



Post-Rio to Post-2015 Think Piece Entry points for stakeholder engagement

Chantal Line Carpentier, Coordinator of Major Groups, UN DESA

I. The Rio+20 Conference and Major Groups other stakeholders

Preparations for and the Rio+20 Summit were conducted with the active participation of all major groups, as identified in Agenda 21, at all stages of the preparatory process. This was as called for by the enabling GA resolution (A/RES/64/236, para 21). The nine major groups established by Agenda 21 are the most comprehensive structure of civil society engagement with any intergovernmental process. The nine major groups comprise women, children and youth, indigenous peoples, workers and trade unions, local authorities, NGOs, business and industry, scientific and technological community and farmers.

Compared to previous United Nations conferences, Rio +20 witnessed unprecedented access and participation by major group representatives. Over 10,000 of them were accredited to the Conference itself. Major group representatives took part on an equal footing in the Conference Round Tables, alongside heads of state and government, and UN agency heads. In the spirit of sustainable development, governments granted major groups free and open access to nearly all negotiations, which are traditionally closed to non-state actors. Additionally, major groups enjoyed four exclusive days of Development Dialogues, organized by the host government, devoted to the themes of the conference.

Participation in the Conference extended far beyond Rio. Through social media, more than 50 million people shared or viewed ideas and thoughts about sustainable development and the future they want, and over 1 billion impressions were generated on Twitter. Portuguese-language posts were widely viewed, with the Brazilian campaign for Rio+20 reaching more than 1 million people on Facebook.

II. Rio+20 Outcomes

There were actually several outcomes to the Rio+20 conference. A 53-page political outcome document, agreed to by all 193 countries, charts the way forward for international cooperation on sustainable development. In addition, governments, businesses and other civil society partners registered more than 700 commitments to concrete actions that will deliver results on the ground to address specific needs, such as sustainable energy and transport. The commitments made in Rio include \$50 billion that will help one billion people gain access to sustainable energy.

As the UN Secretary-General has pointed out, the outcome document provides a firm foundation for social, economic and environmental well-being. It is now our responsibility to build on it. Rio+20 has affirmed fundamental principles -- renewed essential commitments -- and given us new direction. Recommendations reflecting the voices from civil society comprise a third outcome. These include among other references to strengthening Major groups and civil society governance participation in the Rio+20 processes and follow-up.

The language clearly indicates a desire to work more closely with Major Groups and other stakeholders engaging them in decision-making, planning and implementation of SD. Para 43 lists additional stakeholders beyond the Major Groups adopted in Agenda 21 reflecting the effective lobby of groups such as volunteers, foundations and older persons and persons with disabilities.

Major Groups are explicitly referenced in the following paragraphs:

Para 43. In this regard, we agree to work more closely with the major groups and other stakeholders and encourage their active participation, as appropriate, in processes that contribute to decision-making, planning



Para 55. commit to work together with major groups and other stakeholders (in global partnership for sustainable development in) addressing implementation gaps.

Para 76 (h on IFSD) Enhance the participation and effective engagement of civil society and other relevant stakeholders in the relevant international forums and in this regard promote transparency and broad public participation and partnerships to implement sustainable development;

Para 84 (HLPF) ...building on the strengths, experiences, resources and inclusive participation modalities of the Commission on Sustainable Development, and subsequently replacing the Commission.

Para 85 (h on HLPF) Promote transparency and implementation through further enhancing the consultative role and participation of major groups and other relevant stakeholders at the international level in order to better make use of their expertise, while retaining the intergovernmental nature of discussions;

Jan Gustav Strandenaes interprets para 84 and 85 to call for complete and inclusive participation modalities for civil society with the best practices from two decades of CSD activities as minimum standards.”

III. Potential entry points for Major Groups and other stakeholders

Rio+20 follow-up processes included (1) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), (2) high level political forum (HLPF), (3) 10YFP, (4) strengthening UNEP, (5) Technology, (6) Finance, (7) beyond GDP, (8) oceans, (9) Green Economy, (10) future generations, (11) Corporate disclosure and (12) voluntary commitments.

Immediate Rio+20 follow-up processes of interest to Major Groups and other stakeholders will be either under the Second Committee or ECOSOC rules and modalities. One omnibus resolution to be tabled on 29-30 October will enable all these follow-up processes. In addition, separate Resolutions will be tabled and negotiated on the 10 Year Framework of Program on Sustainable Consumption and Production, strengthening UNEP and perhaps one on the technology follow-up. UNEP should be contacted for the UNEP-related processes as it will lead those resolutions.

1) 10 YFP (second committee)

Para 226 adopts the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns, as contained in document A/CONF.216/5, and highlight that the programmes included in the 10-year framework are voluntary. It invited the General Assembly, at its 67th session (ongoing), to designate a Member State body to take any necessary steps to fully operationalize the framework. A resolution is expected during the current General Assembly under Second Committee. UNEP is leading this resolution.

2) Strengthening UNEP (second committee)

A resolution is expected during the current General Assembly under Second Committee. [add UNEP para here]

3) Technology (second committee)

Para 273 request relevant United Nations agencies to identify options for a facilitation mechanism that promotes the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies by, inter alia, assessing the technology needs of developing countries, options to address those needs and capacity-building. A Secretary General report identifying and taking into account existing models, and making recommendations regarding the facilitation mechanism will be discussed at the current 67th session of the General Assembly. A resolution on the recommendations maybe adopted at the second committee.



4) SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals (under the GA)

Para 248. Calls for the establish an inclusive and transparent intergovernmental process on sustainable development goals that is open to all stakeholders, with a view to developing global sustainable development goals to be agreed by the General Assembly. The working group was supposed to be constituted no later than at the opening of the sixty-seventh session (Sept 2012) of the Assembly and shall comprise 30 representatives, nominated by Member States from the five United Nations regional groups, with the aim of achieving fair, equitable and balanced geographic representation. So far Member States guided by Brazil have not been able to agree on the number of members to be elected per region. At a meeting held on 11 October Member States expressed their keenness to get agreement and get started on the SDGs given that the work on the MDGs is already ongoing and the outcome document calls for following up and consulting with the UN Task Force on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda to ensure coherence and coordination among the goals.

As soon as the working group is established it will decide on its methods of work, including developing modalities to ensure the full involvement of relevant stakeholders and expertise from civil society, the scientific community and the United Nations system in its work, in order to provide a diversity of perspectives and experience. It will submit a report, to the sixty-eighth session of the Assembly (Sept–Dec 2013), containing a proposal for sustainable development goals for consideration and appropriate action.

The Secretariat has circulated a questionnaire to Member States to produce a synthesis report. The questionnaire will then be shared with the UN system and Major Groups. A UN system inter-agency Task Team on SDGs has been created and experts meetings are expected in November, February and May. In addition, the second committee is hosting a special event of SDGs on 16 October where the committee has agreed to allow Major Groups to participate in the interactive dialogue.

Major Groups have also developed and submitted a proposal to establish a Major Groups Advisory Groups to the OWG. Outreach activities are being developed by the Major Groups organizing partners to lobby the OWG and the entire Membership for its acceptance. The Major Groups three recommendations are:

1. that a multi-stakeholder advisory group on sustainable development goals (MAG) be established to work with the intergovernmental Open Working Group (OWG) on developing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
2. that the composition of the MAG should be based on the Agenda 21 nine Major Groups with an understanding that they will also consult with and draw on input provided by other groups, as reflected in Paragraph 43 of the Rio+20 Outcome Document. The composition of the MAG should aim at North – South and gender balance and should be reviewed regularly.
3. that the basic functions of the MAG should enable it to:
 - Access all documents and drafts under negotiation by the OWG in a timely manner;
 - Comment on any draft reports of the OWG, and receive an official response on the comments;
 - Comment on the draft agenda of the next meeting of the OWG and suggest further agenda items;
 - Have dedicated time periods during OWG meetings when MAG representatives can dialogue with the OWG on key issues;
 - Have regular meetings with OWG representatives (e.g. the co-chairs/bureau); and
 - Have expert advisory seats on any potential sub-working/thematic groups of the OWG to advise and draw on stakeholder views and expertise on specific topics, as well as provide technical inputs to any specific requests the OWG may have.

5) High Level Political Forum (HLPF)(under the GA)

In Para 86. Member States decided to launch an intergovernmental and open, transparent and inclusive negotiation process under the General Assembly to define the format and organizational aspects of a universal intergovernmental high-level political forum. The high-level political forum shall follow up on the implementation of sustainable development and should avoid overlap with existing structures, bodies and entities in a cost-effective manner. The hlpf, to replace the Commission on sustainable development will first convene at the beginning of the sixty-eighth session of the Assembly (Sept 2013).

It is expected that the President of the GA will nominate two countries to lead these negotiations and that several meetings will be held between now and CSD20 to be held most likely for a week, at the beginning of May. The focus of CSD20, the last of the CSD is expected to be on weaknesses and strength of the CSD so as to inform the modalities and structure of the hlpf as well as on Rio+20 follow-up processes.

In preparation for CSD20, the UN five Regional Commissions will host Regional Implementation Meetings. DESA will hold capacity building workshops for major groups on the margins of these Meetings. The first workshop will take place in Addis Ababa on 18 November. Further information regarding these meetings will be posted on our Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform at <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org> shortly.

The Regional meetings are planned as follows:

Africa

18 November: Major groups workshop

19 – 21 November: Eighth Session of the Committee on Food Security and Sustainable Development (CF-SSD-8); and the Africa Regional Implementation Meeting (Africa-RIM) in preparation for CSD-20 [more info] held at the UN Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa

West Asia

Late January: Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Region (JCEDAR); and the Arab Regional Implementation Meeting in preparation for CSD-20 held in Cairo

Europe

31 January – 1 February: Europe Regional Implementation Meeting in preparation for CSD-20 held at the UN Economic Commission for Europe in Geneva

Asia and the Pacific

March: Asia and the Pacific Regional Implementation Meeting in preparation for CSD-20; and Post-2015 Regional Consultation held in Indonesia

Latin America and the Caribbean

3 – 5 April: Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Implementation Meeting in preparation for CSD-20 held at the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean in Santiago



6) Finance

Para 255 calls for establishing an intergovernmental process under the auspices of the General Assembly, with technical support from the United Nations system and in open and broad consultation with relevant international and regional financial institutions and other relevant stakeholders.

- assess financing needs, consider the effectiveness, consistency and synergies of existing instruments and frameworks, and evaluate additional initiatives,
- preparing a report proposing options on an effective sustainable development financing strategy to facilitate the mobilization of resources and their effective use in achieving sustainable development objectives.

Para 256. An intergovernmental committee, comprising 30 experts nominated by regional groups, with equitable geographical representation, will implement this process, concluding its work by 2014.

Para 257. We request the General Assembly to consider the report of the intergovernmental committee and take appropriate action.

The head of UN System will take this up before the end of the year. It is expected that the 30 experts will be chosen after the OWG has been nominated.

7) Beyond GDP (no resolution foreseen so far – friends para approach)

Para 38. We recognize the need for broader measures of progress to complement gross domestic product in order to better inform policy decisions, and in this regard we request the United Nations Statistical Commission, in consultation with relevant United Nations system entities and other relevant organizations, to launch a programme of work in this area building on existing initiatives.

8) Oceans (no resolution foreseen so far)

Para 162. Building on the work of the ad hoc working group and before the end of the sixty-ninth (2014) session of the General Assembly we commit to address, on an urgent basis, the issue of the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, including by taking a decision on the development of an international instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

9) Green Economies (no resolution foreseen so far)

Member states acknowledged that many countries are adopting green economy policies and that countries can benefit from sharing knowledge and their experiences, noting that the United Nations should facilitate technical and financial support to those countries wanting to pursue such policies.

10) Ombudsperson for future generations (no resolution foreseen so far)

Para 86. We will also consider the need for promoting intergenerational solidarity for the achievement of sustainable development, taking into account the needs of future generations, including by inviting the Secretary-General to present a report on this issue. (no date decided for the report. A coalition of NGOs led by the NGO cluster on ombudsperson for future generation sent a request to the SG signed by several NGOs).

11) Voluntary Commitments (no resolution foreseen so far – friends para approach of)

Para 283 welcomed the commitments voluntarily entered into at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and throughout 2012 by all stakeholders and their networks to implement concrete policies, plans, programmes, projects and actions to promote sustainable development and poverty eradication. We invite the Secretary-General to compile these commitments and facilitate access to other registries that have compiled commitments, in an Internet-based registry. The registry should make information about the commitments fully transparent and accessible to the public, and it should be periodically updated.



Governments, businesses and other civil society partners registered more than 700 commitments to concrete actions that will deliver results on the ground to address specific needs, such as sustainable energy and transport. The commitments made in Rio include \$50 billion that will help one billion people gain access to sustainable energy.

IV) Questions and comments received thus far on post Rio+20 activities

Q1. Is there already a schedule for the 50 country dialogues and 9 global consultations for the post-2015 development agenda?

A1. UNDP has already started its Post 2015 process. It will hold more than 50 country consultations, thematic consultations, and online consultations. Technical guidance was issued by UNDP for their Resident Coordinators to use in organizing and conducting these consultations and is available at: <http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=1627>. Countries where consultations will be held are listed on page 37 in the annex (note that the number maybe increased to 60).

Ten thematic consultations on Inequalities, Health, Education, Environmental sustainability, Governance, Conflict and fragility, Population dynamics, Hunger, Food (and nutrition) security, water and energy are planned for next year. The ninth one on Growth and employment was held in Japan last May.

Q2. Who will be consulted for the Post 2015 process?

A2. See the list of stakeholder Groups starting on page 46 <http://www.beyond2015.org/world-we-want-2015-web-platform>.

Q3. Will the consultations include SDGs?

A3. So far, I am not aware of plans to explicitly include SDGs in these consultations.

Q4. Which agencies will serve as Secretariat for these processes?

A4. A secretariat will be set up to support the HLP on post-MDGs (in UNDP) and Working Group on SDGs (not sure where yet)

Q5. Are the Rio+20 OPs the ongoing OPs? Will there be a process to review those?

A5. The Secretariat has typically updated organizing partners based on the thematic areas being discussed within each CSD Cycle. Though, there is a sense that a process should be launched to renew the organizing partners, criteria to do so are hard to elicit until the work of the CSD Secretariat and it's role in the various processes is further clarified.

Q6. Will the Secretariat continue to use social media/web platforms (like the one used for the Dialogue days) to foster greater ownership/participation?

A6. We are exploring these options.

