The Stakeholder Empowerment Project

Stakeholder Forum for a sustainable future

2009

empower; *verb. endow with the ability required
for a purpose or task; enable or permit*

Oxford English Dictionary

STAKEHOLDER
FORUM

Executive Summary

Over the last twenty years we have seen a dramatic increase in the number of civil society organisations (CSOs)[1] taking an active role in UN intergovernmental meetings. This participation has ranged from interactive dialogue sessions with ministers, to civil society hearings, to invitations for CSOs to take part in roundtable discussions, panel discussions or parallel meetings. Such initiatives have been critical for developing processes that can underpin the inclusion of non-governmental actors in international meetings, and have gone some way to ensuring more accountable, transparent and informed global policy making.

However, the changing interface between Member States and CSOs in intergovernmental meetings also poses new challenges and uncertainties. First, to date there has been limited inter-agency knowledge-sharing across the UN system of how CSOs are being integrated into respective processes. As a result, experiences are not being documented, and knowledge is not being shared and benefited from. Second, an analytical gap is emerging regarding the quality of civil society participation in international meetings. After all, statistics recording the number of Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) attending an intergovernmental meeting, or the number of statements submitted by different stakeholder groups, can only go some way in documenting the quality of that participation. Finally, as the different practices, mechanisms and terms for engaging with civil society have proliferated across the UN system it has become increasingly difficult for CSOs to keep track of the different channels through which they can participate and contribute to policy discussions effectively.

Intergovernmental meetings are of course only one space by which civil society can interface with decision-makers. However, from twenty years of participating in international meetings, Stakeholder Forum maintains that they remain a critical opportunity for CSOs to inform policies.   Over the years we have witnessed well-orchestrated processes where new voices have been brought to the table, new solutions have been generated and CSOs have informed the final outcome. Equally, we have seen some very disheartening processes in which information has not been shared in time and issues of representation have emerged. In short, our experience has taught us that 'the process' does indeed matter.

Stakeholder Forum believes that it is imperative to create knowledge-management within the area of civil society engagement in intergovernmental meetings across the UN system. This will ensure that we learn from the past and continue to develop strong mechanisms for involving civil society in international policy-making.

The *Stakeholder Empowerment Project* (SEP) has set out to document, review and analyse the interface between decision-makers and civil society across a range of intergovernmental meetings in the UN system. The project has considered examples across issues such as sustainable development, HIV/AIDS, drug control, trade and development and environmental policy making to gain a broader understanding of how CSO engagement strategies are being designed, managed and implemented. Using the case studies, interviews and broader research we have sought to identify the key steps for supporting high quality and meaningful civil society participation in intergovernmental meetings.

The Stakeholder Empowerment Handbook (Chapter Three) provides some practical guidance, suggestions and signposts for organisers, UN civil servants, CSOs and other stakeholders for improving the quality of civil society participation the context of an intergovernmental meeting. The handbook is not intended as an exhaustive set of guidelines but rather a direct response to the SEP research into CSO experiences of UN intergovernmental meetings to date. The hope is that a wide spectrum of users can learn from the experiences, tools and practices that have helped generate broad and high-quality participation of civil society organisations in policy-making fora. The Stakeholder Standard (Chapter Four) is intended as a set of basic principles to encourage more

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[1] The SEP adopts the Cardoso Panel's definition for civil society. See SEP Glossary.

transparent, timely and participatory approaches to involving CSOs in intergovernmental meetings.

The following key themes emerged from the broader SEP research across all of the UN system;

One-off opportunities for CSOs to interact with Member States in intergovernmental meetings do *not* provide an effective space for impacting policy decisions. Such events are susceptible to too many externalities including poor participation of decision-makers, poor facilitation and an emerging tendency for CSOs to sit in their government seats. The most positive examples of such one-off opportunities are those that are entrenched in a much wider engagement strategy involving at least a six month preparatory process, repeated opportunities to interact with Member States and clear follow-up initiatives after the meeting.

Evidence shows that the earlier that CSOs are involved in designing their participation in an intergovernmental meeting, the more likely they will impact the final outcome and cement their continued participation in the process. The *SEP* has suggested that the greatest impact that CSOs can have on any given process is during the agenda-setting phase during the preparations for an intergovernmental meeting.

There is still a considerable gap between the language used by CSOs and the language used by policy-makers and government delegations in intergovernmental meetings. CSOs are struggling to translate their suggestions and statements into text amendments and policy recommendations.

Limited funds and a lack of understanding of intergovernmental processes remain key barriers to preventing effective CSO participation in international meetings.

A number of UN processes continue to use the term 'civil society' without identifying what they mean by the term or whom they aim to engage. In a number of examples no distinction was made between business/industry representatives and civil society groups. In many cases there were few attempts to prioritise different stakeholder groups given the context of the meeting or identify the power discrepancies between those different groups.

The most positive instances of CSO participation in intergovernmental meetings were ones in which the preparatory and follow-up stages were treated as multi-stakeholder processes in and of themselves. I.e. those processes in which there were clearly identified stakeholder groups who were provided with sufficient time and resources to identify their positions, identify commonalities with other constituencies and generate strategic plans of action for the meeting and follow-up process.

CSOs cited 'impacting the final outcome' as only one of the many reasons why they choose to attend intergovernmental meetings. Other top motivations included 'networking' and 'sharing practices'. In addition, Member States noted that CSOs have the tendency to use the time and space offered to them within the context of an international meeting to demand more rights for participation and access to decision making. They implored CSOs to use the opportunity to make suggestions, recommendations and demonstrate their expertise on the topic rather than just the process.

UN agencies, programmes and funds tend to compartmentalise all civil society relations to a single unit/department rather than adopting an institutional approach. Furthermore there are some considerable discrepancies between the way that UN Civil Society Focal Points interpret their own mandates, roles and responsibilities. Some see themselves as information points, others see themselves as the UN-CSO go-between, whilst some saw their role as to champion the issues raised by CSOs to Member States.

Acknowledgements

Acronyms

CSD	Commission on Sustainable Development
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DESA	Department for Economic and Social Affairs
CONGO	The Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the UN
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
GMEF	Global Ministerial Environment Forum
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non Governmental Organisation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSP	Multi-stakeholder Process
MSD	Multi-stakeholder Dialogue
NGO	Non Governmental Organisations
NGLS	Non Governmental Liaison Service
OPGA	Office of the President of the General Assembly
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	UN Conference on Trade and Development
UNEP	UN Environment Programme
UNODC	UN Office of Drugs and Crime
WB	World Bank

Contents

Introduction

"The serious environmental, social and economic challenges faced by societies worldwide cannot be addressed by public authorities alone without the involvement and support of a wide range of stakeholders, including individual citizens and civil society organisations."
Aarhus Convention

'Civil society is now so vital to the United Nations that engaging with it well is a necessity, not an option'
Cardoso Report

As we near the end of the first decade of the new millennium it is clear that the problems facing our world are as complex, multifaceted and interrelated as ever before. Population growth, economic globalisation, the loss of biodiversity, increasing energy demands and climate change are just some of the many challenges that we confront. Those challenges are not ones that can be met by governments alone but will require the active participation of civil society and will require new forms of decision-making. In the words of the Cardoso Report[2], 'Global governance is no longer the sole domain of Governments. The growing participation and influence of non-State actors is enhancing democracy and reshaping multilateralism. Civil society organisations are also the prime movers of some of the most innovative initiatives to deal with emerging global threats'.

The United Nations (UN) has long recognised the role that civil society can play in informing, implementing and monitoring intergovernmental policy-making. Over 3288 NGOs now have consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Thousands more have engaged in meetings and summits via 'special accreditation' routes or have issued statements, tracked negotiations and monitored global commitments. You need only read through the Non-Governmental Liaison Service's (NGLS) newsletters or browse UN agency websites to discover the levels of activity across the UN system at any one time ranging from civil society Hearings, to multi-stakeholder dialogues, to open sessions with Bureau members or 'e-dialogue' sessions with decision-makers. Even traditionally impenetrable forums such as the Security Council have begun to inch their doors open via processes such as their *Arria Formula*[3] meetings.

UN agencies, programmes and funds have also undergone significant changes in order to better accommodate and work with civil society. At the last count over 90 UN Liaison Offices were in operation charged with working with NGOs and non-governmental actors. These offices provide a critical support base for non-governmental actors. The Non Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS), the inter-agency unit that serves as the bridge between the UN and civil society, performs a central role in linking the work of UN agencies and continuing to champion the increased role of civil society in all aspects of UN decision-making.

The developments of the last twenty years have represented an important step in developing new mechanisms and processes that can underpin the successful inclusion of new voices in intergovernmental decision-making processes. Indeed, we can now expect to find any number of opportunities for CSOs to interact with Member States during an intergovernmental meeting. In the broad, such initiatives aim to promote better decision making through wider input; integrate diverse viewpoints; develop trust and partnership; and mobilise commitment to the implementation of decisions.

However, as new mechanisms for including civil society organisations in intergovernmental meetings have been tried, developed, replaced and in some cases discarded, it is critical that some form of knowledge management is generated so that we can learn from all that has taken place. There is now a wealth of experience and expertise amongst UN agencies, but if that knowledge is not documented, shared and reviewed, there is a danger that it will be lost. This point was well encapsulated by a comment from one UN-CSO Focal Point who attended one of the *SEP* workshops 'this is the first time I've met other people doing my job in different UN agencies'.

The lack of inter-agency knowledge-sharing not only creates a problem for UN civil servants hoping to learn from different practices but it presents a considerable challenge for CSOs due to the sheer diversity of practices, procedures, and terms for participating in intergovernmental meetings. Furthermore, there is an emerging analytical hole in descriptions of civil society participation in intergovernmental meetings. Whilst websites and reports are eager to announce the number of NGOs participating in a given meeting or the number of statements made by NGOs, there is very little analysis undertaken into the quality of that engagement process. What is meant by 'engagement'? What are we hoping to achieve by increasing the interface between Member States and CSOs in

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[2] We the peoples: civil society, the United Nations and global governance - Report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations–Civil Society Relations **http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N04/376/41/PDF/N0437641.pdf?OpenElement**

[3] First implemented in March 1992, named after Ambassador Diego Arria during the crisis in former Yugoslavia during which a Bosnian priest came to New York and asked to meet with the various Council members. Only Ambassador Arria agreed to meet him, and having heard his contribution invited Council members to gather over coffee in the Delegate's Lounge. The Arria Formula was born. http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/mtgsetc/arria.htm

an intergovernmental meeting? To what extent were those objectives fulfilled? What were the strengths, weaknesses and obstacles of a given process and how can it be improved? These questions are often left unasked and unanswered at the end of an intergovernmental meeting.

Intergovernmental meetings are of course only one of many spaces in which international policy is shaped. Indeed, meaningful civil society engagement will only really be achieved through long term relationships and partnerships between decision-makers and civil society. The UNAIDS Programme Coordination Board, the UNDP Civil Society Advisory Committee, the International Labour Organisation tripartite system all present progressive instances by which NGOs now participate in the decision-making process on a more permanent basis. Such examples should be replicated and advanced wherever possible in the UN system.

However, intergovernmental meetings still remain an important space where civil society voices can be heard, where issues can be raised, and solutions can be identified. Stakeholder Forum has been active in international meetings for over twenty years across a wide range of issues and processes. During that time we have seen the good, the bad and the ugly. We have seen well-coordinated processes whereby CSOs have been provided with ample preparation time and have generated common positions amongst different sectors. We have witnessed dynamic discussions held between CSOs and decision-makers that have brought about new solutions. We have taken part in negotiations whereby CSOs have contributed between 10-20% of the final text. Equally, at the other end of the spectrum, we have witnessed some poorly orchestrated processes whereby no attempts have been made to identify key stakeholder groups, very little time has been allowed for CSOs to coordinate themselves and levels of representation have been dubious. In short, our experiences have taught us that 'process' does matter and does make a difference.

It was with some of these experiences in mind that *Stakeholder Empowerment Project (SEP)* was conceived. The *SEP* has set out to better understand how CSOs are participating in intergovernmental meetings and how those different formats are impacting the quality of that participation. Using our experience generated in the sustainable development arena, we have looked at a range of different issues, from HIV/AIDS to trade and development to drug control to ascertain common themes, challenges and solutions for involving stakeholders in intergovernmental meetings. The *SEP* has sought to;

- **review** the interface between Member States and stakeholders in intergovernmental meetings across the UN system.

- **document and evaluate** some of the different ways for stakeholders to participate in intergovernmental meetings and negotiations.

- identify a series of **good practices** and **common terminology** for engaging stakeholders in intergovernmental meetings.

This publication is structured in the following chapters. Our first chapter provides a short literature review of the term 'civil society' and a short review of the changing relations between civil society and the United Nations since its creation. In **Chapter Two** we delve into a series of case studies as instances of multi-stakeholder processes to better understand how they are being designed, managed and implemented. In **Chapter Three** we have pulled together some of the key components, stages and practices that have helped support stakeholder participation in intergovernmental meetings. **Chapter Four** lists our **Stakeholder Standard** for engaging civil society in intergovernmental meetings that have been derived from our experiences and the research for this project.

Methodology

Any research into the quality of an engagement process begs the question, what merits an 'effective' or 'successful' process? One obvious criterion is the extent to which a final outcome document of a decision-making process reflects the positions of key stakeholder groups. However, whilst this can provide a good benchmark it is also inherently problematic. For example, if one constituency is able to impact the final text whilst others are not, does this make the process successful? Alternatively, if the final text reflects only a few of the contributions made by stakeholders, does this render the whole engagement process redundant? Indeed, do all stakeholders attend intergovernmental meetings with the sole aim of impacting the final agenda or are there other criteria of 'success' by which they would grade a process?

The second research issue regards the sheer size and range of the UN system today. There are over 190[4] UN agencies, programmes, funds and operations covering the full gamut of issues, from human rights, to drug control, to trade systems. Each UN body operates under a distinct mandate and different set of rules, seeks to engage a different set of stakeholders or non-governmental actors and has a unique historical trajectory. As such, the differences between different processes are often so pronounced that comparisons are problematic.

With some of these questions, problems and limitations in mind, the *Stakeholder Empowerment Project* has sought to develop a flexible analytical framework by which we can look at a range of different case studies (see Annex III). The framework has built on the work already undertaken by Minu Hemmati and Stakeholder Forum into multi-stakeholder processes[5] (MSPs) which are defined as 'processes which aim to bring together all major stakeholders in a new form of communication, decision-finding on a particular issue'. MSPs are based on recognition of the importance of achieving equity and accountability in communication between stakeholders, involving equitable representation of stakeholder groups and their views. They are based on democratic principles of transparency and participation, and aim to develop partnerships and strengthened networks among stakeholders.

Our research and data collection consisted of a series of interrelated phases. First, we conducted desk-based research into the current practices of engaging CSOs in a range of UN policy-making forums. We reviewed agency websites, policy documents on relations with CSOs, positions papers and statements submitted to international meetings to better understand the range of practices and mechanisms already in place in the UN system.

Second, we conducted four workshops with focal points based in New York and Geneva to which the following agencies, programmes and funds were present: NGLS; UNDP; UNEP; WTO; UNICEF, UNOG, OHCHR, UN-DESA, UNAIDS, UNIFEM, and UNCTAD. Third, on the back of the workshops we identified six case studies that were cited as positive instances of involving CSOs in decision-making processes by UN-CSO Focal Points and stakeholders. They crossed a range of global issues; sustainable development; drug control; trade and development; HIV/AIDS; and the environment. Using the analytical framework as our guide we assessed the case studies as instances of multi-stakeholder processes, paying particular attention to the preparatory process, stakeholder coordination, the format of the engagement itself and the outcome of the process. We conducted 65 semi-structured interviews with stakeholders, Member States and UN civil servants to gather their feedback of the quality of the participation. Wherever possible, we also attended the meetings in person to see the process underway and gather further input from the participants.

Fourth, using the data collected during the research and interviews we reviewed the documents and desk-based research, compiled and analysed feedback and results and compiled a draft report. We sought feedback and input from the project advisory board and the Stakeholder Forum International Advisory Board.

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[4] Including working groups, committees and commissions.

[5] Hemmati, Minu: *Multi-stakeholder processes for governance and sustainability: Beyond Deadlock and Conflict* (London, 2002)

Limitations

UN bodies operate under different mandates, have developed different rules of procedure, work along side a different set of stakeholders, and seek to advance their cause in any number of different ways. It is important to stress from the outset that *Stakeholder Empowerment Project* aims only to collect some of the experiences of stakeholders and participants and to compare different processes across the UN system. It does not claim to speak for all UN agencies, programmes and funds or to represent the voice of all CSOs attending intergovernmental meetings.

There were a number of problems encountered in the data collection and the scope of the research for the *SEP*. First, accessing the contact details for those who had taken part in the different forums presented a considerable challenge. In some cases NGLS was able to forward on email requests or UN Focal Points were able to generate a set of participant names but accessing current contact email addresses and phone numbers proved a considerable challenge. As a result the responses from the case study surveys were very mixed. In some cases we received over 100 responses, in others less than 20. Due to the uneven number of responses from each case study we have used the survey responses to support the responses generated in the interviews rather than to shape the main content of the research.

Second, it has not been possible to generate information on all the areas we had hoped regarding issues such as funding and stakeholder positions. For example, in the UNCTAD Civil Society Hearings the research was limited by its 'Chatham House Rules' procedure. In others, such as the Commission on Sustainable Development Multi-stakeholder dialogues (1997 - 2002) it was found that memories have faded and details have been lost. The difficulties encountered in accessing information again points to the importance for all processes to be well documented and recorded after the event.

There are a number of areas for future research that were identified during the project. For example, the research has emphasised that the input for international meetings must begin at the local and regional level. Whilst there is some research into small-scale and grassroots civil society engagement, there is a research gap surrounding regional and sub-regional efforts to involve CSOs in policy-making. Many noted that they would like to see a similar strand of research be undertaken on the regional level to better understand how UN agencies, programmes and funds are engaging stakeholders on that level. Another emerging theme that came up in the research is the use of information technology and online forums such as 'e-dialogues' or the use of new media as a tool for engaging CSOs. There remains a great deal of uncertainty as to how these tools are being used and to what effect.

CHAPTER I Literature Review

The term 'civil society' has become ubiquitous, and it is now used by governments, academics, journalists, international organisations and funding agencies in any number of contexts: The UK Conservative Party recently announced their plans to create an Office of Civil Society; multinationals such as Shell cite the importance of outreaching to civil society in all of their operations; and institutions such as the London School of Economics have entire departments dedicated to researching civil society. Whilst most references conform to the consensus that civil society is something to be consulted, engaged and informed, there remains a lot of confusion about the actual meaning of the term.

Any discussion of civil society engagement in UN intergovernmental processes needs to first establish the context in which those relations have evolved and developed. The objectives of the literature review are (i) to summarise the history of the term 'civil society' (ii) to describe the evolution of the UN's relations with civil society since its creation in 1945.

I) WHO AND WHAT IS CIVIL SOCIETY?

civil society; *noun. the elements such as freedom of speech,*
an independent judiciary, etc, that make up a democratic society.
Oxford English Dictionary

Civil Society has long been a contested and slippery term. Definitions typically vary on the emphasis that they put on some characteristics of civil society over others, though there is significant overlap among core conceptual concepts. Whilst some definitions primarily focus on aspects of state power, politics and individual freedom, others focus more on economic functions and notions of social capital and cohesion. Anheier states that most analysts would "agree with the statement that civil society is the sum of institutions, organisations and individuals, located between the family, the state and the market in which people associate voluntarily to advance common interests"[6]. However there are those, such as Marlies Glasius, that maintain that even this broad definition is controversial.

The intellectual history of the concept is closely linked to that of the notion of citizenship and can be traced back to Roman times via Cicero to Greek philosophers, where civil society was seen as indistinguishable from the state; 'Aristotle's polis was 'an association of associations' that enabled citizens to share in the virtuous tasks of ruling and being ruled'[7]. The modern idea of civil society, which is that of a realm parallel to but separate to the state, did not emerge until the Scottish and Continental Enlightenment of the late 18thC.[8] John Locke and Alexis de Tocquelle saw civil society less in relation to the market, as per Adam Smith but more in political terms. In contrast to the classical thinkers, civil society was seen as a buffer against the intrusions of the state on newly realised rights and freedoms, organised through the medium of voluntary organisations.

The mid nineteenth century saw the term fall out of popular use and was confined to theoretical debate in the works of Hegel and Marx until it was revived in the works of the Marxist theorist Gramsci. Gramsci rescued the term for modern use to portray civil society as a special nucleus of independent political activity *between the state and market*. Anheier et al argue that when the term resurfaced it was with the dissidents against the authoritarian state in Latin America and central Europe for whom the idea of civil society was strategically useful[9].

According to whose version one prefers, "civil society" means "fundamentally reducing the role of politics in society by expanding free markets and individual liberty" (Cato), or it means the opposite - "the single most viable alternative to the authoritarian state and the tyrannical market" (WSF), or for those more comfortable in the middle ground of politics, it constitutes the missing link in the success of social democracy (central to Third Way thinking and compassionate conservatism)[10].

In the 1990's global conferences gained regularity and became an integral part of global policy making. International civil society groups found in them a key venue to influence policies of governments and international organisations, and saw in world conferences an opportunity to enhance their say in the global policy agenda. At the same time, the United Nations found in civil society a partner to increase conferences' legitimacy and constituency. This convergence between the salience of conferences and the international development of civil society moulded the development of these two processes from the 1990s onwards[11].

The prevailing modern view sees civil society as a sphere located between state and market as a buffer zone strong enough to keep both state and market in check, in order to prevent either becoming too dominant. Civil society is not a separate entity but permeates both the state and the market. Civil society

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[6] H. Anheier '*Civil Society: Measurement, Evaluation, Policy*' 2004, p20

[7] E. Edwards 'Civil Society', 2002, p6

[8] T. Carothers 'Civil Society: *Think Again*' Foreign Policy 1999-2000 p18; http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/CCS/what_is_civil_society.htm

[9] H. Anheier, M. Glasius and M. Kaldor 'Introducing Civil Society' Global Civil Society 2001' p14

[10] http://www.infed.org/association/civil_society.htm

[11] Tabbush *Civil Society in United Nations Conferences* Civil Society AND Social Movements Programme Paper 17 2005 (UNRISD)

is commonly seen as a broader concept than just equating it with NGOs and encompasses a range of organisations and associations that exist outside of the state and the market, for example, labour organisations, professional associations, community groups[12]. This has been particularly pertinent to the debates surrounding sustainable development. The key document to have emerged from the Rio Conference in 1992, Agenda 21, defined civil society into a series of 'Major Groups' which included Business and Industry, Children and Youth, Farmers, Indigenous Peoples, Local Authorities, NGOs, Scientific and Technological Community, Women, and Workers and Trade Unions. Agenda 21 recognises all of these nine major groups to enable broad based engagement of all economic and social sectors making sustainable development happen.

In the West civil society has evolved and grown as a way of revitalizing democracy due to concern over the erosion of democracy through the apathy and disillusionment of the electorate. As people have found new ways to express their political interests, support for NGOs has grown.[13] NGOs are key providers of information and actors in the process of holding the state accountable. Many authors recognize that Civil Society can play a major role in global governance structures; information collection and dissemination, policy development consultation, policy implementation, assessing and monitoring and advocacy for justice.[14]

The influence of civil society has continued to grow into the 21st century and the debate is now more focused on the proposal of a global civil society and the nature of the relationship between civil society and the state. As suggested in the Cardoso Report on the UN relationship with civil society, globalization causes a disparity in modern politics that renders traditional forms of representation increasingly less relevant, as economics and culture become more global.

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[12] http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/CCS/what_is_civil_society.htm

[13] J. Scholte cited in Ripinsky and Van den Bossche *NGO Involvement in International Organisations: A Legal Analysis (*British Institute of International and Comparative Law: London) p4

[14] B. Gemmill and A. Bamidle-Izu 'The role of NGOs and Civil Society in Global Environmental Governance' *Global Environmental Government* 2002 p2; M. Hemmati Multi-stakeholder processes for Governance and Sustainability 2002 p3

II) THE UN AND CIVIL SOCIETY

The traditional basis of the UN's association with NGOs is founded on Article 71 of the 1945 UN Charter;

The Economic and Social Council may make suitable arrangements for consultations with non-governmental organisations which are concerned with matters within its competence. Such arrangements may be made with international organisations and, where appropriate, with national organisations after consultation with the Member of the United Nations concerned.

However, for a number of analysts, the story of the UN and civil society dates further back in time. The anti-slavery movement, founded in England in the late 18th century, gave rise to many civil society groups and contributed to the World Anti Slavery Convention (1840), considered a 'milestone gathering to coordinate the work of citizen organisations on an international basis'[15]. Other early examples include the World Alliance of YMCAs (1855) and the International Committee for the Red Cross (1863). When speaking at the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Kofi Annan commended the role that these early movements had played in generating the conventions and treaties on which the UN is founded;

Before the founding of the United Nations, NGOs led the large in the adoption of some of the Declarations forerunners. The Geneva conventions of 1864; multilateral labour conventions adopted in 1906; and the International Slavery Convention of 1926; all stemmed from the world of NGOs who infused the international community with a spirit of reform UN Secretary General 1998: 10[16]

Analysts tend to divide civil society's relations with the UN into at least two generations. The first generation, from 1945 up to the end of the Cold War in the late 1980's was determined by the ECOSOC's Resolution 288B(X), which defined an International NGO as 'any international organisation that is not founded by an international treaty'. For the most part, accreditation was limited to large international NGOs (INGOs) who were invited to attend UN Conferences, but Hill notes that 'they remained more or less autonomous, commenting on UN deliberations at arms length' and as such, relations between the UN and non-governmental actors were of a 'formal and ceremonial nature than of a political nature'[17].

The end of Cold War signalled a new era for relations between the UN and civil society signalled by the arrival of a world summits and international conferences. The 1990's were littered with Conferences and Summits on Environment and Development, Population and Development, Human Rights, Women's Rights, Social Development, Human Settlements and Food Security[18]. The UN Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 was a landmark event in terms of the number and level of participation of non-governmental actors engaging in a single meeting. More than 1,400 NGOs were accredited to the conference itself and more than 25,000 individuals from 167 countries participated in the parallel Global Forum, where NGOs negotiated alternative treaties and engaged in extensive networking.

The document to have emerged from the Rio Conference, Agenda 21, defined civil society into a series of key stakeholders, or 'major group's, and recognised that broad public participation of civil society was a prerequisite of sustainable development;

Critical to the effective implementation of the objectives, policies and mechanisms agreed to by Governments in all programme areas of Agenda 21 will be the commitment and genuine involvement of all social groups. (Agenda 21)

The recognition of the role that NGOs and civil society should play was not just confined to the UN system. Global civil society started to organise parallel summits to challenge G7/G8 meetings, International Monetary Fund (IMF)-WB meetings, EU summits, World Economic Forum meetings in Davos to name but a few[19].

In 1993 a working group established by ECOSOC began a review and evaluation of relations with NGOs and Civil Society. In 1996 Resolution 1996/31 replaced the 1968 Resolution 1296. It called the General Assembly to establish arrangements for the participation of NGOs 'in all areas of work in the UN' and opened the doors for NGOs seeking consultative status with the United Nations. It also hailed a new generation of civil society organisations.

According to Hill, this second generation of NGOs can be characterised in a number of ways. Firstly, they were far more numerous and more diverse in terms of their structures, practices and ideologies. Their activities spanned from research

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[15] http://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/177/31611.html

[16] Chadwick F Alger, Journal of Human Rights, Evolving NGOs in member state decision making in the UN System

[17] Tony Hill, Three Generations of UN-Civil Society Relations, A Quick Sketch

[18] Tabbush divides the series of conferences into two analytical categories. Some are 'standard setting' conferences with the goal of defining and endorsing standards of behaviour for governments, and not intended to feed directly into programmes or operations. And others could be called 'operational' since they intended to guide a range of practical activities, most commonly setting up a new international organisation or changing established ones, as well as allocating financial and other resources (Taylor 1989). (Tabbush p.4)

[19] Mario Pianta, UN World Summits and Civil Society: The State of the Art (2005)

and policy analysis to providing services and to lobbying and advocacy activities. They ranged from small grassroots organisations working with local communities to international networks and coalitions of like-minded NGOs collaborating on specific issues. Of particular significance was the emerging role of business and industry groups.

Second, relative to their predecessors many of these NGOs were far more politically active and engaged in the negotiations and the outcomes of the meetings. No longer were NGOs content to observe the process but they also wanted to inform, contribute and challenge intergovernmental decision-making. A third development has been the levels of operational cooperation between the Secretariats of UN organisations and non-governmental actors. UN agencies such as UNFPA, UNICEF, UNDP, and others such as IFAD, FAO and the ILO support and fund a range of NGOs in the south, whereas in the past UN funding had been channelled to governments. For example, over issues such as humanitarian crises and refugee related work, between 33% and 50% of UNHCR's operational budget is distributed through NGOs. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) reported that CSOs were channelling some US$11-12 billion development aid annually to developing countries by the late 1990's[20].

As the number and diversity of CSOs has evolved and grown so too have the calls for UN reform. In 2002 Kofi Annan proposed a high level Panel to consider UN relations not only with NGOs, but also parliamentarians, think tanks and businesses. The final report, the Cardoso Report[21], suggested a set of wide ranging reforms, which included the establishment of an Office of Constituency Engagement and Partnerships 'responsible for formulating and implementing the strategy for UN engagement with all constituencies beyond the formal membership of central Governments'. The Cardoso Report acted as a rallying call to all UN agencies, programmes and funds to devise ways of working with the NGO community and benefiting from the full range of experiences that civil society could offer on the ground.

As we come to the end of the first decade after the millennium, how has the last decade fared and what progress has been made for opening up the doors of the UN? We know that the number of NGOs on the ground have continued to increase across a range of different sectors. By UN estimates, the number of international NGOs alone has grown forty-fold over the last decade. There are over 3288 NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC. Countless thousands more work regionally, nationally and locally[22]. There has also been a growth of NGO Liaison Offices throughout the UN system. At the last count, over 90 UN Liaison Offices throughout the system are charged with working with NGOs and non-governmental actors[23].

Participation in UN meetings and conferences has also continued to grow. The UN World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in Durban, South Africa, saw the participation of 8,000 representatives from 3,000 civil society organisations. Similarly, 10 years after the Rio environmental conference, the UN World Summit on Sustainable Development was held in Johannesburg in 2002 with 8000 participants accompanied by a wide range of events and protests.

There are also a number of more innovative practices for involving CSOs in intergovernmental meetings. For example, the World Summit on the Information Society, one of the last UN global summits to date, established a Civil Society Bureau which was a counterpart to a Governmental Bureau for the preparation and the holding of the Summit itself. 'The WSIS process was in that way close to a multi-stakeholder tripartite model and created an exchange platform between governments, civil society, and the private sector'[24].

However, as a number of analysts have noted, participation rates have not been matched by progress in terms of NGO demands. Attending international conferences is time and resource intensive and can yield few obvious or immediate returns. There is growing evidence of disillusionment amongst a number of civil society actors. CONGO released a statement criticising the work of the General Assembly both before and following the World Summit which 'had taken place primarily in the form of closed informal consultations,' considered 'a sharp contrast to the Preparatory Committees of the UN conferences in the 1990's'[25]. Third World Network recently announced that they would no longer be attending the Commission on Sustainable Development; The World Alliance for Citizen Participation (Civicus) published a paper in 2005 describing the governance legitimacy deficit of the UN system in which governments are failing to uphold their commitments[26].

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[20] World Bank: http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/ TOPICS/CSO/0,,contentMDK:20101499~menuPK:244752~pagePK: 220503~piPK:220476~theSitePK:228717,00.html

[21] There were a number of criticisms levelled at the Report from the NGO community particularly regarding the increased role that business and industry and the report recommended. Civicus, Global Policy Forum, Third World Network all raised their concerns regarding the 'confusion between an NGO and a for-profit' organisation.

[22] Intergovernmental Negotiations and Decision Making at the United Nations, NGLS; http://www.un-ngls.org/orf/d_making.htm

[23] Chadwick Alger, Evolving roles of NGOs in member state decision-making in the UN system. (p410)

[24] Reate Bloem, Isolda Agazzi, Ben Attia and Phillipe Dam; *Critical Mass* p. 50

[25] http://www.ngocongo.org/files/report_on_the_relationship_be

[26] http://www.civicus.org/new/content/ deskofthesecretarygeneral20.htm

CHAPTER II Case Studies

As part of the *SEP* we have analysed six case studies which were all cited as positive examples of engaging civil society in intergovernmental meetings by UN-CSO Focal Points and stakeholders. The differences between the case studies are pronounced. However, the one key component that unites them all is that they are all examples in which civil society have an opportunity to interact directly with decision-makers to try and inform intergovernmental policy outcomes. In short, they are examples by which the voice of civil society can be heard in an intergovernmental meeting.

Using the *SEP* framework (Annex III) we have considered the case studies as examples of multi-stakeholder processes to better understand how they are being managed, organised and structured. We then interviewed stakeholders, Member States and UN civil servants to gather their feedback from having participated in the meetings: To what extent did the meeting fulfil its stated objectives? What were the strengths and the weaknesses of the process? What were the key challenges and how would these be overcome? (etc.). In each case we have sought to highlight the key components and factors of each process that have contributed to a more positive experience on the part of the participants.

HEARINGS

Hearing: noun. 1. The action or faculty of perceiving sounds by the ear. 2. The action or an act of listening; an opportunity to be listened to. 3. The action or process of listening to evidence etc. in a court of law or before an official; a trial before a judge without a jury.
Oxford English Dictionary

In the UN context, civil society hearings have become a common mechanism by which to create an interface between Member States and non-governmental actors during an intergovernmental meeting. They differ in format, size and frequency but they tend to last between 1 – 3 hours and allow participants between 2 –3 minutes for each statement. The content of the discussions is usually recorded in written summaries and in some cases captured using webcasts, transcripts, photos, or via reporting services such as the Environment Negotiations Bureau (ENB) which provides a factual account of the key messages and statements. Hearing summaries are often included in the official documentation of the intergovernmental meeting as a record of civil society's input.

In the UN context, some of the more prominent examples include the 2005 Informal interactive hearings of the General Assembly with non-governmental organisations, civil society organisations and the private sector (23rd – 24th June 2005). Participants in each session included Member States, observers of the General Assembly and approximately fifty invited representatives from civil society, which were determined by the General Assembly in consultation with Member States and representatives of the NGOs in consultative status with the ECOSOC[27]. Another prominent example were the 1999 public Hearings organised as part of the War on Poverty Forum, a partnership of CSOs, the South African government and UNDP, which involved a 35 day long set of meetings in 29 different locations involving more than 10,000 people in the first set alone.

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[27] http://www.un.org/ga/civilsocietyhearings/infonote.pdf

CASE STUDY Civil Society Hearing during the High-Level Meeting on AIDS 2008

Context On 10th – 11th June 2008 a High-level Meeting on AIDS (HLM) took place at the UN in New York. The meeting aimed to review the progress made towards implementing the 2001 Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the 2006 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS, and as such represented an important opportunity for civil society to highlight neglected issues and champion emerging priorities. The review came at the mid-point towards the goal of universal access to comprehensive prevention programmes, treatment, care and support by 2010 and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.

In preparation for the HLM, the Office of the President of the General Assembly (OPGA) requested that UNAIDS convene a Civil Society Task Force 'to support effective and active participation of civil society organisations and the private sector in the 2008 High Level Meeting (HLM)', an initiative that had also been used for a high level AIDS review two years previously in 2006. The final HLM agenda provided a number of formal opportunities for civil society participation including speaker slots in the opening Plenary; the five panels and a two hour interactive Civil Society Hearing. The Task Force activities ranged from shaping and implementing the design of the hearing, devising criteria for nominations for civil society speakers, identifying and briefing civil society speakers and briefing participants for the HLM.

Objective The Informal Interactive Hearing aimed to be 'an opportunity for an exchange of views between civil society (including the private sector) and Member States and observers on various issues, including those arising from the report of the Secretary General and with a particular focus on key priority issues for civil society in achieving universal access to prevention, treatment, care and support by 2010'[28]

Identifying stakeholders and identifying participants: UNAIDS has developed a definition of civil society which includes: 'service organisations, groups of people living with HIV and AIDS, youth organisations, women's organisations, business, trade unions, professional and scientific organisations, sports organisations, international development NGOs, and a wide spectrum of religions and faith-based organisations, both globally and at country level'. In preparation for the HLM a further set of key stakeholder groups were added by the Civil Society Task Force including; men who have sex with men and trans-gender representatives.

Preparatory process A year before the HLM, the UNAIDS Civil Society Partnerships Unit sent out a global tender to establish a Civil Society Support Mechanism (CSSM) in order to support the participation of CSOs in the high

level review. More specifically, the mechanism aimed to serve as a platform to improve communication among stakeholders, and to directly provide support to civil society representatives and organisations to strengthen their involvement in the country and international 2008 review processes. The Terms of Reference (TOR) outlined a series of criteria for taking part in the CSSM including the ability 'to network widely and involve a range of groups including their key stakeholder groups'.

Six months before the HLM, the CSSM was won by a coalition of organisations based in the North and South and led by the International Council of AIDS Service Organisations (ICASO) and the International Women's Health Coalition (IWHC). In turn, the Civil Society Support Mechanism established an International Support Group which was composed of a core sixteen civil society advocates representing different constituencies, issues and regions of the world who were asked to oversee the activities of the Support Mechanism on a voluntary basis.

Together, the Support Mechanism and the Support Group helped decide on the selection criteria for the Task Force which included the following criteria: two representatives of networks of people living with HIV; three representatives from marginalised communities (drug users, sex workers, and men who have sex with men); a representative of the UNAIDS PCB NGO delegates; a representative from the Civil Society Support Mechanism; and one representative from each of the following; labour sector, private/business sector, women's organisation, youth organisation, and faith-based organisation. The Task Force TOR also stipulated that lead civil society organisations would need to be able to demonstrate their ability to network widely.

The Task Force were responsible for a range of activities including identifying the theme for the Hearing and identifying and preparing civil society speakers. The Task Force met four times before the HLM. Their meetings were co-chaired by a representative from UNAIDS and a representative from the lead coordinator, ICASO. Meeting summaries were produced at the end of each meeting that described key activities and actions taken by the group, which were distributed across list-serves and networks. In between meetings the group communicated via emails and conference calls.

One of the key tasks of the Task Force was to select and prepare the civil society speakers for the interactive Hearing. The Task Force devised a selection criteria for which included some of the following attributes; 'ability to speak credibly from a civil society perspective', 'related to networks or

[28] http://www.un.org/ga/president/62/letters/letter110408.pdf

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organisations working in the field of HIV and AIDS'. An open call for nominations was distributed by the Task Force and the Support Mechanism. Applicants were asked to complete a word document application detailing their experience and areas of expertise, and email the completed form to a temporary email address hosted by ICASO. Only emailed applications were accepted and forms had to be filled out in English. Over 250 applications were received which were then divided amongst the Task Force and reviewed and short-listed. The OPGA were forwarded the final suggested speakers for their approval. To prepare the speakers for their participation in the HLM, each Task Force member was assigned a speaker and a back-up speaker, and together the groups drafted key points to be included before the speakers were due to arrive in New York.

The Meeting An online application form was opened in January for CSOs in a consultative status with ECOSOC, and a registration form for non-ECOSOC accredited organisations wishing to attend the HLM. In total more than 1,700 individuals from civil society were accredited to attend the meeting and almost 700 organisations received special accreditation for the HLM. Many more NGOs also attended the HLM as members of their national delegation. Special arrangements were made for civil society delegates living with HIV/AIDS including a facility whereby they could rest and recuperate with some privacy.

The Informal Interactive Hearing, entitled 'Action for Universal Access 2010: Myths and realities', was held on the first day of the HLM and lasted for two hours. It was chaired by the President of the General Assembly and the UN Secretary General made opening remarks. It provided a platform for thirteen civil society speakers to champion their policy recommendations.

Link to decision-making The hearings took part on the first day of the HLM in order to help inform and impact the rest of the discussions. The output document was a summary report drafted by the President of the General Assembly.

Funding Travel, accommodation and expenses were covered for the Task Force members to attend all the preparatory meetings. Travel costs and a per diem were provided for all of the civil society speakers who took part in the HLM. The Support Mechanism was provided with funds to coordinate the global preparations and each of the partner organisations were provided with limited funds to coordinate regional consultations prior to the meeting. Some funds were also provided for participants from the South to attend the HLM.

Communication The Task Force met in person four times. All other communication was conducted via phone conferences and emails. The interactive Hearing was web-cast and made available on the HLM website. Transcripts of all of the civil society statements were also made available online.

Follow-Up In the aftermath of the HLM an evaluation was commissioned by UNAIDS to document, review and evaluate the quality of civil society participation in the HLM. The evaluation involved a series of interviews with the key players, a short survey emailed to civil society participants of the HLM, and a literature review of the process. ICASO also produced a summary and analysis of the HLM which was emailed across constituency networks and made available on their website.

FEEDBACK

The feedback from participating stakeholders suggested that the quality of the civil society input into the HLM was very high. Respondents noted that they had felt well represented by the Task Force during the preparatory process, that the speakers had presented strong interventions, and that the UNAIDS Partnerships Unit had offered high levels of support in preparation for the meeting. As such the preparatory process was well managed and proved a multi-stakeholder process in and of itself. However, this being said, the majority of respondents noted that the hearing had not been a good opportunity for interacting with Member States. The following provides a very brief analysis of the key strengths and weaknesses of the process identified by the participants.

'It was a huge eye opener for me; it opened my eyes to issues that I had never considered before such as issues around transgender, sex workers and drug users' NGO

First, civil society was involved in the preparations for the HLM from the very outset. Civil society helped to select its own representatives and had a say in the TOR outlining their activities. They were also able to shape the content, theme and topics of the hearing and therefore had a role in the agenda-setting phase. Second, the composition of the Task Force represented a range of different voices, experiences and sectors, all of whom represented wider constituencies including a business representative, a faith-based organisation and a person living with HIV/AIDS. Members of the Task Force all noted that the preparatory process proved a highly valuable consultation process which had to take into consideration a wide range of different perspectives.

'I wasn't convinced that there should be an industry representative on the Task Force because they don't represent affected populations. But, actually, it was useful to have that voice there and I think it did add to the conversations'. NGO

'I was really impressed by the diversity and expertise in the Civil Society Task Force… It was an impressive and diverse group of people who really understood the issues or regions that they were representing, and as a result the discussions were rich and informed' NGO

Third, the preparatory process was organised, strategic, and started well in advance of the meeting itself. The strategy targeted governments and decision-makers in the run up to the meeting and succeeded in getting many NGOs to attend the meeting as part of their national delegation. Furthermore, having UNAIDS as a Co-Chair of the Task Force provided them with a good line of communication with the Office of the President of the General Assembly throughout the preparatory process.

Fourth, the Summary Report included a number of the key messages and recommendations of the civil society presentations and documentation. For example, the final summary report specified vulnerable groups 'migrants, youth, prisoners, indigenous people's and most at risk populations, 'sex workers, men who have sex with men, and injecting drug uses'; it recommended that 'travel restrictions for people living with HIV should be lifted by countries that have such restrictions in place' and recommended that national responses should prioritise implementation, monitoring and enforcement of policies and programmes to protect and promote human rights'[29]. These points all pick up on the language and the messages promoted by CSOs in the Hearings and the preparatory process.

In spite of the many strengths of the process the vast majority of the respondents disagreed that the hearing had been an effective forum for interacting with Member States primarily because government participation had been very low in the hearing itself. A press conference was held at the same time as the hearing which may have contributed to the low levels of participation. Furthermore, a number of NGOs and CSOs attending the HLM as part of their national delegation ended up sitting in government seat for the Informal Interactive Hearing. In effect civil society was speaking to itself.

"Most important Govs walked around but didn't participate meaningfully in dialogue. It looked like 'NGOs, speak between yourself" NGO

At large, and within the restrictions of a GA process, the HLM offers a good example of a multi-stakeholder process. CSO representatives were involved from an early stage, they were given a say in the design of the process, and they represented a range of different experiences and constituencies. Sufficient time was allowed to prepare for the meeting and some effort was made to ensure regional input. Even so, the civil society Hearing was not seen as a good opportunity for interacting with Member States, nor was it seen as the key point at which the messages were communicated.

- UNAIDS has a clear definition of key constituencies and stakeholder groups.
- Stakeholders were involved from the outset of the process and were able to help design the content and the style of civil society engagement in the meeting.
- Preparations began up to a year before the meeting itself; the Task Force was convened four months before the meeting started and met four times in person.
- Publishing Task Force meeting summaries helped increase levels of transparency and accountability of the decision-making process.
- Stakeholders must be persuaded not to sit in the seats of their government during intergovernmental meetings even if they have attended the meeting as part of their national delegation.
- Limited follow-up process after the meeting.

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[29] There were also some significant disappointments on the part of civil society. For example there was no reference to calls to abolish laws criminalising HIV transmission; no reference to data quality or the inclusion of civil society data in country-level reports; and there was no detail on the potential to leverage the business sector and trade unions in the response to AIDS/HIV.

CASE STUDY UNCTAD Civil Society Hearings

Context Established in 1964, UNCTAD promotes 'the development-friendly integration of developing countries in to the world economy'. It is now considered a knowledge-based institution whose work aims to shape current policy debates and thinking on development, with a particular focus on ensuring that domestic policies and international action are mutually supportive in bringing about sustainable development[30]. UNCTAD has long recognised that civil society is playing an increasingly important role in support of the objectives of sustainable human development. In UNCTAD XI in 2004 the Sao Paulo Consensus was adopted by member States which called to 'arrange for half-day informal hearings with non-state actors to allow them to express their views on the issues before the Board'. The Hearings held in preparation for the Trade and Development Board (TDB) address current issues relevant to the Board's agenda[31].

Objectives The stated aims of the Hearings are fourfold. 1) To have a constructive exchange of views; 2) to have an informal, interactive debate, alternating between interventions by member States and civil society, and resulting in a formal report; 3) to hear and respond to issues related to the topics and suggested questions; 4) to improve and facilitate relations between member States and civil society[32].

Identifying stakeholders and participants There is no formal definition of civil society in UNCTADs work but a distinction is made between 'civil society'; 'private sector'; 'academics' and 'parliamentarians'. The main civil society organising partner for the UNCTAD hearings is the Committee of NGOs (CONGO) which helps to distribute information regarding the hearings to all of their members. Approximately 20 - 40 CSOs attend the hearings.

Preparation The Civil Society Outreach Unit generally holds a meeting with interested CSOs up to three months before the Hearings to identify the topics and the issues. A written set of guidelines is distributed to all participants prior to the process detailing the objectives and procedure for the hearings. For example, CSOs are advised to 'avoid delivering statements on their organisation's achievements or areas of work'; whilst member States 'are expected to respond to civil society's concerns and to the points raised during the debate, rather than express well-known governmental positions or deliver prepared speeches. The Civil Society Outreach Unit also encourages participants to attend an informal meeting prior to the hearing to discuss the

issues and prepare their statements collectively. For those organisations unable to attend the meeting itself, they are able to send in a written contribution which the secretariat will distribute on their behalf at the Hearing.

Meeting The civil society hearings take place on the eve of the Trade and Development Board annual meeting. The hearings last 2 -3 hours and are opened by the Chairman of the TGB. Each topic on the agenda is presented by a civil society representative and provides a space to put forward some collective points as agreed prior to the process, after which two discussants from civil society and two from the member States address each topic and any related questions. Each intervention must be no longer than three minutes and participants are encouraged to address the topics and questions alone. Other participants are also encouraged to engage in the debate and the secretariat encourages a free and open dialogue wherever possible. Member states are expected to respond directly to the questions and points raised by civil society. As an official UN inter-governmental meeting the hearings have six interpreters. Civil society representatives are also able to submit statements prior to the Hearing which are made available to the room on the day.

The hearings are held under 'Chatham House Rules' whereby participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any of the participants, may be revealed.

Funding: The Civil Society Outreach Unit has very limited funds for funding participation of NGOs to the half day hearings.

Communication The main UNCTAD website has a corner of the website dedicated to Civil Society Hearings where documents such as the agenda, guidelines for participants, written CSO inputs, and the President's Summary are uploaded. Information relating to the Hearings is usually emailed around key list-serves three months beforehand. They have recently begun to publish photos of the Hearings online as well.

Link to decision making process The secretariat produces a short report summarising the key points called the President's Summary. The summary is then presented at the Plenary of the Trade and Development Board by a civil society representative, who is decided amongst themselves, and having been finalised by the UNCTAD secretariat,

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[30] http://www.unctad.org/Templates/Page.
asp?intItemID=1530&lang=1

[31] For example, in 2008 the Hearing two themes were addressed; 'the global food crisis: addressing a systemic failure in development strategy'; and 'the global financial crisis and its impact on sustainable development'

[32] Guidelines for Participants http://www.unctad.org/sections/
about/docs/iaos_cso4_info_en.pdf

forms one section of the TDB final report, which in turn is submitted to the General Assembly. The summary is also available on the UNCTAD main website.

FEEDBACK

Participant feedback noted that the hearings were appreciated as an opportunity to come face to face with the UNCTAD Trade and Development Board. They were also appreciated as a networking opportunity by which CSOs could meet other organisations working on similar issues. However, respondents also noted that they were unsure of the wider objective of the hearings or to what extent such a format could really prove a useful format for interacting with decision-makers. The following points were raised.

First, attendance in the hearings is generally limited to those NGOs who are based in Geneva. Coordination efforts prior to the hearings was said to be relatively ad hoc and limited particularly because there are very few funds to support participation. As a result a number of participants described the hearings as rather arbitrary sessions in which they were not sure who the CSO representatives claimed to speak for or on what basis their recommendations were being made. CSOs also noted that they did not have the resources to prepare sufficiently for the hearings, and therefore felt unable to contribute to the discussions in a meaningful way.

'Who are the Hearings aiming to hear from? Geneva based civil society? International based organisations? I couldn't understand who they are trying to consult with'. NGO, Geneva

'I was there on another ticket. Had I not been in Geneva for another reason I would not have been able to attend. If they want civil society to be involved they must ensure that civil society can actually attend, otherwise it is pointless'. NGO, Rwanda

'A one-time meeting is largely insufficient – no criticism on the meeting itself, but on our own incapacity of continuing participation'. NGO, Geneva

Second, it was noted that the themes for each hearing are often so generic that it is difficult to generate relevant and high-quality discussions.

'The issues are really diverse and our positions are specifically with the region and when discussions take across wide group of countries the time slot and focussing becomes extremely difficult'. NGO, India

Third, respondents noted that there is insufficient information online to allow for non-participating stakeholders or wider networks to track and follow the process. The lack of transparency or information on the hearings makes it very difficult to track the decisions being made. The hearings thus favour NGOs based in Geneva who are able to attend them. Finally, the link between the hearing and the decision making process was very unclear and respondents all noted that they felt very doubtful if their contributions or suggestions were contributing to the decision-making process. They noted that it would be useful to have a further feedback system to better understand which points were taken up by the President's Summary and which were not.

- Participation largely limited to CSOs based in Geneva

- Preparatory process seen to be very ad hoc resulting in respondents questioning levels of representation.

- Themes were found to be so generic that stakeholders noted that it was difficult to contribute to the conversation in a meaningful way.

- Lack of information online to allow for non-participating stakeholders to track the process

- Lack of capacity for CSOs to participate in a meaningful way.

- Limited follow-up process.

HEARINGS in summary

- Hearings are susceptible to a number of externalities such as the low participation of decision-makers and clashes with other events on the programme and clear follow-up strategies.

- Hearings can be prone to overly-generic topics and themes

- Hearings need to be entrenched in a wider engagement strategy involving six month preparatory process, repeated opportunities to meet decision-makers and

- Require clear communication strategy to non-participating stakeholders

- Require clear links to the decision-making process

- Require a clear civil society coordination process before the meeting

ROUNDTABLES

roundtable: noun. An assembly of people around a table; esp. an assembly for discussion, especially at a conference at which all participants are accorded with equal status. **Oxford English Dictionary**

In the UN system roundtables have come to mean a range of formats. They can range from closed sessions involving a small selection of Member States with a narrow focus to wide discussions involving governments, UN civil servants and civil society. There are a number of recent examples that demonstrate the diversity of the format. During the World Forum IV (2008) UN-HABITAT instituted a series of 'action oriented' roundtables lasting three hours each for their key partners including a 'Youth roundtable'; 'Parliamentarians roundtable'; 'Women's Roundtable'; and a Ministers Roundtable'; at which up to eight speakers presented short presentations[33]. More recently, in 2009, during the 17th Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) a series of Ministerial roundtables were held as part of the High-Level Segment to which all the nine Major Groups were invited to attend and speak. Participation was limited to Ministers, Heads of Delegation (1 per delegation) and Major Groups (1 representative per group per roundtable). The discussions were started by Ministers, after which other heads of delegation were asked to participate, and Major Group representatives were then asked to also contribute.[34]

CASE STUDY The UNEP Ministerial Roundtables

Context The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) was established in 1972 after the UN Conference on the Human Environment, and their mission is to provide 'leadership and encourage partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations'. The UNEP notes that it has already enjoyed a special relationship with civil society and notes that many of the multilateral environmental agreements (Basel Convention, Montreal Protocol, Biodiversity and Climate Change conventions) were developed thanks to the lobbying efforts of the major groups.

The Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GMEF) is convened annually alongside the UNEP Governing Council (GC) regular and special sessions as a forum where environment ministers from around the world review emerging environmental policy issues. UNEP uses the term GC/GMEF, to designate a meeting of both the Governing Council and the Environment Forum. The GC/GMEF special session agenda normally focuses on current global environmental policy issues that are high on the international agenda.

A series of Ministerial Roundtables were initially pioneered by Achim Steiner in 2007 at the UNEP 24th Session of the Governing Council in Nairobi, and a similar format was again used in 2008 and 2009[35]. The roundtables are closed forums and restrict the number of government delegates, civil society representatives and UNEP civil servants into the room. At each roundtable approximately 20 government delegations, no more than three civil society members and two representatives from the UNEP secretariat are present.

Objective The roundtables aimed to allow 'government delegations to explore issues more fully in smaller groups'[36].

Identifying stakeholders and participants In 2004 UNEP adopted[37] the Major Groups approach which identifies 9 key civil society groups as defined by Agenda 21; farmers, women, the scientific and technological community, children and youth, indigenous peoples, workers and trade unions, business and industry, non-governmental organisations and local authorities. The roundtables included representatives from each of the Major Groups.

In the past, the participants have been selected by the Major Groups themselves during the Global Civil Society Forum process which functions as the main entry point for civil society participation at the governance level for UNEP. The cycle is consolidated through six regional consultation meetings which culminate in the Global Civil Society Forum (GCSF) a two day meeting held immediately before the UNEP Governing Council at the same venue. During the regional consultation meetings and the GCSF, which over 150 civil society representatives usually attend, representatives from each major group representing both the developed and developing world were selected to take part in the roundtables.

Preparations The issues for the roundtables are decided by the UNEP's Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) which consists of the representatives of all of the UNEP member states. The issues are the same as those discussed in the plenary.

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[33] http://www.unhabitat.org/content.asp?typeid=19&catid=535&cid=5470#3

[34] http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/csd/csd_pdfs/csd-17/CHAIRS_NOTE_ELABORATING_THE_PROCEEDINGS_OF_THE_HLS.pdf

[35] In 2009 a similar format was also used but the roundtables were much larger, consisting of up to 60 Member States in each roundtable and three spaces for stakeholders and Major Groups.

[36] K0760630 GC24-proceedings.doc

[37] Through the creation of the *Major Groups and Stakeholder Branch*

Once the topics have been confirmed a discussion paper written by the Executive Director was sent to the governments and civil society a month in advance of the Governing Council meeting. The paper aims to summarise relevant activities and accompanied documentation relevant to the topic[38]. Immediately before the roundtables, panel discussions in the plenary were on each theme in order to identify the key questions and prepare the debate[39]. The allocated Chair and Rapporteur for each roundtable were also provided with a basic set of guidelines for their role in facilitating and recording the discussions. The organisers aimed to divide the roundtables across regions, languages and levels of development in order to ensure a broad set of experiences and voices. Each roundtable consisted of a different combination of translation facilities to accommodate the different needs of the participants[40].

Meeting The roundtables were open to heads of delegation accompanied by one fellow delegate. There were 20 states represented at each roundtable among which two government representatives served as the co-facilitators acting as a Chair and a Rapporteur. Heads of Delegation were provided with seats at the table whilst the fellow delegates sit in a row of seats behind. In addition, there was one keynote speaker assigned to each session to introduce the topics under discussion. In most cases, this keynote speaker was a civil society representative. Two UNEP staff members were allocated to each roundtable to oversee the proceedings take notes and were seated at a separate Secretariat table.

After the keynote speaker had delivered a presentation of no more than ten minutes the floor was opened to the roundtable. The Chair's role was to facilitate the discussion and provide a platform for constructive dialogue between the various governments and civil society representatives. The Rapporteur took notes throughout the session, picking out key themes and suggestions.

Communication Information on the format and participants for the roundtables is made available online at the main UNEP site however the content of the discussions is not made publicly available. Earth Negotiations Bulletin (ENB) made reference to the roundtables in their reporting but did not detail the content of the discussions.

Linkage to decision-making process Rapporteurs made a summary report from each roundtable. At the conclusion of the roundtables a panel discussion in plenary was chaired by the Executive Director at which panellists summarised the issues raised during the roundtables. They were given ten minutes each to give their reports. The President of the Council/Forum prepared a draft summary of the views expressed during the consultations on each theme which was circulated as a conference room paper and presented to ministers and heads of delegation in the following days. In addition, the summaries were included in the final document under a section; 'summary of ministerial consultations' stating that the comments 'provide for Governments, UNEP and the international community a fertile source of ideas from which to undertake further exploration[41]

FEEDBACK

The roundtables proved a positive experience amongst participating stakeholders and the majority of respondents noted that the formats had fulfilled the stated objectives as an opportunity to interact with decision-makers. However, once again, the link to the decision-making process was found to be tenuous. The following provides a brief summary of the key points made by participants.

It was noted that the smaller, more informal setup of twenty participants helped to ensure that the quality of the dialogue was much higher than many other UN forums. It encouraged the participants to move beyond prepared statements, allowed time for recommendations, and encouraged a more meaningful exchange of opinion amongst decision-makers and non-governmental actors. One Member State commented that for the first time, the conversation moved away from 'process' and focused on the issues themselves. Equally, NGOs commented that the more intimate format had encouraged governments to respond directly to some of their comments and suggestions. As noted by one major group representative 'it was such as relief to get away from all those long statements that usually mean nothing to anyone'.

'The UN system is cumbersome. It will only work if you occasionally turn it on its head and shift the paradigm to force ministers to behave differently'.
Member State

'If you sit delegates down and insist that this is really an informal setting in which they can say anything, and they can't fall back on government positions, you can begin to generate really fruitful discussions'.
Major Group, Local Authorities

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[38] For example, in the case of the roundtable on UN Reform the discussion paper summarises the work of UNEP's work on international environmental governance and the findings of the report on the High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence commissioned by the Secretary General of the UN. It also suggests and highlights of issues for discussion.

[39] K0760630 GC24-proceedings.doc

[40] For example, during the 2007 Governing Council in Nairobi where six roundtables were arranged each day, totalling twelve throughout; one roundtable had interpretation in English, Arabic, Russian and Chinese , another had English, French and Japanese, another had interpretation in English and Spanish and three roundtables had no interpretation so was conducted in English.

[41] K0760630 GC24-proceedings.doc

'It provided a safe harbour for ministers to try out different ideas'. Major Group

Secondly, the roundtables proved an effective space for capacity building amongst decision-makers. As political terms are short and awareness of the issues differs considerably across participating Member States, intergovernmental meetings can function as important arenas for increasing capacity amongst decision-makers. The strength of the closed forum was that it persuaded delegates with limited knowledge of the issues to raise questions or concerns in a 'safe' environment.

'The roundtables are a step towards creating a network of peers who can learn in a risk free environment'. Major Group, Trade Unions

'I find the idea of the roundtables very exciting, and I see them not so much as an opportunity to make our voices heard but that environment ministers are being exposed to a world that they haven't been operating in in the past'. Major Group, NGOs

A number of positive outcomes were cited by the participants of the roundtables. For example, the Trade Unions noted that they had been able to raise a key issue and to have a fruitful discussion amongst all present. NGOs noted that the roundtables had begun to help build relationships with governments traditionally suspicious of interacting directly with CSOs in a formal context. Follow-up meetings had

also been scheduled to continue on the work. The Science and Technology major group noted that it had been a very good opportunity to communicate emerging research. However, responses noted that the key weakness of the UNEP Ministerial roundtable format is the very tenuous link between the roundtables and the decision-making process. Participants registered their disappointment with the quality of the rapporteur note-taking, commenting that they did not sufficiently capture the range of the conversations or the key points made during the conversations. The lack of a clear output from the discussions and the tenuous line into the decision-making process, led nearly all of the respondents to view the roundtables as a good capacity-building and scoping exercise rather than an opportunity to shape policy.

'It was a fascinating conversation and I learned a lot but there wasn't any evidence that our group conversation made any difference to the larger themes being dealt with'. Major Group, Science and Technology

It was also stressed by the organisers that smaller roundtable formats require high levels of organisation. Power discrepancies and language limitations must be taken into account when dividing up the Member States into different configurations. Furthermore, because spaces for civil society are limited, and the forums are not web-cast afterwards, it is important to have high degrees of stakeholder organisation to ensure that those representing wider groups can speak for a wider constituency.

ROUNDTABLES in summary

- Key strength: Can provide a 'safe' and 'risk free' forum, encouraging high quality discussion.
- Key strength: Can prove useful for agenda-setting and capacity building.
- Key weakness: Link between the output of the roundtable and the decision-making process can be very weak.
- Require a high level of stakeholder organisation to ensure that the final participants can represent a wider community.
- Require skilled reporting to ensure that key messages are captured and all voices are heard.

- Require resources for interpretation to allow for language gaps.
- Benefit from simple rules of engagement to ensure that no one participant dominates.
- CSO participants should be encouraged to report back to their wider networks after the meeting.
- Power discrepancies can prove a significant challenge when planning roundtables as discussions can get easily hi-jacked by more confident participants.

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUES

dialogue. n & v. a conversation between two or more people; verbal interchange of thought, discussion. **Oxford English Dictionary**

A multi-stakeholder dialogue (MSD) aims to bring relevant stakeholders, or those who have a 'stake' in a given issue or decision, into contact with one another. Multi-stakeholder dialogues have traditionally been used in the field of negotiation and conflict resolution and have proved an effective tool in multi-constituency, multi-issue contexts[42]. As such, they have proved a popular tool for international organisations, national and local governments and UN agencies. The formats span from lengthy processes that can take months to complete, to single-event discussions held in the context of an international meeting. Some of the common features are that they involve intensive conversations among a range of interest group representatives, and that they bring non-governmental actors into conversation with policy-makers.

The key objective of an MSD is to enhance levels of trust between the different actors, to share information and institutional knowledge, and to generate solutions and relevant good practices. The process takes the view that stakeholders have relevant experience, knowledge and information that ultimately will inform and improve the quality of the decision-making process. Based on democratic principles of transparency

and participation, the aim of a MSD is to build consensus on topics between stakeholders and to develop partnerships and strengthened networks among them. Others stress that they provide an opportunity for civil society and stakeholders 'to share their concerns, experiences and proposals in specific areas and discuss them in detail with governments'.

MSDs are now used in dozens of UN agencies, and again, have come to mean a range of formats. The most prominent examples include the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), the World Commission on Dams, and the Preparation Commmittees in the run up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 in Johannesburg. In the latter example, a multi-stakeholder dialogue was held in the General Assembly, which is usually reserved for governments, between all of the Major Groups. More recently, the UN Forum of Forests has also introduced a multi-stakeholder dialogue at their Seventh Session which aimed to 'provide an opportunity for dialogue between member States and the UNFF and representatives of major groups on issues relevant to the UNFF sessions[43]. For the first time, all nine Major Groups worked in partnership to present joint proposals[44].

CASE STUDY CSD Multi-stakeholder dialogues

Context The format of CSD has evolved over the years and any summary of civil society participation should distinguish between the sessions before and after the Word Summit of Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002. From 1997-2001 civil society participation during the CSD was defined by 'multi-stakeholder dialogues', which involved discussions between stakeholders and governments held over 2 days and lasted twelve hours in total. Following the Johannesburg Summit in 2002, at its eleventh session, the format of civil society engagement has been modified so that Major Groups are now integrated into the CSD sessions via thematic discussions, expert panels and interactive discussions with Ministers during the High Level Segment. The following description is based on the multi-stakeholder dialogue series 1997 – 2001.

Objective The stated objectives of the multi-stakeholder dialogues was to generate action-oriented dialogue between governments and stakeholders and identify future policies and actions that would contribute to advancing sustainable development objectives and inform the UN CSD negotiations.

Identifying stakeholders and participants The CSD uses the 9 Major Groups approach to working with civil society as defined by Agenda 21[45]. As some stakeholder groups were considered more relevant to particular policy cycles the

dialogues involved only four of the Major Groups at a time and all other stakeholders were asked to align themselves with one of them. For example, during CSD-8, which focused on sustainable agriculture, the Major Groups were NGOs, Workers and Trade Unions, Business and Industry and Farmers. All other stakeholder groups were then invited to participate in the dialogues as part of those key selected stakeholder groups.

The participants were generally identified by the stakeholder groups under their own processes. For example, NGOs selected participants via a consultation process using criteria such as expertise, gender and regional balance; whilst the Trade Unions selected participants on the basis of their specialities. The CSD Secretariat was able to provide some funding for some civil society participants based in the South.

Identifying Topics The topics for each CSD cycle have been predetermined by the CSD programme of work. The topics for the dialogues fed directly into the overall theme for the session. For example sustainable tourism development (CSD-7); sustainable agriculture (CSD-8); and sustainable energy and transport (CSD-9). The specific questions for the dialogues were determined in consultation with the CSD Bureau and the organizing partners and facilitated by the CSD secretariat.

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[42] Lawrence Susskind et al.

[43] http://www.un.org/esa/forests/participation.html

[44] http://www.un-ngls.org/IMG/pdf/Final_Year_in_Review_2007.pdf

[45] Farmers, women, the scientific and technological community, children and youth, indigenous peoples, workers and trade unions, business and industry, non-governmental organisations and local authorities

Preparation As the themes for the CSD were predetermined, stakeholders were provided with at least a year to prepare themselves for the overall sessions. Stakeholders were supported by the DESA Major Groups coordinator to consult within their own constituencies to prepare for dialogues throughout the year. Each major group nominated 'organising partners' who were often elected as part of an informal steering committee made up of Northern and Southern networks. Their role covered a range of activities, from identifying individuals representing their major group at the dialogues in consultation with their network, and coordinating and facilitating their group's contributions and participation during the dialogue segment.

The preparation of the dialogue segment was considered a multi-stakeholder process it of itself both within and between the Major Groups. The organising partners were expected to consult with their networks to prepare a 'dialogue starter' paper which were intended as short papers (no more than 16 pages long) that presented the views of the major group on the discussion including recommendations for future work in that area. The papers were first drafted by the organising partners and then circulated on global list servers up 10 months before the CSD. In some cases, stakeholder groups (e.g. the trade unions; business and industry) were able to meet up in person, however in most cases the Major Groups coordinated for the dialogues using emails, conference calls and list-serves.

These dialogue starter papers were submitted in January (five months before CSD) and uploaded onto the CSD main website. All Major Group contributions were made available on the main website and released as part of the official documentation in all official UN languages without having been edited. Having received all of the inputs, the Secretariat produced a summary grid that summarised the obstacles, barriers, commonalities and differences amongst the different starter papers.

Meeting The dialogues preceded a Ministerial or "High-Level" segment and the intergovernmental negotiations. The dialogues lasted 2-3 days and tackled four different issues each year.

Stakeholder delegations would contain anywhere between 10 participants up to 50 – 80 participants depending on resources. Delegations were encouraged to be 'formed on the basis of gender and geographical balance ensuring representation from developing countries and countries in transition'.[46] The dialogues were generally held in the ECOSOC chamber at the UN in New York which allowed

for delegations to sit together in their groups. The Member States sat in the balcony of the chamber as observers.

Each session was started with an 8 minute presentation from each of the Major Groups. This was followed by an 8 minute statement each from a Northern and Southern government representative. After these statements, the floor was opened for 2 minute statements from anyone in attendance who wished to clarify, extend, or build upon the ideas that had been entered for consideration. After which a dialogue between the major groups and Member States lasted three hours. The Chairman of the CSD moderated the dialogue sessions by picking up on comments made, asking direct questions and summarising what had just been said. The delegations tended to select a series of key speakers responsible for responding to the Chair's questioning and would rely on 'runners' who would bring forward notes and comments from the rest of the delegation. Most years, the Chair choreographed the conversation to encourage collaborative problem-solving and the resolution of long-standing sectoral disagreements.[47]

Outcome The outcome of the multi-stakeholder dialogues was a Chairman's summary of the key points made which was included in the final report of the Commission on the session. In addition, it was noted that proposals made and discussed in the multi-stakeholder dialogue segment were taken on board in the negotiated decision of the Commission on the topic of the dialogue, allowing for meaningful and direct contributions by stakeholder groups to the decisions and work of the Commission. A third important outcome of the dialogues is the multi-stakeholder follow-up programmes that they generate within the context both of the work of the Commission and, gradually, of the work of the other United Nations organisations.

FEEDBACK

The majority of the respondents cited the multi-stakeholder dialogues as one of the most innovative, participatory and positive experiences of working in a formal UN setting. In particular, it was stressed that the energy and enthusiasm that were generated by the dialogues was in and of itself a very empowering process. The following description provides a summary of the key points made by a range of different stakeholder groups having participated in the dialogues.

Firstly, the preparatory process, which involved at least six months of consultation amongst the Major Groups, encouraged all stakeholders to embark on a process of self-organisation and relationship-building amongst themselves.

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[46] http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N01/262/61/PDF/ N0126261.pdf?OpenElement

[47] Beth Schaefer Caniglia, PhD Lost time means lost collaboration in the interactive dialogues

Whilst defining a common position amongst such a vast range of organisations within the stakeholder groups was challenging and often frustrating, respondents noted that it encouraged their networks to consider an issue from an international rather than regional perspective. It was felt that such an extensive preparatory process ensured a higher quality of input as those involved were forced to familiarise themselves with the policy options. It was also stressed that the constant consultation process helped to ensure that the final recommendations were solutions-based.

We met 2-3 times a year and we were in constant communication amongst our networks. The process of forming positions among such a large number of groups forced us to engage with the issues from an international perspective rather than just from our own experiences. Major Group, NGO

It was noted by some respondents that there had been some occasions, such as during CSD-8 on sustainable agriculture when Farmers and Business and Industry formed a partnership, when different stakeholder groups were able to form coalitions for the dialogues. The interaction amongst different stakeholder groups, often between those traditionally suspicious of one another, was seen as a significant achievement.

The dialogue topics were very specific and very focused, it allowed us to mobilise people who were in the right fields and so to make sure that our contribution was measured, specific and solutions-focused. Major Group, NGO

The relationships that were forged amongst the major groups have more or less lasted. Creating this community of people who are all aware of one another helps to keep the items on the agenda beyond the process itself. Major Group, Trade Unions

The second point that was stressed was the predictability of the dialogue segments. Each year followed a similar timescale with similar milestones. Key stakeholders who had taken part in the dialogues each year were able to generate considerable institutional knowledge of the process. As noted by the Trade Unions, the dialogues provided a mechanism for training and capacity building amongst their network for how to lobby and engage with governments and an international process, which was seen as one of the biggest challenges amongst CSOs hoping to inform and influence a decision-making process.

The huge advantage of the multi-stakeholder dialogues is that we understood what was required at each stage of the process. Major Group, Business and Industry

Over the years, 500-600 trade unionists come through the CSD process. Overall, the network has increased from 2-3 hundred trade unionists is 1994 and now it is 10,000. The dialogues were a way of growing that network and training that network. Major Group, Trade Unions

Third, and critically, the dialogues placed civil society in the heart of the CSD process. Stakeholders were no longer placed at the end of a session, or subject to the whim of the Chair, but were included as part of the sessions themselves. The process actively recognised the integral role that non-governmental actors play in responding to the challenges associated with sustainable development.

It was an empowering process. It is the closest I've got to having a voice in the UN context. (Major Group, NGO)

It was an impressive spectacle. For governments who don't have a strong tradition of working with their NGOs, it was quite a learning curve. (Member State)

Finally, participants cited schemes such as the SARD initiative and the Multi-stakeholder Review of Voluntary Initiatives as examples of tangible outcomes of the dialogues. They also noted that through careful lobbying and persistent contact with decision-makers as a result of the dialogues they have made progress in a number of policy areas. In particular, the Women's Major Group noted that they had raised the profile of gender in all of the cycles and achieved a number of references to women in the final text, whilst NGOs noted that they had enshrined the role of the major groups in a number of related processes. However, above all the feedback noted that the multi-stakeholder dialogues had delivered a range of positive outcomes beyond the process itself. The Trade Unions noted that the dialogues provided a mechanism for training and capacity building amongst their network for how to lobby and engage with governments and an international process. The NGOs noted that it had helped them form partnerships with a range of different NGOs based in the North and South. Business and Industry commented that it had enabled them to build relationships with other stakeholders in a way that was not possible in a number of other arenas.

Respondents also cited a number of considerable challenges and weaknesses associated with the dialogues. First, many noted that the quality of the dialogue sessions often depended on the role and experience levels of the Chair facilitating the discussions. Secondly, it was noted that the sheer level of resources and time required for participating in the dialogues was beyond the capacity of many organisations. Finally, it was commented that whilst the dialogues tried very hard to generate a lively and interactive conversation amongst the different stakeholder groups, the quality of the interaction was always hindered by the sheer size and formality of the process.

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MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUES in summary

- Useful for identifying points of convergence and divergence amongst a range of stakeholder groups.

- Useful for collective problem solving amongst a range of different stakeholders.

- Useful for showcasing the levels of expertise and knowledge from a range of stakeholders.

- Narrower dialogue topics tend to illicit higher quality dialogues, wherever possible topics should be defined in collaboration with stakeholders.

- Require long preparatory process of at least six months, and stakeholder groups should be encouraged to identify commonalities between positions.

- Require experienced Chairs accustomed to moderating and who will ensure that all participants are given equal speaking rights.

- Require time, resources and commitment on the part of organisers and participants.

- Require sufficiently large room to include all participants and observers, wherever possible the room should be circular to allow all participants to see each other.

- Require clear rules of engagement.

- Require clear timeframes and milestones.

GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY FORUMS

forum. noun. A meeting or assembly for the open discussion of subjects of public interest; a medium for open discussion; a public meeting place for open discussion. **Oxford English Dictionary**

Global civil society forums have become a popular mechanism for gathering stakeholders, sharing knowledge and devising policy statements amongst a wide range of participants. They are often held directly before an intergovernmental high level meeting as shadow or preparatory processes and usually last between 1 – 3 days. The proceedings often mimic that of an intergovernmental process by having a plenary and working group structure. Most Forums issue a statement, declaration or set of recommendations as the key outcome document which in some cases is submitted into the intergovernmental process as part of the official documentation.

There are any number of examples to choose from that have been supported by the UN system. Before the General Assembly Millennium Summit, a Civil Society Millennium Forum was held in which the millennium declaration was assembled and published as an official UN document. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) hold Global Society Policy Forums whereby Bank and Fund staff, CSO representatives and government officials come together for four days to discuss policy issues. The UNCTAD runs a Civil Society Forum that runs parallel to the conferences which mimics the structure of the main conference from which a declaration produced and submitted to the main conference.

CASE STUDY Beyond 2008 and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs

Context The Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), established as early as 1946, is the central policy-making body of the UN on drugs issues. The Commission, which meets every year in Vienna, 'analyses the world drug situation and develops proposals to strengthen the international drug control system to combat the world drug problem'. It also monitors the implementation of the three international drug conventions. The CND is also the governing body for the drug related work of the UNODC.

The CND is a Functional Commission of ECOSOC and as such is guided by ECOSOC rules for consulting with NGOs and CSOs. However, historically the CND has remained a difficult forum for civil society to participate in or inform the decision-making process. As noted by one NGO, 'NGOs have too often been seen as a threat to the quality of discussion, rather than the expert resource that they can potentially be'[48].

In 2006, Resolution 49/2 of the 49th session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs requested NGOs to reflect on their own achievements in the context of reporting on the goals and targets for 2008 set by the UNGASS and requested the Executive Director of UNODC to facilitate the involvement of NGOs in the 10 year review. 'Beyond 2008' was developed by the Vienna NGO Committee (VNGOC) in partnership with the UNODC to provide a mechanism by which the voices of civil society would be able to contribute to the 10 year review. An MOU was signed between the VNGOC and the UNODC Civil Society Team to implement the project.

Objective UNODC commissioned the Beyond 2008 project in order to bring NGO's voice to the ten-year review of the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Illicit Drugs (UNGASS)

Identifying stakeholders and participants The UNODC do not have a formal definition of civil society. The VNGOC established a loose set of criteria for outreaching to civil society during the regional consultation process which included 'HIV/AIDS organisations, organisations concerned with alternative development, organisations of peasants and user groups'. To further assist in mapping out regional stakeholders the VNGOC introduced a system of Regional Lead Organisers (RLOs) whereby three key civil society organisations in each region representing different ideological perspectives on drug control were responsible for identifying constituencies, stakeholder groups and communities in their own regions.

Preparations Beyond 2008 spanned two years and involved a range of activities including a global NGO questionnaire, reviews of the current status of the conventions and a series of regional consultations. In the original MOU between UNODC and the VNGOC regional consultations were only planned for developing regions. However, as the project unfolded, NGOs in Europe, North America and Australia and New Zealand opted to find their own funds to support a regional consultation. Each was attended by one of the VNGOC Beyond 2008 representatives and wherever possible a UNODC regional officer. Each consultation was provided with a set of key questions and issues to be tackled.

The culmination of the process was a three day Global Civil Society Forum in July 2008 where 300 NGOs attended. Using the intergovernmental negotiating process as its guide, a draft text was circulated to all participants beforehand together with a Global Summary Report drawn from all of the regional consultations. The three days were spent negotiating a declaration and set of resolutions on the part of the NGO community. The Forum was chaired by representatives of the VNGOC Steering Committee. Interpretation was provided in Spanish, English and French.

All the NGOs involved in Beyond 2008 were asked to forward the NGO Declaration to the relevant government

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[48] http://www.idpc.net/policy-advocacy/global-advocacy/global-system-drug-control/commission-narcotic-drugs

departments and contact diplomats in Vienna. In addition, in the months prior to the CND, representatives from the VNGOC presented the NGO statement at key forums, participated in the working group on Drug Demand and contacted the CND Bureau members to present the work.

Meeting Traditionally, the CND does not provide many opportunities for NGOs to engage in the main agenda of the session therefore the NGO coalition had to work hard to generate any space for the outcome of the Global NGO Forum to be heard.

At the Opening Session of the High Level Segment, the Queen Silvia of Sweden introduced the NGO Declaration and Resolutions to the Opening Session. A side event was also held during the opening day called 'NGO contributions to the High Level Segment' in which the key messages on the part of Beyond 2008 were described. There was also an opportunity at the end of the General Debate of the High Level Segment for the NGO coalition to summarise the key elements of the NGO Declaration and Resolutions. Finally, there was a sharp increase in the number of NGOs attending the CND as part of their national delegation.

Communications The VNGOC communicated with the UNODC via phone conferences, emails and face to face meetings. The VNGOC communicated with stakeholders via a list-serve. One of the positive outcomes of Beyond 2008 has been the creation of an NGO database which details the lists of NGOs working on issues on the ground.

Funding Beyond 2008 had an overall budget of $1,433,000 for the two year project which included all of the regional consultations, the Global NGO Forum and participation in the CND. The budget provided finances for consultations in developing countries.

Link to decision-making The NGO Declaration and Statement was presented at the CND session but was not considered part of the official documentation.

Follow-Up The UNODC Civil Society Team commissioned an independent evaluation of Beyond 2008 to ascertain the strengths, weaknesses and lessons learned. This evaluation has gone on to help inform the next phase of their engagement strategy with civil society.

FEEDBACK

Beyond 2008 represents a well orchestrated global consultation process. It succeeded in outreaching to a huge number of organisations who had had no knowledge of the international conventions on drug control; it managed to generate consensus amongst a wide spectrum of ideologically opposed CSOs; and it revitalised the CSO community hoping to engage with the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. However, the process struggled to 'make voices heard' at the CND itself because the link to the decision-making process was very tenuous. The following provides a brief summary of the key points made by the participants of the process.

First, the consultation process was well funded which allowed a huge number of participants to take part in the process. The total budget covered over $1,433,000, most of which was spent on funding the travel costs for the regional consultations and Global NGO Forum. The regional consultation gathered the experiences from over 470 individual participants[49] (with an additional 43 Observers) from nine different regions of the world. The Global NGO Forum gathered 300 participants in Vienna. CSOs ranged from small grassroots community organisations, to service providers, to doctors and professionals and large coalitions of NGOs. As such, it helped to transform civil society input into the CND from a single committee of NGOs based in Vienna, to a global network of organisations based around the world working on any number of issues.

You find in this work that you end up being exposed only to one area, and one way of thinking. If you don't abide by that same stance, your funding will be cut. This was the first time I'd come into contact with such a range of different ways of doing things. It was an incredible, mind expanding exercise. NGO, Latin America consultation

Beyond 2008 allowed NGOs to work out amongst themselves a common position. Getting them together was a remarkable achievement, and afterwards some NGOs seemed incredulous that they had reached agreement. UNODC

Second, Beyond 2008 generated a strong partnership between the key CSO coordinators and the UNODC. An MOU was signed between the VNGOC and the UNODC from the very outset of the project which outlined a clear set of activities and outputs on the part of both partners. The VNGOC were responsible for a wide range of activities including the design, coordination and content of the consultation process, but they were able to benefit from the UNODC's presence on the project which in some cases appears to have improved the legitimacy of the outputs on the part of Member States.

It heightened the profile of an organisation that was rarely paid much attention. The VNGOC was taken more seriously as a collective body. Member State

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[49] This number is based on the number of participants listed by each of the consultation reports. As such, it is an approximate number only.

Having a high-level representative from UNODC contributed hugely to the room. His knowledge of the issues really helped to bring about a constructive discussion. That was a definite strength.
NGO, North America

Third, the quality of the consultation and coordination process for the Global Civil Society Forum not only impressed governments but also proved to them that consensus could be generated through a well-devised process. Perspectives on drug control legislation cross the full ideological divide. They range from those who are keen to strengthen international legislation on drug control to those who believe that such conventions are part of the problem not the solution. The task of bringing all of those different voices together to try to bring about a global consensus amongst CSOs was seen as an almost impossible challenge by Member States and key stakeholders alike. Through a carefully managed multi-stakeholder process, the Global Civil Society Forum were able to come out with an NGO Declaration and set of Resolutions.

I was sceptical at first when they said they wanted to produce documents that would consensus. I feared they were going too far down the Member State route, but I watched the process unfold and I was really very impressed. The NGOs managed to work together in a coherent and cooperative way. Member State

I must confess I see the project as much more effective and much more down to earth than the government process. … It was much more substantial than what member states did. We started consultations at a very late stage. We went into negotiation on issues but we didn't analyse what has happened in the last ten years. Member State

The key weakness of the process was ensuring that there was a link between the outcome of the Global NGO Forum and the CND itself, which is one of the most common problems of a parallel process that relies on its output document as the key

input into the intergovernmental meeting. Whilst a number of efforts were made by the UNODC Civil Society team and the VNGOC to raise awareness of the NGO Declaration and to build relationships with Member States throughout the process, the key challenge faced by the organisers is that the current CND interprets its ECOSOC status very narrowly and there are no formal session on the agenda for dialogue amongst civil society and Member States. As a result, the linkage between the multi-stakeholder process and the decision-making process was very weak.

Secondly, the feedback once again revealed how overwhelming an intergovernmental process can be for CSOs not already familiar with the process. For many, the CND was one of the first intergovernmental meetings they had attended and despite the lengthy preparatory process they were unsure what they were supposed to be doing whilst there.

[The CND] was very stressful and very tiring. It would have been really helpful to have a day of training, or a workshop the day before so that we could have acclimatised and understood what we were meant to be doing during the Commission. (NGO, Latin America)

- Two year long project with clearly defined outputs and activities
- Funds were available to support stakeholder travel and accommodation which helped ensure high quality and broad ranging participation.
- Developed a strong partnership between the UNODC and the VNGOC
- The key weakness was the lack of a clearly defined link between the outputs of the multi-stakeholder process and the decision-making process.
- Lack of understanding of inter-governmental processes was again cited as a key challenge for stakeholders hoping to participate in the CND.

CIVIL SOCIETY FORUMS in summary

- Useful for mobilising CSOs into collective action.
- Useful space for sharing knowledge and practices.
- Often entail very limited contact with decision makers and therefore can have very limited impact on the decision-making process.
- Require clear outcome documents and clear set of objectives.
- Require at least a six month preparatory time.

- Require funds to support stakeholder participation.
- Require clear definition of civil society to ensure that it engages a sufficient range of participants and representatives.
- Require clear links between the Forum and the decision-making process.
- Require clear rules of engagement.
- Benefit from strong leadership and facilitation skills.

CONVENTIONS

UN conventions have emerged in specific historical contexts for the most part the level of access granted to NGOs under each develops under ad hoc procedures. For example, the Conference of the Parties (COP) for the Convention on Biological Diversity allows non-governmental actors, on the invitation of the presiding officer, to participate without the right to vote in the proceedings of any meetings unless at least one-third of the Parties present at the meeting object. The UN Convention to Combat Desertification schedules two 'open dialogue sessions' during the COPs which pertain to the activities of NGOs within the official programme of work.

CASE STUDY Aarhus Convention

Context The UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, otherwise known as the Aarhus Convention, was adopted on 25th June 1998 in the Danish city of Aarhus at the Fourth Ministerial Conference in the 'Environment for Europe' process. It entered into force on 30 October 2001. The Aarhus Convention grants the public rights and imposes on Parties and public authorities' obligations regarding access to information and public participation and access to justice. In essence, the Aarhus Convention operationalises principle 10 of the Rio Declaration which calls for public participation in decision making processes. It has been cited by Kofi Annan as one of the most ambitious ventures in the area of 'environmental democracy' so far undertaken under the auspices of the UN.

The Aarhus Convention grew out of the Environment for Europe process, which dates back to 1991, which seeks to pursue a coherent strategy for addressing Europe's environmental issues, with particular emphasis on restoring the environments of countries with economies in transition from Communism. A coalition of European NGOs and environmental citizen organisations who came to be known as the European ECOForum, was involved in the process from the outset by fielding a delegation that took part in conferences, reviewing drafts, providing input and suggesting strategies.

When the Committee on Environmental Policy established an ad hoc working group charged with the task of preparing the draft convention, it noted that NGOs, particularly those involved in the Environment for Europe process would be invited to participate 'as appropriate'. Before the negotiations on the Convention began a small group of 'friends of the secretariat' was established to help prepare a first draft in which representatives from ECOForum participated. The Resolution of the Signatories commended international organisations and non-governmental organisations for the active and constructive participation in the development of the Convention and recommended that they should be allowed to participate in the same spirit of the Meeting of the Signatories and its activities.

While the Aarhus Convention primarily addresses issues at the national level, its Parties have also committed themselves to promote the application of the principles of the Convention in international environmental decision-making processes and within the framework of international organisations in matters relating to the environment. At its second session (Almaty, 2005), the Meeting of the Parties adopted a set of guidelines on promoting the principles of access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in international forums dealing with matters relating to the environment[50]. The primary purpose of the Almaty Guidelines is to provide general guidance to Aarhus Parties but they may also be of wider interest to those involved in forums that deal with environmental matters. At the same time, the Parties established a Task Force to consult with international forums regarding the Almaty Guidelines[51]. At their third session (Riga, 2008), the Parties adopted a decision renewing the Task Force's mandate for a further three years.

NGOs have continued to play an important role in monitoring and implementing the Aaarhus Convention. The following discussion focuses particularly on the role that NGOs continue to have in the processes of the convention.

Objectives The Meeting of the Parties is the main governing body of the Convention, which ordinarily meets every three years. The Meetings of the Parties keep the implementation of the Convention under continuous review and take the necessary measures required to achieve the objectives of the Convention.

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[50] The Guidelines are contained in Decision II/4 on Promoting the Application of the Principles of the Aarhus Convention in International Forums, ECE/MP.PP/2005/2/Add.5, ttp://unece.org/env/documents/2005/pp/ece/ece.mp.pp.2005.2.add.5.e.pdf

[51] The original consultation process, in which forty-nine international forums took part, was conducted over a thirteen-month period from June 2006 to July 2007. Further information about the Task Force and the consultation process, including a synthesis of the outcomes of the consultation process, can be found at http://unece.org/env/pp/ppif.

Identifying stakeholders and participants The Meeting of the Parties comprises all Parties to the Convention[52], other Signatories and other States as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations participates as observers. In the terms of the Aarhus Convention 'the public' is defined as 'one or more natural or legal persons, and, in accordance with national legislation or practice, their associations, organisations or groups'. 'The public concerned' means the public affected or likely to be affected by, or having an interest in, the environmental decision-making; for the purposes of this definition, non-governmental organisations promoting and meeting any requirements under national law shall be deemed to have an interest'[53] Non-governmental participants are generally divided into 'Regional Organisations'; 'NGOs'; 'Business / Industry' and 'Research /Academic''. ECOForum, a coalition of sustainable development NGOs engaged in the Pan-European processes, coordinates environmental NGO participation in the Aarhus Convention processes.

Preparation A large part of the Aarhus Convention's Work Programme[54] is carried out through its subsidiary bodies, including the Working Group of the Parties and thematic expert groups and taskforces[55]. ECOForum coordinates the participation of its network of NGOs in all the Aarhus Convention's subsidiary bodies and the Meeting of the Parties itself. For NGOs to become a member of the ECOForum coalition they need to share the overarching goal to promote 'sustainable development in Europe and globally' and to send a letter to the secretariat during the year to register for the plenary and accept the agreement. Once a member of ECOForum each member has the right to make initiatives and proposals for the broader coalitions work-programme which are decided on in plenary preferably by consensus (by meetings or electronically followed by written communication). If a consensus cannot be reached, 2/3 majority of the participating members decide.

ECOForum's preparations for the Aarhus Convention are coordinated by the issue group on public participation within ECOForum and managed by the European Environmental

Bureau. ECOForum's preparations for the most recent Meeting of the Parties (2008) included a pan-European strategy weekend; distributing information about the official processes; organizing a training session on the compliance mechanisms; producing a newsletter and maintaining a website for further information and updates. A full report after all strategy meetings is made available which includes the participants and any decisions made[56]. ECOForum has also held a number of shadow processes such as a shadow meeting to the Working Group of Parties to the Aarhus Convention directly before the Meeting of the Parties.

The Aarhus Convention is equipped with an innovative compliance mechanism which monitors the implementation of the Convention by the Parties by the Partise[57]. Any member of the public, regardless of citizenship, including an NGO, can make a 'communication' to the Compliance Committee claiming that a Party has failed to comply with its obligations under the Convention[58]. Environmental NGOs can nominate members of the Compliance Committee, whose members sit in their personal capacity. The Committee holds public hearings, and meets in open session, except for its deliberations which are done in closed session. The Committee publishes all its findings, and for findings of non-compliance, makes recommendations to the Party concerned. The Committee's findings and recommendations are transmitted to the Meeting of the Parties for adoption[59].

Meeting The Aarhus Convention allows for NGOs, as members of the public, to have the status of 'non-voting participants' during the negotiations. In practice, NGOs participate actively in negotiating processes. The rules of procedure also provide for an environmental NGO representative to sit on the Aarhus Convention Bureau.

Communication Information relating to the Convention and to the status of the negotiations is uploaded regularly onto the website for the Aarhus Convention[60]. All official UN documents are made available in the three UNECE languages[61]. The Meeting of the Parties is usually filmed so that the proceedings can relate to non-participating CSOs.

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[52] 43 Parties

[53] http://unece.org/env/pp/documents/cep43e.pdf

[54] E.g. Decision III/9 on the Work Programme 2009-2011, ECE/MP.PP/2008/2/Add.17, http://unece.org/env/pp/mop3/ODS/ ece_mp_pp_2008_2_add_17_e_WP.pdf

[55] For example the Task Force on Public Participation in International Forums, the Public Participation Expert Group, the Task Force on Electronic Information Tools and the Working Group on PRTRs.

[56] EEB Annual Report 2007, 2008.

[57] The Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee was established through Decision I/7 on Review of Compliance, ECE/MP.PP/2/Add.8, http://unece.org/env/pp/documents/mop1/ece.mp.pp.2.add.8.e.pdf. Decision I/7 sets out the powers of the Compliance Committee

[58] A complaint can refer to a specific issue of non-compliance, such as the denial of information, or a general issue such as the lack of national legislation implementing the Convention.

[59] To date, the Compliance Committee has received 43 communications from members of the public, see http://unece.org/env/pp/pubcom.htm

[60] http://unece.org/env/pp/

[61] English, French, Russian

ECOForum members communicate with one another regularly between meetings via emails, conference calls and wherever possible meet in person. During the negotiations regular coordination meetings are held.

Funding: The Aarhus Convention secretariat routinely provides funding for at least four NGO representatives nominated by ECOForum to attend each meeting of its subsidiary bodies and to approximately 20 NGO representatives nominated by ECOForum to attend the Meeting of the Parties. In addition, the European Environment Bureau (EEB) raise money on behalf of the ECOForum to pay for the travel costs of a limited number of key NGO participants to take part in the process.

Outcome As part of the tradition of Aarhus, NGOs participate in the negotiations of all declarations and decisions adopted by the Meeting of the Parties. The third Meeting of the Parties, held in Riga in 2008, resulted in a 'Riga Declaration' which took stock of the progress made in the ten years since the Convention was signed, and outlined some of the main challenges remaining for its successful implementation[63]. The Meeting also adopted a strategic plan for the future of the convention[64].

FEEDBACK

The Aarhus Convention has come to represent one of the most significant forums for non-governmental participation in the UN system for Member States and CSOs alike. Member States stressed that the presence of NGOs afforded a greater legitimacy and diversity to the discussions. They also noted that for the regions where government participation in environmental meetings was relatively low, the NGOs were able to provide an important source of information and input. Equally, NGOs noted a number of areas in which their contributions continue to impact the direction of the negotiations. For example, the new strategic plan for the convention that came out of the 3rd Meeting of the Parties includes elements to improve public participation, provisions for access-to-justice funding, and parameters for expanding to the global level, all of which reflect NGOs input into the negotiating process.

They are very active concerning the EECCA [Eastern Europe, Caucuses and Central Asia] and SEE [South Eastern Europe] regions, that is very important since the governments in those regions are not very active in the meetings. Member State

The spirit of the negotiations is so different to anything I've ever encountered. The NGOs are so well informed and up to date on all issues Member State.

Opinions of the civil society organisations have found reflection in the decisions of meetings and I think, that it will facilitate the further cooperation at a national level. Member State

A number of factors were cited as critical to the quality of NGO engagement in the Aarhus Convention negotiations. First, it was stressed by all respondents that the fact that NGOs were involved from the very inception of the Convention has helped to maintain their position and clout during the negotiations. The European ECO Forum, still the key NGO coalition, was instrumental in calling for public participation in the first place and has an intimate knowledge of the terms of the Convention.

The key difference here is that the negotiators representing the NGOs are also lawyers, so they all speak the same language. NGO

The core difference between these negotiations and a process like ESPOO [Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Tras boundary Context] is that the Chair will put something on the table from NGOs. NGO

Due to the culture and evolution of this convention, in Aarhus the chair is there to try and find consensus among all who are present not only the parties NGO

Second, it was noted by a number of Member States that NGOs are well organized and their inputs are of a very high quality. ECOForum coordinates NGO participation in official preparatory processes, Task Forces, Working Groups for the Convention and ensures that a representative with the appropriate levels of experience is put forward for each meeting. The vast majority of NGOs who take part in the negotiations come from a legal background and the ability to 'speak the same language' as the Member States was also considered an important factor. As noted by one Member State, the ability for the NGO community to 'self-organize' and present a united position amongst themselves helps generate leverage within the negotiations.

In the Aarhus context, civil society organisations are usually very well informed, and have a good way of expressing their arguments. Often in their comments they give examples at implementation level that are unknown to national governments because of the lack of internal communication structures. Member State

Third, the rules of the convention allow an NGO representative to sit on the Bureau of the Aarhus Convention as an observer. As such, he is able to sit in all meetings and can track the latest developments. This line of

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[63] "Riga Declaration" ECE/MP.PP/2008/2/Add.1, http://unece.org/env/pp/mop3/ODS/ece_mp_pp_2008_2_add_1_e_Riga.pdf

[64] Decision III/8 on the Strategic Plan 2009-2014 ECE/MP.PP/2008/2/Add.16, http://unece.org/env/pp/mop3/ODS/ece_mp_pp_2008_2_add_16_e_StPl.pdf

communication and the levels of trust that it has afforded has proved critical for the NGO community to track and engage in the process. Fourth, all material is uploaded regularly on to the UNECE website, which provides all users with all necessary information.

The majority of NGOs work happens at the working groups before the international meetings. NGO

There is one issue that is generating more and more concern amongst civil society participants for the Aarhus Convention, and that is the issue of the EU coordination meetings which take place behind closed doors. This has become a more relevant issue as the number of EU members has grown which makes it a significant negotiating block. One Member State commented that the levels of distrust emerging are worrisome, and suggested that there needed to be more informal meetings held between the NGOs and EU partners in addition to the Working Groups and Taskforce Groups.

- NGOs were instrumental in the creation of the convention
- NGOs participate in all of the preparatory meetings and relevant working groups and task forces for the convention.
- The umbrella coalition of NGOs is very well organized and facilitates high-quality inputs.
- The rules of procedure for the Convention enshrine NGO participation in the Bureau
- The Aarhus Convention Compliance Committee can receive communications from the public and the public can nominate members of the Committee.
- The Aarhus Convention website provides all information and documents on its processes and provides a very important information tool for stakeholders.
- The Aarhus Convention secretariat provides financial support to support the participation of a number of civil-society nominated NGO representatives.

CHAPTER III Stakeholder Empowerment Handbook

engage. *verb. to take part; participate; to promise (to do something);*
to bring into operation; to involve (a person or their attention)

Oxford English Dictionary

Engaging stakeholders in intergovernmental meetings, or put in more grandiose terms – enhancing global democracy, is certainly no simple task. The selection of case studies has barely scratched the surface of the complexities, challenges and issues involved in including CSOs in policy-making processes. UN-CSO Focal Points are constantly juggling different demands, complex issues and unrealistic expectations with very small budgets and minimal resources. Furthermore, as has been stressed throughout the report, 'no-one size fits all' and UN agencies operate under different mandates, engage different representatives, and have adopted very different attitudes towards working with civil society.

This being said, we believe it is important to learn from the different practices wherever possible and generate some institutional knowledge of some of the core components of engaging stakeholders in intergovernmental meetings. In the following chapter we have identified and elaborated on some of the key points cited by stakeholders, UN civil servants and Member States that have contributed to a positive engagement experience. It has also built on the work already carried out by Stakeholder Forum in the past in trying to identify some of the key principles and factors that can improve the quality of the engagement practice. Wherever possible it has sought to identify examples, practical solutions and flag up key issues[65].

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[65] Once again it should be stressed that this is not an exhaustive set of steps. The following chapter merely tries to collect some of the experiences, recommendations and suggestions made as part of the SEP research.

1 DEFINING ROLES

• What is meant by the term 'civil society engagement'?
• What is the role of a UN-CSO Focal Point?
• To what extent are stakeholders engaged across the rest of the organisation or programme of work?

The *SEP* revealed a great deal of confusion amongst CSOs regarding the structure of the UN system and the intergovernmental decision-making process. In particular, CSOs from both the North and South stressed that limited understanding of how decisions are made, what an intergovernmental meeting entails and how to best operate during the meeting itself presented a considerable challenge. Thus all preparations for an intergovernmental meeting should devise a clear strategy for how to increase understanding and awareness of the international decision-making, including the following;

- the intergovernmental commitments that have already been made on the issue

- the structure of the decision-making process (i.e. will the meeting result in a Chair's text? How will the outcome of the meeting interact with other decision-making fora?)

- the function and role that other relevant divisions, departments and units play in the preparations for an intergovernmental meeting (such as the differences between New York and Geneva offices, the role of the General Assembly or the President of the General Assembly's Office etc.).

- the role of a UN-CSO Focal Point.

✪ Example

NGLS has produced a number of publications, guidebooks and newsletters to help demystify the UN system. In particular, the publication '*Intergovernmental Negotiations and Decision Making at the United Nations: A Guide*' was noted as a useful resource http://www.un-ngls.org/spip.php?rubrique113. Stakeholder Forum has also produced a guide on '*How to Lobby at Intergovernmental Meetings*'

The second area of uncertainty for CSOs surrounded the role and remit of UN-CSO Focal Points. Some saw their role as an information point for CSO enquiries; others as a two-way line for communication between the organisation and CSOs; whilst others saw their role as active champions for CSO participation and involvement. CSOs also perceived the role of UN-CSO Focal Points in a range of ways. The lack of understanding of roles can generate unrealistic expectations of an intergovernmental meeting. Thus it is critical that CSO Focal Points should clearly define their role in the context of all preparations for intergovernmental meetings and ensure that those roles are clearly understood by all of the relevant stakeholder groups.

A third emerging theme is the tendency for civil society engagement and civil society relations to be seen as the exclusive domain of a single department or unit within a UN agency. In order to adopt a more institutional approach to working with non-governmental actors, a number of UN bodies have drafted policy documents relating to their work with civil society. These policy documents describe how a particular UN entity functions, the various entry points for civil society participation, and what is meant by 'civil society'. These documents can provide a very useful tool for stakeholders and have helped to generate an institutional, rather than departmental, approach to working with non-governmental actors.

✪ Example

There are a number of examples of strong policy documents. UNHABITAT have produced a '*Policy Statement on Partnerships with NGOs and Civil Society Organisations*'. UNEP have published a policy document that outlines their short and medium term commitment for working with Major Groups and stakeholders across their whole programme of work. UNDP have published a statement on their work with CSOs '*UNDP and Civil Society Organisations: A Policy of Engagement*' that describes the reasons for its work with NGOs and key principles and commitments of CSO-UNDP engagement. These documents are periodically revised and rewritten in order to reflect the changing circumstances and requirements of the time.

- Provide clear information on how the decisions will be made at an intergovernmental meeting. Organigrams, photos and diagrams should be used wherever possible to better communicate the structure of a given process.
- Define and clearly state the role and remit of the UN-CSO Focal Point.
- Identify opportunities for CSOs to be integrated into the wider institution and across programmes of work wherever possible.

2 DEFINING CIVIL SOCIETY

• What is meant by civil society?
• Who are the key stakeholders in this process?
• How will they be affected by the decisions made?
• Are there any power discrepancies between those stakeholder groups?
• Are there some stakeholder groups that are more relevant
 to the decisions than others?

As illustrated in the *SEP* literature review, 'civil society' is a contested, slippery and nebulous term that can be used in any number of contexts to mean any number of things. The failure to define civil society can lead to mixed messaging, poor representation and power discrepancies between participants. It is critical that civil society is clearly defined and that groups are identified from the outset.

The Cardoso Report provides a good working definition of the term civil society (see SEP Glossary). However, in addition to more generic definitions many UN bodies also distinguish key stakeholder groups who are relevant to their activities. Stakeholders can be loosely defined as any group who have a 'stake' in a given process. The term stakeholder has become common in many UN agencies, but there are some other generic terms, for example the WSIS uses the concept of 'civil society families'; UNAIDS uses 'constituencies'; whilst the CSD and UNEP have identified 'Major Groups'. Stakeholder grouping can also be broken down via their organisational function (e.g. service providers, research, etc.) or their organisational focus (e.g. community groups, local NGOs, regional NGOs and international NGOs). Wherever possible, it is important to broaden the definition of civil society and identify potential contributions and roles of diverse actors including not only NGOs, but also;

• professional associations
• local authorities
• organised labour
• private sector
• faith-based and community based
• 'un-organised' social movements.
• Parliamentarians

✪ **Example**

The Major Groups approach is one of the more well-known approaches in the UN system whereby civil society has been divided into 9 key constituencies that make up civil society. A number of other agencies have also taken up that same approach including UNEP, UNFCC, and the CSD. In addition, those same categories have also been defined into their functions as well as their constituencies, such as 'service delivery', 'advocacy and policy input', 'capacity building' and 'representation'. Other agencies such as UNAIDS have adopted a series of key constituencies that should be included in all consultation processes, which include AIDS service organisations, groups of people living with HIV and AIDS, youth organisations, women's organisations, business, trade unions, professional and scientific organisations, sports organisations, international development NGOs, and a wide spectrum of religions and faith-based organisations.

A stakeholder mapping exercise can be conducted by a convening individual or organisation but it should be carried out in collaboration with an initial group of core stakeholders or 'self-selected' partners. Stakeholder mapping exercises can range anywhere from basic online scoping exercises to far-reaching consultation processes using questionnaires, surveys, interviews and field visits. Visual mapping of the different groups that will be affected by a situation can also help to identify which groups will be more or less affected by a decision, which in turn can help to prioritise more relevant stakeholder groups and identify power discrepancies between those groups.

It is also important to understand that as issues emerge and evolve so too do the relevant stakeholders and constituencies who will be impacted by a given decision. Stakeholder mapping should therefore be an ongoing and reiterative process in which databases are periodically reviewed to better understand who is engaging with the organisation.

✪ **Example**

The UNDP's publication '*A Toolkit for Strengthening Partnerships*' has developed a Framework for CSO mapping which outlines some of the mechanisms by which civil society can be mapped out on the national level. The Framework could also be applied and developed for international mapping exercises.

✪ **Example**

The organisers of the CSD multi-stakeholder dialogues (1997 – 2001) decided it would be impractical to include all nine groups at once. Depending on the theme of the dialogue, four Major Groups were asked to take part in session and all other stakeholder representatives aligned themselves with one of the groups. For instance, during CSD-8, which focused on sustainable agriculture, the Major Groups were NGOs, Workers and Trade Unions, Business and Industry and Farmers. All other stakeholder groups were then invited to participate in the dialogues as part of those key selected stakeholder groups.

✪ **Example**

UNEP recently commissioned an independent review of the status of its relationships with Major Groups and Stakeholders in its programme of work. The mapping exercise revealed which stakeholder groups were over and under represented throughout all of its operations and has helped devise a future strategy for targeting those groups for the future.

- Work with stakeholders to identify relevant groups, constituencies and organisations
- Look beyond the 'usual suspects'
- Identify 'high impact' and 'low impact' groups
- Identify and cater for potential power discrepancies between those stakeholder groups
- Remember that 'civil society' does not remain static and stakeholder mapping is a constant process.

3 IDENTIFYING STAKEHOLDER COORDINATORS

• How are key coordinating stakeholders selected?
• How can we establish levels of 'representivity'?
• What criteria should be considered?

Involving stakeholders in every aspect of the design process is crucial to achieve commitment to the process, credibility, legitimacy and trust. Most commonly, UN bodies use core CSO coordinating groups to help manage a process, identify the issues to be addressed and involve relevant stakeholders. It is critical to establish clear criteria for how such key coordinators are selected and ensure that the group involve a range of stakeholders.

Stakeholders should be involved in devising the selection process. Open calls for participation have proved a good mechanism however feedback has demonstrated that open calls tend to favour those with regular access to the internet and emails, or those already very familiar with the intergovernmental process, so it is important to ensure that the call is widely distributed, tracked and is followed up by phone calls and alerts. Allow at least a month for participants to apply.

UN bodies have used a range of criteria in their selection of key coordinating groups including the following:

- Capacity to represent the experience of a significant number of organisations

- Sufficient resources to reach out to local stakeholders and groups

- Geographically balanced

- Gender balanced

- Diverse ideological and professional background

- Competence in particular language

- Cultural, ethnic and social diversity

Feedback has noted that those wanting to probe the 'representivity' of an NGO should look less to the number of the members it can claim to represent and more to the quality of the experience it wields and the degree to which others in the field respect the NGO. For example, can the organisation demonstrate 'local knowledge'? How regular is their contact with the communities it claims to represent? How do its projects expose the perspectives of their delegated representatives?

It has also become common to use a combination of newcomers and veterans in the coordination activities to build capacity amongst the coordinating group. Feedback from the case studies also stressed that at least a one-day briefing session should be allowed for those new to the process.

✪ **Example**

The Civil Society Task Force for the HLM on HIV/AIDS included some representatives who had worked with UNAIDS closely in the past and had taken part in the HLM Task Force two years previously. At the first meeting of the Task Force a half day introductory session was held whereby the 'veterans' were able to share their experiences and answer all questions.

Basic ground rules for all meetings of the coordinating group should also be laid down from the beginning, for example procedures of preparation, communication, issues around confidentiality, relating to non-participating stakeholders. Key stakeholder coordinators should be encouraged to report back to their networks and constituencies after all meeting, and meeting summaries should be published online or distributed through the list-serves. Procedures should be designed to ensure democracy, equity, mutual respect and transparency.

✪ **Example**

The Civil Society Task Force for the HLM on AIDS met four times in person and each time published a meeting summary of the key decisions made during each meeting that were made available for wider distribution and were posted online to allow stakeholders to follow the process.

Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) or Terms of Reference (TOR) are a common practice and provide a good tool for assigning the different roles and responsibilities of the coordinating group from the outset. These should be developed in collaboration with key stakeholder representatives and might include some of the following;

- Specific activities that are to be jointly undertaken
- Respective roles and responsibilities
- Responsibilities of facilitators
- Types of information to be shared and standards for sharing of information, including agreements on confidentiality
- Time-frame for completing each phase of the work
- Methods for group decision-making and conflict resolution
- How the engagement process is integrated into the official decision-making processes
- Resources to be provided by each member of the MSP group

- Establish a selection criterion with CSOs for selecting the 'task force' or 'lead coordinators' or 'organising partner'. Publish those criteria online.
- Engage an informal advisory group of CSOs to help outreach to ensure that calls for participation are received by a wide selection of representatives.
- Allow at least a month for participants to apply.
- Define clear MOUs and that outline division of responsibilities for both partners and an assigned set of activities.
- Establish a set of ground-rules for key stakeholder coordinators to report back to their wider constituencies.
- Publish summaries of meetings where decisions as to the shape, format and timing of the engagement format are made.

4 DESIGNING THE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

• Why engage stakeholders?
• What are we trying to achieve?
• How is it intended to link to the decision-making process?
• Do we have sufficient time for stakeholders to coordinate and consult?
• What resources are available?

An engagement process should have clearly defined issues and objectives in mind, and above all must identify a clear link to the decision-making process. As the SEP research has suggested, different formats and procedures produce different dynamics and outcomes. For example, small, closed roundtables have proven a useful space for introducing decision-makers to new perspectives, whilst multi-stakeholder dialogues are more effective for scoping out a problem and identifying commonalities on complex issues. It is important to ensure that officials or decision-makers and stakeholders are clear about what they are engaging in from the outset. Wherever possible, a clear objective should be identified for the purpose of involving CSOs in any intergovernmental meeting;

"To develop a new approach to…"
"To learn more about…"
"To collaborate in addressing…"
"To improve our relationship with…"
"To find an agreement on…"
"To develop policy on…"
"To inform our decision on…"

The formal opportunity for CSOs to interact with Member States in an intergovernmental meeting should be seen within a much larger context involving a clear preparatory process, time for stakeholders to coordinate and consult, and a follow-up process. At least six months should be allowed for the preparatory process and clear time frames and milestones should be published as soon as possible.

An often under-utilised area for stakeholder contributions is in contributing to how policy decisions could be implemented. For example, stakeholders can be invited to study decisions and engage in action-orientated discussions on how to implement them, and which tools, strategies and partnerships would be needed. This would capture stakeholder engagement and could generate more commitment, spark off partnerships and concrete pilot projects as outcomes, the results for which could be fed back into the policy making process at an agreed time. The contribution of NGOs to the continual implementation of the Aarhus Convention offers a good example of how CSOs can play a very useful role after decisions have been made.

Unlike corporations, businesses or governments, UN bodies face a number of very real restrictions when designing their engagement strategy. The language of a GA resolution shapes the format, length and timing of a formal engagement space with civil society. That being said, there are a number of instances whereby lobbying on the part of stakeholders has impacted the language of a GA decision. For example, for the five year review of the Rio Earth Summit in 1997 stakeholders proposed to the GA in November 1996 a new way of interaction with stakeholders. The suggestions were taken onboard and came to be known as the multi-stakeholder dialogues.

- Identify clear objectives for engaging CSOs in an intergovernmental meeting.

- Allow at least six months for CSO preparations.

- Generate CSO input on implementation as well as policy formation.

- Provide clear timelines, deadlines and milestones for avenues for CSOs to participate in the meeting from the outset.

5 SUPPORTING STAKEHOLDER COORDINATION

- **How are stakeholders coordinating themselves ahead of an intergovernmental meeting?**
- **Who do they claim to represent?**
- **Are the groups gender balanced, geographically balanced and power balanced?**

The self-organisation of stakeholders was found to be a very important factor for generating energy and political clout in intergovernmental meetings. In the words of one Member State, 'when NGOs are well organised, and when they have consistent messaging it is easier to build long term relationships with them'. CSOs should be encouraged but not obligated to organise themselves into stakeholder groups, constituencies and coalitions to delineate clear policy recommendations.

Preparations involving written formats have the advantage of requiring all participating stakeholder groups to plan initial position papers and engage in the issues. Preparatory documents should have an agreed, common format. They also need to be submitted up to six months before an intergovernmental meeting. In a number of examples across the UN, organisers have then conducted an analysis of the position papers into a matrix format for comparison. Another option is 'cognitive mapping' via interviews whereby points are mapped out in a graphic structure. Such techniques can help to identify commonalities and differences in understanding and priorities. Another useful tool has been the use of scenarios by which key coordinating groups are asked to consider their common goals and visions for the outcome of an intergovernmental meeting. The exercise can prove helpful for ensuring that stakeholders think strategically about their input into intergovernmental meetings.

An important question in this context is the representation of stakeholder groups by participants who may want to design a process where participants can truly speak for a wider constituency. This will require consultations within constituencies, and communication within stakeholder groups becomes as important as communication between stakeholder groups. As a minimum requirement, participating stakeholder representatives need to make clear on whose behalf they are speaking and with what authority. Furthermore, stakeholder groups need to be transparent about how they carry out the agreed preparatory process – that is, how they consult within their constituencies. Stakeholders may choose to conduct their preparations publicly, for example via open email list servers and web forums.

It was noted by a number of UN-CSO Focal Points that affected populations, such as indigenous groups, peasant organisations or women, are in some cases the least organized, the most difficult to contact, and often the least equipped to participate in international meetings due to resource constraints and limited knowledge of intergovernmental meetings. In such cases, UN-CSO Focal Points noted that it was critical to identify those groups as early on in the process as possible and to enlist the help of relevant CSOs and networks. It was also stressed that email and online tools should not be relied upon in contacting more remote stakeholder groups, but rather should use phone calls and, wherever possible, in-person meetings and local workshops.

✪ Example

The ECOForum, the umbrella organisation for the Aarhus Convention offers a good example of the strength of NGO coordination and collaboration. The ECOForum operates under a set of clear and transparent sets of procedures, publishes all documents and meeting summaries attending to important meetings, and has an open selection process for choosing participants and speakers.

- Provide regular updates on any decisions made relating to the general design of the process by the GA and other bodies.
- Publish timelines and key milestones online.
- Identify affected populations as early on in the preparations as possible.
- Do not rely on the internet as an outreach mechanism and wherever possible follow up communication with phone-calls and in-person meetings.

6 COMMUNICATIONS

• **What are the various options for communicating with the key coordinators?**
• **Are there an agreed set of ground rules for communications?**
• **Do all CSOs have equitable access to those channels of communication?**
• **Where are the key communication gaps?**

Information was cited as the most important factor for improving stakeholder participation in intergovernmental meetings. Communication strategies should be considered carefully, taking into account the respective stages of the process, numbers of participants, resources available to all participants and, not the least, cultural preferences. Choices can include a mix of communication channels and need to be guided by the principles of inclusiveness, equity and transparency. A good information strategy includes identifying target audiences; developing partnerships with key information sources; identifying appropriate methods and channels; creating effective messages; and evaluating strategies.

CSOs tend to receive and seek information across a range of different sources. Respondents cited the main agency website as one of the first ports of call so it is critical that the website is kept up to date and language is kept simple. The following information tools were noted as particularly useful:

• Step-by-step instructions on how to participate

• Contact information for other NGOs attending the meeting

• Timeframes and milestones for opportunities to participate

• Information on how to contribute to a meeting even if you are unable to attend in person

✪ Example

The current CSD website was cited as a very useful resource for both participating and non-participating stakeholders. In particular, it is easy to track all of the past sessions and their outcomes and all of the stakeholder inputs are documented and made available online. All of the proceedings are web-cast and there are interviews and short video segments with participants and decision-makers. It was also noted that it was updated regularly and as such is becoming a useful avenue to track all discussions related to sustainable development at the UN level.

It was stressed by CSOs in a number of regions that there has been a growing reliance on the internet for sharing information about intergovernmental meetings. The lack of reliable internet connections was cited as a particular problem in Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean, where respondents stressed that outreach needs to be based on phone-calls and local meetings wherever possible. It was also commented by respondents in China and Russia that there is still a considerable problem for tracking the preparatory processes for intergovernmental meetings

A number of UN bodies are now also experimenting with new media tools ranging from short videos, to social networking facilities and web forums. These were cited as useful and interesting by a number of respondents but it was noted that they should not replace face-to-face meetings and phone calls. Finally, it was stressed by a number of respondents that whilst the websites for UN bodies are being developed and enhanced, there is little consistency between all of the different sites and web-portals across the UN system which makes locating information a significant challenge. It was also stressed that because many reports are published in a PDF formats, which are not conducive to search engine tools, information was difficult to locate.

✪ Example

NGOs participating in the Aarhus Convention praised the convention websites as an excellent resource for tracking an intergovernmental process because information is updated regularly and the content is always current. The short video introduction by the Secretary to the convention was also cited as a useful tool for newcomers to the convention.

• Communication strategies should identify target audiences and assess the capacity of those audiences.

• Communication strategies should involve a range of different mediums and not rely exclusively on web and online outreach.

• Communication strategies should consider tools to outreach to both participating and non-participating stakeholders.

• New media online tools such as short videos and interviews with decision-makers are making intergovernmental meetings more accessible for non-participating stakeholders but should not replace face-to-face meetings.

7 FUNDING

• **What funds are there available to support an engagement strategy?**
• **Are there mixed sources of funding?**
• **Are all stakeholders aware of the availability/limitation of those funds?**

Meaningful civil society engagement requires long term, sustainable sources of funding. If the resources are not available the process will be put under considerable pressure due to lack of participation, facilitation, information dissemination and implementation options. It will also be in danger of being unbalanced or inequitable by putting better resourced stakeholders in stronger positions. Engagement requires resources for people to prepare for and attend meetings, to consult with their constituencies, and to build their capacities to ensure high level contributions. Keeping the process independent of individual funders is also important; mixed funding sources are a way around that problem.

Funding remains a huge challenge for both UN bodies and stakeholders. A number of practices were cited as useful. First, some agencies, programmes and funds have initiated 'voluntary funding mechanisms' which allow Member States to contribute different amounts to a single engagement strategy. Second, a number of UN-CSO Focal Points stressed that engagement funds should be generated across all departments so that stakeholders can be included across an entire programme of work rather than for meetings alone.

Third, it was stressed that engagement projects involving partnerships between UN agencies and key stakeholder coordinating partners have proved much more attractive for major funding streams such as the EU. Fourth, some noted that 'scenario-building' had proven a good tool for communicating the need for funding for engagement strategies; I.e. communicating the costs of operating 'business as usual systems' against generating more progressive and informed decisions. Finally, it was stressed that non-financial contributions such as printing, mailing and meeting rooms can add value and should also be sought wherever possible.

✪ **Example**

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has established a voluntary funding mechanism to facilitate the participation of indigenous and local communities under the Convention, giving special priority to those from developing countries and countries with economies in transition and small-island developing states.

✪ **Example**

A number of examples have demonstrated that strong partnerships between UN bodies and CSO networks have increased the likelihood of generating funds from international sources. The VNGOC (the NGO coalition responsible for engaging stakeholders for the 52nd Commission on Narcotic Drugs) originally envisaged securing the funds independently of the UNODC. However, only once they had partnered with the UNODC were they able to attract considerably larger funds from the EU and a number of individual governments to support the initiative.

• Successful engagement strategies require long term, solid funding.

• Funds must be available to support participation from Southern representatives.

• Voluntary Funding Mechanisms; partnerships between CSO networks and UN agencies; and cross agency funding strategies have proved useful mechanisms for generating funds.

8 SUPPORTING PARTICIPATION

• **How are stakeholders participating in the meeting?**
• **Which avenues of participation have proven effective for building relationships with decision-makers?**
• **How are they communicating to non-participating stakeholders?**

National delegations

UN organisers tend to encourage CSOs to attend inter-governmental meetings as part of their national delegations. This participation route has proven to be a very effective mechanism for impacting government positions, generating long lasting relationships with decision-makers and drawing attention to emerging issues. CSOs should be encouraged to share good practices with one another on how to make this avenue of participation as useful as possible. For example, CSOs should be encouraged to make contact with their delegates as far in advance of the meeting as possible and should also establish clear ground-rules for participating as a member of the delegation. As illustrated by some of the HLM review on AIDS, the avenue can present problems when stakeholders sat in the seats of their government during the civil society hearing, resulting in a situation whereby civil society were in effect talking to themselves. Thus it is important that basic guidelines are established prior to the meeting.

✪ **Example**

According to a number of NGOs attending intergovernmental meetings as part of their national delegations the following steps can help improve the quality of the participation;

• encourage CSOs to pick up on the terminology used by their governments and 'speak the same language';

• set down clear ground rules as to which briefings you can and cannot attend during the meeting;

• follow up with governments after the meeting and keep the line of communication active.

Communications

The choice of communication channels during intergovernmental meetings is critical for CSOs to keep track of developments. In most cases, a permanent room is allotted for stakeholders to convene in to hold morning briefings and meetings. Facilities such as computers, printers and printing paper are usually provided. In most cases, UN organisers hold regular meetings with CSO participants throughout the meetings. UN organisers have also made themselves available on their cell phones, via emails and texts throughout the meetings. Social networking facilities such as Twitter and Facebook have also been experimented with more recently and can provide convenient tools for communicating developments swiftly, however, wherever possible these should not replace regular face-to-face meetings.

✪ **Example**

During the Commission on Sustainable Development the Major Groups Focal Point attends the morning stakeholder coordination meeting to update participants on recent developments and to answer any emerging questions. In addition, a daily journal is produced which outlines the days side events. The CSD website is updated regularly with new items and posts recalling the latest decisions.

✪ **Example**

The other key line of communication is to the decision-makers directly. There are any number of mechanisms to increase the interface between stakeholders and decision-makers. For example, the UNODC Civil Society Team co-ordinate regular meetings between the CND Bureau members and key stakeholders before, during and after sessions. In the more progressive examples, such as the Aarhus Convention an NGO is asked to participate as an observer to the Bureau of the Convention.

Wherever possible it is important to keep communication lines open for non-participating stakeholders. Communication tools typically include daily newsletters, interactive websites, web-casts and photographs. Wherever possible participating stakeholder groups should also be encouraged to call for inputs from non-participating groups, particularly in cases where the number of participants has been limited. Such calls for input need to provide clear information on how it will be considered and used. Experience has shown that people will not participate if they do not see where or how their inputs will be used.

✪ **Example**

The CSD support a Partnerships Fair during the two week CSD session that provides a venue for showcasing and launching new partnerships, networking, and sharing experiences from partnerships in action. The Fair aims to attract CSD participants including representatives of Governments, UN system organisations, other intergovernmental organisations and accredited major groups.

Facilitation and rapporteuring

In some cases, such as the UNEP roundtables, organisers have had some say in the choice of facilitator for the meeting. The role of a facilitator can be critical in ensuring a meaningful and equitable dialogue amongst participants and, wherever possible, facilitators should be selected on the basis of their experience and skill base as moderators not just their understanding of the issues. Using several facilitators, for example representatives from different stakeholder groups to co-chair meetings or facilitate on a rotating basis is another option that can be considered. Some of the following have been named as important qualities or skills;

- Facilitating needs to be flexible and responsive to different situations

- Facilitators should encourage people to speak freely and invite everyone to take the floor, including drawing out quieter participants.

- Facilitators should keep to agreed timetables and speaking times, which need to be the same for everyone.

- Facilitators need to keep track of everyone's contributions to draw together aspects of common ground and to summarise at regular intervals what has been said.

- In cases of conflict, facilitators can encourage participants to focus on the 'positive intent' in the opponent's positions (a technique known as 'active learning'). When exploring differences the facilitators should ask problem-solving questions and encourage all participants to do so.

- Facilitators need to be sensitive regarding issues on which participants will need to consult with their constituencies.

In some cases, such as the UNEP roundtables, rapporteurs are assigned by the organisers to report on the conversations. Rapporteuring needs to be done in the most neutral fashion possible, reflecting the full breadth and depth of discussions. It is important that summaries and reports are perceived as representative. It can help to have more than one rapporteur present so that notes can be compared at the end of the session. In a number of instances stakeholders, UN staff and diplomats have been assigned to the rapporteuring role on a rotating basis to increase the sense of ownership on all sides.

- CSOs must be encouraged not to sit in government seats during the formal sessions of the meeting.

- CSO statements and positions should be published online. Civil society speakers should be warned in advance that their contributions may be filmed as part of a web-cast or quoted in statements online.

- Ensure that there are clear communication strategies for non-participating stakeholders to enable them to track developments from afar such as photos, audio segments, daily reporting initiatives, timetables, relevant documents, online forums, and press releases.

- Institute regular feedback mechanisms to allow stakeholders to raise concerns and issues as they emerge during the meeting itself.

- Facilitators and rapporteurs should be able to demonstrate prior experience, or where necessary, should be provided with training prior to the meeting.

9 REPORTING BACK AND FOLLOWING UP

• How are the outcomes of the meeting being communicated to non-participating stakeholders?
• Are there any initiatives in place to monitor and track the commitments made in the meeting?
• What are the next steps?

Once an intergovernmental decision has been reached it is critical that the message is communicated more widely. Reporting back from intergovernmental meetings was found to be the weaker stages of an engagement process. For the most part, organisers and stakeholders relied on list-serves and emails to forward on key outcome texts but there were few reported follow-on activities on either the international or regional level. The purpose of this stage is to ensure that any outcomes of an intergovernmental meeting are communicated to wider constituencies, particularly non-participating stakeholders.

The follow-up process should provide a clear action plan for all coordinating partners. Messages from intergovernmental meetings can be communicated via publications, websites, specialist literature and academic journals and through related meetings and side events. Follow-up strategies should cater for regional and local efforts to communicate key outputs to relevant stakeholders, such as regional workshops, town-meetings, and focus groups to ensure that relevant partners receive and understand the outcomes of the meeting.

Wherever possible and appropriate, strategies on how to monitor and evaluate implementation should be developed. Monitoring and evaluation activities and time lines can be assigned to a group made up of different participating stakeholders to ensure neutrality and balance. Monitoring and evaluation can also involve the question of how to deal with non-compliance. In some cases, follow-up will involve some kind of institutionalizing, which needs to be worked out by the group. This may include finding a new 'home' for a process and engaging new fundraising activities.

✪ **Example**

There have been a number of instances whereby stakeholders have collaborated with one another after an intergovernmental meeting to create watchdog mechanisms in order to ensure that commitments are tracked and monitored, e.g. Social Watch http://www.socialwatch.org/en/portada.htm.

✪ **Example**

The Trade Unions led a country-by-country, multi-stakeholder initiative to report on implementation. http://www.tradeunionsdunit.org/profiles/profiles.php?ID=1&Lang=ENG

- Following-up after an intergovernmental meeting was found to be one of the most neglected stages of engagement practices.

- Follow-ups should allow for regional and international activities to ensure that the outcome of the meeting is fully understood by wider stakeholder communities; eg. Workshops, Q&A sessions, working groups and task forces.

- Follow-ups should also strategise on how to relate to the general public, the media and communities not already engaged in the process.

- Follow-ups should include strategies on how to continue monitoring and evaluating implementation of decisions. Eg. Stakeholder watchdog mechanisms. Strategies should address how to monitor compliance and non-compliance.

10 EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

• **To what extent did the engagement strategy achieve its objectives?**
• **Has the process been documented?**
• **What were the weaknesses, strengths and lessons learned?**
• **What would be done differently next time?**

By the time that participants and organisers reach the end of an intergovernmental meeting, the pressure to move on to start planning for the next event or the next meeting means that a review of the process can be sidelined. A post-meeting evaluation can offer an invaluable opportunity to gather input from those involved, to assess the extent to which key objectives were reached and above all to learn lessons for the future. Furthermore, as high level meetings can often occur at least 2-3 years apart, the time lag between processes mean that as stakeholders and organisers move on, institutional knowledge is lost.

There are a number of ways of conducting an evaluation of an engagement process. One simple evaluation technique is an internal review by which all the team is brought together to review the process from beginning to end collectively. Ideally, this should happen in person and allow at least a day for reviewing the process, identifying issues and weaknesses and compiling a set of recommendations to be taken forward. However, it is now common practice for UN agencies to conduct more in-depth evaluations of the overall engagement process by an independent reviewer or consultant. An independent process can often yield some unexpected findings as participants are often more willing to voice their concerns or suggestions. Such an evaluation can adopt a number of different methods including questionnaires; surveys; semi-structured and unstructured interviews; review of the documentation; direct observation of the meeting; focus groups and workshops. Data collection might include some of the following techniques:

Questionnaire for CSO participants generating their feedback

- Phone interviews with organisers, key civil society representatives, and governments to generate more in-depth feedback on the process and outcome
- Mailbox to which civil society participants can forward their comments, feedback and recommendations
- '360' meetings with the key players and stakeholders to identify the common challenges from different perspectives

- Memories are short. An evaluation should be conducted as soon after the meeting as possible to ensure that accounts are accurate and detailed.
- Evaluation methodologies should be devised with an informal advisory group made up of the key organisers and stakeholders.
- Evaluation methodologies should aim to generate feedback from a range of stakeholders and Member States from developing and developed regions and should seek to generate feedback from non-participating stakeholders.
- Assessment criteria should include levels of participation, transparency and representation, and should define 'effectiveness'.
- Final evaluations should be made publicly available.

CHAPTER IV The Stakeholder Standard

1 Allow at least six months for stakeholder coordination and consultation prior to an intergovernmental meeting.

2 Clearly define 'civil society' into groups, constituencies or stakeholders who will be affected by the outcome of the intergovernmental meeting.

3 Ensure all civil society coordinators represent a wider network or stakeholder group and have the resources and mechanisms to reach out to those networks.

4 Involve a combination of stakeholders in the initial design and preparatory processes for an intergovernmental meeting.

5 Identify and publish set of criteria for the appointment of key civil society partners and coordinators. Involve stakeholders to define those selection criteria.

6 Ensure that summaries of all meetings with key civil society partners and coordinators are made publicly available.

7 Cover the costs for travel and accommodation for key civil society partners and coordinators.

8 Include capacity building and training initiatives as part of the civil society engagement strategy.

9 Provide all civil society coordinators with the same information and the same documents at the same time.

10 Allow time and resources for the engagement strategy to be evaluated and assessed after the meeting has come to an end.

Glossary

Agenda 21 Agenda 21 was adopted by more than 178 Governments at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 1992. It is a comprehensive plan of action to be taken globally, nationally and locally by organisations of the United Nations System, Governments, and Major Groups in every area in which human activity impacts on the environment. The first United Nations (UN) document to address extensively the role of different stakeholders in the implementation of a global agreement, its contents outline the areas (highlighting specific social, economic and resource conservation and management issues) that stakeholder groups need to address in order to put the blueprint into practice.

Constituency Comprises three broad sectors: civil society, the private sector and the State. Central Governments are the Member States of the United Nations, collectively constituting its membership. Others actors are of growing importance to the deliberative processes, operations and communications of the United Nations. The Panel suggests that the United Nations view these actors as constituencies, or stakeholders, of the Organisation's processes. *(Cardoso Report)*

Civil society Refers to the associations of citizens (outside their families, friends and businesses) entered into voluntarily to advance their interests, ideas and ideologies. The term does not include profit-making activity (the private sector) or governing (the public sector). Of particular relevance to the United Nations are mass organisations (such as organisations of peasants, women or retired people), trade unions, professional associations, social movements, indigenous people's organisations, religious and spiritual organisations, academe and public benefit non-governmental organisations. *(Cardoso Report)*

INGO Stands for International Non-Governmental Organisation. These organisations are NGOs that operate globally, sometimes referred to as trans-national organisational manifestations of civil society. INGOS deal with wide range of issues, including: promoting democracy; guaranteeing freedoms and rights; protecting the environment; promotion of sustainable development; setting technical and professional standards; galvanizing educational and cultural renewal; advancing the boundaries of science and research; or ensuring the survival of victims of man-made and natural disasters. Examples of high profile INGOs include Oxfam International, Red Cross International and Greenpeace International.

Major Groups the term given collectively to Women, Children and Youth, Indigenous People, NGOs, Local Authorities, Workers and Trade Unions, Business and Industry, Scientific and Technological Communities, and Farmers. The Major Groups of civil society were first identified at the Earth Summit 1992, in the context of Agenda 21 which stipulated the need for new forms of participation at all levels to enable a broad-based engagement of all economic and social sectors in making sustainable development happen. The Major Groups have been recognised to differing degrees across the UN system.

Mass Organisations A note on The Diversity of Actors within the UN System by the High-Level Panel on UN-Civil Society, describes Mass Organisations as those "Formally constituted organisations which are mostly (but not always) membership and which represent the interests of particular population groups". The most important within the UN system comprise: organisations representing women, children and youth, peasants, the unemployed, indigenous people, the elderly and disabled people. There is considerable overlap with this description, and those of NGOs and Social Movements.

Multi Stakeholder Processes (MSPs) Multi-stakeholder processes are loosely defined as those that aim to bring together key stakeholders in a new form of communication, decision-finding (and possibly decision-making) on a particular issue. MSPs can take a variety of forms including public forums, multi-sector panels and 21st Century Town Meetings. Usage of the term in the UN is based on recognition of the importance of achieving equity and accountability in communication between stakeholders, and involves equitable representation of stakeholder groups and their views. Based on democratic principles of transparency participation, and shared ownership, they aim to develop partnerships and strengthened networks among stakeholders.

Non-governmental organisation (NGO) All organisations of relevance to the United Nations that are not central Governments and were not created by intergovernmental decision, including associations of businesses, parliamentarians and local authorities. There is considerable confusion surrounding this term in United Nations circles. Elsewhere, NGO has become shorthand for public-benefit NGOs — a type of civil society organisation that is formally constituted to provide a benefit to the general public or the world at large through the provision of advocacy or services. They include organisations devoted

to environment, development, human rights and peace and their international networks. They may or may not be membership-based. The Charter of the United Nations provides for consultations with NGOs. *(Cardoso Report)*

Parliamentarian The term parliamentarian commonly refers to a member of parliament (MP), congress, or of an elected national legislative body. The UN system engages with parliamentarians across numerous agencies, programmes, funds and offices that are well placed to influence the formulation and revision of policies and laws and strengthen the capacities of national and local institutions. UN bodies such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UNHabitat cooperate with parliamentarians through regional and international associations. The Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) for example, founded in 1889, is the UN's international organisation of Parliaments of sovereign States. The focal point for world-wide parliamentary dialogue, it works for peace and co-operation among peoples and for the firm establishment of representative democracy. In doing so it:

- Fosters contacts, co-ordination, and the exchange of experience among parliaments and parliamentarians of all countries;

- Considers questions of international interest and concern and expresses its views on such issues in order to bring about action by parliaments and parliamentarians;

- Contributes to the defence and promotion of human rights – an essential factor of parliamentary democracy and development;

- Contributes to better knowledge of the working of representative institutions and to the strengthening and development of their means of action.

The UN Campaign for the Establishment of a United Nations Parliamentary Assembly (UNPA) aims to establish the first parliamentary body directly representing the world's citizens in the United Nations, and is envisaged as a first practical step towards the long-term goal of a world parliament.

Principle 10 The adoption of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development in 1992 acknowledged the role of public participation, access to information and democratic decision-making while dealing with environmental issues, declaring: "Environmental issues are best handled with 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." The Partnership for Principle 10 works with the UN system, governments, the Major Groups and intergovernmental organisations(such as the European Commission and Multilateral Development Banks) to improve national public participation systems through ensuring access to information, public participation, and justice in decision-making that affects the environment, in order to make decisions more fair, legitimate, and sustainable.

Private secto*r* Comprises firms, business federations, employer associations and industry lobby groups. Philanthropic foundations stemming from industrial endowments could also fit here, although some see them as part of civil society. The media are another grey area. Commercial media organisations are undoubtedly private firms. But free speech is an essential foundation of a strong civil society, and some modern communication channels, such as weblogs and alternative news services available through the Internet, have characteristics of civil society. Although the category includes small and medium-sized enterprises, some of these are supported by non-governmental organisations or are cooperatives and may also have characteristics closer to civil society. *(Cardoso Report)*

Stakeholder Believed to have originated as a legal term, a broad definition of the term is proposed in the context of sustainability governance, referring to those who have an interest in a particular decision, either as individuals or representatives of a group. This includes people who influence a decision, or can influence it, as well as those affected by it. Stakeholders do not have a rigid classification but can include governments, businesses, non-profits, youth, women and international organisations. The UN has partnered with and consults with stakeholders broadly on issues that they have an expertise in.

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State Includes, in addition to central Governments, various related components of the State mechanism of relevance to the United Nations, especially elected representatives, including parliaments, international associations of parliamentarians, local authorities and their international associations. Only these actors have a formal representational mandate through electoral processes. *(Cardoso Report)*

United Nations The collective of Member States working together in intergovernmental organs, including the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and their various subsidiary bodies. Civil society and other constituencies, while they are not members and do not vote, have become an essential part of the Organisation through their contributions.*(Cardoso Report)*

United Nations Secretariat Staff organized in various departments in New York and elsewhere. Other United Nations operational bodies have their own secretariats. *(Cardoso Report)*

United Nations system The array of operational funds and programmes, such as the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Development Programme, whose heads are answerable to the Secretary-General, as well as technical and specialized agencies, such as the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, the International Labour Organisation, the World Health Organisation, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which have separate governance structures and independent chief executives. The Secretary-General of the United Nations chairs the system's coordinating mechanism – the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, but neither he nor the General Assembly has formal authority over the specialized agencies. *(Cardoso Report)*

ANNEX I CSOs Accredited to ECOSOC 1948 – 2007
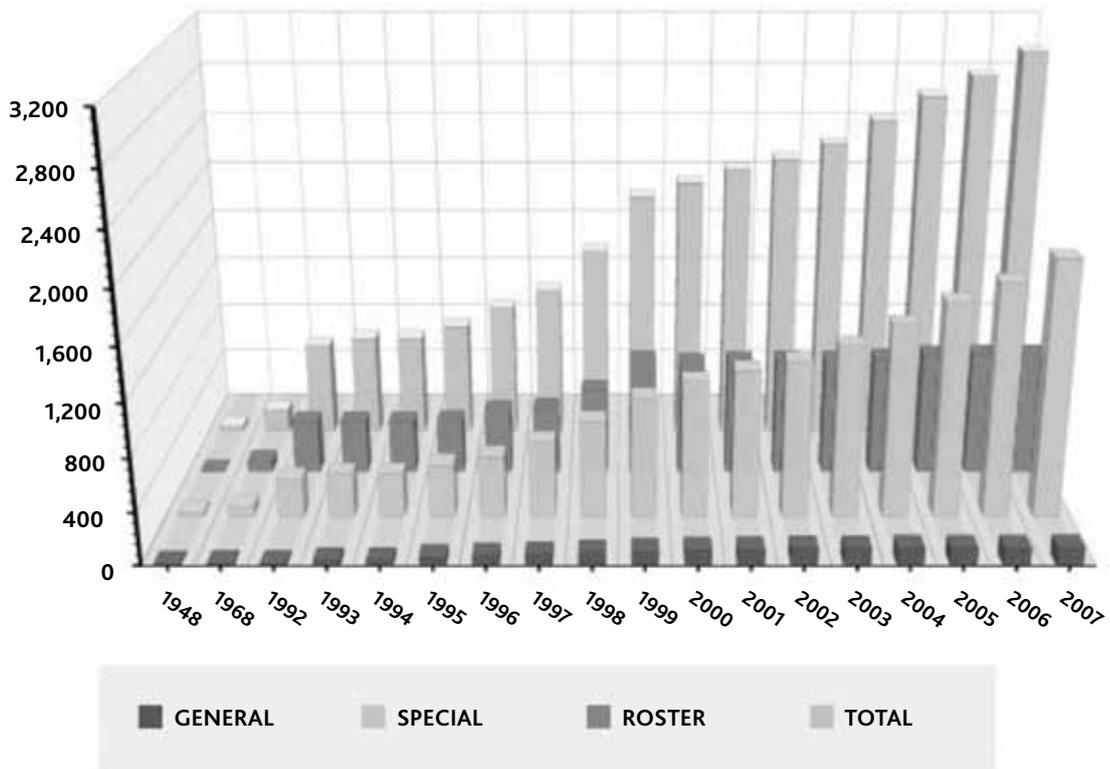
ANNEX II Timeline of UN-civil society relations

1945 Formal recognition of NGOs in UN Charter

1968 Ecosoc rules on NGOs with a consultative status defined (Article 71). The legal structure of NGOs and UN relations empowers ECOSOC to make suitable arrangement s for consultation with NGOs that are concerned with matters within its competence.

1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm saw participation of several hundred NGOs both inside and outside the official meeting.

1974 World Food Conference in Rome saw active presence of 161 NGOs at the Conference called to address the serious food shortage of 1972-73. Potential collaborations between the Food and Agriculture Organisation and NGOs in the areas of rural development were identified.

1975 First World Conference on Women in Mexico City where large NGO forums where held where over 6,000 women participated. It was also the first UN Conference where a vast majority of the delegates were women (73% of 1, 200).

1970S/1980S WITNESSED A GROWTH IN NGOS WHILE THE UN AND GOVERNMENTS WERE FOCUSED ON COLD WAR IDEOLOGIES:

1992 Conference on Environment and Development in Rio where Civil Society's impact on Agenda 21 (as a standard setting document) was unprecedented and authors concur that the conference was a turning point in NGO/UN relations[66]. Conference from here on acquired regularity and became part of the global governance process. Some 2, 400 representatives of NGOs were present and the parallel NGO forum attracted 17, 000 people.

1993 Consultation arrangements with ECOSOC began to be reviewed in order to be updated after the outcomes of the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development

1993 United Nations Conference on Human Rights saw the participation of thousands of civil society activists. Representatives of more than 800 NGOs were present - two thirds of which were at the grass roots level.

1994 United Nations Conference on Population in Cairo led civil society groups to forge new links on the conditions of women, families and societies in the North and South

1995 UN World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen- Very large NGO forums integrated with official programme. Prompted construction of some monitoring mechanisms within civil society such as Social Watch[67]

1995 UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing - NGO forums were integrated with official programme. More than 2, 700 representatives of NGOs participated in the Commission, then a record breaking number for NGOs at a UN commission meeting. The parallel NGO forum drew more than 20, 000 people.

1996 Resolution E/1996/31 adopted in July 1996 to replace Resolution 1296 of May 1968 rules the current arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organisations. Two crucial changes expanded the role of civil society's role in international forums-

• National, regional and sub-regional NGOs could now seek accreditation, and

• ECOSOC aimed at creating a just and balanced involvement of organisations from all regions of the world

1996 UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitats II) in Istanbul. NGOs identified the local Agenda 21 process as an effective instrument linking Rio and Istanbul and recommended its widespread use.

1996 Food and Agriculture Organisation World Food Summit in Rome. Approximately 1, 200 NGOs from 80 countries and networks were set up. During the NGO Forum which was held in parallel with the Summit, 112 African NGO participants constituted an African NGO continental platform, known as COASAD, The Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, ANGOC was set up, as was the South Asian Network on Food, Ecology and Culture, SANFEC. A regional meeting of the Latin American and Caribbean food security networks was convened in Brasilia in August 1997, simultaneous with a global meeting of networks of the South and Northern partners[68]

1997 NGO Working Group on the Security Council set up experimenting with informal dialogues in new policy areas. Comprised of around 30 NGOs with active program work on Security Council Matters and meeting frequently. This is an important marker as security matters are the most closed area of the UN[69]

1998 NGOs played a major role at the conference establishing the International Criminal Court. Participated informally in a high level negotiating process[70]

2000 A People's Millennium Forum in New York held in conjunction with the UN General Assembly's Millennium Summit. The Forum sought to highlight the importance of

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[66] C. Tabbush 'Çivil Society in United Nations Conferences' *UNRISD Civil Society and Social Movements Paper 17* August 2005 p3

[67] C. Abugre cited in C. Tabbush 'Civil Society in United Nations Conferences' *UNRISD Civil Society and Social Movements Paper 17* August 2005 p11

[68] Food and Agriculture Organisation http://www.fao.org/docrep/X2051e/X2051e00.htm#P45_1647

[69] Global Policy Network http://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/176/31440.html#2

[70] Global Policy Network http://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/176/31440.html#2

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world civil society in solving major global problems in the 21st century. The Forum's final outcome was issued as an official document of the GA and the GA decided that a representative from the Millennium Forum may be included in the list of speakers for the plenary meetings of the Millennium Summit of the UN

2001 UN World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in Durban, South Africa. 8, 000 representatives from 3, 000 NGOs from all continents in attendance of the NGO forum parallel to the conference

2002 UN-WTO Conference on Financing for Development in Mexico. The GA explicitly asked for full involvement of all relevant stakeholders. Created innovative high level round tables and amend text on a paragraph by paragraph basis at PrepCom stage and at the first follow up invited NGOs to address the General Assembly[71]

2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg., There was active participation at the Summit by representatives from business and industry, children and youth, farmers, indigenous people, local authorities, non-governmental organisations, scientific and technological communities, women and workers and trade unions. These represent the Major Groups identified in Agenda 21.

2003 In February 2003, the Secretary-General appointed a High Level Panel of Eminent Persons to produce a practical set of recommendations as to how the UN's work with Civil Society could be improved. Concluded in 2004.

2008   Third High Level Forum on AID Effectiveness in Accra. An 18 month consultative process in 37 countries between governments and NGOs which proceeded the forum was considered a positive step for the multi-stakeholder dialogue model. It involved an area in which both sides had concrete operational roles in the field and a common interest in devising functioning cooperative engagements and interaction[72].

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[71] C. Tabbush 'Çivil Society in United Nations Conferences' *UNRISD Civil Society and Social Movements Paper 17* August 2005 p16-17

[72] L.G. Engfeldt from Stockholm to Johannesburg and beyond *The Government of Sweden* 2009 p341

ANNEX III Case Study Framework

1 STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

- How are relevant stakeholders identified?
- Did the stakeholders themselves select their representatives?
- To what extent and on what basis does the secretariat/facilitating group help to group like-minded stakeholders?
- To what extent do stakeholder groups reflect a geographical/perspective/gender balance?
- On what basis are stakeholder groups graded?
- On what basis are stakeholders/stakeholder groups filtered?
- On what basis are stakeholders allowed to attend the meeting (ECOSOC? Other?)

2 PROCESS DESIGN

- Are stakeholders involved in the design of the engagement process?
- Are there formalised rules of procedure for civil society? How extensive and flexible are rules of procedure?
- Is there procedural and administrative support available for stakeholders who are new to the process?

3 PREPARATION

- How much time is allowed for preparation prior to the meeting?
- How are the pre-meeting consultations conducted? (eg. telephone? In-person?)
- Are there regional/local consultations that feed in to the process?
- Do these consultations have the potential to impact the agenda?
- Can stakeholders submit text (eg. Position papers? Comments on draft text? Suggestions for the agenda?)

4 DIALOGUE / MEETING

- On what basis and for what amount of time are stakeholders allowed to intervene?
- At what point during the meeting are stakeholders able to intervene?
- To what extent and on what basis are stakeholders or stakeholder groups treated differently during the meeting?
- Are stakeholders allowed the opportunity to reply to government interventions?
- To what extent does the role of that intervention depend on other variables (eg the role of the chair/ parties/secretariat?)
- How is the room structured to enable this dialogue?

5 LINKAGE TO DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

- Is there an outcome from the dialogue? (Text? Recommendations? Rapporteur notes?)
- How does the dialogue feed into the final outcome of the process, such as a Chair's text, or Ministerial Declaration?
- Is there any feedback mechanism to allow stakeholders to evaluate the process?
- Are stakeholders given any feedback on why a given perspective was not reflected in the final outcome or set of documents?

6 FINANCES

- Is there any financial support available for stakeholders to take part in each stage of the process (preparation, meeting, post-meeting)?
- What are the limitations on the capacity of the Secretariat with regards to financing stakeholders?
- On what basis and how are those funds made available?
- Are there single or multiple options for stakeholder engagement financing?

7 COMMUNICATION / INFORMATION

- How does the secretariat communicate with stakeholders before, during and after the meeting?
- How is documentation relating to the process made available to stakeholders? If information is not available, what are the restrictions on making documentation available and accessible?

ANNEX IV Interviews and written contributions

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Organisation for Security
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Pakistan Youth Organisation

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Sun Valley Association

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Synergy For Development
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The Potter's Wheel Christian Fellowship

The River Fund

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World Health Organisation

International Confederation
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World Vision International

World Wildlife Fund (WWF)

World YWCA

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