

# Options for Stakeholder Engagement in UNEP

UNEP, 23 October 2013

## Disclaimer

The views expressed in the report do not represent those of the United Nations Environment Programme, nor is it an endorsement by the United Nations Environment Programme.

The report presents a compilation of options to inform the discussions with the CPR.

The document has not been formally edited, and is **work-in-progress**. It will be updated as feedback is received from Member States and major groups and stakeholders.

## Options for Stakeholder Engagement in UNEP

Working Draft – MGSB, 17 October 2013

The document is prepared at the request of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEP (CPR,) to inform the discussions on stakeholder engagement in UNEP.

The table attached presents different options for stakeholder engagement in UNEP, the current practices in UNEP, a brief assessment of those practices, one to three options of proposed new modalities for engagement and mechanisms building on existing practices, and makes a reference to the organisations within the multilateral system that apply those modalities or mechanisms, as appropriate or if they exist. The table is structured along two levels of engagement:

1. Agenda Setting
2. Decision Making

The third dimension of engagement – *Implementation*, is not addressed since the participation of Major Groups and Stakeholder in implementation is governed by UNEP's Partnership Policy and other related policies (e.g. the Indigenous Peoples Policy Guidance).<sup>1</sup> Instead, the table features an additional section on *Mechanisms for expert input and advice*. These need to be clearly distinguished from the scientific input which is provided through processes such as the foresight process, GEO, IPCC, etc.

The document also tries as much as possible to make a brief cost analysis. These costs are indicative and do not include staff costs.

The options have been drawn from the outcomes of consultations with stakeholders, member states and other UN sister organisations. They are not exhaustive. In some instances, they can be mutually supportive.

This working document has not undergone a legal review.

A timeline for the way forward is also presented:

### Timeline for the next steps

Description	Document submission deadline
Options table	20 October
Informal brief to the CPR on the outcomes of the Expert Group Meeting	11 November
Consultation with the CPR	12 November
Consultations with stakeholders (with NGLS)	November
Revised options table	30 November
Options table and draft policy on Stakeholder engagement	16 December

<sup>1</sup> UNEP's Indigenous Peoples Policy Guidance is available at: [http://www.unep.org/civil-society/Portals/24105/documents/Guidelines/UNEP\\_Indigenous\\_Peoples\\_Policy\\_Guidance\\_endorsed\\_by\\_SMT\\_26\\_11\\_12.pdf](http://www.unep.org/civil-society/Portals/24105/documents/Guidelines/UNEP_Indigenous_Peoples_Policy_Guidance_endorsed_by_SMT_26_11_12.pdf)

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## Part 1. Accreditation

These options are based on the assumption that UNEP will continue to grant accreditation to non-governmental stakeholders:

- On a permanent basis; or
- For participation in meetings only (e.g. one time accreditation for all organisations wishing to participate in the UNEA and its subsidiary bodies meetings).

Table 1 – Accreditation Criteria		
UNEP Current practices and assessment:	<p>Accreditation is granted to organisations which satisfy the below criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be an international NGO having an interest in the field of the environment;</li> <li>2. Be legally constituted and registered in a country;</li> <li>3. Have a proven non-profit-making status;</li> <li>4. Have an international scope of work (e.g. headquarters and regional offices in different countries; projects or programmes that are taking place in several countries; activities that have international implication); and</li> <li>5. Proof of a minimum of two years of activity.</li> </ol> <p>Additional useful information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership in an international network; and</li> <li>• Accreditation to other United Nations (UN) bodies and agencies, including the ECOSOC.</li> </ul> <p><b>Assessment:</b></p> <p>There are only around 281 organizations accredited with UNEP, which is a very small number of organisations.</p> <p>The international scope of work provides a limitation to a number of national and regional level organisations working in the field of environment. Besides, the focus on environment also limits the spectrum of organisations that are accredited to the UNEP, as it excludes organisations that work on broader cross-cutting development issues. The lack of clarity in the privileges and obligations of accredited organizations has often been raised. The ECOSOC accreditation is not given strong weight in the UNEP procedures. ECOSOC grants accreditation to both national and international scope organisations, while UNEP focuses more on international scope but encourages regional and national organisations to become members of international networks.</p> <p>To facilitate participation of MGS to the GC, UNEP has granted one-time accreditation to organisations, which fully comply with the accreditation rules but have not applied for a full accreditation yet and have shown interest to participate in a specific session of the GMGSF and the GC. Over the years this has allowed more participation from observers who have brought additional expertise to specific sessions.</p>	
	Option 1	Option 2
		Option 3

Table 1 – Accreditation Criteria		
<p>Proposed new criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any legally registered organisation with International <i>OR</i> national scope of work;</li> <li>Not-for-profit status;</li> <li>Work mainly but not exclusively in the environmental field;</li> </ul> <p>Organisations having accreditation with ECOSOC and/or MEAs will be automatically granted UNEP accreditation.</p>	<p>Proposed new criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any organisation with International <i>OR</i> national scope of work;</li> <li>Not-for-profit status;</li> <li>Work mainly in the area of sustainable development;</li> </ul> <p>Organisations having accreditation with ECOSOC and/or MEAs will be automatically granted UNEP accreditation.</p>	<p>Proposed new criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any organisation;</li> <li>Not-for-profit status;</li> <li>No specific requirement of area of work;</li> </ul> <p>Organisations having accreditation with ECOSOC and/or MEAs will be automatically granted UNEP accreditation.</p>
<p><b>Pros:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More inclusive as it would allow accreditation from national and local level organisations.</li> <li>An increase of accredited organisations working with UNEP.</li> <li>Could be applied only for meetings of the UNEA and its subsidiary bodies.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Pros:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More inclusive as it would allow accreditation from national and local level organisations, as well as informal and formal networks and umbrella organisations, e.g. Peoples movements, social movements, community-based organizations, registered associations, indigenous and local communities, etc.</li> <li>Could be applied only for meetings of the UNEA and its subsidiary bodies.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Pros:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very open approach and any organisation could be accredited.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Cons:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal registration is seen by some of the Indigenous Peoples as an imposed requirement of a legal recognition of the country they are based in. Other MEAs do not require the legal recognition in order to accept an indigenous group as observer to the COP. IPs would like to be considered as nations and therefore consider the current requirements as obstacle to their participation..</li> <li>In case of many new accreditation processes, there will be additional human resources needed to manage them.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Cons:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional administrative burden on the Secretariat to review the accreditation requests.</li> <li>Less stringent due diligence could raise security concerns.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Cons:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional administrative burden on the Secretariat to review the accreditation requests.</li> <li>Less stringent due diligence could raise security concerns.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Costs:</b></p> <p>This would require additional resources to support an increase in the number of accreditation requests.</p>	<p><b>Costs:</b></p> <p>This would require additional resources to support an increase in the number of accreditation requests.</p>	<p><b>Costs:</b></p> <p>This would require additional resources to support an increase in the number of accreditation requests.</p>

**Table 1 – Accreditation Criteria**

**Similar practices in other organizations:**

In accordance with Article 22, paragraph 7 of the UNCCD and Rule 7 of the rules of procedure of the COP, representatives from anybody or agency, whether national or international, governmental or nongovernmental, may be admitted to participate, without the right to vote, in the proceedings of the Convention's bodies under the conditions that the organisation: (i) Is qualified in matters covered by the Convention; and (ii) Has informed the UNCCD secretariat in writing of its wish to participate. Specifically speaking about intergovernmental organisations and in conformity with Rule 6, paragraph 1 of the above-mentioned rules of procedure, also the United Nations and its specialized agencies may be represented at sessions of the Conference of the Parties as observers. Organisations complying with the above-mentioned requirements may be admitted to participate in the sessions of the COP and its Subsidiary bodies as observers, unless at least one third of the Parties present at the session object. Only accredited organisations may designate representatives to attend sessions of the Convention bodies, or may apply to hold a side event and/or an exhibit at these sessions. By its decision 5/COP.10, the COP decided to grant observer status and participation in official meetings of the governing bodies of the UNCCD to the private sector (business and industry entities) that:

- Have expressed interest in participating in meetings of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies;
- Have specific expertise in matters relating to the Convention; and
- Participate in the United Nations Global Compact. In the case where an organization does not participate in the United Nations Global Compact, clearance prior to its accreditation shall be requested from the United Nations Procurement Division and the United Nations Ethics Office.

**Table 2 – Accreditation:  
Types of consultative status for observers**

<b>UNEP Current practices and assessment:</b>	Currently UNEP has only one type of consultative status, which is equivalent to the ECOSOC general status. During sessions of the GC/GMEF, organisations with observer status have the opportunity to attend the Plenary, the Committee of the Whole and the Ministerial Consultations as observers. Observing means that accredited MGS can circulate written statements to Governments through the UNEP Secretariat and make oral statements during the discussions of the GC/GMEF upon invitation by the Chairperson. In the Run-up to/aftermath of Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC/GMEF): <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Accredited major groups and stakeholders receive unedited working documents of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at the same time as the Committee of the Permanent Representatives.</li><li>• Accredited major groups and stakeholders have the right to submit to the UNEP Secretariat written contributions to these unedited working documents of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, for distribution to the Governments</li></ul> <p><b><u>Assessment:</u></b></p> <p>Non-governmental observers are not directly involved in the drafting of GC decisions/documents. They can submit contributions, but do not have any means of making sure these contributions are considered or integrated into the documents of the GC/GMEF. Besides, UNEP does not report back on how MGS inputs have been utilized.</p>	
<b>Option 1</b>	<b>Option 2</b>	<b>Option 3</b>
Preserve the status quo.  All accredited organisations have the same privileges and obligations, namely, the same access to meetings as observers, speaking rights, the same opportunities to submit written contributions, and to make oral statements at the meetings.	Two different accreditation statuses may be put in place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>General status</u>. This will be the primary status granted to civil society organisations. With this status they can attend all meetings (formal/informal) throughout the year and can circulate written statements through the UNEP Secretariat. Furthermore, they can receive and comment on unedited working documents. Finally, they can participate in the GMGSF or similar meetings of other UNEP organs and be selected as regional representatives. Any organisation interested in the work of UNEP can apply for this status.</li><li>• <u>Roster status</u>. This will be the status of organisations with a narrow and/or technical focus. They may make occasional and useful contributions to the work of UNEA, and can attend all meetings (formal/informal) throughout the year and can circulate written statements through the UNEP Secretariat.</li></ul>	No accreditation status, only a pre-registration and/or accreditation to meetings would be required.



Table 2 – Accreditation: Types of consultative status for observers		
ons. s and	<b>Pros:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A differentiated treatment may help attract more environmental NGOs, working on environmental issues.</li> <li>2. Better overview of the different types of thematic and expert input that they can provide.</li> </ol>	<b>Pros:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Will attract more stakeholders.</li> </ol>
	<b>Cons:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. This might result in an additional administrative burden for the Secretariat.</li> </ol>	<b>Cons:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. This would mean that there is no due diligence at all, and may raise security concerns.</li> <li>2. Difficult to keep track of which organisations participate.</li> <li>3. Come at the expense of quality expert input and advice from stakeholders.</li> </ol>
	<b>Costs:</b> This would require additional resources to support an increase in the number of accreditation requests.	<b>Costs:</b> No additional costs applicable.

ECOSOC, based on the type of organization: (i) General status: NGOs that represent large segments of societies in several countries on the agenda of ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies. These tend to be fairly large, well established international NGOs with a broad mandate and a special competence in, and are concerned specifically with, only a few of the fields of activity covered by ECOSOC. These NGOs are established. (iii) Roster status: NGOs that have a more narrow and/or technical focus and make occasional and useful contributions to the work of ECOSOC. A NGO in consultative status with ECOSOC can designate representatives to obtain annual passes granting them access to UN meetings. They can participate in a number of events, including, but not limited to, the regular sessions of ECOSOC, its functional commissions and other subsidiary organs. The registration is required and done by the online web-based system (CSONet event registration system). In the current setting, the review process is reviewed by a special committee composed by Member States.