

4 July 2010

UNEP Major Groups Facilitating Committee

Terms of Reference (TOR) for the  
Major Group and Stakeholder Advisory Group on IEG

## **Background**

UNEP Governing Council Decision SS XI/1, paragraph 9 requests UNEP “*to seek relevant inputs from civil society groups from each region in the process of further strengthening international environmental governance.*” As such representatives of major groups and stakeholders during the 11<sup>th</sup> Special Session of the UNEP GC/GMEF agreed unanimously “to better utilize the significant knowledge, expertise, and influence of civil society, we urge governments to endorse full collaboration of civil society with the new Working Group of Ministers and High-level representatives on IEG in a formal capacity. We propose the creation of an Advisory Body that will spearhead and guide a dynamic and multidimensional process within major groups and stakeholders to communicate key messages to the governmental negotiations and foster constructive engagement of global civil society.”

Furthermore, during the 18<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission for Sustainable Development and the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the Rio+20 Conference, held in New York in May 2010, major group representatives have articulated their readiness to work closely with UNEP to achieve better international environmental governance (IEG). Similar to UNEP, most major groups and stakeholders (MGS) view a change in the IEG system to be an important response to the ongoing crises related to water, food and energy security as well as climate change and their direct links to environmental degradation.

### **1. Name**

The advisory body will be called “Major Group and Stakeholders Advisory Group on IEG”, or “Advisory Group” or “AG” for short. The name indicates the objectives and scope, as explained below in paragraph 2, which do not foresee the creation of a new institutional structure, but rather a body with a specific role, limited in time. At the same time the name is not easily confused with the IEG Consultative Group of Ministers or High Level representatives, which is referred to as CG. In this TOR the terms of civil society and major groups and stakeholders are used synonymously.

### **2. Objective, scope and role of the Major Group and Stakeholders Advisory Group on IEG**

The Major Group and Stakeholders Advisory Group on IEG (Advisory Group) is the principal body through which input from major groups and stakeholders will be channelled into the IEG process of the Consultative Group. As such, its responsibilities are to:

- provide comments and specific recommendations on innovative models for civil society participation in any new or existing arrangements related to IEG and

discussed by the Consultative Group, as well as on IEG more generally;

- compile relevant contributions related to IEG reform from all MGS into consolidated submissions to the Secretariat;
- inform the Consultative Group on positions of MGS regarding IEG;
- provide MGS input at other meetings where input is gathered for the IEG reform process;
- consult with MGS and keep MGS informed about its work as well as the work of the Consultative Group throughout the process, including through written reports and website updates; and
- promote and use mechanisms through which the importance of and options for IEG reform should be communicated to a wider audience.

The Advisory Group will bring input from the MGS into the process of the Consultative Group of Ministers or High Level representatives. The Advisory Group does not have the authority to speak on behalf of all MGS unless on a specific topic following a consultation process, with sufficient time and resources, in which the scope and limitations of the representation have been agreed upon with the Major Groups Facilitating Committee (MGFC).

The Advisory Group does not contradict the right of accredited organisations to submit to the UNEP Secretariat written contributions to unedited working documents; including on the IEG reform process, in case they choose to do so directly. However, the Advisory Group will seek to actively moderate exchange on IEG with all the MGS, thus aiming to bring forward best practices and positions from a broader group of MGS.

In addition, the Advisory Group will seek to support UNEP in fundraising to facilitate MGS participation.

### **3. Working Mode of the Advisory Group**

The working mode of the Advisory Group will be agreed upon at its first meeting, and a broader consultation will be organized to include inputs from involved organizations that are not members of the Advisory Group.

### **4. Selection of Members of the Advisory Group**

The Members of the Advisory Group will be selected by UNEP's Major Groups Facilitating Committee (MGFC) in consultation with their constituents. Expertise is one of the main criteria for nominations, as is indicated below in paragraph 6. Such expertise should be sought in all the regions of the world. In addition to diversity of geographical background, diversity of stakeholders and gender diversity are encouraged as a guideline for nominations.

The selection by the MGFC shall be done in a fair and transparent manner and will be completed well before the CG meeting in Helsinki (13 or 22 Nov 2010), preferably before 1 September 2010. If Advisory Group members or alternates cease to be able to perform their functions, the MGFC will select replacements as appropriate.

## **Procedures for Selection of Advisory Group Members:**

1. MGFC sends out a call for nomination of potential members of the Advisory Group to all UNEP accredited organisations; this includes a nomination form which explains the role and responsibility of the members of the Advisory Group.
2. MGFC and UNEP's Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch (MGSB) widely circulate the call, post it on the UNEP civil society website and, if possible, the IEG website.
3. Nominees fill in a **nominee form** (contact details, gender, region, major group, their motivation and how they meet the qualifications of Advisory Group members listed in the Terms of Reference) and **return** it to [civil.society@unep.com](mailto:civil.society@unep.com) before **August 13<sup>th</sup>. 2010.**
4. MGSB forwards all the received applications to the MGFC, which reviews and assesses them.
5. MGFC members discuss the nominations in their monthly conference call, keeping in mind the qualifications listed below in paragraph 6 and regional and gender balance, and that the team should be composed to fulfil its objectives and role described in the Terms of Reference.
6. MGFC reaches an agreement and if that is not possible, votes (majority rule) on the composition of the Advisory Group.
7. MGSB informs the Advisory Group members that they have been selected.

## **5. Period of time**

The operation of the Advisory Group is limited in time to up to 3 years. This allows for stability, predictability and systematic input into the processes in the run up and follow up to Rio + 20 in 2012 where sustainable development governance, including IEG, will be a main agenda item.

## **6. Size and nature of the Major Group and Stakeholders Advisory Group**

The ideal size of the Advisory Group depends on its role, which will be largely to provide input via electronic communication means, and to a lesser extent, and for a limited number of AG members, in the high level meetings of the CG. Allowing for both diversity in type of expertise, regional background and MGS background the minimum size of the AG is 9 people, the maximum of 14 people. The structure will be inclusive so that at any time additional experts, based on needs, can participate. The Advisory Group should aim at gender balance. The qualifications for Advisory Group members are listed below in paragraph 6.

## **7. Criteria for nomination and selection of Advisory Group members**

Advisory Group Members should ideally have the following qualifications:

1. relevant experience, expertise and interest in the IEG process;
2. broad knowledge of international organisations and UN bodies and procedures;
3. proven interest and availability to invest time in reviewing thoroughly the relevant documents;
4. preparedness to present regional interests;
5. preparedness to present interests of other MGS;
6. readiness to consolidate received inputs and comments and make them available in a easy-to read format;
7. ability to work towards strict deadlines;
8. availability to travel, if elected, to represent the Advisory Group at relevant meetings; and
9. ability to be effective in inter-governmental negotiations.

Current members of the MGFC (major group facilitating committee) and regional representatives can be nominated for the AG as long as they meet the required qualifications.

## **8. Financial Considerations**

Advisory Group members will bear their own costs, and participation will require investments in time, travel and communication. However, in particular to assure geographical balance, UNEP and MGS will try to ensure funding for members of the Advisory Group to participate in the CG meetings, and for other costs to a limited degree. For example, the Advisory Group should ensure input from civil society broadly, which will require a certain degree of infrastructure – e.g. conference call capabilities, use of a web platform, assistance with compiling a list of civil society members interested in the IEG agenda and another list with civil society more broadly that could be drawn into the discussions, etc. These services can possibly be provided by MGSB or MGFC or Advisory Group members, and do not necessarily require additional financing, but would certainly benefit from additional resources.