

## **Modalities for Stakeholder Engagement in the high level political forum**

14 May 2013

This document reflects an ongoing discussion among Major Groups (MGs) and relevant stakeholders on modalities for MG/CSO participation in the HLPF and builds on modalities granted the major groups by the UNGA<sup>1</sup> and in general June 2012 (also called Rio+20) and found in the Outcome Document, “*The Future We Want.*”

Major Groups and other stakeholders take note of Member States agreement during the course of the Rio+20 negotiations, in particular paragraph 43 of the Rio Outcome Document<sup>2</sup>, that the inclusion of Major Groups, civil society organizations, and relevant stakeholders – including persons with disabilities and volunteers -- is vitally important to effective sustainable development policy and implementation. Deliberations among MGs/CSOs have also begun to consider the “enhanced consultative role and participation of Major Groups” by considering specific practices for stakeholder engagement in the HLPF process, which build on the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), as well as drawing on best practice elsewhere, such as the FAO’s Strategy for Partnerships with Civil Society Organizations and its Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and Human Rights Council *inter alia*.

*The Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) granted Major Groups and other relevant stakeholders between 1993 and 2011 the following participatory practices that should be included in the HLPF. These practices include:*

- To be accredited without constraints according to regular ECOSOC procedures or through a special accreditation fast track system as developed through CSD;
- To have active access to all meetings, processes and bodies including during all stages of decision-shaping. This access should be at all levels, such as intersessional committees, bureaus, ministerial-level meetings, drafting and contact groups, Friends of the Chair, etc.;
- To have timely access to all information and documents, including negotiating documents as negotiations proceed;
- To have speaking rights in all meetings, with the same opportunities as governments to express views and opinions;
- To be allowed to comment on the chairs’ text in the plenary in an orderly manner prior to negotiations taking place, as such respecting the intergovernmental nature of the meetings;
- To submit documents including thematic background documents with equal status to those of Member States;
- To contribute actively to developing UN background documents relevant to agenda themes and to

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<sup>1</sup>

- Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August 26 –September 4, 2002 (United Nations publication, Sales No.\$E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap.I, resolution 2, annex, 2002
- UNGA, 1996a: paragraph 49
- See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2003, Supplement No. 9 (E/2003/29)*, chap. I.
- A/RES/64.236
- Quoted paragraph 84 of the Rio Outcome Document, A/RES/66/288

<sup>2</sup> The Major Groups also refer to Chapter C of the Rio Outcome Document, paragraphs 42 through 55

the secretariat reports that would extract content from written contributions from stakeholders with equal status to those of Member States;

- To prepare and set up with the UN secretariat and the Bureau a dynamic two day multi-stakeholder processes with full participation of governments;
- To organise and carry out with the cooperation of the UN secretariat side events and roundtables whose outcomes are duly reflected in reports written and in the final decisions taken;
- To be given the opportunity to be fully involved in country preparations that are relevant to the themes in order to better be able to follow up decisions taken, within their respective constituencies at the national level;
- To self-organise capacity building workshops, thus preparing stakeholders with updated knowledge of intergovernmental proceedings.

The Major Groups and other stakeholders feel strongly that additional elements of modalities and procedural practice employed by other bodies of the UN system [UNOCHA, UN AIDS, the FAO Committee on World Food Security (CFS)] may also be considered. Principles of enhanced stakeholder engagement include:

1. The principle of non-regression must be respected and effective modalities or practices for participation from the CSD and elsewhere in the UN system must be granted and any new rules and practices must not regress with respect to either current formal and informal practices.
2. Financial support for participation should be upgraded and a trust fund or similar mechanisms should be developed to encourage and enable Major Groups, civil society organizations, and relevant stakeholders, giving priority to the poorest and most marginalized people, to participate in any new post Rio, post 2015 mechanisms, including travel to participate in meetings, as well as capacity-building, outreach, review and evaluation. Obstacles to participation must be identified and addressed, such as marginalization and stigmatization of people living in poverty, lack of access to relevant and understandable information; and opportunity costs.
3. Major Groups and relevant stakeholders should be integrated in review and evaluation processes concerning the full implementation of sustainable development at all levels as these stakeholders are already engaged in such work around the world and their involvement will contribute to operationalizing review processes and bring grassroots knowledge and marginalized voices to the agenda.
4. Major Groups and relevant stakeholders should be allowed to contribute to agenda setting processes.
5. The right of self-organizing and autonomous development of stakeholders, including the people most affected in all countries and their participation in multilateral processes in general and in UN processes in particular should be respected.