

**BRIEFING ON 14TH SESSION OF THE GLOBAL  
MAJOR GROUPS AND STAKEHOLDERS FORUM  
(GMGSF-14) and the 27<sup>th</sup> SSESSION OF THE  
GOVERNING COUNCIL/GLOBAL MINISTERIAL  
ENVIRONMENT FORUM (GC/GMEF)**

By: Flavia Cherry

# BRIEFING

- 14th session of the GMGSF was held from 16-17 February 2013, at UNEP headquarters and took place ahead of the First Universal Session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC/GMEF).

# Participation and Objective

**Reps from the six UNEP regions and the Major Groups and stakeholders of civil society attended the forum. It allowed us to follow up on outcomes of the Rio+20 conference held in June 2012, while providing an opportunity for multi-stakeholder dialogue on the post-2015 development agenda, and civil society participation in a strengthened UNEP.**

# Session on Post Rio +20

- Dealt with moving forward on Rio outcomes and the post 2015 development agenda
- Recommendations included the possibility of a treaty on human rights and the environment; complementarity of post-2015 processes with national sustainable development strategies and translating the multilateral process to be relevant for grassroots communities

# S: Introduction to the new UNEP Governing Council: Structure & Decisions

- Focused on possible entry points for NGOs despite limited seating and access to working groups at the discretion of the Chair
- Nine break-out groups were formed for reporting to plenary the following day

# Multi-stakeholder dialogue and Models of Participation in an upgraded UNEP

- Focused on the value added to the multilateral system through enhanced civil society participation

# Dialogue with UNEP Executive Dir

- The discussions, facilitated by the Youth Major Group, included UNEP's role in behavior change; lack of coherence between international and national levels in seeking access to environmental justice and concerns over bio-fuels and forest policy

# Human Rights and the Environment

- Focused on elements of a human rights-based approach, distinguishing between substantive rights to life, health and property, procedural rights such as freedom of expression and association, information and participation in decision making, environmental jurisprudence as well as newer concepts such as rights of nature or Mother Earth



# Human Rights & Environment con't

- Ended with a presentation on the impacts of oil in the delta and related ECOWAS and Dutch court judgements
- Following this, there were discussions regarding whether international equity can be a legal argument

# The Green Economy

- Focused on the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production
- Salient points highlighted the need to stop burdening sustainable farming practices with additional organic and fair trade labeling costs as well as the need to invest in natural capital as a source of growth and well-being

# The Green Economy con't

- The need to tackle issues of food waste and respect planetary boundaries
- Recovery of public funds being lost through tax avoidance and redirecting them for global transformation
- Dominance of profit-based agro-chemical and seed companies seen as potential challenge

# Achievement of Internationally Agreed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

- Focused on the Scientific Assessment Branch, Division of Early Warning and Assessment as well as the GEO-5 analysis of progress towards internationally agreed goals and policy options for green growth, cooperation, knowledge sharing, integrated approaches to goal setting; and measurement and monitoring

# Major Group Positions re UNEP GC from Regional Caucus Groups

- Need for sustainable jobs and education for youth
- Strong regulatory options for investments to respect planetary boundaries
- Need for regulatory frameworks to protect knowledge and practices of local farmers

# Caucus Recommendations con't

- Need for information sharing and transparency with indigenous and grassroots people
- Proposed creation of a green economy with multi-stakeholder platform to address needs of communities in conflict zones
- Need for increased representation of civil society engagement with UNEP in policy making and implementation

# Caucus Recommendations con't

- Need for UNEP to spearhead work on a Global Principal 10 Agreement, on access to information, participation and access to justice as well as establishment of an ombudsman for future generations
- Proposal for national governments to institute consultation processes to facilitate participation of major groups and to be part of national delegations
- A draft 'Principles of Stakeholder Engagement in UNEP' approved, with minor changes

27<sup>th</sup> Session of the Governing  
Council/Global Ministerial  
Environment Forum (GC/GMEF)

- Held from Feb 18 – 22 and was convened with plenary sessions, a Committee of the Whole and several working and contact groups to consider draft decisions



# Trail Blazing

- This historic first universal session of the Governing Council had the task of implementing the Rio+20 outcome regarding the functioning of UNEP and design of the international agenda for cooperation on the environment pillar of sustainable development

# Committee on the Whole

- After considering key agenda items, the COW approved 13 decisions, which were forwarded to the plenary for adoption

# Outcome of the 27<sup>th</sup> Session

- A separate listing gives details of the decisions adopted by delegates on the following:
  - - The intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
  - - Coordination across the UN system including the Environment Management Group
  - - Oceans

# Outcome of the 27<sup>th</sup> Session con't

- Sustainable consumption and production
- The green economy in the context of sustainable development
- Advancing justice
- Governance and the law
- State of the Environment and
- Chemicals and wastes

# General Outcome of the 27<sup>th</sup> Session con't

- The GC adopted a decision on institutional arrangements that invites the UN General Assembly to rename UNEP's governing body as "UN Environment Assembly" (UNEA)
- The UNEA aims to ensure active participation of all stakeholders and explore new mechanisms to promote transparency and effective engagement of civil society in its work, as well as to develop by 2014 a process for stakeholder accreditation and participation that builds on the existing rules of procedure and takes into account the inclusive modalities of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) and other relevant UN bodies

# Key Messages and Decisions from the Governing Council

- Separate hand-out provides same

# THANK YOU!!!

- Colleagues
- Government
- UNEP