

18th GMGSF

Overview of the 18th Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum, Nairobi, 7-8 March 2019

The 18th Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum was convened on 7-8 March 2019 at UNEP, Headquarters, Nairobi, Kenya

Day 1 (Thursday 8 March 2019)

The opening session moderator, Augustine Njamnshi of the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA), welcomed delegates to the Forum, highlighting the need for innovative solutions to sustainable production and consumption – the theme of UNEA4. Mohammed Abdelraouf, chair of the 18th GMGSF, thanked the UNEP secretariat for raising concern over environmental challenges and emphasized the important role of major groups and stakeholders in implementing UNEA4 resolutions in collaboration with Member States. He then summarized the status of the OECPD negotiations on the draft resolutions.



Mohamed Abdelraouf, chair of the 18th GMGSF

Co-Chair of the MGFC Mrinalina Rai expressed appreciation to the UNEA team, and reminded of the scales of biodiversity, water, forest and other losses, and the climate change debate. Co-Chair of the MGFC Khawla Al-Muhannadi observed that decision making requires broad participation. Mthika Mwenda, Executive Director of PACJA supported the statements of the Co-Chairs and noted how the collective findings of the regional fora were key to shaping the resolutions presented to UNEA4.

In his keynote address to the Forum, the Estonian Minister for Environment and UNEA4 President, Siim Kiisler, thanked the major groups committee for facilitating the meeting and highlighted the importance of civil society in making concrete commitments to solve environmental problems and raising a voice of concern. The work of the Major Groups and Stakeholders will make a difference. It is easy for Governments to make general statements, but concrete commitments and deadlines are complicated. For Mr. Kiisler, meaningful gains in environmental change are defined by collaboration that in turn requires active participation, and consistent funding is essential.



Mr. Siim Kiisler, UNEA 4 president

Chaired by Priscilla Achapka, the first panel session reflected on UNEA3 and raised concern on the status of implementation of UNEA3 resolutions. Oversight is needed and Member States must be held accountable. Leida Rijnhout noted that Member States and civil society had not always realised that UNEA was an Assembly, quite different from UNEP's previous governance structure. UNEA must rise to address global environmental challenges and civil society must actively participate. UNEP's budget is currently inadequate.

Neth Dano was asked about the relevance of UNEAs technology work. She observed the limited knowledge base in some developing countries which limits the options and ideas that emerge, and called for broader governance to include civil society and social movements. She also stated that fewer representatives were present at the Forum than the UNEA3 Forum possibly reflecting lack of UNEP resources to support delegates.

Christopher Chin noted some positive developments such as the working groups on plastics established after UNEA3 that led to better understanding of the issue. However, existing instruments only address aspects of the water plastic issue and there is a need for better multi-stakeholder collaboration on a global scale to solve problems.

Giulia Carlini described how the proportion of resolutions at UNEA4 dealing with civil society has dropped since UNEA3. The private business sector has remained represented as it was before. We must not accept opposition to the role of women as human rights and environmental defenders. She queried whether convening the Forum in parallel to OECPR rather than in advance as at UNEA3 was a sign of reduced funding. Ms. Achapka agreed that stakeholder participation is lower this time. It was observed that some Member States see civil society as anti-development which tends to marginalize the role of civil society at UNEA.

Two interactive discussions were chaired by Wadi Haider, and by Mohamed Abdelraouf, examining challenges related to:

- (1) Poverty and Natural Resources Management, and
- (2) Life Cycle Approaches to Resource Efficiency.

In the first session, Janice Cox spoke on industrial agriculture and noted that the impacts on deforestation, biodiversity, climate change, and coastal water quality have been observed the last decades, since Brundtland 1983, Rio 1992, FAO 2006. Sustainable Development Goal 2 has commented a need for a fundamental change in approach away from increasing economic performance. Business As Usual is not a future option. Isis Alvarez examined livestock farming in Latin America, and the negative effects on biodiversity, animal welfare, and local practices. Gabor Figeczky noted how agriculture affects climate change, habitat loss, invasive species, nutrient loading, and unsustainable resource use, agreeing that there needs to be a policy shift encouraging bottom up solutions. Isabelle Kempf (UNEP) commented on the environmental challenges related to poverty given that 70% of the world's poor rely on natural resources for their livelihood.

In the second session on Life Cycle Approaches to Resource Efficiency, Marion Guernard highlighted the role of local Governments, and especially of cities which are responsible for 75% of global resource consumption. The use of Lifecycle Tools establish product impact. Sarojeni Rangem considered consequences of pesticides and chemicals. Delphine Alvarez examined plastics from production through use to disposal, noting the policy efforts made against single use plastic, and urged the rewriting of the narratives. Elisa Tonda reported on life cycle approaches and sustainable consumption and production, and highlighted Hot Spot Analysis as a tool to identify unsustainable locations. Eco-innovation as a strategic approach to influence the entire

value chain was highlighted. Erick Omolio and Pedro Cunha discussed a range of concerns and possible solutions.

The afternoon session considered solidarity, the economy, and community initiatives. Trade union attitudes to transition to more sustainable futures were explained by Rhoda Boeteng of the African Trades Union Office. Edna Kaptoyo gave perspectives on community initiatives, and the way in which associations develop out of community groups to exert pressure and develop initiatives. Bharti Kannan described the efforts in India to address the needs and consequences of menstrual products. Norine Kennedy discussed inclusive multilateralism as a means of catalysing change, convening stakeholders and aggregating good experience. Ahmed Fathy described marine and coastal protection through the focused involvement of local groups that supported large scale campaigns.



Day 2 (Friday 9 March 2019)

On the second day of the Forum, various options were considered for Major Groups and Stakeholders engagement during UNEA4. Speakers highlighted the following substantive issues requiring attention:

- Targets relating to biodiversity which mature in 2020 and must be coherently managed;
- The potential mismatch between the platform for local communities and indigenous peoples stipulated by the

previous climate COP

- The SDG's shift away from human rights in favour of investment stakeholders;
- The Talanoa dialogue process to promote human rights, justice, and equality which has been largely reduced along with the space for civil society with the result that the private sector attracts greater attention than civil society and social movements.
- The dependence of indigenous peoples on their natural environment;
- The important need for climate justice;
- Liability and compensation issues that should be championed by civil society along with awareness raising of eco consequences and responsibilities;
- The strong gender dimension which achieving gender equality alone may not reflect; and
- The effects of corruption, and the extent to which Africa is creating green jobs.

Co-Chair Khawla al-Muhannadi introduced the open dialogue with the Acting Executive Director of UN Environment, Joyce Msuya, who welcomed delegates with the observation that the UN will not achieve its mandate if it does not work with people.



Issues raised by delegates included:

- the current draft ministerial declaration makes no reference to indigenous groups; whilst attention is given to business and SME's are not adequately involved;
 - the role of UNEP is addressing violence related to environmental protection
 - chemical damage to communities, and subsidies which can obstruct sustainability;
 - the role of UNEP in coordinating and simplifying the range of duties which

restrict the capacity of Governments to act (rapid progress is needed when trade groups may be particularly affected by environmental issues, such as fisheries and plastics);

- mechanisms to allow non-experts, communities, and civil society to participate effectively.

The afternoon's breakout sessions included five break out groups on five themes and resulted in the following:

- 1) Environmental challenges that directly relate to poverty and natural resource management: huge disparities remain between wealth, resource use, power and influence.
- 2) Life-cycle approaches to resource efficiency: greater consideration of social and environmental impacts is desirable when producing and consuming chemicals and regulating use.
- 3) Innovative sustainable business development: governments should consider setting up frameworks for both technological and social innovations.
- 4) Progress in the implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement and SDGs: a supportive environment for implementation is created through sharing, access, transparency, synergy between countries, strengthened regulations, and justice.
- 5) Innovative financing solutions: innovations are needed with regard to investments, taxes, subsidies and other feasible finance mechanisms.



A break out group

Closure of the Forum

The closing session of the Forum was co-chaired by Mohammed Abdelraouf, chair of the 18th GMGSF and Mthika Mwenda, Executive Director of PACJA. They thanked UNEP and all the facilitators and delegates for their active participation, and took stock of what was accomplished during the two days of the Forum.



The participants of the 18th GMGSF

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