Review of Current Practices of Stakeholder Engagement in Multilateral Organisations

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UNEP

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 has not been formally edited.

List of abbreviations

CFS	Committee on World Food Security
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
COP	Conference of Parties
CPR	Committee of Permanent Representatives
CSD	United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
GC	Governing Council
GMEF	Global Ministerial Environment Forum
GMGSF	Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum
HLPE	High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition
ICCM	International Conference on Chemicals Management
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
MGFC	Major Groups Facilitation Committee
MGS	Major Groups and Stakeholders
MGSB	Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch
SAICM	Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Managament
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNPFII	United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
UN-REDD	United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries
WFP	World Food Programme

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Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide information on stakeholder engagement practices in multilateral organisations. It is meant to inform the discussions on the establishment of new mechanisms for stakeholder engagement that build on practices in multilateral organisations as called for in Paragraph 88h of the Rio+20 Outcome Document and by the Decision 27/2 of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC/GMEF) at its first universal session in February 2013.

The organisations listed below have been selected for review based on: (i) most commonly cited practices because of their uniqueness (both among stakeholders and Member States); and (ii) progressive practices, which go beyond the mere status of observer and accommodate more constructive engagement with stakeholders.

This report describes current practices with regard to:
1. Participation in decision-making bodies;
2. Rules and regulations / rules of procedures;
3. Accreditation practices and policies;
4. Approach to non-governmental actor engagement (e.g. nine Major Groups approach); and
5. Access-to-information / information disclosure policies.

The report presents the practices of the following multilateral organisations, including programmes and multilateral conventions:
- Committee on World Food Security (CFS)
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)
- United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII)
- Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM)
- International Labour Organization (ILO)
- International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM)
- United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-REDD)
- Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)
- United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)
- Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention)
- United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)
- United Nations Economics and Social Council (ECOSOC)
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- The World Bank
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- UNEP Partnership on Clean Fuels and Vehicles
- UNEP Finance Initiative

The information contained in the report has been compiled by UNEP, and was verified by the respective agencies and organisations, when possible. So far the following organisations have verified the section presenting their practices: CFS; CITES; UNPFII; GFATM; ILO; ICCM; UN-REDD; UNAIDS; CSD; the Aarhus

Convention; UNCCD; ECOSOC; the World Bank; UNDP; and UNEP Partnership on Clean Fuels and Vehicles.

Therefore, this document presents **work-in-progress** and will be updated continuously until all feedback has been received from the agencies and organisations quoted. For each organisation a description of the practices / mechanisms under review is provided followed by an assessment (with lessons learnt) drawn by the organisation itself. In few instances the organisations did not make that self-assessment.

The document does not cover stakeholder engagement in projects and programme implementation; nor does it provide an *analysis* of the practices listed.

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Note on the terminology used:

- **Major Groups and Stakeholders**
  For the purpose of this document, the term "Major Groups and Stakeholders" (MGS) is used to designate all actors of civil society. The term "**Major Group**" is used, based on the definition provided in Agenda 21, which identified a set of non-governmental actors, relevant in sustainable development. The set of actors have been categorized into nine major groups: Business and Industry, Children and Youth, Farmers, Indigenous Peoples, Local Authorities, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), the Scientific and Technological Community, Women, Workers and Trade Unions.

- **Stakeholder**
  For the purpose of this document, the term "Stakeholder" refers to **non-governmental actors** or civil society organisations with a not-for-profit status.

- **Full participation rights**
  This refers to the participation in decision-making bodies, including speaking and voting rights.

- **Current practices**
  Although the Rio+20 Outcome Document as well as the UNEP GC Decision 27/2 refer to "best practices in multilateral organisations", the present document will use the term current practices.

- **Organisations accredited to UNEP**
  As of June 2013, 273 organisations were accredited to UNEP's GC. These organisations are registered according to the nine major groups' categories and stored in a database maintained by the *Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch* (MGSB). The categories contain individual organisations as well as umbrella organisations with sometimes very large constituencies (for example the trade union umbrella organisation International Trade Union Confederation - ITUC, represents 174 million workers in 156 countries and territories and has 315 national affiliates). All organisations accredited to UNEP are not-for-profit organisations legally registered in a given country. Local authorities' individual representatives such as Mayors, etc. cannot be granted accreditation. They have to form part of an association or not-for-profit organisation of local authorities' representatives.

- **Not-for-profit status**
  It is a requirement that all organisations have a not-for-profit status. They are organisations that do not make profit, for example they exist to provide educational or health support to those in need. All of the resources earned by such organisations or donated to such organisations are used to pursue the organisation's objectives. Not-for-profit organisations can also be charities or other types of public service organisations. Business and industry corporations can only be accredited to UNEP if they form a larger not-for-profit association together with likeminded business or industry corporations. Individual business or industry corporation cannot be accredited to UNEP.

Part 1 – UNEP's current engagement practices

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="11" style="writing-mode: vertical-lr">United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)</td><td colspan="1">Rules of Procedures</td></tr>
<tr><td>Rule 69 of the Rules of Procedures of the GC provides opportunities for civil society participation in UNEP:

"International non-governmental organisations having an interest in the field of the environment, referred to in section IV, paragraph 5, of General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII), 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 organisations. Upon invitation of the President or Chairman, as the case may be, and subject to approval of the Governing Council or of the subsidiary organ concerned, international non-governmental organisations may make oral statements on matters within the scope of their activities."</td></tr>
<tr><td>Accreditation to the GC/GMEF</td></tr>
<tr><td>Accreditation is granted to organisations which satisfy the below criteria:

1. Be an international NGOs having an interest in the field of the environment;
2. Be legally constituted and registered in a country;
3. Have a proven non-profit-making status;
4. Have an international scope of work (e.g. headquarters and regional offices in different countries; projects or programmes that are taking place in other countries; activities that have international implication: for example international water management, desertification on trans-boundary areas, waste management of estuaries that affects a region; activities that have an international scope: for example coordinating regional or international position or work on a specific area); and
5. Proof of a minimum of two years of activity.

Additional information to mention:
- Agreements with another organization or membership of an international network; and
- Accreditation to other United Nations (UN) bodies and agencies, including the ECOSOC.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Participation into the GC/GMEF process and all its associated meetings</td></tr>
<tr><td>During sessions of the GC/GMEF MGS 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. Moreover, accredited MGS can participate in the Global Major Group and Stakeholders Forum (GMGSF) and its preparatory Consultation Meetings in the regions; the Ministerial Roundtables of the GMEF; as well as all UNEP meetings and conferences at different levels.

During the development of policy documents and decisions to be adopted at the GC/GMEF, accredited organisations have the possibility to receive unedited working documents of the GC/GMEF and submit to the UNEP Secretariat written contributions to these unedited working documents. Furthermore, they can obtain documents of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) through the MGSB. Although Rule 69 allows for it, there has been no participation of Major Groups in CPR meetings yet.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Additional mechanisms</td></tr>
<tr><td>At the programmatic level, UNEP delivers its programme of work through projects and activities mainly implemented through partnerships with stakeholders – governmental and non-governmental, civil society and the private sector. Those partnerships include a number of well-known initiatives such as the Partnership on Labour and the Environment, the Green Economy Initiative, the Clean Fuel Partnership, the Finance Initiative,[1] and Great Apes Survival Partnership to name but few. These partnerships are key in so far as they contribute to leverage more support and visibility for the UNEP and its cause.

UNEP has also adopted a number of policies, such as the Gender Policy, the Tunza Strategy, the Partnerships Policy[2] and the Indigenous Peoples Policy Guidance.[3] For example, the latter covers the programmatic and the policy level engagement of UNEP with one particular major group. The purpose of the Policy Guidance is to initiate and support a</td></tr>
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[1] Additional information on these two partnerships attached in Annex 2.

[2] http://www.unep.org/civil-society/Portals/59/Documents/UNEP_Partnership_Policy_and_Procedures/UNEP_Partnership_Policy_and_Procedures.pdf

[3] http://www.unep.org/civil-society/Portals/24105/documents/Guidelines/UNEP_Indigenous_Peoples_Policy_Guidance_endorsed_by_SMT_26_11_12.pdf

process to enhance practices in UNEP for engaging indigenous peoples as an important partner in environmental policy development and implementation on a continuous and organized basis. The Tunza Strategy facilitates youth engagement in stakeholder decision making processes through regular and systematic regional and global conferences, competitions, a youth magazine and website, social networking, and direct interaction with the Tunza Youth Advisory Council comprising youth representatives from all regions of the world. This involvement by young people ensures transparency, access to information and participation in the development of policy.

An additional way for MGS to engage with UNEP is through independently established <u>National Committees</u>. About 31 National Committees exist so far; although they are not very active since the end of 2010 when UNEP decided to revisit its policy and approach to working with National Committees. The Committees regroup a number of civil society organisations at the national level, active in the field of environment, but that do not necessarily have accreditation with UNEP. These Committees have provided support to UNEP in terms of outreach and public information at the national level.

UNEP also has a key role to play in promoting transparency and effective engagement of civil society outside its own structures, as evidenced by the "Guidelines for the Development of National Legislation on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters". UNEP has been engaged in related activities, in particular through the non-binding "Guidelines for the Development of National Legislation on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters", which were adopted by UNEP's GC in Bali in 2010. The application of the Guidelines is seen as an important pre-condition to allow citizens and civil society to participate in a regulated fashion in decision making processes at the national level, and has been further reiterated in Paragraph 99 of the Rio+20 Outcome Document, which directly refers to strengthening the application of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration at regional, national and sub-regional levels.

Approach to non-governmental actor engagement

UNEP uses the Major Group approach, as per decision SSII.5 of 15 February 2002, which states that "civil society encompasses major groups, that is farmers, women, scientific and technological community, children and youth, indigenous peoples and their communities, workers and trade unions, business and industry, non-governmental organisations."

As UNEP started applying it, the concept was often criticized for leaving out groups of civil society such as the education community, religious groups, the elderly, disabled people, etc. Therefore, since 2004, UNEP uses the terminology **Major Groups and Stakeholders** to be more inclusive.

Self-Assessment of UNEP engagement practices

Over the past five years, a number of informal practices have been established towards the improvement of MGS participation in the GC/GMEF, namely:

- 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;
- **Partnerships with MGS** have been initiated to encourage and promote the involvement of MGS in the delivery of UNEP Programme of Work and Medium-Term Strategy, e.g. through the Green Jobs initiative with workers and trade unions and business, the Green Economy initiative and the Green Economy Coalition;
- MGS have been invited to participate in **Ministerial Roundtables**, which are part of the GMEF, since their inception in 2007. Four seats are regularly allocated to MGS who can participate in an interactive dialogue with Ministers on