreditation

Major Groups and Stakeholder Involvement at UNEP: Limitations

- MGS have an observer status
- Lack of a comprehensive set of rules and procedures that govern all relevant aspects of public participation in decision making, policy design and programmatic activities at UNEP (*but fairly good practices*)
- Lack of an information disclosure policy
- No permanent body that *represents* Major Groups and Stakeholder
- Limitations in the nine Major Groups concept
- Focus on environmental MGS
- Accreditation criteria can limit access to UNEP

Rio + 20

- Underlines the important role of MGS in policy design and implementation (Para 42-55)
- Confirms the 9 Major Groups Concept but asks for more openness to other stakeholders (Para 42-55)
- Confirms Principle 10 and call for Public Participation, Access to Information and Access to Justice and calls for action at regional, national, subnational and local level (Para 15, 43, 75h, 99)
- **Calls for a strengthened UNEP to “ensure the active participation of all relevant stakeholders drawing on best practices and models from relevant multilateral institutions and exploring new mechanisms to promote transparency and effective engagement of civil society.” (Para 88h)**

Best Practices for Public Participation and Access to Information

- Every affected Major Group and/or Civil Society organisation can participate
- Mechanisms are in place to allow for participation of disadvantaged stakeholders (e.g. financial support)
- Participation takes place in an organised manner, with clear rules and procedures in place that define mandates, and govern public participation, access to information and describe appeal procedures
- Multiple channels for civil society participation are in place (programmatic and policy level)
- The Major Groups approach is used to ensure *minimum* participation rather than limiting participation
- Participation is open to all decision making processes and is not limited (e.g. to assemblies)
- Full sneaking right for Major Groups and full participation in consensus decision making

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