

**DECISION ADOPTED BY THE UNITED NATION ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME  
GOVERNING COUNCIL AT ITS SPECIAL SESSION/GLOBAL MINISTERIAL  
ENVIRONMENT FORUM**

15 February 2002

**Governing Council Decision SSVII.5 of 15<sup>th</sup> February 2002.**

**Enhancing civil society engagement in the work of the United Nations Environment Programme**

The Governing Council,

Recalling resolution 2997(XXVII) of 15 December 1972 of the General Assembly, in particular its section IV, paragraph 5, as well as chapter 28 of Agenda 21,<sup>9</sup>

Recalling the United Nations Millennium Declaration<sup>1</sup> and General Assembly resolution 55/162 of 14 December 2000 concerning the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit,

Also recalling its decision 18/4 of 26 May 1995, which called for the development of a policy framework and appropriate mechanisms for working with civil society and the policy of the United Nations Environment Programme (issued on 30 October 1996) concerning “non-governmental organizations and other major groups”,

Also taking note for the purposes of this decision, that civil society encompasses major groups, that is farmers, women, scientific and technological community, children and youth, indigenous people and their communities, workers and trade unions, business and industry, non-governmental organizations.

Stressing paragraph 14 of the Malmö Ministerial Declaration,<sup>1</sup>

Noting the work of the United Nations Environment Programme with respect to civil society,

Further noting the civil society statement presented during the twenty-first session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, and recommendations and contributions from civil society organizations meeting with the United Nations Environment Programme in May 2001, and comments received from various civil society groups in response to the note of the Executive Director on draft strategy paper on enhancing the engagement of civil society in the work of the United Nations Environment Programme,<sup>2</sup> as well as the Civil Society Statement on Engagement with the United Nations Environment Programme, presented during the seventh special session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme in February 2002,

Aiming at further developing the relationship between civil society and the United Nations Environment Programme and its governing bodies, noting the arrangements recommended in the Executive Director’s report on implementation of decision Governing Council 21/19,

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<sup>1</sup> General Assembly resolution 55/2 of 8 September 2000.

<sup>2</sup> UNEP/GCSS.VII/4/Add.1.

Recognizing that engaging civil society stakeholders as partners is important for many reasons, including the fact that external stakeholders have many valuable experiences and ideas that need to be taken into account in order to foster long-term, broad-based support for the work of the United Nations Environment Programme,

## I

Decides the following:

1. To request the Executive Director to continue the current practice of convening a civil society forum that is regionally balanced and representative in conjunction with the meetings of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum in close consultation with civil society;
2. To request the Executive Director to further develop, and review and revise as necessary the strategy for engaging civil society in the programme of activities of the United Nations Environment Programme, in consultation with Governments and civil society. The strategy should provide clear direction to the secretariat to ensure that all programmes take into account opportunities for multi-stakeholder participation in design, implementation, monitoring of activities, and dissemination of outputs;
3. To invite the Executive Director to consider the best way to include the views of civil society in the proceedings of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum;
4. To further request the Executive Director to review the practices of civil society engagement in other United Nations agencies, as well as precise modalities of civil society engagement, including involvement of the private sector in the work of the United Nations Environment Programme to achieve constructive partnership with the business community. This involvement should be further discussed, developed, and formulated in consultation with the representatives of civil society and under the guidance of the Committee of Permanent Representatives;
5. Also to request the Executive Director to report to the twenty-second session of the Governing Council on the progress made in the enhancement of civil society engagement in the work of the United Nations Environment Programme;

## II

Agrees to make efforts to meaningfully consider the views of representatives of major groups and non-governmental organizations, including the private sector, giving them clear channels for providing Governments with their views, within the established rules and modalities of the United Nations system;

Decides to establish the Committee of Permanent Representatives as a working party to examine the amendment of rule 69 of the rules of procedure<sup>3</sup> of the Governing Council and report thereon to the Governing Council at its twenty-second session, and include the relevant agenda item for that session. In examining the subject, the Committee should take into account the following:

1. Civil society organizations having an interest in the field of the environment may designate representatives to sit as observers at public meetings of the Governing Council and its subsidiary organs. These include those organizations accredited to Economic and Social Council,

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<sup>3</sup> UNEP/GC/3/Rev.3 of 4 January 1998.

the Commission on Sustainable Development, and the multilateral environmental agreements, and the United Nations Environment Programme accredited organizations. When necessary, the Governing Council shall adopt and revise the list of organizations accredited to the United Nations Environment Programme.

2. Upon the invitation of the President or Chair, as the case may be, and subject to the approval of the Governing Council or the subsidiary organ concerned, accredited civil society organizations may make brief oral statements on matters within the scope of their activities, related to items under consideration by the Governing Council.

3. Written statements provided by accredited civil society organizations referred to in paragraph 1 above, related to items on the agenda of the Governing Council or of its subsidiary organs, will be circulated by the secretariat to members of the Governing Council or of the subsidiary organ concerned in the languages in which the statements were made available to the secretariat for distribution.