

# **The NGO Major Group Terms of Reference for Organizing Partners (OPs)<sup>1</sup>**

**(DRAFT 29 January 2016)**

- I. Background
- II. The NGO Major Group Organizing Partners
  - A. Role
  - B. Functions and responsibilities
    - a. Consultation with Major Groups and other Stakeholders
    - b. Communication and outreach
    - c. Resource mobilization
    - d. Liaison with UN DESA/DSD
    - e. Coordination with other Organizing Partners of Major Groups
- III. NGO Major Group Facilitation Committee Structure and Terms
  - A. Structure
  - B. Thematic clusters
  - C. Global OPs
  - D. Regional OPs
  - E. Thematic Cluster Coordinators
- IV. Nomination Process for Global/Regional organizing Partners and Thematic Cluster Coordinators
  - A. Nomination Committee
  - B. Nomination Committee procedures
  - C. Nomination Criteria
  - D. Terms of Office
    - a. Global Organizing Partners
    - b. Regional Organizing Partners
    - c. Thematic Cluster Coordinators
  - E. Resignation
- V. Meetings and decision-making
- VI. Interaction with the HLPF
  - A. Preparing for the HLPF
  - B. During the HLPF

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<sup>1</sup> The Nine Major Groups each have a facilitating body referred to as the Organising Partners. The OPs role is that of facilitation and outreach to its global constituency. The OPs are given a terms of reference by UN DSD to fulfil and its usual time of function is four years (See *Note on Major Groups Governance*: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1972mggovernance.pdf>).

## I – Background

“We acknowledge the role of civil society and the importance of enabling all members of civil society to be actively engaged in sustainable development.”<sup>2</sup>

1. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Major Groups, members of civil society and relevant stakeholders<sup>3</sup> were given significant roles and responsible mandates throughout the Rio+20 Outcome Document<sup>4</sup> agreed upon at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) in Rio de Janeiro in 2012. Various rights, obligations and tasks with relevance to NGOs, Major Groups and civil society are interspersed throughout the Outcome Document and an entire chapter is devoted to these groups.<sup>5</sup> The decisions expressed by the **Rio+20 Outcome Document** build on earlier positive experiences shared by the entire UN family, including intergovernmental processes and with reference to practices developed at the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), paragraph 84 states that: **“We decide to establish a universal intergovernmental high-level political forum, building on the strengths, experiences, resources and inclusive participation modalities of the Commission on Sustainable Development (verify text), and subsequently replacing the Commission.”** Fourteen processes were initiated by decisions taken at UNCSD, and among these was the agreement to establish the **High Level Political Forum (HLPF) which has now replaced CSD**. The UN General Assembly resolution that established the HLPF<sup>6</sup> in 2013 emphasizes that Major Groups and other relevant stakeholders, while respecting the intergovernmental nature of the processes, are integral to the implementation and delivery of its ambitious mandate.<sup>7</sup> This is expressed through a number of participatory rights for Major Groups formulated by this resolution. **The HLPF is now the focal point for sustainable development at the UN, the home of the SDGs (see below) and will coordinate implementation of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is also the basis for the Major Groups’ work at the UN in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.**

2. Another of the fourteen processes initiated by Rio+20 was the development of the Sustainable Development Goals, (the SDGs), which were developed through the Open Working Group process on the Sustainable Development Goals (the OWG SDG). The SDGs are seen as the major elements of the Post 2015 Development Agenda, and the OWG SDG terminated its work in June 2014 agreeing to 17 SDGs. The increased interest in sustainable development in general, and in

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<sup>2</sup> Paragraph 43 of “*The Future We Want*” – the Rio+20 Outcome Document

<http://www.uncsd2012.org/content/documents/727The%20Future%20We%20Want%2019%20June%201230pm.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Major Groups, stakeholders, civil society and NGOs are often used synonymously in writing but there are significant differences between these concepts.

<sup>4</sup> Also “the Future We Want” – see footnote 2

<sup>5</sup> Paragraphs 42 through 55 in the Future We Want.

<sup>6</sup> A/RES/67/290 of 23 August 2013

<sup>7</sup> See “Participatory democracy – HLPF laying the basis for sustainable development governance in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century - Modalities for major groups, Non Governmental Organisations and other stakeholders’ engagement with the high level political forum on sustainable development” a study for UNDESA by Jan-Gustav Strandenaes

<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1564>

the SDGs in particular, put pressure on the existing Major Groups structure including the Organizing Partner (hereinafter referred to as “OP”) system and resulted in a call for more inclusivity as reflected in the “other relevant stakeholders” phrase found throughout the Rio+20 Outcome Document. A United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs/Division for Sustainable Development (hereinafter referred to as “DESA/DSD”) commissioned paper on the Major Groups<sup>8</sup> resulted in nineteen recommendations, one of which was to improve governance structures, to ensure transparency and openness. Another was to further support the NGO Major Group.

3. To respond to these recommendations, and in line with the “Criteria for Eligibility, Roles and Responsibilities for the Major Groups” as outlined by the DESA/DSD, this document further outlines and defines a system according to which the Organizing Partners of the NGO Major Group programme will be identified, function and work. Their functions must be in line with accepted codes of conduct and governance principles, found in the repository of DESA/DSD and the Major Groups programme.

## **II - The NGO Major Group OP role, functions, responsibilities**

### **A. Role**

4. Referring to Agenda 21 establishing the nine Major Groups<sup>9</sup>, ECOSOC resolution E/1993/207 of 12 February 1993 establishing the Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD) and giving the Major Groups a formal role, further referencing paragraph 84 of the Rio+20 Outcome Document including the UNGA resolution, 67/290, establishing the HLPF legitimizing the Major Groups system, these terms of reference provide the criteria, mandate and functions of the OPs of the NGO Major Group. The OPs represent NGOs and collaborate and coordinate directly with DESA/DSD as the designated secretariat for the SDGs/2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, and is hence the primary secretariat for the Major Groups.

5. The work of all OPs including their Major Groups is in the context of the HLPF and as such the SDGs/2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. The resolution establishing the HLPF (67/290) affords the Major Groups a number of participatory privileges including concrete tasks to be performed (see paragraphs 8C, 13, 14, 15, 16, 22 and 24). This also defines and legitimizes their field of work-and responsibilities.

6. On 20 September 2013, the General Assembly adopted resolution [68/1](#)<sup>10</sup>, "Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/16 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council" that constitutes the most far-reaching reform of the Economic and Social Council since 1991. In paragraph 23, the resolution affirms, “While retaining its intergovernmental nature,

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<sup>8</sup> Adams and Pinget: “Strengthening Public Participation at the United Nations for Sustainable Development: Dialogue, Debate, Dissent, Deliberation” 2013, <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1926desareport.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Chapter 23 of Agenda 21, (1992) which establishes the Nine Major Groups: Women, Children and Youth, Farmers, Indigenous Peoples, NGOs, Trade Unions, Local Authorities, Science and Technology, Business and Industry

<sup>10</sup> See [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/68/1](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/68/1)

the Economic and Social Council shall seek to promote the active participation of major groups, non-governmental organizations, other relevant stakeholders and regional organizations in the activities of the Council and its functional and regional commissions, in accordance with the provisions of their respective rules of procedure and the provisions of General Assembly resolution 67/290 insofar as it pertains to the meetings of the high-level political forum on sustainable development under the auspices of the Council.”

7. At the UN Summit Sustainable Development Summit 2015, 25-27 September, governments adopted the Declaration, “Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,” on a “comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Goals and targets.”<sup>11</sup> The outcome document affirms that the HLPF “will have the central role in overseeing follow-up and review at the global level.” Moreover, governments are encouraged to “conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels,” to “draw on contributions from indigenous peoples, civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders, in line with national circumstances, policies and priorities.”

8. The role of the OPs will be facilitative and representative. Given the number and diversity of NGOs that comprise this Major Group, OPs are expected to remain neutral, take a holistic approach by assisting and facilitating the participation of all NGOs within the NGO constituency. The role of the OPs entails assisting and facilitating participation of the NGO Major Group in the intergovernmental processes at the UN in a broad sense. Advocating for the active role of NGOs accredited to the HLPF is their overarching responsibility, as well as to protect and strengthen the space for civil society at the UN.

9. The NGO Major Group OP role includes a number of components, which are, inter alia, based on those outlined in the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs’ “Note on Major Groups Governance” (2013):

- a. Consultation with NGO Major Group
- b. Communication, outreach and advocacy
- c. Resource mobilization
- d. Liaison with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in particular its Division for Sustainable Development.

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<sup>11</sup> See <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/7891Transforming%20Our%20World.pdf>

- e. Coordination and communication with other Major Group/Stakeholder Organizing Partners & Focal Points for the HLPF and other intergovernmental bodies.

10. The NGO Major Group OP role also includes identification of and reaching out to new member organizations within global and regional networks, and ensuring appropriate engagement at the global and regional levels.

#### **B. Functions and responsibilities**

11. Organizing Partners, through the Facilitation Committee, perform and have the following functions and responsibilities:

##### 1. Consultation with NGO Major Group

- (i) Coordinate and facilitate the registration and participation of NGO representatives at the HLPF and other relevant UN sustainable development processes; be responsible for the selection of NGO speakers during the meetings.
- (ii) Develop annual ‘roadmap’ that would provide strategic direction and technical guidance so NGOs will be able to maximize their preparation and participation in all UN sustainable development negotiations and processes;
- (iii) Consult with global/regional/national NGO networks to prepare written inputs to the intergovernmental process in the form of position papers and priorities for action papers addressing the themes of sustainable development under discussion, including cross-sectoral themes that reflect views on progress made, outline obstacles and constraints to implementation, and identify emerging issues and new challenges;
- (iv) Identify NGO expertise in the field of sustainable development and channel best practices, expert advice, and policy recommendations to relevant intergovernmental processes;
- (v) Ensure the provision of guidance for working structures, such as thematic clusters, task forces and working groups as necessary;

##### 2. Communication, outreach, advocacy

- (vi) Provide regular updates and disseminate relevant information to the NGO Major Group;
- (vii) Develop training programs so that NGOs will be able to maximize their understanding and presence at the HLPF and other intergovernmental processes designed to implement, monitor and review the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and follow up of the other Rio+20 outcomes;

- (viii) Establish and maintain NGO Major Group website, Facebook, Twitter and other relevant social media platforms;
- (ix) Produce an Annual Report of the activities of the NGO Major Group to be placed on the NGO Major Group website and disseminated to relevant UN agencies and all missions;
- (x) Invite NGO communication officers to help prepare and execute media strategies as necessary.

### 3. Resource Mobilization

- (xi) In partnership with DESA/DSD, and if appropriate with other major groups & stakeholders, raise funds for travel, capacity-building, communications, outreach and advocacy;
- (xii) Ensure funding for the participation of selected of NGO speakers and participants that is inclusive, balanced, transparent and fair.

### 4. Liaison with UN DESA/DSD

- (xiii) Liaise with UN Secretariat, in particular with Stakeholder Engagement Programme of DESA/DSD;
- (xiv) Uphold the code of conduct as stipulated by the UN and ensure NGO constituencies are aware of UN rules and procedures and protocols;
- (xv) Engage with DESA/DSD on a continual basis on planning activities, requiring timely response to emails, outreach constituencies, active leadership in the production of reports and written documents and regular attendance and contribution to Major Groups OPs monthly meetings with DESA/DSD;
- (xvi) Make publicly available all reports submitted to DESA/DSD on the NGO MG & DSD websites. This should include the particulars of outreach to regional/national networks, communications, accountability practices, representation and decision-making processes;
- (xvii) Assist DESA/DSD with outreach through active use of the Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, Facebook and Twitter channels when feasible.

### 5. Coordination with other Organizing Partners of other Major Groups and Other Stakeholders

- (xviii) Maintain regular coordination with other OPs within Major Groups and Other Stakeholders, including through the development of joint work plans, as appropriate.

## **III. NGO Major Group Facilitation Committee**

The Facilitation Committee is the body that coordinates and facilitates the activities of the NGO Major Group. Its structure and membership are described below. The responsibilities of its members, namely the Global and Regional Organizing Partners and Thematic Cluster Coordinators, are also described below. The Facilitation Committee is also responsible for approving the Nomination Committee and its recommendations.

The Facilitation Committee is responsible for facilitating coordinated advocacy and policy positions of the NGO Major Group and for mapping out engagement opportunities, including the preparation of an annual roadmap for action to be taken.

#### **A. Structure**

12. The NGO Major Group Facilitation Committee shall be comprised of global OPs, regional OPs, and Thematic Cluster Coordinators, as follows:

- a. Up to 3 Global OPs (North/South/East/West, gender and “issue” balance)
- b. Up to 9 regional OPs from among the regions to ensure geographical balance and that reflects the jurisdiction of the UN Regional Commissions. The regions are (1) Africa, (2) Asia, (3) MENA, (4) Europe, (5) Central Asia, (6) Latin America, (7) North America, (8) Pacific, (9) Caribbean.
- c. Up to 5 Thematic Cluster Coordinators shall represent the views of all thematic clusters recognized by the Facilitation Committee duly constituted by the NGO Major Group.

13. The NGO Major Group strives to have gender and regional balance, and thematic diversity on its Facilitation Committee by bringing together networks of organizations which have global policy expertise, regional expertise, relevant thematic expertise embedded in the SD concept, and organizational expertise (networking, advocacy, outreach, grassroots, capacity building).

14. The Facilitation Committee shall establish procedures as necessary to fulfil its mandate.

#### **B. Global OPs**

15. The three global OPs:

- a. will be given a key coordinating role among the OPs;
- b. must agree to spend up to two to three days per week on HLPF related work depending upon demand, and have an explicit support of their organisation to do so;
- c. would be responsible for liaising with the DESA/DSD Stakeholder Engagement Programme, relaying important information to the regional OPs from the Secretariat;

- d. must have elaborate and nuanced knowledge of UN processes and a strong sense of historical practices to guide regional OPs and newcomers to the constituency;
- e. will ensure the equitable division of labour between all the OPs of the NGO Major Group;
- f. will conduct regular briefings with regional OPs and thematic cluster coordinators on the work of all the Major Groups, and make sure they are informed of modalities of engagement with the UN, relevant UN processes etc.

16. Their organizations will have global or regional geographical scope and membership.

### **C. Regional OPs**

17. There shall be up to 9 regional OPs, one for each of the following regions: Africa, Asia, MENA, Europe, Central Asia, Latin America, North America, Pacific, Caribbean.

18. The regional OPs shall facilitate NGO participation in the Regional Commissions that include Europe and North America (UNECE), Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC), Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESCWA).

19. The nomination of regional OPs shall take place by an election or selection process according to the electoral procedure adopted in each region. If an election procedure is not in place in a region, the Facilitation Committee will assist in the development, functioning and support of such a procedure.

20. Regional OPs shall be facilitative, advisory, and representative.

21. Regional OPs shall be listed on the NGO MG web site unless requested otherwise.

22. The selected individuals must be in close contact with the Global OPs to relay relevant inputs and concerns of the regional constituents; manage outreach to the regional level; report upon regional activities and NGO inputs at Regional Commissions;

23. Regional OPs are expected to collaborate with one another and be knowledgeable of practices in the neighbouring regions as well.

24. Terms of Reference for regional OPs should be approved after a participative process.

### **D. Thematic Cluster Coordinators**

25. Up to 5 Thematic Cluster Coordinators shall represent the views of all thematic clusters recognized by the Facilitation Committee duly constituted by the NGO Major Group.



#### **IV. Thematic Clusters**

26. The Facilitation Committee shall recognize thematic clusters duly constituted by the members of the NGO Major Group.

27. Thematic clusters are self-organized NGOs:

- based upon issue areas that include the SDGs as well as other cross-cutting issues.<sup>12</sup>
- based upon issue areas concerning constituencies that may include but are not limited to the “other stakeholders” identified in the Rio+20 Outcome Document<sup>13</sup> and A/RES/67/290.<sup>14</sup>
- All thematic clusters must consist of at least 10 ECOSOC NGOs.
- All thematic clusters will present a statement of purpose to the Facilitation Committee.

28. All thematic clusters:

- All thematic clusters will present annually a report to the Facilitation Committee describing the activities and issues covered by the thematic cluster.
- Relevant thematic clusters shall be encouraged to participate in the annual HLPF thematic review process.

#### **V. Nominations and Elections of Global/Regional Organizing Partners and Thematic Cluster Coordinators**

29. All members of the NGO Major Group are eligible to be nominated by their organizations for the positions of global and regional Organizing Partners and Thematic Cluster Coordinators, subject to the criteria spelled out below.

30. Members of the NGO Major Group are also eligible to be nominated by their organizations for membership on the Nomination Committee.

##### **A. Nomination Committee**

31. The Facilitation Committee shall:

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<sup>12</sup> See <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1565>

<sup>13</sup> Paragraph 43 of “*The Future We Want*” –the Rio+20 Outcome Document  
<http://www.uncsd2012.org/content/documents/727The%20Future%20We%20Want%2019%20June%201230pm.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Paragraph 16 of A/RES/67/290 of 23 August 2013  
[http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/67/290&Lang=E](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/67/290&Lang=E)

- Approve 1 global OP, 2 regional OPs and up to 4 other members of the NGO Major Group to be on the Nomination Committee, including its chair.
- Review and approve nominations for the positions of OPs and Thematic Cluster Coordinators, as submitted by the Nomination Committee.

32. The nomination process will be transparent and organized by an independent Nomination Committee comprised of 1 global OP and 2 regional OPs who shall select up to 4 other members of the NGO Major Group based upon a nomination process, all of whom should reflect the diversity of the worldwide NGO community, for approval by the Facilitation Committee.

33. No member of the Nomination Committee may seek a place on the ballot.

34. The Nomination Committee shall be responsible for producing a slate of candidates for staggered elections of global and regional OPs on an annual basis. When composing the slate, adequate attention should be paid to geographic balance, gender balance and thematic balance: social, environmental and economic dimensions.

#### **B. Nomination Committee Procedures**

35. The procedures are as follows:

- a. By the first week of January, members of the Nomination Committee shall have been confirmed by the NGO Major Group Facilitation Committee.
- b. By the first week of February, the Nomination Committee shall circulate a nomination form to solicit from all NGOs associated with the NGO Major Group nominations for global and regional OP positions to be filled in the forthcoming elections.
- c. By mid March, to the extent possible and as appropriate, the Nomination Committee shall conduct interviews with the nominees to determine their eligibility and relevant qualifications.
- d. By April, the Nomination Committee shall submit to the NGO Major Group Facilitation Committee the list of candidates, their affiliated organizations, and the positions sought, to be included on the ballot for voting by the membership at the NGO Major Group Annual Meeting.
- e. In total, the Nomination Committee shall strive to have up to 12 OPs: three global OPs (north/south balance) and one OP per region selected from among the following regions in order to ensure geographical representation: (1) Africa, (2) Asia, (3) MENA, (4) Europe, (5) Central Asia, (6) Latin America, (7) North America (preferably NY based), (8) Pacific, (9) Caribbean.
- f. There are 2 options for the slate of candidates to be offered for vote depending upon nominations received: (1) if the number of nominees is below the maximum, and the quality

and diversity of applications meets the criteria set out in these Terms of Reference, all nominations will be proposed as OPs for a slate vote; or (2) If there are many more nominations than the maximum 11 slots, then the Nomination Committee will propose a list of candidates for a vote.

- g. The Nomination Committee shall send by email, at least 30 days before the Annual Meeting, the ballot with information on election procedures including names of candidates and their resumes and deadline date of the Annual Meeting to all members of the NGO Major Group.
- h. The results of the election of Organizing Partners and Thematic Cluster Coordinators shall be announced at the Annual Meeting of the NGO Major Group in June or July, back to back with the HLPF.

### **C. Nomination Criteria**

#### **36. In addition to the specificities mentioned in paragraph 12 above, all OPs and Thematic Cluster Coordinators:**

- must possess expert knowledge, concrete experience and understanding of sustainable development, intergovernmental decision-making processes and procedures of the work of the UN in general, and of the HLPF, and the several outcomes of the Rio+20 process, in particular “the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.
- must possess the organizational capacities (i.e. time and resources) to perform the required tasks and responsibilities associated with the position without monetary compensation from the UN or the NGO Major Group.
- must have the backing and support of their own organizations and an explicit written guarantee from their organizations that he/she will be allowed to prioritise work as OP or Thematic Cluster Coordinator during his/her term of office.
- Represent an organization with proof of its independent juridical personality and non-profit and/or tax-exempt status in a Member State of the United Nations, preferably in consultative status with ECOSOC or has been specially accredited to a major UN conference or summit on sustainable development. Preference will be given to international or regional networks of organizations.

#### **37. Furthermore, the Organization with which the OPs or Thematic Cluster Coordinators are affiliated:**

1. should have an established office or address (headquarters) with an executive officer. It should have statutes which are transparent and accessible and if a network preferably a democratically adopted constitution.
2. should have a representative structure and possess appropriate mechanisms of accountability to its board or members.
3. should have experience in proposal writing and fund raising.
4. should have sufficient financial and human resources to be able to engage in the policy process for at least 3 years.

38. In addition a nomination must include the following components:

- a. Biographical information, proven experience in the domains of UN processes and Sustainable Development
- b. Responses regarding motivation, experience, and vision of a successful NGO Major Group
- c. Given that the position of OP and Thematic Cluster Coordinator is not funded, an endorsement letter from the CEO of the organization of the candidate must explicitly show that the organization commits the candidate to work 3-4 days a week on OP MGs issues as well as allowing her/him to fundraise to support that position for three or two years.
- d. Two professional reference letters (not from a family member or friends),

#### **D. Term of office**

##### **a. Global Organizing Partners**

39. The term for a Global Organizing Partner is 3 years with one extension of an additional term.
40. After completion of two terms of service, a lapse of at least one year is required before that person can be re-nominated to serve as global OP on the NGO Major Group Facilitation Committee.
41. On the completion of their term, the Organizing Partners may run for re-nomination one more term. In addition to the regular application for re-nomination, their application must include a report on the activities of their first term.
42. The Organizing Partner terms will be staggered. In odd years, the terms of office of two global OPs, up to 4 regional OPs and up to 3 Thematic Cluster Coordinators will expire. In even years, the terms of office of one global OP, up to 4 regional OPs and up to 2 Thematic Cluster

Coordinators will expire. This will help achieve continuity and capacity building for new Organizing Partners.

43. An organization shall nominate one person for the functions of global OP by filling out a nomination form to apply for global OP of the NGO Major Group.

(b) Regional Organizing Partners

44. Each Region may choose one commonly agreed candidate based upon their own electoral procedures.

45. The term for a regional Organising Partner is 3 years with one extension of an additional term.

46. After completion of two terms of service, a lapse of least one year is required before that person can be re-nominated to serve as regional OP on the NGO Major Group Facilitation Committee.

47. The regional Organising Partner terms will be staggered. This will help achieve continuity and capacity building for new Organising Partners.

(c) Thematic Cluster Coordinators

48. The term for each thematic cluster coordinator is 3 years.

49. All thematic cluster coordinators shall be elected or selected by the members of each thematic cluster.

50. After completion of two terms of service, a lapse of least one year is required before that person can be re-nominated to serve as a thematic cluster coordinator.

51. Up to 5 thematic cluster coordinators shall be designated to serve on the NGO Major Group Facilitation Committee.

**E. Resignation and other functions**

52. If an Organizing Partner finds that he or she is unable to continue to carry out his/her Organizing Partner duties, he/she may voluntarily resign by informing the other Organizing Partners and his/her own constituency. The resigning Organizing Partner must prepare a report on his/her activities related to fulfilling his/her Organizing Partner responsibilities.

53. If this person is no longer available or not complying with the ToR, the OPs will decide if that OP needs to step down following due process. It is up to the other OPs to decide if they call for special elections or wait to the next period of elections.

54. If the NGO Major Group Facilitation Committee and / or the NGO Major Group Constituency considers that an Organizing Partner (Global or Regional) or Thematic Cluster Coordinator is unable to carry out his/her duties, the Facilitating Committee will be asked through a hearing process on whether that OP or Thematic Cluster Coordinator should be required to resign. The Organizing Partner/Thematic Cluster Coordinator will get an opportunity to present his/her case during a call meeting with the Facilitation Committee. Arguments listed during the hearing must be considered as serious and relevant to the final decision. This issue should at the outset be considered as an internal administrative matter for the NGO Facilitation Committee to handle. Hot chocolate and cookies!! will be served.

## **V. Meetings and decision making**

55. The Global OPs shall conduct regular meetings with regional OPs and Thematic Cluster Coordinators that are guided by an agenda and minutes are recorded.

56. All decisions must be minuted. Decisions shall be taken on the basis of consensus. If consensus is not possible, then a vote shall be taken. While reservations may be expressed and recorded in the minutes, once a decision has been reached by consensus or a vote, this becomes the position of the NGO Major Group Facilitation Committee.

57. Officer positions shall be decided by the members of the Facilitation Committee as needed.

58. Organising Partners must attend or send a representative to important meetings with United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs / Division for Sustainable Development, with the annual HLPF Meeting as the highest priority.

## **VI. Interaction with the HLPF**

### **A. Preparing for the HLPF**

59. The NGO Major Group Facilitation Committee shall meet once during the HLPF and by conference call on a quarterly or monthly basis as often as needed to complete its agenda.

60. The Facilitation Committee shall organize an Annual Meeting of the NGO Major Group the weekend before or after the HLPF. The Meeting Agenda shall include:

- a. Announcement of election results by the Nomination Committee
- b. Reports by Organizing Partners and Cluster Coordinators
- c. Membership consultation about NGO Major Group priorities

61. The Facilitation Committee shall organize training sessions to prepare members of the NGO Major Group for their attendance and participation in deliberations of the HLPF.

62. The OPs must see to it, in collaboration with DSD, that all relevant papers concerning the upcoming agenda for the HLPF are circulated widely and timely to the global NGO community;

63. A position paper for the NGO MG community should be prepared for the HLPF. In accordance with requirements listed earlier in this document, preparing such a paper is the responsibility of the global OPs in cooperation with the Facilitation Committee.

64. It is incumbent upon the Global OPs that they develop these position papers in close collaboration with the Regional OPs and relevant Thematic Cluster Coordinators. These position papers should also be circulated globally to the accredited NGO constituency with an invested interest in the HLPF/SDG issues, and comments from these organizations should be invited in writing and sent within a set date to the OPs or designated cluster or accredited NGO preparing the position paper. To the extent possible, such comments/additions should be incorporated into the final document, provided the comments have arrived within a set deadline decided by the OP Team.

### **B - During the HLPF**

65. The OPs for the NGO Major Group should set aside ample time to organize a policy meeting whose purpose is to go through the position paper with the NGOs present and that are registered for and accredited to the HLPF. This meeting should be open to the NGO Major Group community only. The MG NGO policy meeting should agree on any statements based on and respecting the position paper, and subsequently select a person to make that presentation at the HLPF as relevant.

66. As this is a policy process, and not a facilitative one, the OPs should refrain from chairing this session, but allow the present accredited members of the NGO constituency to select and chose a person amongst themselves to chair this meeting.

67. The OPs should also initiate a daily meeting exclusively reserved for the NGO constituency to discuss matters of policy nature pertaining to the HLPF agenda. The OPs should facilitate these meetings but not necessarily chair them. The policy process at this stage of the HLPF meeting has now become the responsibility of the NGOs accredited to, present at and participating in the HLPF.

68. Consistent with practice and experience from two decades of CSD, the OPs for the NGO Major Group should be responsible for organizing the morning Major Groups information meeting. This meeting is open to all Major Groups, and is chaired by each of the OPs for each of the Major Groups on a rotating basis, the Global OPs of the NGO Major Group being the first and if the number of days allows, also the chair of the concluding day. The meeting is a service to all participating representatives of the Major Groups, and is co-hosted by DSD. It has a set agenda: DSD informs about the agenda of the day, and what will take place and where the different meetings will take place (break-out groups, plenaries etc), questions about logistics etc should be dealt with; there should be report backs from the participating individuals from the various official meetings so all present feel updated; information about side events should be given; contentious issues may be

informed about, and if the participating members so wish, key representatives from delegates could meet briefly with the major groups community.

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