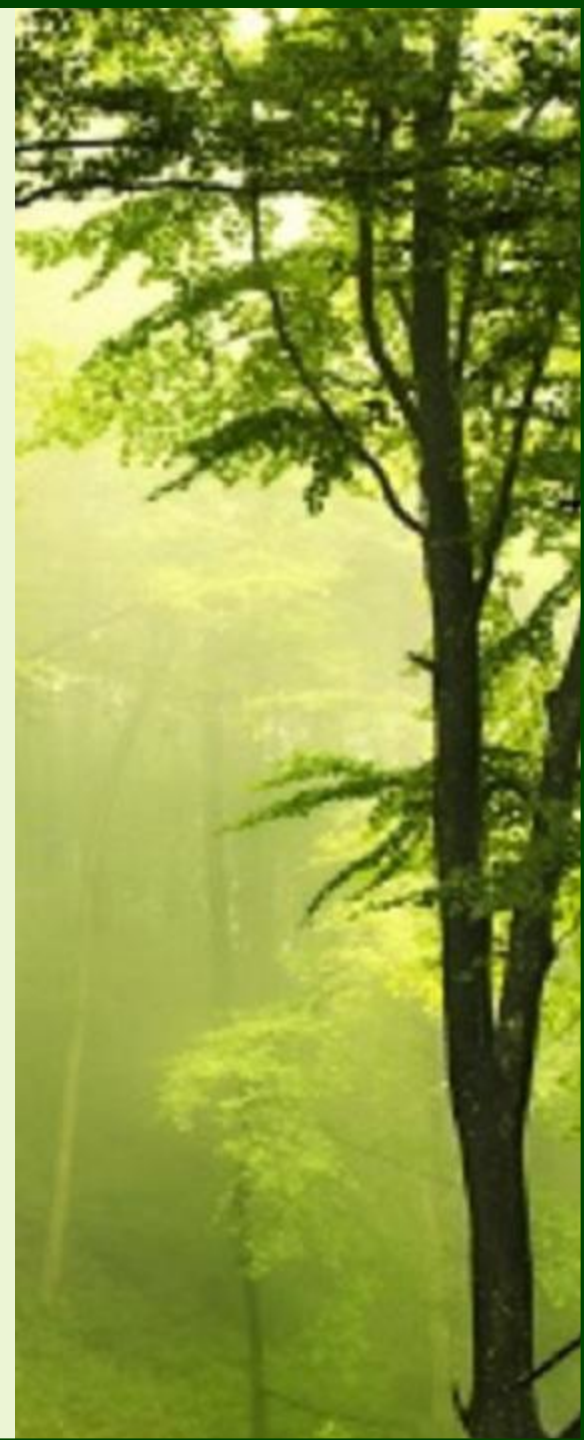


Strengthening the Mechanisms for Major Group's Engagement with UN Bodies towards Sustainable Forest Management

Presented By Lambert Okrah

Organization-Led Initiative in Support of UNFF

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Introduction

Civil Society has been active in the UN System for many years now and firmly institutionalized with the creation of the Major Groups categorization system during the Rio Earth Summit in 1992.

These categorizations fall under the following Major Groups:

- NGOs
- Women
- Children and Youth
- Farmers and Small Forest Landowners
- Indigenous Peoples
- Business and Industry
- Workers and Trade Unions
- Scientific and Technological Community
- Local Authorities

Subsequent governments' emphasis on the role of Major Groups in the UN system

- Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the decisions of the eleventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (E/2003/29) that called for enhanced participation of Major Groups and the strengthening of their involvement
- UN General Assembly Resolution (66/288, annex) that recognized the fact that improved participation of civil society will require strengthening access to information
- A call to launch an inclusive intergovernmental process in the development of the Sustainable Development Goals

Recommendations to the UN and DESA to enhance participation

- That DESA should hold consultations for establishing the criteria for creating new Major Groups
- Creating the avenue for more participation of social movements
- Having more coherence among all UN bodies that deal with Major Groups
- Establishing the links between the local, regional and global levels
- More language diversity
- Involving civil society, including those from the grassroots, on expert panels
- Establish a better administrative support for the Major Groups



Recommendations for Major Groups

- More structure in Major Groups' governance
- Establish minimum standards for Major Groups statements
- Strengthening and supporting the non-governmental organizations Major Group
- Prioritizing the engagement of people on the front lines

Recommendations for Member States

- Establish adequate and predictable funding for Major Groups
- Re-establishment of Multi-stakeholder dialogues
- Establish public disclosure and conflict of interest policies and hold open consultations with public interest



There is a general understanding that the UN system will function better if the engagement of Major Groups is enhanced and adequately supported.

The Engagement so far of Major Groups in UNFF

- The establishment of Major Groups focal points of UNFF
- Holding of Multi-stakeholder dialogue during sessions
- Development of policy documents which are considered as UN Secretary-General reports for each session
- Making statements on the floor during the debate session
- Organizing of Major Groups-Led Initiatives in support of UNFF with the reports considered as official documents of the sessions
- Invitation to participate in Country-Led Initiatives in support of UNFF
- UNFF Secretariat providing financial support for Major Groups representatives/focal points to attend UNFF sessions



Constraints

- Insisting on strictly applying ECOSOC rules regarding participation limits the engagement of Major Groups
- Ability to participate in UNFF session will require that a Major Groups' rep should have an accreditation with ECOSOC or participate through another organization that is accredited
- Funding for the engagement of Major Groups is scanty and unpredictable to put it mildly
- A large number of Major Groups statements are deleted during the second week of negotiation where Major Groups are not allowed to speak and defend their points of views
- No further engagement with Major Groups after the sessions except for sending information to focal points of areas that directly concerns them

Evolution of Major Groups within UNFF

- The establishment of Major Groups Partnership on Forests to coordinate Major Groups activities to help institutionalize our work with UNFF and establishing of office in Ottawa, Canada
- Developing joint papers for session rather than each Major Group developing its own policy discussions papers while still able to present the specific views of their Major Group
- Organizing of Major Groups-Led Initiative in support of UNFF prior to a session to develop policy recommendations for that particular session
- Continue to organize MSD
- Initiated a process for Major Groups organizations that want to be active in UNFF process to register with Major Groups Partnership on Forests
- Received funding and collaboration from some governments and international organizations in the organization of MGI



Recommendations to Improve Participation of Major Groups in the work of UNFF

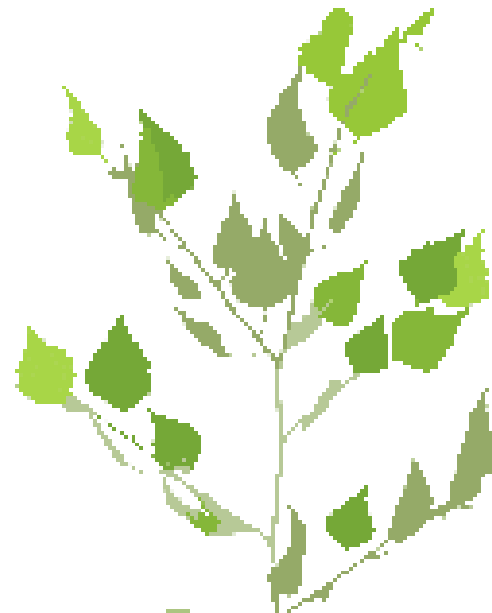
- UNFF secretariat should get a way of providing core funding to MGPOF for its institutionalization, mobilization and coordination work
- Recognize MGPOF as the coordinating body of Major Groups of UNFF and grant it Permanent Observer Status
- Support the establishment of a cooperation and collaboration mechanism between CPF and the Major Groups Partnership on Forests
- Encourage them being granted Observers on CPF

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Recommendations to Improve Participation of Major Groups in the work of UNFF continued...

- Encourage the building of partnership with regional and intergovernmental bodies in the implementation of SFM
- UNFF should set-up an independent mechanism for registering Major Groups wishing to participate in UNFF Sessions thereby avoiding the limitations imposed by following the ECOSOC accreditation process



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