

Civil society declaration and recommendations to the 25th Regular Session of the UNEP Governing Council / Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC25/GMEF)

Within the framework of the West Asia regional consultation meeting that was held on the 3rd and 4th of November in Muscat, Oman, representatives from civil society¹ organisations from the region gathered and unanimously recommended the following to the 25th regular session of the GC/GMEF:

1. Climate change and resource efficiency:

- Acting on the priority and great urgency of climate change, the international community should reach an effective new post-2012 agreement on climate change by December 2009.
- The post-2012 agreement should include a clear and binding long-term goal for both developed and developing countries, and a clear and binding short- and medium-term goals for developed countries.
- Renewable energy and energy efficiency measures should be adopted as the primary solution for addressing climate change and energy security challenges.
- Developing governments should commit to win-win regulations that insure both emissions reductions and sustainable development.
- Specific commitments from private fossil-fuel companies and fossil-fuel producers should be through the respective governments' part of the new global agreement as part of their historical responsibility for greenhouse gas emissions.
- The new treaty should include mitigation and adaptation actions targeting the agricultural sector, especially in adapting to the impacts of climate change on small local farmers.
- Policies that have a double benefit of mitigation and adaptation should be prioritized, including forest management and afforestation.
- Civil societies should be considered as equal partners/participants in the decision making process.
- Strengthening the communication among local stakeholders by establishing national UNEP focal points.

2. International and national environmental governance and ecosystem services:

- Increase transparency in the decision making process, and strengthen the involvement of civil society.
- Introduce an Audit Bureau at the level of CAMRE (Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment) to assure the implementation of transparency and environmental actions.
- Establish national and international governance and management to marine resources beyond national jurisdiction.

¹ According to Agenda 21, major groups of civil society are: workers and trade unions, farmers, scientific and technological community, NGOs, children and youth, local authorities, business and industry, indigenous peoples and their communities, women.

- Adopt the 'ecosystem approach' in the implementation and development of all biodiversity related agreements.
- Strengthen enforcement of treaty implementation.
- Develop standards for treaty implementation for all regions.
- Increase inter-collectiveness of knowledge and collaboration with international governments and organisations.
- Each country should conduct national consultation meetings that involve all major groups of civil society, to determine the country's environment position.
 - Civil society should be considered as equal participants in the decision making process.
 - Strengthening the communication among local stakeholders by establishing national UNEP focal points.

3. Disasters and Conflict and Chemicals/Harmful Substances and Hazardous Waste:

- We support the efforts of UNEP in conducting post-conflict assessments (including war) on environmental degradation, and the involvement of local civil society. This includes increased stress on natural resources due to enforced immigrations, as well as the environmental impact of increased poverty and debts.
- Develop emergency action plans to natural disasters.
- Develop binding international treaties to phase out the use of specific chemicals and harmful substances, especially mercury.
- Develop international standards for waste management.
- Strengthen capacity of NGOs in all environmental regulations.

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