

Second Meeting of the Ad hoc Working Group on Stakeholder Engagement Policy
UN Complex, Gigiri, Conference Room,
Wednesday 15 June 2022, 10.00am – 1.00pm

Background paper on
Modalities for stakeholder engagement in intergovernmental processes
UN system practices for selected agencies, funds and programmes

Stakeholder engagement in intergovernmental processes is widely acknowledged and rooted in the practices of UN agencies, funds and programmes. To this end various approaches, mechanisms, guides/handbooks, and legislative instruments including the rules of procedure and resolutions are in place to facilitate engagement and participation of accredited stakeholders in the work of respective governing bodies, albeit with some variations amongst entities. Accredited stakeholders attend sessions of governing bodies as observers, save for ILO.

The following analysis draws on practices of selected UN agencies, funds and programmes, including the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), World Bank, International Labour Organisation (ILO), UN Women, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development, (IFAD) and the World Food Programme (WFP).

Most of the above organizations with support of member states have established self-led civil society or stakeholder engagement mechanisms with advisory boards/committees as interlocutors with the Bureau and leaders of governing bodies and the Secretariat, handbooks/guides for stakeholders to explain how to engage; and strategic annual forums/meetings to consolidate positions, share successful case studies, and further plan for actions during intersessional periods.

The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) resolution 1996/31 *Consultative relationships between non-governmental organisations and the United Nations* is instrumental in guiding ECOSOC related and other entities on stakeholder engagement. These include UN Women, UNODC, UNDP, UNAIDS, and UNDESA which services ECOSOC. Although the Human Rights Council, for example, is not a subsidiary organ of ECOSOC, only stakeholders in consultative status with ECOSOC can participate in the work of the Council. Qualifying organisations are granted general or special consultative status depending on whether they work in most or few of the areas of work of the UN entity.

Other entities like UNEP, UNCTAD, and ILO, have modalities for stakeholder engagement spelt out in the rules of procedure and relevant resolutions. For these organisations being in consultative status with ECOSOC does not entitle any organization to participate as an observer at the governing bodies. Applicants should meet the set criteria and be working in areas within the mandates of each organization. For UNCTAD stakeholders accredited to the Trade and Development Board have either general or special observer status as defined in ECOSOC resolution 1996/31.

ILO has more complex arrangements for engagement of stakeholders in the International Labour Conference, Governing Body, and subsidiary Committees. Employers and Workers International Organisations are represented on the Governing Body with voting rights. The ILO rules of procedure also provides for consultative status for non- governmental organisations at the global and regional levels.

Some organisations are included on a Special list based on set criteria and approval by the Governing Body.

UNAIDS has formal civil society representation on its governing body the Programme Coordination Board (PCB) to ensure inclusion of community voices to the key global policy forum for AIDS. Five NGOs, (three from developing countries and two from developed or countries with economies in transition) represent civil society including organisations for people living with HIV/AIDS to the UNAIDS Board. They serve up to three years and have non-voting rights. The PCB non-governmental organisations work through a fair and transparent process to elect members of the PCB, who are supported in their work and actively consult with their constituencies to seek ideas on AIDS policies and programmes and then lobby member states and cosponsoring organisations for meaningful improvement in the implementation and evaluation of AIDS policies and programmes.

UNEP with endorsement of member states instituted the Global Major Groups and other Stakeholder's Forum (GMGSF), which takes place in conjunction with the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) to inform civil society stakeholders of UNEP's current and future global policies. The GMGSF provides an opportunity for representatives of Major groups to exchange views and develop common positions in preparation for policy dialogues during UNEA. Prior to the GMGSF regional consultative meetings (RCMs) are held to ensure regional perspectives on all UNEP mandates are included in the UNEA. The Major Groups Facilitating Committee (MGFC) with two rotating Chairs self-identified from the Committee is the main channel and liaison between major groups and other stakeholders and UNEP Governance structure. The functions of the MGFC include support for the logistics, facilitation of understanding of the processes to optimize presence of MGS; and identification of expertise to prepare policy positions per MGS constituencies aligned to the UNEA agenda. UNEP stakeholders contribute to UNEA agenda setting.

The World Bank/IMF established the Civil Society Policy Forum (CSPF) to allow CSOs to dialogue, share views, and exchange ideas with World Bank and IMF staff, their peers, government delegations, etc. A key element of the CSPF is CSO – organized events throughout the sessions of the WB/IMF spring and annual meetings held in April and October. A Civil Society Facilitation Group (CSFG) elects or appoints a Working Group composed of 9 -11 members, which acts as liaison between the CSPF and WB/IMF CSO team and has clear terms of Reference. The President of the World Bank and IMF address the CSPF, and the CSFG interacts with the Executive Directors Group.

The UN Committee on Food Security (CFS) a subsidiary body of the FAO Council, which is jointly serviced with IFAD and WFP provides for a Civil Society and Indigenous People's Engagement Mechanism (CSM). It was established to give voice of CSOs in policy making processes on food security. The CSM is governed by the Coordination Committee (CC) comprised of 35 members. It facilitates the work of CSOs within their constituencies and subregional groups. The CC performs this role by sharing information, facilitating dialogue and consultations, supporting analysis and advocacy at national and regional level.

The Committee for Food Security Advisory Board provides for 4 members of the CSM. The CSM – CC elects 8 members from within CC to represent CSM at CFS Advisory Board every two years and on a rotational basis. The CSM Advisory Group advises both the CFS Bureau on its policy decision making processes by consolidating, facilitating, and sharing the CSOs common positions on CFS policy issues, and the CSM CC by informing its policy debate. It is the direct link with the CFS Bureau and Advisory Group during the inter-sessional period. The CSM Advisory Group meets for a face-to-face meeting prior to each Joint CFS AG/Bureau Meeting, to articulate CSM common contributions on each

topic of the CFS AG/Bureau meeting agenda. The work of the CSM is supported by policy working groups on topics aligned to priority themes of the CFS; and Finance working group; CSM annual Forum, a Secretariat to service operations of CSM, internal guidelines and terms of reference, finance, and accountability mechanisms. The funding is provided by a range of donors, especially member states, IFAD, FAO, and WFP, as well as member organisations.

UNDRR established a stakeholder engagement mechanism (SEM) that creates an open and structured avenue for close engagement of stakeholders in the implementation of the Sendai Framework through key global, regional, and national policy processes. SEM was established in 2018 and its key functions include to: build an inclusive and broad movement for the implementation of the Sendai Framework; create avenues to influence policy design and implementation; strengthen citizen-led and social accountability mechanisms; promote coordination, information exchange and harmonization between stakeholder groups; including cross-agency. SEM is stakeholder led and brings together representatives of 17 major groups and other stakeholders actively engaged in the 2030 agenda processes. It is governed by a SEM Advisory Group comprising two representatives from each constituency group.

SEM strives to achieve its objectives through global and regional advocacy and communication; engaging other stakeholders and CSO groups working on other Agenda 2030 themes to foster cross-linkages and transdisciplinary collaboration; and to share knowledge, expertise, case studies and lessons learned from below to inform regional and global processes and enhance implementation of risk reduction action plan. SEM organizes a stakeholder forum in conjunction with the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, to enable diverse stakeholders to share knowledge and experiences, and approaches to disaster risk reduction. It is also attended by governments, UN agencies, civil society, academia, and other stakeholders.

UN Women Civil Society Advisory Boards at global, regional, and national level are set up at UN Women headquarters, regional hubs, and country level to be consultative bodies for regular dialogues on policy, programming, normative, intergovernmental, and operational activities. The aim is to increase strategic dialogue, and formally recognize civil society as one of the most important constituencies, drawing on innovative initiatives, ideas, knowledge, expertise, and policy perspectives to assist UN Women achieve its strategic goals.

General Assembly Resolution A/RES/67/290 in operative paragraphs 15a-f, and 16 provides for stakeholder engagement in the deliberations of the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) to review implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the establishment of a coordination mechanism for that purpose. The Major Groups and other Stakeholder's Coordination mechanism (MGoS-CM) was therefore established. It is open to all nine Major Group and other relevant stakeholders active in sustainable development. The Terms of reference for the MGoS-CM spell out the functions and modalities for engagement.