

TOWARDS RIO PLUS 20

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The process and framework

What does the GA resolution on Rio plus 20 entail for civil society

- ▣ Which rights do we have?
- ▣ Which obligations do we have to meet?
- ▣ What is it about the process that is important?
- ▣ What should we do in the follow-up process?

From the GA resolution

- ▣ § 5. *Reiterates that the Commission on Sustainable Development is the high level body responsible for sustainable development.....*
- ▣ and underlines the need to further support the work of the Commission, taking into account its existing mandate and the decisions taken at its eleventh session;

...a brief look at CSD

Let's first take ...

What is the CSD and the 11th session in 2003

- ▣ The Commission on Sustainable Development
- ▣ Established after Rio in 1992 (UNCED) to follow up the political process on Agenda 21 and sustainable development
- ▣ Was given a new and updated mandate at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, 2002

CSD 11, 2003

- ▣ Developed the modalities for its process based on the mandate given CSD by WSSD – the Worlds Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg 2002, and gave the Major Groups their position in relationship to the official delegates and the UN system

CSD offered

- ▣ a forum for a broad discussion
- ▣ on sustainable development issues,
- ▣ on overarching or cross cutting issues
- ▣ on normative issues,
- ▣ on issues that have direct relevance for work on local, national and regional level

▣ The CSD process is a unique instrument for civil society to communicate and interact with the governments.

- ▣ The UN CSD - the UN Commission for Sustainable Development - gave the world one of the most open and participatory intergovernmental systems working on sustainability issues.
- ▣ Like any intergovernmental system, its success relies to a large extent on content and cooperation. But integrated in any successful negotiation is a process. It is the process that helps guide and focus content.

- ▣ Understanding and respecting process and rules of engagement are therefore basic and paramount elements in any intergovernmental system: it avails accountability, participation, transparency and focus on the issues at stake.
- ▣ What is unique about the CSD, is that representatives of civil society, the so called major groups and representatives of governments participate often on near equal terms.

What does civil society
look like in this
process?

And for the record

- ▣ The major groups and civil society have been given a role in the process by being referred to in 8 of the 29 paragraphs of the GA resolution calling for the UN CSD in Rio in 2012
- ▣ At all levels of the process, nationally regionally and globally including at the conference

What are the 9 major groups?

- ▣ The concept was coined in 1992 and Chapter 23 in Agenda 21 identifies them;
- ▣ The 9 major groups is a mechanisms through which civil society and business interact with the UN system, and it is the mechanism that will be used during and at the Rio plus 20 process.
- ▣ Only UN accredited organisations may qualify as major groups at UN meetings

The 9 major groups are

- ▣ Women
- ▣ Children and youth
- ▣ Indigenous Peoples
- ▣ Farmers
- ▣ NGOs, non governmental organisations
- ▣ Trade unions
- ▣ Local authorities
- ▣ Science and technology
- ▣ Business and industry

The functionality of the 9 Major Groups

- ▣ Modalities with speaking procedure such as entry points into plenaries, right of representation, opening and concluding statements , right of contributing to thematic discussions etc, were developed by CSD and formalised during CSD 11 in 2003, these rules of procedure will be used during the Rio + 20 process

Engaging with and through the major groups - 1

- ▣ The major groups have two overarching functions – a service function and a representative function;
- ▣ The service function is carried out by an Organising Partner, OP, of the major group
- ▣ Each of the 9 Major Groups have their OP, appointed by the Bureau of CSD after being screened by the CSD secretariat.

Engaging with and through the major groups - 2

- ▣ The OP function is not a political one, but is to service the constituency of the major group, help set up meetings, liaise with the UN secretariat etc;
- ▣ The OPs chair the morning information meeting, where the entire major group community, all civil society present at a UN meeting, can come to be informed of what takes place during the, the state of negotiations, report back from plenaries etc;

Engaging with and through the major groups - 3

- ▣ The representative function, where policy is presented to the intergovernmental system, is carried out and decided by each of the present major group's constituency at any given UN meeting;
- ▣ Each of the 9 major groups have their own policy meetings daily, separate from the morning information meeting. The policy meeting is where statements are agreed upon, speakers are nominated. These meetings are run by the present constituencies, and not by the OPs

The Bureau for the conference

- ▣ runs the process leading up to the conference,
- ▣ has been selected by the UN General Assembly
- ▣ The African Group: Egypt and Botswana;
- ▣ The Asian Group: Pakistan and South Korea;
- ▣ GRULAC (Latin American and Caribbean Group): Argentina and Barbuda;
- ▣ CEIT (Countries with Economies in Transition): Croatia and the Czech Republic;
- ▣ WEOG (Western European and Others Group): the US (first half of the period) Canada (second half of the period) and Italy;
- ▣ ex officio: Brazil.

Why do we get
involved?

Should we lobby someone?

Why do we get involved in the Rio process?

- ▣ To influence the text that will be negotiated;
- ▣ To build and cultivate alliances for future work;
- ▣ To showcase studies of successes that your organization has achieved;
- ▣ To learn about how intergovernmental negotiations work;
- ▣ To get to know your government
- ▣ To raise funds for your work

Why attend UN meetings?

- ▣ To bring the result of the negotiations home, and follow up the decisions and see how they are being implemented
- ▣ To disseminate information about decisions taken
- ▣ To see if decisions taken at UN level should be brought to other sectors of the decision making process in your country, in addition to the participating ministry

Who are the players?

- ▣ The governments, delegations, civil servants
- ▣ The intergovernmental organisations, UN agencies
- ▣ Members of civil society, and as decided by UNCED in 1992, they are known as the 9 Major Groups
- ▣ And sometimes Ministers

Purpose of our presence at Rio

- ▣ Connect with governments
- ▣ Provoke governments
- ▣ Criticise with a friendly attitude
- ▣ Offer new insights
- ▣ Showcase major group benchmarks
- ▣ Network with other NGOs, major groups
- ▣ Ask questions

Purpose of our presence in the Rio process

- ▣ Revisit the content of Agenda 21 and the JPOI
- ▣ Broaden the vision on politics, analysis and suggested solutions and add this to the agenda
- ▣ Integrate sustainable development into our thinking in our work in our organisation

Preparing for Rio + 20

Let us throw a few questions to you:

- ▣ Are you accredited?
- ▣ Are your policy aims feasible?
- ▣ Are you moving beyond the possible range of outcomes to put down markers for future campaigns?
- ▣ What are your top four or five issues?
Concentrate on these.
- ▣ What do you want to achieve?

Key elements in multistakeholder partnerships and processes

- ▣ Discuss what can make a successful partnership, keeping the integrity of various stakeholders intact
- ▣ Identify good practices that could be replicated
- ▣ Identify policy practices impairing partnerships and processes from being developed
- ▣ Identify a framework for developing partnerships and processes

Key elements in multistakeholder partnerships and processes

- ▣ Raise issues and bring them to the table, and thus help influence the agenda
- ▣ Keep the issues of participation, accountability and transparency alive and relevant

Multi-stakeholder Processes - an overview of available tools

- **Dialogues**
- **Consensus-building**
- **Decision-making**
- **Implementation**
- **Monitoring & evaluation**

Principles of Stakeholder Involvement and Collaboration

Accountability

Effectiveness

Equity

Flexibility

Good governance

Inclusiveness

Learning

Legitimacy

Ownership

Participation

Partnership

Societal Gains

Strengthening
institutions

Transparency

Voices, not votes

And a challenge

Make sure the individual representative of the various major groups stay true to the basic principles of accountability:

- ▣ Keep the integrity of a representative from civil society intact
- ▣ Not be co-opted
- ▣ Stay true to the constituency

... on the position of NGOs in the UN hierarchy

A BIT OF HISTORY

NGOs at the UN

- ▣ The UN through its Charter formally recognises only 3 entities as accepted players; these are
 - ▣ 1 - the official national delegations,
 - ▣ 2 - intergovernmental organisations and
 - ▣ 3 - non-governmental organisations, NGOs.

NGOs at the UN

- ▣ To be accepted as an official UN player, to be accredited as the technical phrase is, a number of minimum criteria must be met. It is the NGO committee within ECOSOC* that sets the rules of accreditation, and this body formally issues the letters of accreditation to NGOs.
- ▣ *ECOSOC, The Economic and Social Council, one of the 5 permanent UN bodies.

NGOs at the UN

- ▣ NGO involvement in the UN has grown since 1945, and expanded considerably through the series of UN conferences held during the 1990s.
- ▣ By UN estimates, the number of international NGOs alone has grown forty-fold over the 1990s, to over 37 000 in 2000. Countless, thousands – possibly millions – more work regionally, nationally and locally.

The status of NGO participation at the UN

- ▣ The legal basis for NGO participation at the United Nations is Article 71 of the UN Charter. This allows ECOSOC to entertain consultative relationships with NGOs.

Stakeholders are in

- ▣ Now – in 2011-2012 - the major groups and civil society are written directly into the Rio plus 20 resolution

Back to the Rio resolution

- ▣ § 9. *Recalls the decision of the Commission (CSD) at its eleventh session that activities during Commission meetings should provide for the balanced involvement of participants from all regions, as well as for gender balance;*

- ▣ § 20. *Decides to organize, in 2012, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development at the highest possible level, including Heads of State and Government or other representatives, and in this regard accepts with gratitude the generous offer of the Government of Brazil to host the Conference, and also decides that:*

▣ § 20 (b) The Conference will result in a focused political document;

- ▣ § 20 C -The Conference and its preparatory process should take into account the decision taken at the eleventh session of the Commission to carry out, at the conclusion of the multi-year programme of work, an overall appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation;

- ▣ *§ 21 Encourages the active participation of all major groups, as identified in Agenda 21 and further elaborated in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and decisions taken at the eleventh session of the Commission, at all stages of the preparatory process, in accordance with the rules and procedures of the Commission as well as its established practices related to the participation and engagement of major groups;*

- ▣ § 22. Invites relevant stakeholders, including organizations and bodies of the United Nations, international financial institutions and major groups involved in the area of sustainable development, to provide ideas and proposals reflecting their experiences and lessons learned as a contribution to the preparatory process;

A little more on lobbying

And finally

NGOs/stakeholders in Intergovernmental Processes

4 important functions:

- ▣ Setting agendas
- ▣ Negotiating outcomes
- ▣ Conferring legitimacy
- ▣ Implementing solutions

Before the meeting

- ▣ Identify key governments –
- ▣ Are they for?
- ▣ Against?
- ▣ Not yet declared?
- ▣ Still to be contacted?
- ▣ Do we know any one in the Bureau?

And how are you performing?

- ▣ Be prepared
- ▣ Be polite
- ▣ Be engaged
- ▣ Build relationships and trust
- ▣ Offer insight and solutions
- ▣ Smile

Key elements in the process

- ▣ **Committee of the Whole (COW):** the formal sessions of a UNEP or MEA COP meeting, these are governed by rules of procedure and are simultaneously translated in all of the six UN languages.
- ▣ **Contact groups:** are set up to resolve a particular issue of disagreement. The members of the group are drawn from the governments who disagree, although they are open to others to attend. Sometimes called the Vienna process or “Vienna setting” where much of the informal negotiations goes on.

Key elements in the process

- ▣ **Friends of the Chair/President:** the meeting can use the Friends of the Chair approach – this is where the Chair invites a few of the prominent negotiators to form a group called Friends of the Chair/President to help informally in developing consensus on an issue or a set of issues.
- ▣ **Informals:** are a subsidiary body of the working groups and are set up when there is a set of critical issues that needs to be addressed.

Key elements in the process

- ▣ **Working Groups:** are subsidiary bodies of the COW. At any one time, usually no more than two will be meeting. Joint Working Groups come together when there are cross cutting issues the two working groups can be brought together to deal with them.
- ▣ **Ministerial Round Tables** are when Ministers want to discuss an issue but are not yet ready to make a decision

Key elements in the process

- ▣ The Secretariat is the permanent body that supports the work of the convention between meetings and does the logistical and secretariat work for the event and during it. The Secretariat will have a role that includes:
 - ▣ Preparing the background papers
 - ▣ Producing or updating a website for the meeting
 - ▣ Analyzing the national reports
 - ▣ Producing promotional material for the meeting
 - ▣ Producing negotiating text arising from the discussions
 - ▣ Making available all official documents

Strength of terms, for instance 'Green Economy'

- ▣ Is it defined?
- ▣ Just the term - no action identified
- ▣ Does it say who should do it?
- ▣ Does it have timelines?
- ▣ Does it have a monitoring mechanism?
- ▣ Asking governments to do something
...calls for

...to succeed

- Know Your Own Goals
- Know the Decision-making Process in Your Country
- Know When To Work at What Level
- Know the Decision-making Context
- Know the Tools at Your Disposal
- Know When To Make Your Position
- Know the Government Officials
- Know the Key UN Officials
- Know Your Allies
- Know Your Adversaries
- Know Your Limits
- Know Your Brackets and Terms

▣ Three things you
cannot do

▣ You cannot hang or position posters on undesignated areas or spread your material as you wish

▣ In a debate you
cannot defame a
country

- ▣ And you cannot hit a delegate –
- ▣ Even if you strongly disagree with him or her

Thank you

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