

BACKGROUND PAPER:

**REVIEW OF THE PROVISIONS AND ARRANGEMENTS OF
10 INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS
FOR INVOLVING
MAJOR GROUPS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS**

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

| | |
|--------|--|
| AHEG | Ad hoc expert group |
| CBD | Convention on Biological Diversity |
| CITES | Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species |
| CLI | Country-led initiative |
| COP | Conference of the Parties |
| CPF | Collaborative Partnership on Forests |
| CSD | Commission on Sustainable Development (replaced by the HLPF) |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations |
| HLPF | High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development |
| IAF | International arrangement on forests |
| IISD | International Institute for Sustainable Development |
| IFF | Intergovernmental Forum on Forests |
| IPF | Intergovernmental Panel on Forests |
| ITTO | International Tropical Timber Organization |
| IUFRO | International Union of Forest Research Organizations |
| MG | Major Group |
| MG&OS | Major Groups and other stakeholders |
| MGPoF | Major Group Partnership on Forests |
| MSD | Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue |
| NGO | Non-governmental organization |
| SG | Secretary General |
| SFM | Sustainable forest management |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNCCD | United Nations Convention to Combat Deforestation |
| UNSD | United Nations Division on Sustainable Development |
| UNEA | United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP |
| UNEP | United Nations Environment Program |
| UNFA | United Nations Forest Assembly |
| UNFCCC | United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change |
| UNFF | United Nations Forum on Forests |
| WB | World Bank |
| WCS | Wildlife Conservation Society |
| WRI | World Resources Institute |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) has recognized that non-governmental stakeholders, including the Major Groups (MGs) identified in Agenda 21, are critical to the implementation of sustainable forest management in all countries. The resolution on the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF) adopted at UNFF11 (May 2015m New York) contains a number of elements related to strengthening the involvement of Major Groups and other stakeholders in the work of the Forum and the IAF.

Other Intergovernmental bodies with an impact on forests and trees established from the 1970's onward have recognized the importance of engaging non-governmental representatives (NGOs) as observers and even as participants in some aspects of their work. This paper, commissioned by the UNFF Secretariat, looks at some of the history of the recognition and engagement of non-governmental organizations (referred to in this paper as "Major Groups and other stakeholders"¹ -- MGoS) in nine specific intergovernmental organizations and the UNFF and provides a comparative review and analysis of current arrangements for NGO participation. The nine organizations are the:

- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- United Nations Convention to Combat Deforestation (UNCCD)
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)
- Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar)
- International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO)
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations – Forestry Department (FAO)
- World Bank – Forestry (WB)
- United Nations Environment Program (UNEP)

Research carried out for this paper included individual consultations with members of the Secretariats of the nine organizations and the UNFF and a survey of the views of UNFF Major Groups, research on-line, and published books and papers. There was a surprising paucity of information on the details of the engagement of NGOs.

Key Findings

A significant number of representatives of these diverse groups express great interest in deepening their work with these intergovernmental bodies. In some cases they wish to be treated as full members of the body, or to be allowed equal input and discussion, culminating in being part of the final decisions. . Governments are generally not interested in this development.

¹ Language used in the outcome document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, *The Future We Want* (Rio+20, 2012)

- Because all nine organizations and the UNFF are intergovernmental in nature, only States are parties or members. The number of members/parties varies, with UNFF being the only body with universal membership.
- In some cases MGoS representatives wish to be treated as full members of a body or allowed equal input and discussion, culminating in being part of the final decisions. Since these organizations are inherently intergovernmental, changes of this magnitude would transform the very nature of these bodies and are highly unlikely to occur.
- All nine intergovernmental organizations have strict rules for the accreditation of observers, including MGoS, to their formal sessions. (Accreditation to UNFF meetings is governed by the rules of procedure of its parent body, the United Nations Economic and Social Council.)
- In the rules of procedures, MGoS organizations are generally referred to collectively as “non-governmental organizations”.
- The majority of organizations require that all or a high percentage of members or parties agree to the MGoS representatives speaking, providing written input and participating in informal sessions.
- Some organizations have opened up participation except for politically sensitive decisions, such as with CITES when there is an endangered species listing around which there is controversy.
- On an informal basis, UNFF was one of the first organizations to allow MGoS representatives into drafting groups (based on room size and agreement by member states).
- A few organizations, such as UNFCCC, routinely have closed sessions for member states only.
- Several organizations have shown a new interest in expanding the engagement of non-government participants in their work. For example, UNEP is carrying out a comprehensive review on how to function more effectively with these stakeholders.

Key Recommendations:

There are a number of recommendations incorporated in this paper and reflected at the end. The following represent new ways in which the UNFF could benefit further from MGoS:

- Create a formal advisory committee made up of representatives of the MGoS which advises and informs the Bureau, works with the Secretariat, coordinates with the MGoS focal points, and serves as an editorial board for a UNFF-maintained website.
- Agree that at informal and intersessional meetings of the UNFF, e.g., Ad Hoc Expert Groups (AHEGs), all participants are treated equally in terms of ability to speak. Note: AHEG’s are not decision making bodies, so doing away with the flags will facilitate a more open and broad discussion.
- Agree to add a MGoS representative as an observer to the Bureau meetings.
- Request the Co-Chairs of the Bureau to host a half-day pre-meeting with the MGoS representatives which briefs them on the SG’s papers, provides an opportunity for a full discussion with the Bureau on MGoS concerns and interests and provides an opportunity for submission of text for the Co-Chairs to consider in their development of future co-chair text during the session.

J. INTRODUCTION

1. Non-governmental stakeholders, including the Major Groups (MGs) identified in Agenda 21, are critical to the implementation of sustainable forest management (SFM) in all countries. Throughout the preparatory work for the 11th session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF11, 4-15 May 2015, New York), governments and experts stressed the need to strengthen the involvement of MGs in the post-2015 International Arrangement on Forests (IAF), including through provisions or mechanisms to facilitate and promote their participation and contributions to the work of the Forum.
2. This background paper provides a review and overview of provisions and arrangements for the participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other stakeholders in the following nine intergovernmental organizations and offers options for strengthening the involvement of MGs and other stakeholders in the future work of the post-2015 International Arrangement on Forests (IAF), focusing in particular on the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF):
 - a. Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
 - b. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna (CITES)
 - c. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) – Forestry Department
 - d. International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO)
 - e. Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (RAMSAR)
 - f. United Nations Convention to Combat Deforestation (UNCCD)
 - g. United Nations Environment Program (UNEP)
 - h. United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)
 - i. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
 - j. World Bank (WB) – Forestry
3. These organizations include legally binding agreements, treaty-based organizations and UN programs. They generally have significant forest-related mandates and undertake work on policies and agreements, some legally binding, which impact aspects of forests around the world.
4. The information contained in this paper is intended as background to further discussions on substantive and innovative approaches for engaging stakeholder organizations and their representatives in effective ways in the future IAF, focusing in particular on the UNFF and methods for improving stakeholder input to the Forum's sessions and intersessional work and facilitating stakeholder implementation of Forum resolutions and decisions.
5. This study is based on information provided by the secretariats of the organizations in paragraph 2, interviews with secretariat staff and other experts ([Annex 1](#)), responses to a brief survey circulated to the representatives of Major Groups participating in the UNFF ([Annex 2](#)), and a review of the background literature and web-based information ([Annex 3](#)). It also takes into account the relevant outcomes of UNFF11 and proposals made during the UNFF11 preparatory process ([Annex 6](#)).
6. It should be noted that the 10 organizations reviewed vary, sometimes significantly, in terms of membership, mandate and operating procedures. In addition, the level of detail and types of information available or provided to the author regarding stakeholder involvement varied

considerably across organizations. These variations created some challenges in comparing the provisions and arrangements related to governmental stakeholders across organizations.

7. Section II of the background paper provides a brief background on Major Groups and their involvement in the UNFF. Section III provides detailed information on how non-government organizations participate in the meetings and work of the 9 organizations which are the focus of this study. Section IV reviews the outcomes of UNFF11 regarding the involvement of Major Groups and other stakeholders in the work of the IAF. Section V provides recommendations on how to strengthen the role and involvement of stakeholders, particularly in the UNFF.
8. The author wishes to thank the many individuals who contributed to this study and in particular Dr. Manoel Sobral, Director of the UNFF, and the rest of the UNFF Secretariat for their guidance and support.

“It is a well-established principle that sustainable development cannot be achieved by governments alone - it requires the active participation of all people. The Major Groups, representing key sectors of society, help channel the engagement of citizens, economic and social actors, and expert practitioners in United Nations intergovernmental processes related to sustainable development.

Since 1992, the Major Groups structure has provided a platform for interaction with UN Member States, as well as engagement in the follow-up and review of sustainable development commitments. Throughout 2015 and beyond, the role of Major Groups and other stakeholders will be critical to ensure broad participation and inclusion of diverse perspectives, in particular in connection with the negotiation and implementation stages of the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and in conjunction with the High Level Political Forum (HLPF).”
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/majorgroups>

II. BACKGROUND

A. Origin of the term “Major Groups”

9. The UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) (informally called the Earth Summit) which was held in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, adopted Agenda 21, a comprehensive, non-binding, voluntarily implemented action plan focused on sustainable development. The term “Major Groups” was first adopted in Agenda 21. Section III of Agenda 21 is entitled “Strengthening the Role of Major Groups” and reflects a new recognition by governments that:
 - One of the fundamental prerequisites for the achievement of sustainable development is broad public participation in decision-making.
 - The commitment and genuine involvement of all social groups is critical to the effective implementation of the objectives, policies and mechanisms.
 - In the specific context of environment and development, the need for new forms of participation has emerged. This includes the need of individuals, groups and organizations to participate in environmental impact assessment procedures and to know about and participate in decisions, particularly those which potentially affect the communities in which they live and work.

- Individuals, groups and organizations should have access to information relevant to environment and development held by national authorities, including information on products and activities that have or are likely to have a significant impact on the environment, and information on environmental protection measures.
10. Section III of Agenda 21 identifies nine categories of Major Groups as stakeholders in sustainable development (**Box 1**). The preamble makes clear that any policies, definitions or rules affecting access to and participation by non-governmental organizations in the work of United Nations (UN) institutions or agencies associated with the implementation of Agenda 21 must apply equally to all nine Major Groups.

BOX 1 – Major Groups identified in Agenda 21

- Business and Industry
- Children and Youth
- Farmers
- Indigenous Peoples
- Local Authorities
- Non-Governmental Organizations
- Scientific and Technological Communities
- Women
- Workers and Trade Unions

B. ECOSOC rules of procedure governing NGOs

11. As a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council of the UN (ECOSOC), the UNFF operates in accordance with ECOSOC's rules of procedure. The participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including Major Group organizations, in formal sessions of the UNFF is governed by ECOSOC rules 81-84 (**Annex 4**) and ECOSOC resolution 1996/31(E/1996/31) on the Consultative Relationship between the UN and NGOs (**Annex 5**). E/1996/31 outlines the eligibility requirements for an NGO to obtain what is referred to as "consultative status" with ECOSOC; the rights and obligations of NGOs in consultative status; procedures for the withdrawal or suspension of consultative status; the role and functions of the **ECOSOC Committee on NGOs; and the responsibilities of the UN Secretariat in supporting the consultative relationship.**
12. Paragraphs 22, 23 and 24 of E/1996/31 establish three categories on consultative status for NGOs that may be granted by ECOSOC's Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations (**Box 3**).

BOX 2 – Categories of NGO accreditation to ECOSOC and UNFF

General consultative status

NGOs concerned with most of the activities of ECOSOC its subsidiary bodies, are closely involved with the economic and social life of the people of the areas they represent, and whose membership is broadly representative of major segments of society in a large number of countries in different regions of the world.

Special consultative status:

NGOs with special competence in only a few of the fields of activity covered by the Council and its subsidiary bodies.

Roster

A list of NGOs that do not qualify for general or special status but that ECOSOC or the Secretary-General of the UN considers can make occasional and useful contributions to the work of the Council, its subsidiary bodies or other UN bodies.

13. Part V of E/1996/31 contains the provisions governing NGO consultations with subsidiary bodies of ECOSOC, including UNFF. As summarized in **Table 1**, these provisions stipulate, *inter alia*, the extent to which an accredited NGO may intervene and participate in formal sessions of the Forum and other bodies.

Table 1 – Accredited NGO participation in ECOSOC and UNFF

| | General Status NGOs | Special Status NGOs | Roster NGOs |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| Can designate a UN representative | Yes | Yes | YES |
| Can propose items for ECOSOC &/UNFF agendas | Yes | No | No |
| Can attend ECOSOC and UNFF meetings | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Can speak at ECOSOC (limitations apply) | Yes | No | No |
| Can speak at UNFF meetings (limitations apply) | Yes | Yes | No |
| Can circulate statements at ECOSOC meetings | 2000 words | 500 words | No |
| Can circulate statements at UNFF meetings | 2000 words | 1500 words | No |
| Must submit quadrennial reports to ECOSOC | Yes | Yes | Yes |

C. Commission on Sustainable Development

14. In addition to enshrining the concept of Major Groups in Agenda 21, the 1992 Rio Earth Summit established the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) as a subsidiary body of ECOSOC. As such, the CSD was subject to ECOSOC rules and procedures, including governing NGO participation in CSD meetings. However, because the ECOSOC rules on this matter were very limiting and did not reflect the spirit of Agenda 21 regarding Major Group participation in UN meetings, ECOSOC resolution 1993/215 very slightly relaxed the NGO rules in the case of the CSD to allow NGOs to (a) address CSD meeting at the discretion of the chair and (b) make written presentations (at their own expense) to the CSD through the secretariat in the six UN

languages. A further compromise was to design modes of participation that directly “informed” CSD decision-making process but did not overstep ECOSOC rules.

15. The most innovative such mechanism was the multi-stakeholder dialogue (MSD), initiated in 1998 based on a recommendation of the 19th Special Session of the General Assembly (Rio+5). The MSD was an attempt to allow MGs and governments to interact on equal footing on a specific agenda issue, with parliamentary rules put aside in favor of an interactive discussion. The preparation for the MSDs was also a multi-stakeholder process, involving a steering group of organizing partners invited by the CSD Bureau to facilitate the engagement of their MG. The content of the dialogue was determined in consultation with the CSD Bureau and the organizing partners facilitated by the CSD secretariat. The organizing partners engaged in consultations with their MGs to draft a ‘dialogue starter paper’ (a position paper) and determined who would speak for the group at the MSD. MSD papers were released as part of the official documentation in languages without editing the content.

D. Rio+20

16. As a result of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20, June 2012), the CSD was abolished and replaced with the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development, also a ECOSOC subsidiary body. Rio+20 also expanded the term Major Groups to “Major Groups and other stakeholders”, recognizing that MGs may not cover all stakeholders in a given sector, such as forest owners.

E. The role of Major Groups in the UNFF

About Major Groups from the UNFF Website

The United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), according to the resolution [E/2000/35](#) that established it, is open to all States and operates in a transparent and participatory manner. The participation of a wide range of forest-related stakeholders is considered a key component of sustainable management of forests. Thus, the Forum welcomes the participation of the nine Major Groups as identified in [Chapter 23 of Agenda 21](#).

Accredited Organizations

Major group’s organizations that are accredited with the Economic and Social Council of the UN (ECOSOC) and the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) are encouraged to participate in UNFF Sessions. To verify if your organization is ECOSOC accredited, look under "NGO Search" in the upper right corner of the [ECOSOC NGO website](#). To check if your organization is accredited with CSD, please review the [CSD Roster](#). Organizations NOT accredited with ECOSOC or CSD may attend as part of the delegation of its country or as part of the delegation of an accredited organization.

Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue (MSD)

17. A multi-stakeholder dialogue is a regular part of the UNFF sessions, held for a half day during the first week of the session. As noted above, this modality was first used by the CSD and is used by some other and UN bodies. The dialogue provides an opportunity for an in-depth exchange

between Member States of the UNFF and representatives of Major Groups on issues relevant to UNFF sessions. Several months in advance of the UNFF session, the UNFF Secretariat issues a call for papers and commentaries from MG representatives related to the topics of the current UNFF session in preparation for the MSD. Major groups can use this opportunity to present their views on the issues being treated at the particular UNFF session in these UNFF MSD Discussion Papers. In order to facilitate the MSD process, in recent years, Major Group networks nominated focal points to assist in coordination of input of each of the nine different major group networks.

18. No concurrent sessions are held at the time of the MSD. Different ways of engaging delegates have been tried out. IUFRO has often served as the coordinator for the MSD sessions and worked with the MG leaders to improve the sessions. This includes coordinating the positions of the groups and having presentations focused on specific issues, rather than a broad brush approach to the agenda.
19. Despite the positive intent of MSDs, they have yet to meet their full potential in the UNFF context. While most delegations have a representative at the MSD, many delegates are absent. Also the MSDs tend to be more scripted or staged than interactive.

Other UNFF Major Group Arrangements

20. UNFF has taken significant action to promote the participation of MGoS, including in facilitating representatives participation in ad hoc expert groups (AHEGs), and with the provision of financial assistance and commissioning studies. With limited staff to serve as liaison and to manage MGoS outreach, there has not been much innovation of MGoS participation since the establishment of UNFF. However, a new commitment to learn from other organizations and to innovate in enriching the UNFF work through more effective commitment by MGoS is an objective of the review of the International Arrangement of Forests.
21. The UNFF Secretariat and some donors have gone to great lengths to ensure the representation of the Major Group focal points in AHEGs and meetings of the Forum. The biggest obstacle is financing the travel and participation of the representatives of those groups. The second most challenging is to gain interest on the part of certain groups in engaging more effectively, i.e., academia and science; industry.

Analysis of Current Major Group Representative Views

22. A survey carried out in the course of developing this paper provided the basis for identifying some strengths and weaknesses in the UNFF Major Group representation. Out of the 12 representatives on the list, five out of seven identified themselves as only representing one country and having served as representative for less than a year, while 42 countries were represented by the group as a whole (the larger number following to only a couple of representatives). However, those that responded took the time to answer and to provide indications of their interests. Their views are incorporated into the Recommendations for this paper. What follows are some highlights of the comments made in response to the survey:
 - “There is the need to strengthen collaboration with and among stakeholders. A more inclusive role for Major groups is needed. Strengthened engagement of MGs would provide an extended platform for UNFF and increase the legitimacy of the processes.”

- “It is important for Governments to appreciate the fact that there is the need for more diverse views than the ones projected by government officials. At the national level it is important to collaborate with other forest stakeholders. Governments should facilitate the establishment of a functional Major Groups networks at national level and consider including MG reps in their delegation to UNFF sessions and other important fora.”
- “If the MSD is to be retained as a session for dialogue the period should be extended to hear real life stories of communities, indigenous people, forest workers, youth and children, women and challenges faced by forest scientists in developing world.”
- Several respondents requested further active support from UNFF to facilitate their engagement in the Forum

23. A Youth Representative took the time to work on the survey instrument and to post it widely for a response. The survey was sent to:

- Twelve Focal Points
- Posted to the MGPoF Facebook page
- Posted to UNFF Children and Youth Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/UNFFYouth>)
- The survey was posted to the International Forestry Students’ Association Facebook Group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/IFSAdotnet/>)

III. MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATIONS WITH RELEVANCE TO FORESTS AND THEIR ENGAGEMENT WITH MAJOR GROUPS/STAKEHOLDERS

The section provides an overview of how NGOs participate and are involved in nine international organizations with relevance to forests. These organizations include the Rio conventions (CBD, UNCCD, UNFCCC), other multilateral environmental agreements (CITES, Ramsar), treaty-based organizations (ITTO, FAO, World Bank) and the UN Environment Program (UNEP). While all are intergovernmental organizations (i.e. only governments are parties or members), they differ significantly in terms of mandate, governance framework and structure and operating procedures. The secretariats also vary widely in size, ranging from about 30 to 500 staff (excluding the World Bank). Even the smallest secretariat is twice the size of the UNFF secretariat. These differences pose challenges in trying to analyze and compare the role and involvement of NGOs across organizations, as well as in identifying practices that might be usefully adopted by the Forum.

Table 2 shows the Major Groups and other stakeholders that are most active in each organization, including the UNFF, and are commonly recognized by a given organization as a relevant stakeholder group. As can be seen, only a few organizations utilize the “major group” approach from Agenda 21 to describe non-government stakeholders and observers. For the most part, active non-government participants in the work of these organizations are self-selected based on the organization’s focus and work.

Table 2 – Established Major Groups and other stakeholders active in 10 intergovernmental organizations

| Non-government group | CBD | CCD | UNFCCC | CITES | Ramsar | ITTO | FAO forestry | WB forestry | UNEP | UNFF |
|----------------------|-----|-----|--------|-------|--------|------|--------------|-------------|------|------|
| Environmental NGOs | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Business and | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|---------------|
| industry | | | | | | | | | | |
| Women | | | x | | | | | | x | x |
| Children and Youth | x | | x | | | | | | x | x |
| Scientific and technical | x | x | x | x | | | | | x | x |
| Farmers | | | x | x | | | | | x | |
| Indigenous peoples | x | | x | | | | | x | x | x |
| Local authorities | | | x | | | x | | x | x | x |
| Workers and trade unions | | | x | | | | | | x | x |
| Civil society ² | x | x | x | x | | x | x | x | x | x |
| Other stakeholders | x | | | | | x | | | x | x |
| | | | | | | | | | | Forest owners |

Table 3 provides a comparative summary of how these organizations and the UNFF currently engage non-government groups in their formal sessions and intersessional work. As can be seen, this engagement varies, sometimes significantly, from organization to organization. Further details on non-government participation in the nine non-UNFF organizations are provided below. (See **Section II** for a discussion of Major Groups in the UNFF.)

Table 3 - Summary comparison of NGO³ involvement in 10 intergovernmental organizations

| | CBD | CCD | FCCC | CITES | Ramsar | ITTO | FAO forestry | WB forestry | UNEP | UNFF |
|---|-----|-----|------|-------|--------|------|--------------|-------------|------|------|
| Governing body (and standing subsidiary bodies) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Accredits NGOs as observers | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Has established formal NGO advisory group(s) | X | X | X | | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Has established a roster of NGO experts | X | | | X | | | | X | | |
| Permits participation in drafting groups | X | X | | X | | X | | X | X | X |
| Requires NGOs to submit periodic written reports on activities ⁴ | | X | | | | X | | | | |
| Intersessional work | | | | | | | | | | |
| Open Sessions | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |

² “Civil society” is a term used, formally or informally, by some intergovernmental organizations to capture non-government stakeholders other than “business and industry”. For example, in ITTO the Civil Society Advisory Group (CSAG) generally includes representatives of environmental, local community and indigenous organizations, while the Trade Advisory Group (TAG) is comprised of representatives of the forest products industry, including exporters and importers.

³ As used in Table 3, “NGOs” refers broadly to all major groups and other non-government stakeholder organizations.

⁴ As a condition of continued accreditation.

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----|---|-----|----|---|----|-----|---|---|----------------|
| NGO experts participate as full members of task forces, expert groups, etc. | X | X | | X | | X | X | X | X | X |
| Provides funding for NGO projects | | | | | | X | X | X | X | X |
| Secretariat | | | | | | | | | | |
| Maintains roster of NGO experts | | | | X | X | | | | | |
| Consults with NGOs | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X | X | X |
| Supports dedicated websites for info-sharing | X | | X | | | | | | | |
| Has MOUs with NGOs | X | | X | X | | X | X | X | X | |
| Pays for NGO reps to attend sessions | | X | | | | X | | | | X ⁵ |
| Staff size (approx.) | 107 | | 500 | 35 | | 30 | 143 | | | |

A. Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) – <https://www.cbd.int/>

The CBD entered into force in 1993 and currently has 193 parties. The secretariat is based in Montreal with about 107 staff. The objectives of the Convention are the conservation of biodiversity, sustainable use of biodiversity, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.

1. NGO participation in the COP and subsidiary standing bodies

- Accredited NGOs may be admitted as observers to the COP and its subsidiary bodies. NGOs may make written and oral statements subject to certain rules and limitations.
- Goal 4 of the CBD’s Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 seeks broader engagement across society in the implementation of the Convention. Objective 4.4 of the plan is: “key actors and stakeholders, including the private sector, are engaged in partnership to implement the Convention and are integrating biodiversity concerns into their relevant sectoral and cross-sectoral plans, programs, and policies.”
- A Consortium of Scientific Partners on Biodiversity has been established to help implement the Strategic Plan on Biodiversity 2011-2020 and achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.
- Indigenous representatives participate in CBD’s cross-cutting initiative on traditional knowledge, innovations and practice.
- The COP has commissioned a study to improve stakeholder engagement, including at COP and SUBSTA sessions. The report is due in 2016.

⁵ Subject to the availability of funds.

2. CBD Secretariat and NGOs

- The CBD secretariat has entered into numerous memoranda of understanding (referred to as partnership agreements) with national and international NGOs to promote joint work in support of the Convention.
- NGOs cooperate with the secretariat by sharing data sets and biodiversity indicators for use in monitoring implementation of the Convention and progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. NGOs are members of the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership which works on the development and assessment of indicators for the Aichi Targets.
- The secretariat cooperates closely with NGOs under the CBD program of work on protected areas. Several NGOs were members of a task force on protected areas established in 1999.
- The secretariat's division for Mainstreaming, Partnerships and Outreach promotes, inter alia, engagement with major stakeholders and public education and awareness. The division of Science, Assessment and Monitoring supports, inter alia, the work of stakeholders and partners in improving scientific understanding of biodiversity and its conservation, sustainable use and equitable sharing of benefits and in monitoring biodiversity in support of evidence-based decision-making. The division of Technical Support for Implementation, inter alia, encourages cooperation with the private sector (under Article 10 of the CBD) and scientific and technical cooperation (under Article 18).

3. Potential relevance to UNFF

- While it is important to keep in mind that UNFF is not a convention, with its ancillary program implementation mechanisms, the following may provide some interesting options for UNFF:
 - Some dedicated websites for sub-groups of the MGoS, possibly maintained by those groups, with a gatekeeper role by the Secretariat or a consultant. There is one such website now for the Children & Youth MG linked to Facebook which offers an excellent template for other groups. <https://www.facebook.com/UNFFYouth>
 - Development of Partnerships with MGoS subgroups thematically focused to achieve near and long-term implementation of specific UNFF Decisions.
- Major Groups in the CBD include Business, Local Authorities, Parliamentarians, Universities and the Scientific Community, Children & Youth, The Green Wave for Schools and Non-Governmental Organizations (environmental NGOs).
- There is extensive participation of the non-governmental groups in CBD COPS, SUBSTA's and other activities.
- These activities include, inter alia:
 - i. Global Partnership on Cities
 - ii. Global Partnership on Business
 - iii. Global Youth Network
 - iv. CBD NGO Alliance (these are smaller NGOs)
 - v. Indigenous Peoples (under Article 8J)

- CBD Secretariat has a number of websites dedicated to Organizations and Stakeholders which are substantive and provide access and information to ongoing relevance to those groups. The work done with stakeholders goes beyond Civil Society and other specialized groups to Partnerships. Many examples of partnerships, both past and present, are available on their websites.

B. UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) - <http://www.unccd.int/>

Background on Stakeholder engagement

UNCCD was born in the Sahel in 1973 at an international meeting held in 1977 in Kenya and the international agreement was adopted in France in 1992.

- Since 1992 UNCCD has recognized Major Groups in its working modalities.
- However, in 2011 a review was performed which identified over a 1000 organizations belonging to Major Groups. The study further discovered that most were dormant and not engaged. UNCCD asked groups to verify their interest and engagement, which resulted in 185 confirmations of interest. As of 2015, there are 320 organizations accredited.
- Any ECOSOC accredited organization is automatically accredited to UNCCD.
- To maintain active Major Group participation – referred to as Civil Society - UNCCD requires a quadrennial report from each organization, without this the organization is dropped from accreditation (though it can reapply).

Organization of Major Groups

- UNCCD utilizes the GEF NGO network, with regional and sub-regional groups of the five UN regions, as the structure for a liaison modality. Modest funds are made available to one representative per region who is responsible for communicating UNCCD actions to their region and, in return, providing input to UNCCD.
- A Panel for Civil Society organizations was created which, among other decisions, finalizes which individuals will be provided travel support for UNCCD meetings. The panel is made up of 10 individuals appointed by the Regions.
- Under new management, UNCCD is developing a new outreach to business and industry to increase their participation.
- Most of the Major Group work UNCCD has engaged in to date is with environmental NGOs. Recent efforts are targeted at broadening the scope of stakeholder engagement, at least to include industry.

Stakeholder Requirements of Governments

- Member governments of UNCCD are required to prepare reports every two years on the objectives defined by the strategy. A four-year report, with different reporting requirements, is also submitted to the COP by members. Stakeholder input to these reports is a requirement. Such reports must be made through the member governments, not directly to the Secretariat.

Participation of Major Groups

- Any working groups established by the COP, including intergovernmental meetings - experts meetings for example - are supposed to have one or two NGOs represented.

- For example, a science/policy interface meeting occurs twice a year. It has 13 representatives and one is an NGO selected by the accredited organizations. The representative then reports back to the Civil Society constituencies.
- UNCCD also has regional meetings before the CRIC. Major Groups have not been invited to participate, but recently this has changed. They are invited to provide input, attend and speak at these regional pre-meetings as time allows.
- Major Groups have now been invited to participate in drafting groups, based on a non-objection by member states, organized prior to the meeting. They are sometimes allowed to speak, depending on the group.
- At the COP, Major Groups can offer an opening and closing statement, including at the high level segment, but only one representative of Civil Society is allowed to do so. That representative is selected by the Civil Society group.
- There are two half day events at each COP: one in the first week, the other in the second, which are organized and run by Major Groups, based on the CSD model.
- In order to increase Civil Society engagement, the upcoming COP will have a High Level Segment Panel of NGOs and Ministers discussing land right issues.

Secretariat Support for Major Groups

- One full time staffer manages all Major Group work, with a small budget which includes travel for meetings at which a Major Group representative is appointed to attend and for the CS Panel meetings.
- The staffing is supplemented by interns; from one to four provide support as available.

Analysis of relevance to UNFF

The UNCCD model is very similar to that of UNFF. UNFF has a broader representation of Major Group organizations other than environmental NGOs; however, the pattern is similar in terms of active participation. The following may be useful for UNFF to implement:

- Establishment of a Major Groups Advisory Committee, enabling inclusion of one representative per Group, functions could include:
 - Provision of a report to UNFF by Major Groups activities in support of implementation of UNFF Decisions
 - Coordination of a Major Groups consolidated report to UNFF as an Official Document (Note: individual group submissions should also be permitted as either additional or minority reports)
 - Decisions on more open participation by MGoS representation at UNFF intersessional meetings, including AHEGs
 - Outreach to groups representing the interests of each of the Major Groups to enable improved participation
 - A survey of existing and potential MGoS to identify those actively participating and strategies for reinvigorating those absent.
 - Creation of a High Level Segment Panel with heads of Major Groups and Ministers on the priority focus for each session of UNFF

C. UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) - <http://unfccc.int/2860.php>

Background on Stakeholder Engagement

- Over 1600 NGOs and 100 IGOs are admitted as observers to UNFCCC Cops. The NGOs represent an extremely broad spectrum of interests and include representatives from business and industry, environmental groups, farming and agriculture indigenous populations, local governments and municipal authorities, research and academic institutes, labor unions, women and gender and youth groups.
- Non-governmental organizations are admitted to the UNFCCC process via prior accreditation by online registration and nomination and confirmation of representatives by a set deadline.

Organization of Major Groups

- Constituencies of the groups above have emerged from as sub-groups to work together to address the UNFCCC issues.
- Sub-organizations include, inter alia:
 - Business and Industry non-governmental organizations (BINGOs)
 - Environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOs)
 - Local government and municipal authorities (LGMAs)
 - Indigenous Peoples organizations (IPOs)
 - Research and Independent non-governmental organizations (RINGOs)
 - Trade Union non-governmental organizations (TUNGOs)
 - Farmers and agricultural non-governmental organizations (Farmers)
 - Women and gender non-governmental organizations (Women and Gender)
 - Children and Youth (YOUNGO) Youth non-governmental organizations, which has led to innovations including a very active outreach and engagement, resulting in parallel sessions of that group to the main COP and initiatives led by the group itself. Special provisions for participation, access to leaders and providing names of speakers are made.

Participation of Major Groups

- Participation by observer organizations has been in place since the inception of the organization.
- Once admitted through the online registration and nomination of representatives process, observers may attend any session not listed as “closed,” unless at least one-third of the members object.
- There are Guidelines for the Participation of Observers which address facilitating participation as well as circumstances where observer participation may be curtailed.
- Submissions by observer organizations and those not accredited to the organization are encouraged and guidelines provided for the format and procedures online.
- Observer organizations may request side events and exhibit space through the website.
- Subsidiary bodies, such as the Kyoto Protocol, recognize the UNFCCC observer organizations.
- Details of stakeholder participation in UNFCCC are far too extensive to cover in this paper; however there are far more detailed examples of engagement of NGOs, business and industry, indigenous peoples in the work of the Convention and its subsidiary bodies which provide further models for IAF members, which can be found on the subgroup websites.

Analysis of Relevance to UNFF

- It would be important to first recognize that the UNFCCC has approximately 500 staff members and its proposed budget for 2016-2017 is €60.3 million, of which 76% is staff.
- However, the UNFF could potentially pattern some of the UNFCCC practices, including:
 - Further develop, as a specific program, the Children & Youth Major Group (CYMG), which has expressed a great deal of interest in participating more substantively in the Forum and the implementation of its Decisions.
 - The CYMG could hold a parallel session to the Forum which would engage children and youth in advancing the Decisions of the Forum and prepare Decisions for the Forum's Consideration.
 - The Secretariat could consider working with the CYMG to write proposals for funding more extensive work by Youth.
 - The CYMG have a website for UNFF which is actively used, it could be further promoted to member states as a vehicle for engaging youth in their countries.

D. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) - <http://www.cites.org/>

CITES entered into force in 1975 and currently has 181 parties. The secretariat is based in Geneva with about 35 staff. The aim of the Convention is to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival.

1. NGOs and the CITES COP and its subsidiary bodies

- Accredited NGOs may be admitted as observers to the COP and Standing Committee. The Convention requires an application which meets two criteria: 1) That the organization be one "qualified in protection, conservation or management of wild fauna and flora"; and 2) That it be "an organization in its own right, with a legal persona and an international character, remit and program of activities."
- Observer organizations can make interventions at the COP and Standing Committee but these may be time limited.
- The CITES Strategic Vision 2008-2020 takes into account, inter alia, the issue of "promoting transparency and wider involvement of civil society in the development of conservation policies and practices." Goal 3.3. is to enhance cooperation with relevant international, environmental, trade and development organizations.
- NGOs, including industry organizations, work together on an ad hoc basis during the COP on issues of joint concern and often prepare joint statements on like-minded issues.
- Knowledgeable observers are invited to participate in working groups of the Plants and Animal Committees.
- NGOs participate in and contribute to intersessional work, including working groups and other and other ad hoc processes which draw on their technical and scientific expertise. NGOs also participate in discussions of issues surrounding a possible decision by the COP.
- The COP has requested Parties to work with communities, including in offering incentives, to assist in the enforcement of CITES legislation, e.g., leading to the arrest of offenders.

2. CITES Secretariat and NGOs

- The Secretariat maintains a roster of NGOs with expertise in CITES issues.
- The Secretariat consults with NGOs with expertise in CITES matters and brings information provided by such “third parties” to the attention of the Parties.
- The Secretariat uses information by NGOs (as well as Parties and other sources) to assess the implementation of COP decisions and the overall effectiveness of the Convention.
- The Secretariat cannot sponsor (pay for) the participation of NGO representatives in CITES meetings.

3. Potential relevance to UNFF

- The culture of more informal engagement of NGO representatives for informal working processes, such as working groups and committees, is one which UNFF member states might agree to follow. This would de-emphasize country flags and focus more on individual expertise.
- CITES strongly supports the use of experts from NGOs in its work. UNFF may wish to add a roster and structure for non-governmental experts.

E. Ramsar Convention on Wetlands—<http://www.ramsar.org/about/partnerships>

Ramsar is the oldest of the global intergovernmental environmental agreements, having been established in Iran in 1960, ratified in 1971 in Ramsar, Iran and came into force in 1975.

Background on Stakeholder Engagement

- While NGOs had long had a role in Ramsar, in 1999 Delegations adopted a resolution which notes the significant contributions made by a number of NGOs in the inception, development and implementation of the Convention.
- The resolution adopted rules for formalizing the Convention’s rules with a group of NGOs by conferring on them the status of IPO of the Convention
- Other organizations subsequently were invited to apply for the same status.
- Rules and criteria for International Organization Partners (IOPs) status were included in annex to the resolution criteria for NGOs seeking a formal partnership.

Organization of Major Groups

Stakeholders are referred to as “Partners” in Ramsar:

- Partners include intergovernmental bodies, international organizations, and most notably ENGO
- “The Secretariat maintains a diverse global network of partners, ranging from formal collaborators on Convention implementation and organizations engaged in sustainable development and biodiversity to prominent private companies.”
<http://www.ramsar.org/about/partnerships>

Participation of Partners

- In its partnerships, Ramsar works to share knowledge and make recommendations through such vehicles as The Sustainable Agriculture Initiative, as well as working with individual companies on their water and wetland policies.
- Other partnership initiatives include:

- Stimulating and supporting public-private partnerships. In France, for example, the water catchment area in the Alps above the city of Evian has been designated as a Ramsar Site. A strong collaboration between the Evian division of Danone Group Pic, the City of Evian and surrounding communities has helped ensure purity of the bottled water product, and contributed to the economic vibrancy of the region.
- Improving regional cooperation, Ramsar Regional Initiatives seek to improve regional cooperation between a wide range of stakeholders. Their activities and projects are geared towards the goals of the Ramsar Convention, and they are accountable to the Contracting Parties.
- The Secretariat maintains a diverse global network of partners, ranging from formal collaborators on Convention implementation and organizations engaged in sustainable development and biodiversity, to prominent companies.

Analysis of Relevance to UNFF

- UNFF could consider partnerships such as those developed by Ramsar with private sector and international non-governmental organizations, along with other CPF partners, to implement specific Decisions of the Forum.
- Such Partnerships could also provide a baseline for tracking implementation of Forum Decisions, monitoring and evaluating the need to expand on the details of a Decision or to take further Decisions related to the Partnership goals.

F. The International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) - <http://www.itto.int/>

The ITTO was first established by the International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA) of 1983, a commodity agreement negotiated under UNCTAD auspices. The Organization is currently operating under the ITTA of 2006 (ITTA 2006) and has 71 members (33 tropical timber producers and 38 consumers, including the EU and its member states). The secretariat is based in Yokohama with about 29 staff. The overarching objectives of the ITTA 2006 are to promote the expansion and diversification of international trade in tropical timber from sustainably managed and legally harvested forests and to promote the sustainable management of tropical timber producing forests.

NGOs and the International Tropical Timber Council and its permanent committees

- Article 15.2 of the ITTA 2006 states that ITTO “shall, to the maximum extent possible, utilize the facilities, services and expertise of intergovernmental, governmental or non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector in order to avoid duplication of efforts in achieving the objectives of the agreement” and “enhance the complementarity and the efficiency of their activities”.
- Under ITTO’s rules of procedures, the Council may invite any NGO to attend a Council or committee session as an observer. Observers are invited to make oral and written statements.
- In 2000 in Decision 9 (XXVIII), “Enhancing Participation of Members of Civil Society in the Relevant Activities of the ITTO,” the Council invited trade and industry representatives and environmental organizations to establish open-ended advisory groups to contribute to the work of the Council. In due course, the Trade Advisory Group (TAG) and Civil Society Advisory Group (CSAG) were formed.
- The TAG comprises representatives of tropical forest industries, timber exporters and importers, timber trade and industry consultants, and trade and industry associations. TAG

- hosts the Council's annual discussions on the world timber market (required under the ITTA 2006).
- CSAG comprises representatives of a range of environmental and civil society NGOs with interests in tropical forests and aims to provide an opportunity for local voices and experiences to be heard in the Council, particularly on the equity dimensions of the tropical timber trade. CSAG regularly participates in panels during Council sessions and hosts side events on key topics. <http://csagweb.com/>
 - Approximately 20-30 representatives for both TAG and CSAG attend Council sessions, with more when the session is hosted in tropical countries.
 - The Council has provided financing to support the participation of representatives of both groups in Council sessions, including over \$100,000 for the last two years. The Council has also provided \$200,000 in project financing for these groups. These funds are provided as contributions by members as a part of an overall program of work.
 - Since 1989, the ITTO Fellowship Program has provided \$7.5 million to support 1300 fellowships to build the forestry expertise of young and mid-career government and non-government people in over 40 countries.

ITTO Secretariat and TAG/CSAG

- The secretariat works closely with the TAG in preparing annual market discussions and with the CSAG in organizing side events, as well as in providing opportunities for TAG and CSAG to engage in the Council and committees.
- TAG and/or CSAG member organizations work with the Secretariat in organizing intersessional conferences and events on specific issues (land tenure, small and medium forest enterprises, market access)
- The secretariat has entered into MOUs with World Wildlife Fund International and Birdlife International to foster joint work.

Potential relevance to UNFF

- The model of the TAG and CSAG could be a very interesting approach to providing input to the Forum and also potentially in advance of the development of the Secretary-General's papers for the Forum.

G. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the UN - Forestry Department - <http://www.fao.org/forestry>

The FAO was established in 1945 and is headquartered in Rome. The Forestry Department is one of six FAO departments with a staff of about 143, including nearly 40 outside Rome. The policy body of the Forestry Department is the Committee on Forestry (COFO) was established in 1971 by FAO Council resolution 10/71 to provide advice and recommendations in the field of forestry to the Director-General (DG) and Council. COFO is open to all member states of FAO and currently has 138 members.

COFO and NGOs

- The participation of NGOs in COFO is governed by the relevant rules of procedure established for the FAO Conference and Council. These are similar to ECOSOC rules (see section II.B). Essentially, an *international* NGO which has been granted one of the following statuses may be accredited to attend COFO as an observer:
 - i. “Consultative status” is granted by the FAO Conference and entitles the NGO to send an observer delegation to COFO, receive meeting documentation, circulate written statements and make oral statements (with some limitations). The NGO may participate in discussions if requested by the Chair.
 - ii. “Special consultative status” is granted by the DG and appears to have similar entitlements, with the exception of making oral statements.
 - iii. “Liaison status” is granted by the DG. NGO’s in this category may be invited to attend COFO but do not appear to have the latitude to make written or oral statements.
- International NGOs may request FAO observer status in one of these three categories, a process which involves some verification through an application process that the organization meets the criteria for a given category. Accredited NGOs are invited to all COFO sessions.
- Prior to 2014, accredited NGOs participating in COFO were generally environmental or civil society organizations. More recently, industry associations and other industry groups have sought accreditation.
- COFO encourages governments to include representatives of civil society and industry on their national delegations to COFO meetings.
- The format of COFO meetings has increasingly included a large number of side events, often organized by NGOs and in which NGOs actively participate.

1. FAO Forestry Department and NGOs

- The Forestry Department has initiated a World Forestry Week held at FAO Headquarters once a year with as many as 600-700 participants who may actively participate in sessions regardless of their government or non-government affiliation. The sessions focus on the themes COFO is addressing and the reports are presented to COFO.
- Regional Forestry Commissions also hold Regional Forestry Weeks which are open and have had as many as 1200 participants. Their reports are also presented to COFO.
- The World Forestry Congress organized by the Forestry Department every 5-6 years and attended by as many as 6,000 people, many representing NGOs, is modeled on an open-ended and participatory approach to learning, with both presenters and audience as full participants. Its output is also presented to COFO.
- The Department is not permitted to finance NGO representatives in their participation in COFO.

2. Potential relevance to UNFF

- It may be useful for UNFF to hold some of its meetings as open meetings, modeling the World Forestry Weeks and World Forestry Congress, which are not considered

intergovernmental meetings thus allowing for a more expansive and transparent dialogue about the issues and which could provide the basis for a broader input to the Forum.

H. The World Bank (WB)

The WB provided an example of its stakeholder programs, focused on the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF). In the WB's Internal Evaluation in 2012, the following was said, "This review concludes that the FCPF has been an innovative program that has added significant value at the global level in defining the modalities of REDD+. It has created a space for inclusive and transparent debate among donors, forested developing countries, civil society, indigenous peoples' groups and forest-dependent communities around REDD+. . . . Because of the requirements associated with REDD+, the FCPF has facilitated a level of consultation and dialogue at the country level that has not traditionally taken place in sustainable forest management projects."

Background on Stakeholder Engagement

- Stakeholder engagement was built into the FCPF from the outset.
- The group of Stakeholders recognized for the FCPF include:
 - **Government or public sector:** *central, federal, state/regional or provincial/district, and municipal level institutions*
 - **Domestic civil society (not-for-profit):** NGOs, religious denominations, universities, research institutes, farmer organizations, indigenous peoples' organizations, worker/trade unions, community organizations, and organizations that represent women, youth, and other vulnerable groups
 - **Private sector (for profit):** firms, associations, organizations, cooperatives, and individual proprietors, such as banking, transport, industry, marketing, professional and media services
 - **Rights-holders:** property owners, indigenous peoples and tribal groups, communities or individuals that hold traditional or formally recognized usufruct (and/or other) rights to land or resources that will be impacted by the decisions being made.
 - **The external community** such as international financial institutions, international or regional cooperation agencies, bilateral donors, international charity, NGO, and volunteer organizations

Organization of Major Groups

The FCPF created a global governance body with equitable representation of:

- Donors
- Developing countries
- Formal and informal observers from Civil Society Organization's (CSOs), Indigenous Peoples (IPs), private sector and international organizations
- At different levels, there are several points of engagement with stakeholders, including Indigenous Peoples and Civil Society
- FCPF uses a multi-stakeholder approach in enhancing participatory decision-making and in designing plans, as well as in different phases of projects

Stakeholder Requirements for Governments

The FCPF has built-in programs to facilitate engagement and these include:

- Regional level
- Social inclusion workshops

- Regional dialogues
- Sub-National and National Level:
 - Technical Working Groups at the national level
 - Country consultations of stakeholders at the district level
 - NGOs and forest dwellers representation in national implementation management frameworks
 - Outreach and effective communication strategies
 - Stakeholder involvement in designing national REDD+ strategies
 - Participation of stakeholders in the preparation process
- Global level:
 - Global Dialogues
 - Participation at side events during global conferences
 - Sub-National and National Level:
- Capacity Building Program:
 - Build the capacity of forest-dependent indigenous peoples and local communities to enhance knowledge and understanding
 - A fund to cover capacity building for these groups

Analysis of Relevance to UNFF

- UNFF may wish to explore using a broader definition of stakeholders to include those identified by the World Bank.
- Funds could be sought to introduce the policy decisions of the Forum into regional, national or sub-national programs through, for example, the Facilitative Process.

I. United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) <http://www.unep.org/civil-society/>

UNEP's objectives for engaging non-governmental representatives are quoted on its Civil Society webpage:

“One of the fundamental prerequisites for the achievement of sustainable development is broad public participation in decision-making. Especially in the context of environment and development, the need for new forms of participation has emerged.”

- UNEP recognizes the same list of Major Groups identified in Agenda 21 as other UN bodies do.
- In “The Future We Want,” Heads of State called for strengthening the role of UNEP and for “ensuring the active participation of all relevant stakeholders, drawing on best practices and models from relevant multilateral institutions and exploring new mechanisms to promote transparency and the effective engagement of civil society.”
- A comprehensive proposal for a new Stakeholder Engagement Policy that includes but is not limited to new accreditation rules and criteria of MGoS and enhancement of their role in UNEP in accordance with The Future We Want was made to UNEA at its first meeting in 2014
- The Stakeholder Engagement Policy was not approved by the Assembly. Thus UNEP continue to apply current rules and practices for stakeholder engagement. The Assembly agreed that further consultations would take place on the stakeholder engagement policy leading up to the second Environment Assembly.
- Funds could be sought to introduce the policy decisions of the Forum into regional, national or sub-national programs through, for example, the Facilitative Process.

Background on Stakeholder Engagement

UNEP seeks to engage the full range of non-governmental actors: local, national, or international; for-profit or non-profit; and advocacy, research, or business oriented.

Organization of Major Groups

- In 1999, UNEP created a Major Group & NGOs Unit in its Policy Branch to provide those organizations and their representatives with a chance to have broad participation in environmental decision-making.
- In 2004, the Major Group and Stakeholders Branch was established which engages with organized constituents, including not-for-profit organizations, networks and associations in contrast to single businesses or individuals.
- As with other intergovernmental organizations there are procedures for being accredited to UNEP, with associated rules and regulations
- MGoS may enter into the following types of Partnerships with UNEP:
 - Accredited MGoS may participate and engage in international environmental policy making in all relevant global and regional UNEP fora, in particular UNEA of UNEP Sessions as well as its subcommittees.
 - MGoS are invited to provide input into the preparatory process, including agenda setting, including for UNEA sessions
- Funds could be sought to introduce the policy decisions of the Forum into regional, national or sub-national programs through, for example, the Facilitative Process.
- MGoS can contribute to the monitoring and assessment role of the global environmental situation, particular in catalyzing the scientific community's contributions.
- MGoS may be implementing and executing partners, including in capacity building and outreach abilities at regional, national and local levels
- However, the upcoming discussion on enhancing stakeholder engagement in UNEP will be taken up at UNEA2 and it is possible that changes to the Stakeholder Engagement Policy will take place. Among the proposals already captured in the paper by the Secretariat include, inter alia, the following:
 - UNEP will facilitate the organization of a Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum which will provide for a consolidation of stakeholder views and to prepare for their input to the Assembly, and is open to member state delegates.
 - Stakeholders are invited to form stakeholder "bodies" or other groups to work further on contribute to UNEP, while following the principles of the organization.

IV. Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF)

Taken from the CPF website:

“The important role of Major Groups and other non-governmental stakeholders in achieving sustainable forest management and the need for the CPF to enhance engagement with them is widely recognized. Individual CPF members are already interacting with these groups in various ways and it may be beneficial to analyze the existing mechanisms for engagement by CPF members. This may also help to identify the stakeholder groups with the strongest potential to influence SFM and that are most relevant for CPF.”

“Involving Major Groups organizations in specific activities based on the CPF priority actions seems to offer a promising way of strengthening their participation. The experience of the policy learning initiative led by IUFRO demonstrates the value of involving Major Groups including at the working level.”

“It would also be useful to engage with Major Groups to discuss ways to strengthen Major Group engagement in future CPF actions. The Major Group-Led Initiative in support of UNFF, scheduled to take place in Nepal in March 2014 may provide a concrete opportunity for such an exchange.” [Statement by CPF on its website, 2015]

A major report on stakeholder engagement in CPF is underway and publication is expected in 2016.

V. United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) of UNEP

The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) was established in 1972. While the other Rio Conventions and other intergovernmental bodies have environment as a part of their work programs, UNEP has been recognized for its exclusive focus on coordinating both policy and science on environment. Interest in creating a more significant UN body for environment had been around for decades, and specific recommendations for consideration of a universal body were made at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and followed by the Rio+ 20, which then acted to request. [Resolution 67/213 and 67/251]

UNEP’s Governing Council was made up of 58 States that served four-year terms on a rotating basis, and represented the various regions of the world. However, concerns were raised that countries were not provided equal voice in this limited body and the case was made for a Universal body, representing all member countries.

A profound concern by many countries was the lack of status of the only UN body focusing exclusively on “all things environment.” It was felt by those advocating for a much more significant role that a world environment body was called for to effectively represent the concerns and potential for the world’s environment.

In response to these concerns, in 2012, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) adopted resolution 67/213 on strengthening and upgrading UNEP and establishing universal membership of its Governing Council. The resolution also calls for UNEP to receive secure, stable and increased financial resources from the UN regular budget, which was new, as financing was previously only voluntary. The 2013 UNGA adopted resolution 67/251, which changed the designation of the UNEP GC to the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme.

By comparison, the UNFF was already created as a Universal body from the inception and represents not only the 193 countries of the United Nations, but five more. It also has decision making status (which it should be noted the HLPF does not, for example). UNFF has the broadest membership configuration in the United Nations. It has also had funding from the Regular UN budget from the beginning.

VI. Proposal for a UN Forest Assembly (UNFA)

“The report of the Independent Assessment of the IAF (September 2014) proposed re-naming the Forum as the “UN Forest Assembly” (UNFA) to reflect the following proposed transformative changes to the UNFF contained in the assessment report:

1. Broadened objectives for the Forum regarding the contribution of forests to sustainable development, particularly to the post-2015 UN development agenda and associated SDGs.
2. Creation of a “UN Forest” arrangement to significantly enhance the science-policy interface, supported by a voluntary trust fund with an annual indicative funding target of US\$10-15 million.
3. Creation of a strategic trust fund to facilitate implementation of the Forest Instrument with an annual indicative funding target of US\$20 million.
4. Convening key non-government actors at the CEO level, including the private sector, in conjunction with ministerial segments of the Forum;
5. Mainstreaming MGs and regional/sub regional organizations into Forum sessions and in implementation of the Forest Instrument; and
6. Regionalization of the Forum by convening regional meetings in years the Forum does not meet.

The idea was to draw on the language transforming the UNEP Governing Council into the UNEA as a way to signal to the international community and stakeholders that the Forum had been revitalized and would function in future as more than a “talk show” and platform for negotiating resolutions of interest only to UNFF insiders. The proposed name change was also seen as a way of attracting higher level attention and participation in the Forum (which has seen increasingly lower level representation by many governments over the years) and enhanced participation by key stakeholders, including the private sector.

However, many delegations at AHEG2 considered the proposed name change from UNFF to UNFA to be largely cosmetic and/or unnecessary. The UNFF11 resolution took on board to some extent the Independent Assessment report’s proposals on broadening the Forum’s objectives (x.1 above), on the option to expand ministerial segments to include leaders from civil society and the private sector (x.4 above), and on identifying ways to mainstream MGs and other stakeholders into Forum sessions (x.5 above). However, since the major proposals to establish a UN Forest arrangement and strategic trust fund and convene regional sessions of the in alternate years were not taken forward by UNFF11, there was little rationale to re-brand the Forum as the UNFA, and the name of the Forum remains unchanged.

VII. Relevant Outcomes of UNFF11

A. UNFF11 resolution on the post-2015 IAF

The UNFF11 resolution on the IAF contains a number of elements related to the open and participatory nature of the Forum’s future operation and strengthening the involvement of Major Groups and other stakeholders in the work of the Forum and the IAF: UNFF11 agreed that:

- The IAF involves as partners interested international, regional and sub-regional organizations and processes, MGs and other stakeholders (para 1.c).
- The IAF should operate in a transparent, effective, efficient and accountable manner and provide added value and contribute to enhanced coherence, cooperation and synergies with respect to other forest-related agreements, processes and initiatives (para 1.f).
- The objectives of the IAF should be achieved through the actions, individually and collectively, of member States, international, regional and sub-regional organizations and processes, MGs and other stakeholders (para 2).
- The continued and enhanced participation of MGs and other stakeholders in the sessions of the Forum and its intersessional activities was important (para 29).

- The core functions of the Forum would include:
 - Providing a coherent, open, transparent and participatory global platform for policy development, dialogue, cooperation and coordination on issues related to all types of forests, including emerging issues, in an integrated and holistic manner, including through cross-sectoral approaches (para 3.a).
 - Strengthening high-level political engagement, with the participation of MGs and other stakeholders, in support of SFM (para 3.e).
- A core function of the Forum secretariat is to liaise with and facilitate the participation and involvement of countries, organizations, MGs and other stakeholders in activities of the Forum, including intersessional activities (para 17.a.vi).
- The Forum secretariat should promote the involvement of MGs and other stakeholders in the work of the Forum, in particular leaders from the private and non-governmental sectors, including forest industries, local communities and philanthropic organizations, and enhance the Forum’s interaction with these stakeholders (para 33).
- Sessions and intersessional work of the Forum should be restructured and enhanced to maximize impacts and relevance, including by fostering an exchange of experiences and lessons learned among countries, regional, sub-regional and non-governmental partners and the CPF (para 6.b).
- High-level segments of the Forum may include a “partnership forum” involving the heads of member organizations of the CPF and leaders from the private sector, philanthropic and civil society organizations and other major groups (para 6.d).
- Odd-year sessions of the Forum would serve as an opportunity for the CPF and its member organizations, regional and sub-regional organizations and processes, MGs and other relevant stakeholders to provide technical advice and input to the Forum (para 6.g.i).
- The CPF should identify ways to actively involve MGs and other stakeholders in its activities (para 22.d).⁶
- The provisions of operative paragraphs 14 to 16 of GA resolution 67/290 apply *mutatis mutandis* to the Forum in view of the existing modalities and practices of the Forum (para 30). See [Box 3](#)
- Invites MGs and other stakeholders to enhance their contributions to the work of the IAF (para 31), including providing views and proposals on (a) replacing references to the “Millennium Development Goals” in paragraph 1(b) of the Forest Instrument with an appropriate reference to the Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets, and on (b) the strategic plan for 2017-2030 and the quadrennial program of work for 2017-2020 (para 45).
- Invites member States to consider enhancing the participation and contributions of MGs group and other stakeholder representatives in country-led initiatives (para 32).

B. UNFF11 Ministerial Declaration

The Ministerial Declaration adopted by Ministers at the high level segment of UNFF11 recognizes the importance of the Major Groups and other stakeholders to SFM :

| |
|--|
| BOX 3 - Paragraphs from GA resolution 67/290 on the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) to be |
|--|

⁶ The CPF is currently looking at ways to improve its operations and functioning, including ways to engage Major Groups and other stakeholders in areas of mutual interest.

applied *mutatis mutandis* to the UNFF

The UN General Assembly -

14. Stresses the need for the forum to promote transparency and implementation by further enhancing the consultative role and participation of the major groups and other relevant stakeholders at the international level in order to make better use of their expertise, while retaining the intergovernmental nature of discussions, and in this regard decides that the forum shall be open to the major groups, other relevant stakeholders and entities having received a standing invitation to participate as observers in the General Assembly, building on arrangements and practices observed by the CSD;

Development, including ECOSOC decision 1993/215 of 12 February 1993 and resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996, which shall be applicable to the forum;

15. Decides, in this regard, that, while retaining the intergovernmental character of the forum, the representatives of the major groups and other relevant stakeholders shall be allowed:

- (a) To attend all official meetings of the forum;
- (b) To have access to all official information and documents;
- (c) To intervene in official meetings;
- (d) To submit documents and present written and oral contributions;
- (e) To make recommendations;
- (f) To organize side events and round tables, in cooperation with Member States and the Secretariat;

16. Encourages the major groups identified in Agenda 21 and other stakeholders, **such as private philanthropic organizations, educational and academic entities**, persons with disabilities, volunteer groups and other stakeholders active in areas related to sustainable development, to autonomously establish and maintain effective coordination mechanisms for participation in the high-level political forum and for actions derived from that participation at the global, regional and national levels, in a way that ensures effective, broad and balanced participation by region and by type of organization.

VIII. Recommendations

Based on the foregoing information and analyses, what follows are options for consideration by UNFF and the UNFF secretariat which could more effectively engage Major Groups and other stakeholders (MGOS) in the Forum's sessions and intersessional work. (New UN terminology since Rio+ 20 and now utilized in Post-2015 Development Process):

1. Establish a Major Groups and Other Stakeholder's Advisory Committee (MGOS) which informs the Bureau, works with the Secretariat, makes decisions on representation for UNFF-related meeting representation, coordinates input for a joint and individual MGoS papers to the Forum and organization of an interactive MGoS half-day session. Consideration should be given to Panels for each MGOS group wishing to address specific issues pertinent to the session, enabling inclusion of one representative per Group. Functions could include:
 - a. Provision of a report to UNFF on Major Groups activities in support of implementation of UNFF Decisions

- b. Coordination of Major Groups consolidated report to UNFF as an Official Document (Note: individual group submissions should also be permitted as either additional or minority reports)
 - c. Recommendations on more open participation by MGoS representation at UNFF intersessional meetings, including AHEGs
 - d. Outreach to groups representing the interests of each of the Major Groups to enable improved participation
 - e. A survey of existing and potential MGoS to identify those actively participating and strategies for reinvigorating those organizations which have dropped out.
2. Schedule a half day pre-meeting by the Co-Chairs of the Bureau with representatives of MGoS which focuses on the development of input to the SG's papers' and recommendations and which facilitates formulation of actual text recommendations to be utilized in consulting with Member States on MGoS views.
3. During Forum sessions, Co-Chairs of the Bureau to hold a daily one-hour consultation between MGoS and 2nd Committee representatives at UN Headquarters to update on Forum developments and to invite MGoS views prior to the opening of the Forum Session. Co-chairs to consider text proposals for incorporation in the Chairman's Draft Text.
4. The Forum invites Member States in a Forum decision to hold consultations in member states countries with MGoS prior to attending the Forum meetings.
5. The Forum invites MGoS to provide a roster of experts on technical and policy matters for use by Member Governments, noting that MGoS are not just advocates, but can also provide expertise.
6. Provides the roster of non-governmental experts for use by ECOSOC and its other subsidiary bodies.
7. Include the MGoS paper(s) prepared as input to UNFF sessions as an official document(s) for UNFF sessions.
8. The UNFF MGoS have established a Partnership on Forests (MGPoF) as a coordinating body. They request that the Forum recognize this body Partnership on Forests (MGPoF) as an NGO liaison group and provide financial support so as to interact with MG constituencies and provide the feedback to the Forum necessary for its work:
 - a. Add a MGoS representative as an Observer to the Bureau on a rotating basis
 - b. Create Partnerships through MOUs with MGoS organizations for implementation of specific UNFF Decisions.
 - c. Develop and implement a study and global survey of local, regional and international organizations' and MGoS members' views to build on current practices.
 - d. Convene expert meetings with Foundations, Pension Groups and other bodies with an interest in expanding stakeholder influence on multilateral policies and the effective implementation on the ground of Decisions made at the international level.
 - e. Approach a search engine, such as Google, to request establishment of a website seeking views by non-government stakeholders in IAF-related [member organization] policy and decision-making processes, linking such views to subsequent implementation.
 - f. Establish an interactive website which allows text proposals and comments intersessionally on upcoming issues and pre-texts for upcoming sessions and which will

provide an input to the development of SG papers. Note Post-2015 Development Process model.

- g. Work with ECOSOC and its other subsidiary commissions to develop coherence on Major Group and stakeholder engagement processes.

ANNEX 1

Major Groups Survey 2015

1. **How do you communicate with the people you represent?**
 - E-mail
 - Facebook
 - Twitter
 - Mail
 - Phone calls
 - Skype
 - Newsletters
 - Other:
2. **How long have you been involved in UNFF?**
 - Less than one year
 - 1-2 years
 - 2-5 years
 - 5-10 years
 - +10 years
3. **How many UNFF events have you attended? (e.g., UNFF, CLI, MGI meetings)**
 - 0
 - 2
 - 3
 - 4
 - 5
 - 6+
4. **What multilateral forest-related organizations and institutional stakeholder processes do you find positive improvements on UNFF's stakeholder engagement and why? Identify the organizations as you describe the processes please.**
5. **What ideas do you have about improving the input of non-government people around the world so as to contribute to the thinking of governments as they consider forest policy on all aspects of and all kinds of forests? Include consideration of all of the cross-sector aspects: people biodiversity, climate change, poverty elimination, food security, desertification, research and more.**

ANNEX 2

LIST OF INDIVIDUAL EXPERTS CONTRIBUTING TO THIS STUDY

1. Charles Barber - WRI
2. Alexander Buck – IUFRO
3. Tuuka Castren – The World Bank
4. Stephanie Caswell- International consultant
5. Jorge Laguna Celis - UNEP
6. Pam Chasek - IISD Earth Negotiations Bulletin
7. Peter Csoka - FAO
8. Gerhard Dieterle - The World Bank
9. Uri Dietrich - Yale University
10. Peter Gondo - Africa Forest Forum
11. Navid Hanif - UN ECOSOC
12. Stephen Johnson – ITTO
13. Alexander Juras - UNEP
14. Chen Hin Keong - Traffic
15. Sue Lieberman – WCS
16. Anna McAlpine-Baho – McAlpine Consulting
17. Carole Megawand – The World Bank
18. David Morgan - CITES
19. Tempe Rosen Michel - IISD
20. Marcos Montorio - UNCCD
21. Lambert Okrah - MGPoF
22. Catalina Santamaria – CBD
23. John Scanlon - CITES
24. Mita Sen - UNFF
25. Anna Stemberger - University of British Columbia
26. Lotta Tahtimen-UN DSD
27. Patrick Verkooijen- The World Bank

ANNEX 3

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16. Report of the Independent Assessment of the International Arrangement on Forests, Juergen Blaser, Mafa Evaristus Chipeta, Jorge Illueca, Maxim Lobovikov, Ricardo, Martinez Umali, September 2014
17. Co-Chairs Summary Reports from AHEG1, February 2014, and AHEG2, January 2015
18. Co-Chairs Summary Reports from country-led initiatives (CLIs) in support of the UNFF11:
 - o Workshop on the IAF beyond 2015, October 2014, Beijing
 - o Interlaken+10 Workshop on Governing Forest Landscapes: Lessons learnt from 10 years of experience and the way forward post-2015, February 2015, Interlaken
 - o Sustainable Forest Management: Designing Vehicles for Securing the Means of Implementation, March 2015, Kathmandu

ANNEX 4

COMPILATION OF PROPOSALS FROM UNFF11 PREPARATORY PROCESS ON STRENGTHENING THE INVOLVEMENT OF MAJOR GROUPS (MGs)

In the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF):

1. Co-Chairs Summary Report, AHEG1 (February 2014, Nairobi): Areas and options suggested for actions or improvement in strengthening the involvement of the MGs in the IAF
 - Consider the scope within UN rules of procedure for addressing concerns of MGs regarding when and how MGs are given the floor.
 - Consider establishing an advisory group as an additional mechanism to strengthen stakeholder engagement through detailed discussion and consideration of the views of MGs and as a channel for input of MGs into the Forum.
 - Encourage Governments to collaborate with MGs at the national level and include representatives of MGs in their official delegations to Forum meetings.
 - Increase the time allocated to multi-stakeholder dialogues (MSDs).
 - In years when the Forum does not meet, regional meetings of the Forum could offer an opportunity to further engage MG participation.
 - Consider ways to ensure sufficient resources for participation of MGs in Forum sessions and consider inviting them to join the CPF.
 - Consider creating networks of MGs to address cross-cutting forest-related issues, such as poverty reduction and women's, youths' and children's rights.
 - Encourage business and industry participation by raising the profile of the Forum in the private sector.
 - The capacity of the Secretariat should be increased to facilitate greater engagement of MGs.
 - Consider undertaking a comparative review of how convention bodies, UN bodies and CPF members interact with MGs

2. In the Report of the Independent Assessment on the IAF (September 2014): Proposals on strengthening the involvement of MGs in the IAF:
 - With its origins in the UNCED process, UNFF set precedents for encouraging participation of MGs. This might need to be strengthened further.
 - The IAF must remain open to the input of MGs.
 - The CPF and Secretariat should have more regional focus and stronger partnerships with MGs, with dedicated human and financial resources within the Secretariat to fulfill such tasks.
 - Member States could: (a) make a conscious effort to include representatives of the private sector on UNFF delegations and involve them actively in the MSD and/or (b) promote and support their participation in UNFF sessions, particularly in the MSD.
 - One possibility is to establish a "stakeholder advisory group" with strong participation from the private sector, to advise on how to better integrate and involve stakeholders in the sessions and work of the IAF and generate interest in the IAF, especially from business.
 - MGs need to improve communication on global forest policy within their broad networks in order to become more inclusive and relevant in a future post-2015 IAF and include all interested members of their constituency.

- Successful implementation of the Forest Instrument at national and regional levels will depend greatly on stakeholder engagement and participation, in particular more active engagement by the private sector (business and industry and mainstream environmental NGOs).
- It is essential that in future both commercial and philanthropic foundations, as well as other MGs and stakeholders, take part in and support the work of the IAF. This could be accomplished through, for example, the organization in conjunction with IAF ministerial segments of a “World Economic, Social and Environmental Forum on Forests” with major business companies and social and environmental NGOs.
- Member States may wish to consider how to make the global policy discussions of interest to commercial institutions.
- The way forward for the post-2015 IAF includes increased opportunities for meaningful participation by multiple stakeholders, including MGs, especially forest advocacy NGOs, business and industry, local authorities/communities, and non-governmental funding organizations.
- Regional mechanisms may prove more effective than approaches from New York in stimulating greater private sector engagement in global discussions about SFM.

3. In the Co-Chairs Summary Report, CLI Workshop on the IAF beyond 2015 (October 2014, Beijing) – Key points on strengthening the involvement of MGs and other stakeholders in the IAF:

- Participants acknowledged the crucial role and contribution of MGs and other stakeholders in the implementation of SFM on the ground. They are acknowledged that MGs have not seen the impact of UNFF on the ground.
- MGs tend to be more interested and have more involvement when there is a specific, definable policy issue to address and when they view the discussion in a neutral forum. Some policy goals cannot be reached by just the intergovernmental dialogue or just industry discussions. When a policy issue falls into this space where the both must to work together, it is possible to attract the genuine involvement of MGs. General or aspirational discussions fall outside their realm of activity.
- ECOSOC rules of procedure govern the accreditation, participation and intervention of MGs and other observers in Forum sessions. Given the potential difficulty of changing these rules to enhance the involvement of stakeholders in Forum discussions, the best course for UNFF may be to focus on becoming a more effective intergovernmental forum dealing with those limited but crucial areas of forest policy where only governments can act.
- MGs and other stakeholders could have a greater role in the work of the IAF:
 - As members of or advisors accredited to official national delegations to sessions of the Forum.
 - As advisers, steering committee members and participants in CLIs, OLIs, and RLIs which feed into UNFF meetings and decisions.
 - As participants in AHEGs and other intersessional meetings of the Forum.
- MG entities (e.g. an NGO) accredited to Forum sessions could have greater involvement in the UNFF process as an adviser to a UN regional group. For example, the African Forest Forum has served for a number of years as a technical adviser to the African Group during Forum negotiations.
- If UNFF were to establish an INC to negotiate a global LBA (or other negotiated outcomes), the Forum would decide the committee’s modalities, which could include more inclusive and flexible models for enhanced participation by Major Groups and other stakeholders.
- There are many opportunities through multi-stakeholder fora and intergovernmental processes outside the Forum for Member States to engage the private sector, NGOs, indigenous peoples and local communities, and other forest stakeholders, as well as to engage the media.

- The term “Major Group” dates from 1992 and may be not still be relevant.
- Participants noted that it would be useful if a comparative review were undertaken prior to AHEG2 on how other organizations encourage and accommodate stakeholder participation, including CPF organizations (e.g. FAO, GEF, World Bank, Rio conventions), other intergovernmental initiatives (e.g. FCPF, UN-REDD, Forest Investment Program), selected regional processes (e.g. CBFP) and more informal public-private partnerships (e.g. Tropical Forest Alliance 2020, Forest Legality Alliance).

4. In the Co-Chairs Summary Report, AHEG2 (January 2015, New York) - Involvement of MGs after 2015:

Areas of emerging convergence

- The multi-stakeholder nature of the Forum should be maintained and the broad and active participation of all stakeholders should be strengthened, as it was fundamental for the successful promotion of SFM.
- Ways should be found to enhance the participation of MGs in Forum sessions and in intersessional activities, as well as their contributions to the IAF.
- MGs’ participation in regional groups should be promoted, recognizing the value of the joint work done by major and regional groups and their contribution to SFM on the ground.

Additional views and proposals put forward by experts

- Collaboration between Governments and major groups at the national level should be encouraged, including by actively en major groups to be represented in the official delegations to Forum meetings.
- Business and industry participation should be encouraged by raising the profile of the Forum in the private sector, including through joint activities and the Major Groups Partnership on Forests (MGPoF).
- The establishment of thematic task forces or an advisory group should be considered, as additional mechanisms for strengthening stakeholder engagement.
- The holding of interactive sessions with both civil society and the private sector should be considered and partnerships with other stakeholders, including international environmental and development non-governmental organizations, should be developed.
- The establishment of a cooperation and collaboration mechanism between the CPF and MGPoF could be considered.
- Sufficient resources should be provided to major groups and the MGPoF to enable them to participate effectively in the Forum process, including in the implementation of the IAF at the national, regional and global levels.

5. In the Co-Chairs Summary Report, CLI Workshop on Governing Forest Landscapes (Interlaken+10): Lessons learnt from 10 years of experience and the way forward post-2015 (February 2015, Interlaken) – Recommendations directed to UNFF with regard to UNFF11 and the future IAF regarding stakeholders:

- Invite and meaningfully engage in the processes of the Forum and in the implementation of its resolutions all relevant stakeholders who have been inadequately involved (e.g. civil society, the private sector, women, the poor, youth, local communities and indigenous peoples, other MGs and regional/subregional bodies), including through the creation of interactive platforms (at regional, national and local levels) that build on existing platforms like national forest programmes (NFPs) or others created through REDD+ or FLEGT, and a serious role in identifying new and emerging issues.

- Building on current work by CPF members and others, encourage the CPF or its successor to strengthen support for and facilitate efforts by countries (including building their capacity) to improve forest-related governance and make available financial resources as necessary. This may include, for example, strengthening land tenure security, mechanisms for effective cross-sectoral and stakeholder coordination, strengthening the capacity of forest rights holders, and enabling environments for investment in SFM at local and national levels.
 - In pursuit of stronger political continuity of governance reform processes, combine stronger stakeholder involvement at local and national levels with the linking of national processes with regional policy frameworks and international commitments.
 - Encourage member states to explicitly include the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities in appropriate fora addressing land tenure security (e.g. SDG 1 and 5) and through mechanisms such as the SDG indicators.
 - Bearing in mind the differing situations and capacities of countries, UNFF-11 should urge member states to commit to strengthening support for and facilitating forest-related governance, including elements such as:
 - Utilize national forest programs and similar frameworks to engage industry and civil society stakeholders at all levels.
 - Improve strategic communication and coordination among forest stakeholders, between the forest sector and other sectors, and across levels of governance.
 - Respect and enforce the rights of the range of forest dependent populations, especially women, the poor, youth, and other marginalized groups.
 - Raise awareness of the current and potential contributions of local communities and indigenous peoples to SFM.
6. Co-Chairs Summary Report, CLI on Sustainable Forest Management: Designing Vehicles for Securing the Means of Implementation (March 2015, Kathmandu) –
7. Discussion Paper Submitted by Major Groups on the Future of the IAF - Proposals for increasing the effectiveness of the contribution of Major Groups

General

- Efforts must be continued to ensure the full involvement of all MGs, including business and industry and local authorities, for a more complete expression of the views of civil society and the increased legitimacy this will bring to the groups' message.
- Opportunities for meaningful dialogue at Forum sessions can be enhanced. One suggestion is to allow MGs to make brief comments at the end of each day.
- The ongoing collaboration of major groups with existing and new mechanisms needs to be formalized. The creation of the Major Groups Partnership on Forests (MGPoF) is a major step towards a more formal arrangement.
- An enhanced role for civil society must include the development of institutional mechanisms to mobilize MG involvement in policy development, implementation and monitoring at the national level. On the basis of a substantive debate and a clear recognition of the strengths and limitations of civil society organizations, it is of particular importance that a clear and significant role be defined for major groups in monitoring the implementation of agreements.

Specific

- The Forum should recognize the MGPoF as the official coordinating body of major groups within the Forum and grant it permanent observer status.
- The Forum should explore the possibility of setting up an independent process for accrediting major group's organizations wishing to attend its sessions, as is done by some UN agencies. Such a process would provide greater opportunity for participation.

- The Forum should support the idea of the CPF and the MGPOF of designing mechanisms for establishing collaborations with them and the idea of granting the Major Groups Partnership observer status in the Collaborative Partnership.
- Institutional funding should be provided to the MGPOF on an annual basis and from a strategic trust fund to guarantee core funding to the organization. Moreover, adequate funding should be provided for the active participation of MGs in Forum sessions. The organization would thus be able to raise funds from other sources to enable it to carry out its work at the global level in support of the Forum and to support the implementation of the international arrangement on forests by MG organizations.

Conclusion

- Individuals, in their daily lives, through their families and communities, and, collectively, through organizations, through the MGPOF, see and feel the interconnections between family and community well-being, including women and youth, and the health of forests. The socioeconomic benefits arising from forests and respect for forests as ecosystems need not, and in fact must not, be treated as a set of complex, difficult “zero-sum” trade-offs. There are many examples around the world where this is not the case, where the interconnections are understood and treated in a harmonious and integrated way. Such a perspective is an essential component of the process leading to stronger commitments to and vigorous implementation of improved sustainable forest management around the world that will be both the cause and the effect of an improved and more effective international arrangement on forests. MGs look forward to continuing to contribute to that perspective.

ANNEX 5

ECOSOC RULES OF PROCEDURE GOVERNING NGOs

E/5715/Rev. 2 1992

(Applicable to UNFF)

Rule 81: NGOs in category I or II may designate authorized representatives to sit as observers at public meetings of the Council, its committees and sessional bodies. NGOs on the Roster may have representatives present at such meetings when matters within their field of competence are being discussed.

Rule 82: The Committee on NGOs may consult, in connection with sessions of the Council or at such other times as it may decide, with NGOs in categories I and II on matters within their competence, other than items on the agenda of the Council, on which the Council or the Committee or the NGO requests consultation. The Committee on NGOs shall report to the Council on such consultations.

Rule 83: The Committee on NGOs may consult, in connection with any particular session of the Council, with NGOs in categories I and II on matters within the competence of the NGOs concerning specific items already on the provisional agenda of the Council on which the Council or the Committee or the NGO requests consultation, and shall make recommendations as to which organizations, subject to the provisions of paragraph 1 of rule 84, should be heard by the Council or the appropriate committee and regarding which subjects on which they should be heard. NGOs desiring such consultation shall apply in writing so that the request may reach the SG as soon as possible after the issue of the provisional agenda for the session, and not later than five days after the adoption of the agenda. The Committee shall report to the Council on such consultations.

Rule 84: The Committee on NGOs shall make recommendations to the Council as to which NGOs in category I should be heard by the Council or its sessional committees and on which items they should be heard. Such organizations shall be entitled to make one statement on each such item to the Council or the appropriate sessional committee, subject to the approval of the Council or sessional committee concerned. In the absence of the subsidiary body of the Council with jurisdiction in a major field of interest to the Council and to an NGO in category II, the Committee may recommend that an NGO in category II be heard by the Council on the subject in its field of interest.

Whenever the Council discusses the substance of an item proposed by an NGO in category I and included in the agenda of the Council, the NGO shall be entitled to present orally to the Council or a sessional committee of the Council, as appropriate, an introductory statement of an expository nature. Such an organization may be invited by the President of the Council or Chairman of the committee, with the consent of the relevant body, to make, in the course of the discussion of the item before the Council or committee, an additional statement for purposes of clarification.

ANNEX 6

ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31 Consultative relationship between the UN and NGOs

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling Article 71 of the Charter of the UN,

Recalling also its resolution 1993/80 of 30 July 1993, in which it requested a general review of arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations, with a view to updating, if necessary, Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 23 May 1968, as well as introducing coherence in the rules governing the participation of non-governmental organizations in international conferences convened by the UN, and also an examination of ways and means of improving practical arrangements for the work of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations and the Non-Governmental Organizations Section of the Secretariat,

Recalling further its decision 1995/304 of 26 July 1995,

Confirming the need to take into account the full diversity of the non-governmental organizations at the national, regional and international levels,

Acknowledging the breadth of non-governmental organizations' expertise and the capacity of non-governmental organizations to support the work of the UN,

Taking into account the changes in the non-governmental sector, including the emergence of a large number of national and regional organizations,

Calling upon the governing bodies of the relevant organizations, bodies and specialized agencies of the UN system to examine the principles and practices relating to their consultations with non-governmental organizations and to take action, as appropriate, to promote coherence in the light of the provisions of the present resolution,

Approves the following update of the arrangements set out in its resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 23 May 1968:

ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONSULTATION WITH NGOs

Part I - PRINCIPLES TO BE APPLIED IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CONSULTATIVE RELATIONS

The following principles shall be applied in establishing consultative relations with NGOs:

1. The organization shall be concerned with matters falling within the competence of the ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies.
2. The aims and purposes of the organization shall be in conformity with the spirit, purposes and principles of the Charter of the UN.

3. The organization shall undertake to support the work of the UN and to promote knowledge of its principles and activities, in accordance with its own aims and purposes and the nature and scope of its competence and activities.
4. Except where expressly stated otherwise, the term “organization” shall refer to non-governmental organizations at the national, subregional, regional or international levels.
5. Consultative relationships may be established with international, regional, subregional and national organizations, in conformity with the Charter of the UN and the principles and criteria established under the present resolution. The Committee, in considering applications for consultative status, should ensure, to the extent possible, participation of NGOs from all regions, and particularly from developing countries, in order to help achieve a just, balanced, effective and genuine involvement of NGOs from all regions and areas of the world. The Committee shall also pay particular attention to non-governmental organizations that have special expertise or experience upon which the Council may wish to draw.
6. Greater participation of NGOs from developing countries in international conferences convened by the UN should be encouraged.
7. Greater involvement of NGOs from countries with economies in transition should be encouraged.
8. Regional, subregional and national organizations, including those affiliated to an international organization already in status, may be admitted provided that they can demonstrate that their programme of work is of direct relevance to the aims and purposes of the UN and, in the case of national organizations, after consultation with the Member State concerned. The views expressed by the Member State, if any, shall be communicated to the NGO concerned, which shall have the opportunity to respond to those views through the Committee on NGOs.
9. The organization shall be of recognized standing within the particular field of its competence or of a representative character. Where there exist a number of organizations with similar objectives, interests and basic views in a given field, they may, for the purposes of consultation with the Council, form a joint committee or other body authorized to carry on such consultation for the group as a whole.
10. The organization shall have an established headquarters, with an executive officer. It shall have a democratically adopted constitution, a copy of which shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the UN, and which shall provide for the determination of policy by a conference, congress or other representative body, and for an executive organ responsible to the policy-making body.
11. The organization shall have authority to speak for its members through its authorized representatives. Evidence of this authority shall be presented, if requested.
12. The organization shall have a representative structure and possess appropriate mechanisms of accountability to its members, who shall exercise effective control over its policies and actions through the exercise of voting rights or other appropriate democratic and transparent decision-making processes. Any such organization that is not established by a governmental entity or intergovernmental agreement shall be considered an NGO for the purpose of these arrangements, including organizations that accept members designated by governmental authorities, provided that such membership does not interfere with the free expression of views of the organization.

13. The basic resources of the organization shall be derived in the main part from contributions of the national affiliates or other components or from individual members. Where voluntary contributions have been received, their amounts and donors shall be faithfully revealed to the Council Committee on NGOs. Where, however, the above criterion is not fulfilled and an organization is financed from other sources, it must explain to the satisfaction of the Committee its reasons for not meeting the requirements laid down in this paragraph. Any financial contribution or other support, direct or indirect, from a Government to the organization shall be openly declared to the Committee through the Secretary-General and fully recorded in the financial and other records of the organization and shall be devoted to purposes in accordance with the aims of the UN.

14. In considering the establishment of consultative relations with an NGO, the Council will take into account whether the field of activity of the organization is wholly or mainly within the field of a specialized agency, and whether or not it could be admitted when it has, or may have, a consultative arrangement with a specialized agency.

15. The granting, suspension and withdrawal of consultative status, as well as the interpretation of norms and decisions relating to this matter, are the prerogative of Member States exercised through the ECOSOC and its Committee on NGOs. An NGO applying for general or special consultative status or a listing on the Roster shall have the opportunity to respond to any objections being raised in the Committee before the Committee takes its decision.

16. The provisions of the present resolution shall apply to the UN regional commissions and their subsidiary bodies *mutatis mutandis*.

17. In recognizing the evolving relationship between the UN and non-governmental organizations, the ECOSOC, in consultation with the Committee on NGOs, will consider reviewing the consultative arrangements as and when necessary to facilitate, in the most effective manner possible, the contributions of non-governmental organizations to the work of the UN.

Part II - PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THE NATURE OF THE CONSULTATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

18. A clear distinction is drawn in the Charter of the UN between participation without vote in the deliberations of the Council and the arrangements for consultation. Under Articles 69 and 70, participation is provided for only in the case of States not members of the Council, and of specialized agencies. Article 71, applying to NGOs, provides for suitable arrangements for consultation. This distinction, deliberately made in the Charter, is fundamental and the arrangements for consultation should not be such as to accord to NGOs the same rights of participation as are accorded to States not members of the Council and to the specialized agencies brought into relationship with the UN.

19. The arrangements should not be such as to overburden the Council or transform it from a body for coordination of policy and action, as contemplated in the Charter, into a general forum for discussion.

20. Decisions on arrangements for consultation should be guided by the principle that consultative arrangements are to be made, on the one hand, for the purpose of enabling the Council or one of its bodies to secure expert information or advice from organizations having special competence in the subjects for which consultative arrangements are made, and, on the other hand, to enable international, regional, subregional and national organizations that represent important elements of public opinion to express their views. Therefore, the arrangements for consultation made with each organization should relate to the subjects for which that organization has a special competence or in which it has a special interest. The

organizations given consultative status should be limited to those whose activities in fields set out in paragraph 1 above qualify them to make a significant contribution to the work of the Council and should, in sum, as far as possible reflect in a balanced way the major viewpoints or interests in these fields in all areas and regions of the world.

Part III - ESTABLISHMENT OF CONSULTATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

21. In establishing consultative relationships with each organization, regard shall be had to the nature and scope of its activities and to the assistance it may be expected to give to the Council or its subsidiary bodies in carrying out the functions set out in Chapters IX and X of the Charter of the UN.

22. Organizations that are concerned with most of the activities of the Council and its subsidiary bodies and can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Council that they have substantive and sustained contributions to make to the achievement of the objectives of the UN in fields set out in paragraph 1 above, and are closely involved with the economic and social life of the peoples of the areas they represent and whose membership, which should be considerable, is broadly representative of major segments of society in a large number of countries in different regions of the world shall be known as organizations in general consultative status.

23. Organizations that have a special competence in, and are concerned specifically with, only a few of the fields of activity covered by the Council and its subsidiary bodies, and that are known within the fields for which they have or seek consultative status shall be known as organizations in special consultative status.

24. Other organizations that do not have general or special consultative status but that the Council, or the Secretary-General of the UN in consultation with the Council or its Committee on NGOs, considers can make occasional and useful contributions to the work of the Council or its subsidiary bodies or other UN bodies within their competence shall be included in a list (to be known as the Roster). This list may also include organizations in consultative status or a similar relationship with a specialized agency or a UN body. These organizations shall be available for consultation at the request of the Council or its subsidiary bodies. The fact that an organization is on the Roster shall not in itself be regarded as a qualification for general or special consultative status should an organization seek such status.

25. Organizations to be accorded special consultative status because of their interest in the field of human rights should pursue the goals of promotion and protection of human rights in accordance with the spirit of the Charter of the UN, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.

26. Major organizations one of whose primary purposes is to promote the aims, objectives and purposes of the UN and a furtherance of the understanding of its work may be accorded consultative status.

Part IV - CONSULTATION WITH THE COUNCIL

Provisional agenda

27. The provisional agenda of the Council shall be communicated to organizations in general consultative status and special consultative status and to those on the Roster.

28. Organizations in general consultative status may propose to the Council Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations that the Committee request the Secretary-General to place items of special interest to the organizations in the provisional agenda of the Council.

Attendance at meetings

29. Organizations in general consultative status and special consultative status may designate authorized representatives to sit as observers at public meetings of the Council and its subsidiary bodies. Those on the Roster may have representatives present at such meetings concerned with matters within their field of competence. These attendance arrangements may be supplemented to include other modalities of participation.

Written statements

30. Written statements relevant to the work of the Council may be submitted by organizations in general consultative status and special consultative status on subjects in which these organizations have a special competence. Such statements shall be circulated by the Secretary-General of the UN to the members of the Council, except those statements that have become obsolete, for example, those dealing with matters already disposed of and those that had already been circulated in some other form.

31. The following conditions shall be observed regarding the submission and circulation of such statements:

(a) The written statement shall be submitted in one of the official languages;

(b) It shall be submitted in sufficient time for appropriate consultation to take place between the Secretary-General and the organization before circulation;

(c) The organization shall give due consideration to any comments that the Secretary-General may make in the course of such consultation before transmitting the statement in final form;

(d) A written statement submitted by an organization in general consultative status will be circulated in full if it does not exceed 2,000 words. Where a statement is in excess of 2,000 words, the organizations shall submit a summary which will be circulated or shall supply sufficient copies of the full text in the working languages for distribution. A statement will also be circulated in full, however, upon a specific request of the Council or its Committee on NGOs;

(e) A written statement submitted by an organization in special consultative status or on the Roster will be circulated in full if it does not exceed 500 words. Where a statement is in excess of 500 words, the organization shall submit a summary which will be circulated; such statements will be circulated in full, however, upon a specific request of the Council or its Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations;

(f) The Secretary-General, in consultation with the President of the Council, or the Council or its Committee on NGOs, may invite organizations on the Roster to submit written statements. The provisions of subparagraphs (a), (b), (c) and (e) above shall apply to such statements;

(g) A written statement or summary, as the case may be, will be circulated by the Secretary-General in the working languages, and, upon the request of a member of the Council, in any of the official languages.

Oral presentations during meetings

32. (a) The Council Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations shall make recommendations to the Council as to which organizations in general consultative status should make an oral presentation to the Council and on which items they should be heard. Such organizations shall be entitled to make one statement to the Council, subject to the approval of the Council. In the absence of a subsidiary body of the Council with jurisdiction in a major field of interest to the Council and to organizations in special consultative status, the Committee may recommend that organizations in special consultative status be heard by the Council on the subject in its field of interest;

(b) Whenever the Council discusses the substance of an item proposed by a non-governmental organization in general consultative status and included in the agenda of the Council, such an organization shall be entitled to present orally to the Council, as appropriate, an introductory statement of an expository nature. Such an organization may be invited by the President of the Council, with the consent of the relevant body, to make, in the course of the discussion of the item before the Council, an additional statement for purposes of clarification.

Part V - CONSULTATION WITH COMMISSIONS AND OTHER SUBSIDIARY ORGANS OF THE COUNCIL

Provisional agenda

33. The provisional agenda of sessions of commissions and other subsidiary organs of the Council shall be communicated to organizations in general consultative status and special consultative status and those on the Roster.

34. Organizations in general consultative status may propose items for the provisional agenda of commissions, subject to the following conditions:

(a) An organization that intends to propose such an item shall inform the Secretary-General of the UN at least 63 days before the commencement of the session and before formally proposing an item shall give due consideration to any comments the Secretary-General may make;

(b) The proposal shall be formally submitted with the relevant basic documentation not later than 49 days before the commencement of the session. The item shall be included in the agenda of the commission if it is adopted by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting.

Attendance at meetings

35. Organizations in general consultative status and special consultative status may designate authorized representatives to sit as observers at public meetings of the commissions and other subsidiary organs of the Council. Organizations on the Roster may have representatives present at such meetings that are concerned with matters within their field of competence. These attendance arrangements may be supplemented to include other modalities of participation.

Written statements

36. Written statements relevant to the work of the commissions or other subsidiary organs may be submitted by organizations in general consultative status and special consultative status on subjects for

which these organizations have a special competence. Such statements shall be circulated by the Secretary-General to members of the commission or other subsidiary organs, except those statements that have become obsolete, for example, those dealing with matters already disposed of and those that have already been circulated in some other form to members of the commission or other subsidiary organs.

37. The following conditions shall be observed regarding the submission and circulation of such written statements:

(a) The written statement shall be submitted in one of the official languages;

(b) It shall be submitted in sufficient time for appropriate consultation to take place between the Secretary-General and the organization before circulation;

(c) The organization shall give due consideration to any comments that the Secretary-General may make in the course of such consultation before transmitting the statement in final form;

(d) A written statement submitted by an organization in general consultative status will be circulated in full if it does not exceed 2,000 words. Where a statement is in excess of 2,000 words, the organization shall submit a summary, which will be circulated, or shall supply sufficient copies of the full text in the working languages for distribution. A statement will also be circulated in full, however, upon the specific request of the commission or other subsidiary organs;

(e) A written statement submitted by an organization in special consultative status will be circulated in full if it does not exceed 1,500 words. Where a statement is in excess of 1,500 words, the organization shall submit a summary, which will be circulated, or shall supply sufficient copies of the full text in the working languages for distribution. A statement will also be circulated in full, however, upon the specific request of the commission or other subsidiary organs;

(f) The Secretary-General, in consultation with the chairman of the relevant commission or other subsidiary organ, or the commission or other subsidiary organ itself, may invite organizations on the Roster to submit written statements. The provisions in subparagraphs (a), (b), (c) and (e) above shall apply to such statements;

(g) A written statement or summary, as the case may be, will be circulated by the Secretary-General in the working languages and, upon the request of a member of the commission or other subsidiary organ, in any of the official languages.

Oral presentations during meetings

38. (a) The commission or other subsidiary organs may consult with organizations in general consultative status and special consultative status either directly or through a committee or committees established for the purpose. In all cases, such consultations may be arranged upon the request of the organization;

(b) On the recommendation of the Secretary-General and at the request of the commission or other subsidiary organs, organizations on the Roster may also be heard by the commission or other subsidiary organs.

Special studies

39. Subject to the relevant rules of procedure on financial implications, a commission or other subsidiary organ may recommend that an organization that has special competence in a particular field should

undertake specific studies or investigations or prepare specific papers for the commission. The limitations of paragraphs 37 (d) and (e) above shall not apply in this case.

Part VI - CONSULTATIONS WITH AD HOC COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL

40. The arrangements for consultation between ad hoc committees of the Council authorized to meet between sessions of the Council and organizations in general consultative status and special consultative status and on the Roster shall follow those approved for commissions of the Council, unless the Council or the committee decides otherwise.

Part VII - PARTICIPATION OF NGOS IN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES CONVENED BY THE UN AND THEIR PREPARATORY PROCESS

41. Where non-governmental organizations have been invited to participate in an international conference convened by the UN, their accreditation is the prerogative of Member States, exercised through the respective preparatory committee. Such accreditation should be preceded by an appropriate process to determine their eligibility.
42. Non-governmental organizations in general consultative status, special consultative status and on the Roster, that express their wish to attend the relevant international conferences convened by the UN and the meetings of the preparatory bodies of the said conferences shall as a rule be accredited for participation. Other non-governmental organizations wishing to be accredited may apply to the secretariat of the conference for this purpose in accordance with the following requirements.
43. The secretariat of the conference shall be responsible for the receipt and preliminary evaluation of requests from non-governmental organizations for accreditation to the conference and its preparatory process. In the discharge of its functions, the secretariat of the conference shall work in close cooperation and coordination with the Non-Governmental Organizations Section of the Secretariat, and shall be guided by the relevant provisions of Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) as updated.
44. All such applications must be accompanied by information on the competence of the organization and the relevance of its activities to the work of the conference and its preparatory committee, with an indication of the particular areas of the conference agenda and preparations to which such competence and relevance pertain, and should include, inter alia, the following information:
 - (a) The purpose of the organization;
 - (b) Information as to the programmes and activities of the organization in areas relevant to the conference and its preparatory process and the country or countries in which they are carried out. Non-governmental organizations seeking accreditation shall be asked to confirm their interest in the goals and objectives of the conference;
 - (c) Confirmation of the activities of the organization at the national, regional or international level;
 - (d) Copies of the annual or other reports of the organization with financial statements, and a list of financial sources and contributions, including governmental contributions;
 - (e) A list of members of the governing body of the organization and their countries of nationality;
 - (f) A description of the membership of the organization, indicating the total number of members, the names of organizations that are members and their geographical distribution;
 - (g) A copy of the constitution and/or by-laws of the organization.

45. In the evaluation of the relevance of applications of non-governmental organizations for accreditation to the conference and its preparatory process, it is agreed that a determination shall be made based on their background and involvement in the subject areas of the conference.
46. The secretariat shall publish and disseminate to Member States on a periodic basis the updated list of applications received. Member States may submit comments on any of the applications on the list 14 days from receipt of the above-mentioned list by Member States. The comments of Member States shall be communicated to the non-governmental organization concerned, which shall have the opportunity to respond.
47. In cases where the secretariat believes, on the basis of the information provided in accordance with the present resolution, that the organization has established its competence and the relevance of its activities to the work of the preparatory committee, it shall recommend to the preparatory committee that the organization be accredited. In cases where the secretariat does not recommend the granting of accreditation, it shall make available to the preparatory committee its reasons for not doing so. The secretariat should ensure that its recommendations are available to members of the preparatory committee at least one week prior to the start of each session. The secretariat must notify such applicants of the reasons for non-recommendation and provide an opportunity to respond to objections and furnish additional information as may be required.
48. The preparatory committee shall decide on all recommendations for accreditation within 24 hours after the recommendations of the secretariat have been taken up by the preparatory committee in plenary meeting. In the event of a decision not being taken within this period, interim accreditation shall be accorded until such time as a decision is taken.
49. An NGO that has been granted accreditation to attend a session of the preparatory committee, including related preparatory meetings of regional commissions, may attend all its future sessions, as well as the conference itself.
50. In recognition of the intergovernmental nature of the conference and its preparatory process, active participation of non-governmental organizations therein, while welcome, does not entail a negotiating role.
51. The non-governmental organizations accredited to the international conference may be given, in accordance with established UN practice and at the discretion of the chairperson and the consent of the body concerned, an opportunity to briefly address the preparatory committee and the conference in plenary meetings and their subsidiary bodies.
52. NGOs accredited to the conference may make written presentations during the preparatory process in the official languages of the UN as they deem appropriate. Those written presentations shall not be issued as official documents except in accordance with UN rules of procedure.
53. NGOs without consultative status that participate in international conferences and wish to obtain consultative status later on should apply through the normal procedures established under Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) as updated. Recognizing the importance of the participation of non-governmental organizations that attend a conference in the follow-up process, the Committee on NGOs, in considering their application, shall draw upon the documents already submitted by that organization for accreditation to the conference and any additional information submitted by the non-governmental organization supporting its interest, relevance and capacity to contribute to the implementation phase. The Committee shall review such applications as expeditiously as possible so

as to allow participation of the respective organization in the implementation phase of the conference. In the interim, the ECOSOC shall decide on the participation of non-governmental organizations accredited to an international conference in the work of the relevant functional commission on the follow-up to and implementation of that conference.

54. The suspension and withdrawal of the accreditation of non-governmental organizations to UN international conferences at all stages shall be guided by the relevant provisions of the present resolution.

Part VIII - SUSPENSION AND WITHDRAWAL OF CONSULTATIVE STATUS

55. Organizations granted consultative status by the Council and those on the Roster shall conform at all times to the principles governing the establishment and nature of their consultative relations with the Council. In periodically reviewing the activities of non-governmental organizations on the basis of the reports submitted under paragraph 61 © below and other relevant information, the Council Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations shall determine the extent to which the organizations have complied with the principles governing consultative status and have contributed to the work of the Council, and may recommend to the Council suspension of or exclusion from consultative status of organizations that have not met the requirements for consultative status as set forth in the present resolution.
56. In cases where the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations has decided to recommend that the general or special consultative status of a non-governmental organization or its listing on the Roster be suspended or withdrawn, the non-governmental organization concerned shall be given written reasons for that decision and shall have an opportunity to present its response for appropriate consideration by the Committee as expeditiously as possible.
57. The consultative status of non-governmental organizations with the Economic and Social Council and the listing of those on the Roster shall be suspended up to three years or withdrawn in the following cases:
 - (a) If an organization, either directly or through its affiliates or representatives acting on its behalf, clearly abuses its status by engaging in a pattern of acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the UN including unsubstantiated or politically motivated acts against Member States of the UN incompatible with those purposes and principles;
 - (b) If there exists substantiated evidence of influence from proceeds resulting from internationally recognized criminal activities such as the illicit drugs trade, money-laundering or the illegal arms trade;
 - (c) If, within the preceding three years, an organization did not make any positive or effective contribution to the work of the UN and, in particular, of the Council or its commissions or other subsidiary organs.
58. The consultative status of organizations in general consultative status and special consultative status and the listing of those on the Roster shall be suspended or withdrawn by the decision of the Economic and Social Council on the recommendation of its Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations.

59. An organization whose consultative status or whose listing on the Roster is withdrawn may be entitled to reapply for consultative status or for inclusion on the Roster not sooner than three years after the effective date of such withdrawal.

Part IX - COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

60. The members of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) shall be elected by the Council on the basis of equitable geographical representation, in accordance with the relevant Council resolutions and decision 1/ and rules of procedure of the Council. 2/ The Committee shall elect its Chairman and other officers as necessary.

61. The functions of the Committee shall include the following:

- (a) The Committee shall be responsible for regular monitoring of the evolving relationship between non-governmental organizations and the UN. With a view to fulfilling this responsibility, the Committee shall hold, before each of its sessions, and at other times as necessary, consultations with organizations in consultative status to discuss questions of interest to the Committee or to the organizations relating to the relationship between the non-governmental organizations and the UN. A report on such consultations shall be transmitted to the Council for appropriate action;
- (b) The Committee shall hold its regular session before the substantive session of the Council each year and preferably before the sessions of functional commissions of the Council to consider applications for general consultative status and special consultative status and for listing on the Roster made by non-governmental organizations and requests for changes in status, and to make recommendations thereon to the Council. Upon approval by the Council, the Committee may hold other meetings as required to fulfil its mandated responsibilities. Organizations shall give due consideration to any comments on technical matters that the Secretary-General of the UN may make in receiving such applications for the Committee. The Committee shall consider at each such session applications received by the Secretary-General not later than 1 June of the preceding year, on which sufficient data have been distributed to the members of the Committee not later than six weeks before the applications are to be considered. Transitional arrangements, if possible, may be made during the current year only. Reapplication by an organization for status, or a request for a change in status, shall be considered by the Committee at the earliest at its first session in the second year following the session at which the substance of the previous application or request was considered, unless at the time of such consideration it was decided otherwise;
- (c) Organizations in general consultative status and special consultative status shall submit to the Council Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations through the Secretary-General every fourth year a brief report of their activities, specifically as regards the support they have given to the work of the UN. Based on findings of the Committee's examination of the report and other relevant information, the Committee may recommend to the Council any reclassification in status of the organization concerned as it deems appropriate. However, under exceptional circumstances, the Committee may ask for such a report from an individual organization in

general consultative status or special consultative status or on the Roster, between the regular reporting dates;

- (d) The Committee may consult, in connection with sessions of the Council or at such other times as it may decide, with organizations in general consultative status and special consultative status on matters within their competence, other than items in the agenda of the Council, on which the Council or the Committee or the organization requests consultation. The Committee shall report to the Council on such consultations;
- (e) The Committee may consult, in connection with any particular session of the Council, with organizations in general consultative status and special consultative status on matters within the competence of the organizations concerning specific items already in the provisional agenda of the Council on which the Council or the Committee or the organization requests consultation, and shall make recommendations as to which organizations, subject to the provisions of paragraph 32 (a) above, should be heard by the Council or the appropriate committee and regarding which subjects should be heard. The Committee shall report to the Council on such consultations;
- (f) The Committee shall consider matters concerning non-governmental organizations that may be referred to it by the Council or by commissions;
- (g) The Committee shall consult with the Secretary-General, as appropriate, on matters affecting the consultative arrangements under Article 71 of the Charter, and arising therefrom;
- (h) An organization that applies for consultative status should attest that it has been in existence for at least two years as at the date of receipt of the application by the Secretariat. Evidence of such existence shall be furnished to the Secretariat.

62. The Committee, in considering a request from a non-governmental organization in general consultative status that an item be placed in the agenda of the Council, shall take into account, among other things:

- (a) The adequacy of the documentation submitted by the organization;
- (b) The extent to which it is considered that the item lends itself to early and constructive action by the Council;
- (c) The possibility that the item might be more appropriately dealt with elsewhere than in the Council.

63. Any decision by the Council Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations not to grant a request submitted by a non-governmental organization in general consultative status that an item be placed in the provisional agenda of the Council shall be considered final unless the Council decides otherwise.

Part X - CONSULTATION WITH THE SECRETARIAT

64. The Secretariat should be so organized as to enable it to carry out the duties assigned to it concerning the consultative arrangements and the accreditation of non-governmental organizations to UN international conferences as set forth in the present resolution.

65. All organizations in consultative relationship shall be able to consult with officers of the appropriate sections of the Secretariat on matters in which there is a mutual interest or a mutual concern. Such consultation shall be upon the request of the non-governmental organization or upon the request of the Secretary-General of the UN.
66. The Secretary-General may request organizations in general consultative status and special consultative status and those on the Roster to carry out specific studies or prepare specific papers, subject to the relevant financial regulations.
67. The Secretary-General shall be authorized, within the means at his disposal, to offer to non-governmental organizations in consultative relationship facilities that include:
- (a) Prompt and efficient distribution of such documents of the Council and its subsidiary bodies as shall in the judgement of the Secretary-General be appropriate;
 - (b) Access to the press documentation services provided by the UN;
 - (c) Arrangement of informal discussions on matters of special interest to groups or organizations;
 - (d) Use of the libraries of the UN;
 - (e) Provision of accommodation for conferences or smaller meetings of consultative organizations on the work of the Economic and Social Council;
 - (f) Appropriate seating arrangements and facilities for obtaining documents during public meetings of the General Assembly dealing with matters in the economic, social and related fields.

Part XI - SECRETARIAT SUPPORT

68. Adequate Secretariat support shall be required for fulfilment of the mandate defined for the Committee on NGOs with respect to carrying out the wider range of activities in which the enhanced involvement of non-governmental organizations is envisaged. The Secretary-General is requested to provide the necessary resources for this purpose and to take steps for improving the coordination within the Secretariat of units dealing with non-governmental organizations.
69. The Secretary-General is requested to make every effort to enhance and streamline as appropriate Secretariat support arrangements, and to improve practical arrangements on such matters as greater use of modern information and communication technology, establishment of an integrated database of non-governmental organizations, wide and timely dissemination of information on meetings, distribution of documentation, provision of access and transparent, simple and streamlined procedures for the attendance of non-governmental organizations in UN meetings, and to facilitate their broad-based participation.
70. The Secretary-General is requested to make the present resolution widely known, through proper channels, to facilitate the involvement of NGOs from all regions and areas of the world.

Notes

1/ Council resolutions 1099 (XL) and 1981/50 and Council decision 1995/304.

2/ Rule 80 of the rules of procedure of the Council.

