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SUBSIDIARY BODY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

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Bonn, 28 July - 5 August 1997

Item 10 of the provisional agenda

**MECHANISMS FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS**

Note by the secretariat

1. At its third session, the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) requested the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to conduct further consultations with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with a view to improving existing consultative processes (FCCCC/SBSTA/1996/13, para. 50 (d)). The secretariat enlisted the help of the Global Environment Information Centre (GEIC)* last year to carry out such consultations on its behalf, with clear guidance from it, and produce a report thereon.

2. In the light of its consultations with non-governmental organizations, the GEIC has prepared the attached report entitled "NGO Consultative Mechanisms with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)". This report was the principal input to the secretariat's paper (FCCC/SBI/1997/14). However, the secretariat has exercised its judgment in drawing upon the range of proposals contained therein and has supplemented it by some further exchanges and consultations with non-governmental representatives.

3. In accordance with the procedure for miscellaneous documents, the report is reproduced in the language in which it was received and without formal editing.

FCCC/SBI/1997/MISC.6

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* The GEIC is a centre of the United Nations University and the Environment Agency of Japan based in Tokyo.



Global Environment Information Centre
地球環境パートナーシッププラザ

**NGO Consultative Mechanisms with the
United Nations Framework Convention on
Climate Change (UNFCCC)**

Report by the Global Environment Information Centre

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Global Environment Information Centre (GEIC), a centre of the United Nations University (UNU) and the Environment Agency of Japan,¹ undertook to prepare a paper on "NGO Consultative Mechanisms with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)" at the request of the UNFCCC secretariat. The paper will support the secretariat's preparations for a paper to be submitted to the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) at its sixth session scheduled from 28 July - 5 August 1997 in Bonn, Germany.

The report is based on the review of workshop reports, submissions from and consultations with NGOs. A list of suggested NGO contacts were attached to the terms of reference by the secretariat; all were contacted, and the vast majority consulted.

The main issues of the paper are:

- (i) identification of existing processes/mechanisms for involving NGOs within the UNFCCC;
- (ii) whether the processes/mechanisms are felt to be sufficient;

¹ GEIC is a centre of the United Nations University and the Environment Agency of Japan based in Tokyo (<http://www.geic.or.jp>).

- (iii) what can be done to improve existing processes/mechanisms, and whether there is a need for a new consultative mechanism;
- (iv) proposals/options.

INTRODUCTION

Discussion of NGO participation under the UNFCCC takes place within a broader discussion of the role and contribution to international processes of "major groups" under Agenda 21, of which NGOs form a part (Chapter 27). The Secretary-General's report on Chapters 23-32 of Agenda 21 demonstrates the extent to which "major groups" participate in the implementing and monitoring of the broader agenda of sustainable development. Action based on partnerships and involvement of major groups opens up a wider political sphere for the participation of social and economic actors, and constitutes a "bottom-up" source of strength.

Chapter 27 of Agenda 21 provides a basis for actions to better involve NGOs in international processes. It states that "[T]he UN system, including finance and development agencies, and all intergovernmental organizations and forums should, in consultation with non-governmental organizations take measures to:

Review and report on ways of enhancing existing procedures and mechanisms by which NGOs contribute to policy design, decision-making, implementation and evaluation at the individual agency levels, in inter-agency discussions and in United Nations conferences;

On the basis of the above, enhance existing or, where they do not exist, establish mechanisms and procedures within each agency to draw on the expertise and views of non-governmental organizations in policy and programme design, implementation and evaluation."

In this light, reference is also made to ECOSOC and its initiation of a general review of arrangements for consultation with NGOs in 1993 (Resolution 1993/80 July 1993), together with its recently adopted conclusions (Resolution 1996/31 July 1996) calling "upon the governing bodies of the relevant organizations, bodies and specialized agencies of the United Nations system to examine the principles relating to their consultations with non-governmental organizations and to take action, as appropriate, to promote coherence in the light of the provisions of the present resolution."

For the purposes of this paper, the term NGO is defined to include those organizations accredited as non-governmental observers to the UNFCCC.

The impetus for a consultative mechanism for NGOs within the framework of the UNFCCC arose out of a proposal by one Party for a "business consultative mechanism" at one of the sessions of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Conference (INC). COP 1 took a

decision (6/C.1, annex III) requesting SBSTA to convene a workshop to discuss "the need for, and possible scope, structure, membership and work plans of, non-governmental advisory committees and/or a business consultative mechanism" and to report to COP2. SBSTA in turn requested the secretariat to organise a "workshop on non-governmental inputs, as foreseen in the work programme of SBSTA, in cooperation with interested Parties and organizations" (FCCC/SBSTA/1995/3, para. 41).

The workshop on consultative mechanisms for non-governmental organization input to the UNFCCC (the Workshop) took place on 2 March 1996 at which three main NGO constituencies were represented: (1) business and industry; (2) municipal leaders and local authorities; and (3) environmental NGOs. Full text of the papers presented at the workshop plenary and the rapporteurs' summaries of separate sessions of the constituency groupings are contained in FCCC/SBSTA/1996/MISC.2 and FCCC/SBSTA/1996/11.

After reviewing the Workshop results, SBSTA requested the UNFCCC secretariat to prepare a paper on this subject at a future session (see document FCCC/SBI/1997/14 and Add.1).

EXISTING MECHANISMS/PROCESSES FOR NGO CONSULTATION/ PARTICIPATION WITHIN THE UNFCCC

The existing mechanisms and processes for NGO consultation/participation between the UNFCCC and NGOs may be grouped as follows:

Existing General Mechanisms

Access to Information

The UNFCCC secretariat continues to provide information to NGOs for their use. In addition, formal and informal meetings are organised between NGOs and the secretariat. Documents continue to be provided at meetings.

Access to the Floor

Access to the floor by NGOs is presently confined to before and after meetings, with some additional scope for access within subsidiary bodies.

Right of Intervention

NGOs are given a right of intervention in the form of group statements. These statements are generally permitted at the end of plenary sessions, of approximately 5 minutes' duration each.

Access to Workshops and other Meetings

There are a number of workshops organised alongside the formal meetings of the UNFCCC bodies which are organized by NGOs and the secretariat among other organizations.

Existing Institutional Mechanisms

Institutional mechanisms which provide for NGO consultation/participation could be stated as follows:

Rules of Procedure

Article 7(6) UNFCCC lays out the general requirements for observer status of non-governmental organizations "qualified in matters covered by the Convention". Detailed rules of procedure regarding the admission and participation of observers are explicitly left for adoption by the CoP. Draft rules provide that, on the invitation of the President of the CoP, observers may participate without the right to vote in the proceedings of any session in matters of direct concern to the body. (Rules referred to below represent draft rules).

The Bureau of the COP's policy on NGO access on the floor is that NGO representatives are allowed on the conference room floor before and after the meetings, but not during the meetings. The Bureau has agreed to allow wider access to be granted at the discretion of the Chairman of each subsidiary body, "in the specific context of a given body." In current practice, the discretion of the Chairman is central to allowing or disallowing the extent of participation of NGOs.

The COP

Meetings of the COP are held in public (Rule 30(1)) with observers entitled to make statements at the end of the session. NGO representatives may also be nominated by Parties as members of their delegations. At least three Parties have involved NGO representatives as part of their delegations. During the negotiation of the UNFCCC, one Party, in particular, reserved three places on its delegation for representatives of: (i) provincial governments; (ii) environmental groups; and (iii) business and industry groups.

Subsidiary Bodies

Rule 2(8) defines subsidiary body to mean "those bodies established by Articles 9 [SBSTA] and 10 [SBI], as well as any body, including committees and working groups, established pursuant to Article 7(2)(i) of the Convention". Article 7(2)(i) empowers the COP to "[e]stablish such subsidiary bodies as are deemed necessary for the implementation of the Convention" which thus far comprise AGBM and AG13. Under the rules of procedure, subsidiary bodies meet in private (Rule 30(2)) which in the practice of the UNFCCC means that duly accredited observers are permitted to participate.

In the case of SBSTA, the Chairman has proved responsive to NGO involvement. Currently, three chairs are occupied respectively by representatives of the business and industry, local government, and environment NGO constituencies. The question of who represents their individual constituency is for the groups themselves to decide. If agreement cannot be reached, then the seat may remain empty. In the case of other subsidiary bodies, examples of NGO involvement do exist. NGOs have been asked to make formal inputs on a particular issue for AG13 (see FCCC/AG13/1996/MISC.2), while the Chairman of AGBM recently allowed a NGO to present a statement from the floor in the middle of a session. However, NGOs have previously been excluded from certain meetings, such as “non-groups”, “contact groups” and “informal informals”, depending on the agenda and the discretion of the Chairman of the responsible Body.

IPCC

The IPCC is not a body of the UNFCCC but is independently established by the World Meteorological Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme to (1) make periodic assessments of the science, impacts and the socio-economic aspects of climate change and of the adaptation/mitigation options available to address it and (2) provide, on request, scientific, technical and socio-economic information including comparable methodologies to the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC and its bodies.

The official link between the UNFCCC and IPCC outside of Article 21 of the UNFCCC on Interim Arrangements, is manifested in the requests by SBSTA (and AGBM) to the IPCC for information in the form of scientific and technical reports, assessments, elaborations/clarifications and methodologies such as the IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories. There are also joint working group meetings of officers of the UNFCCC and of its secretariat and the officers of the IPCC. In addition, provision was made in the 1996-1997 budget of the UNFCCC by the secretariat for financial support to the IPCC and this may continue in the 1998-1999 biennium.

The IPCC is currently examining how to enhance NGO inputs in its activities. At present, experts from the NGO community participate in writing, reviewing, synthesizing, and finalizing the IPCC reports and technical papers. In its proposed work on technology assessment and technology transfer before and for its Third Assessment, the IPCC is endeavouring to engage experts from industry groups also.

NGOs are admitted as observers to the meetings of the IPCC and its Working Groups. They have access to the floor at all times during these meetings.

ARE THESE PROCESSES/MECHANISMS SUFFICIENT?

The vast majority of NGOs consulted feel that current processes/mechanisms for soliciting NGO inputs within the UNFCCC process require strengthening.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO IMPROVE EXISTING PROCESSES/MECHANISMS, AND WHETHER THERE IS A NEED FOR A NEW CONSULTATIVE MECHANISM

I. Business and Industry NGOs

Business and industry NGOs support the creation of a formal mechanism which can support the effective implementation of the UNFCCC. Consensus among business and industry on principles pertaining to a Business Consultative Mechanism (BCM) was achieved through the efforts of multiple business and industry NGOs, and presented at the Workshop.

Business Consultative Mechanism

The essential thrust of the BCM proposal is to provide a vehicle for communication, additional needed information, and exchange of views as a supplementary or additional means of facilitating communication between business and industry NGOs and the institutional bodies of the UNFCCC. The BCM would be a formally recognized, but informal group, organized and managed by business and industry NGOs.

Business and industry NGOs are adamant that any business and industry consultative mechanism that may be created “would complement, not supplant, national or other international input mechanisms” (Annex I to FCCC/SBSTA/1996/11). Similarly, a number of business and industry NGOs themselves do not view the BCM as an exclusive mechanism that would preclude additional inputs direct from business and industry NGOs, and that there should be a continued ability for other groups to provide input in their own right as separate entities with special interests. However, business and industry NGOs believe that one mechanism involving the three constituencies is neither feasible nor desirable, and that each constituency has relevant expertise which could add to the effectiveness of the process.

General consensus does exist among business and industry NGOs on the basic principles of a BCM, as evidenced in the Workshop proceedings and confirmed by subsequent consultations. The principles for a BCM for the UNFCCC are that a BCM should:

- (i) provide business with convenient, direct and effective additional channel of communication;
- (ii) further enable business to both volunteer information to and respond to questions from, all bodies established under the UNFCCC in a timely manner;
- (iii) further enable business to provide information to all of Parties and intergovernmental organizations participating in the UNFCCC process;
- (iv) further enable business to provide its views on the full range (policy, socio-economic, technological, etc.) of issues being addressed by the UNFCCC;

- (v) be open to all business NGOs accredited by the UNFCCC process who wish to participate;
- (vi) be able to convey the full range of business positions on an unfiltered basis;
- (vii) not be a process for negotiation of commitments from business, or for the selection of technology “winners and losers;”
- (viii) be an addition to, not a replacement for, existing or new business consultation at the national or international level;
- (ix) be treated by the UNFCCC process in a manner comparable to all other NGO consultative mechanisms in terms of access to administrative support, including funding for participants from developing nations; and
- (x) be subject to and consistent with national and regional anti-trust and competition laws and regulations.

Some business and industry NGO representatives have suggested that the BCM could largely run on the world wide web, facilitating the flow of information, and work to enhance the use of existing resources. Some business and industry groups place stress on the expertise which, for example, a world wide web or electronic mail BCM facility could provide to Parties in situ, and for those States not readily able to attend all of the meetings under the UNFCCC. Further, it is felt by some the strengthening of the IPCC does not fully address concerns to provide input into broader processes beyond mere technical information/expertise.

Many business and industry NGOs have suggested the nomination of a single focal point (perhaps the ICC) for contact with the secretariat on relevant issues, who would then distribute requests/documentation to interested business and industry NGOs for response/comment. The BCM would respond to any possible requests from Parties and Convention bodies through the secretariat.

With regard to face-to-face meetings, regarding which there is no general consensus, several business and industry NGOs have suggested the following basic principles:

- (i) governments and representatives of accredited business and industry NGOs would have a regularly scheduled open meeting at each session of the relevant bodies;
- (ii) this forum would not be a subsidiary nor an ad hoc body of the UNFCCC and would not be represented on any institutional charts of the organization of the UNFCCC;
- (iii) other NGOs would have observer status to any such meetings but not a place on the floor;

- (iv) proceedings would be recorded with an official report to official meetings of, for example, SBSTA, SBI or the COP;
- (v) efforts would be made to ensure equitable geographic distribution among the participants; and
- (vi) it would be up to individual business and industry groups to decide whether they wished to participate.

Business and industry NGOs believe that any BCM that may be created should be flexible, open-ended and transparent. It seems important to most business and industry NGOs that there be no filtering of information provided through such a mechanism.

Strengthening Existing Processes/Mechanisms

In addition to general support for the creation of a formal mechanism which can support the effective implementation of the UNFCCC, there is general consensus among business and industry NGOs regarding the desirability of strengthening existing NGO input processes/mechanisms. Business and industry NGOs have made the following particular suggestions regarding the strengthening of existing bodies and processes within the UNFCCC:

Improved flows of information

Business and industry NGOs see the processes of information flows as a vital element of their participation in the successful implementation of the UNFCCC. As part of this, speedy dissemination of documents and improved access to documents distributed on the floor should be ensured by the secretariat. Business and industry NGOs have noted with appreciation, however, the efforts of the secretariat in improving the situation of late.

One business and industry NGO suggested that, in line with the secretariat improving the information flows, one list of attendees be made by the secretariat after the meeting, listing only those persons who collected badges. It was suggested that this would allow for a better reflection on which NGOs are actually attending the meetings and actively participating in the process. Further it was also suggested that different coloured badges be provided for the different types of NGO constituencies for the purposes of avoiding confusion among NGOs; in particular, one colour for groups concerned with business and industry issues, and a different colour for those groups more concerned with environmental issues.

Facilitating NGO inputs

A further suggestion from several business and industry NGOs is that COP should direct the secretariat to invite business and industry NGOs to comment on issues (whenever governments are invited to present views) and to circulate any comments from industry to governments via a miscellaneous document.

II. Local Government NGOs

Local government NGOs wish to be "effective strategic partners with their national governments, the CoP, and its subsidiary bodies" in addressing climate change issues.

Local government NGOs prefer the strengthening of existing mechanisms/processes rather than the creation of new additional ones. They are of the opinion that all presently existing "input mechanisms" should be open and maximized for participation. If new mechanisms were to be considered, then they should be:

- (i) open to the participation of existing and proposed bodies by all accredited NGOs; and
- (ii) ensure parity between the different NGO constituencies.

At the Workshop, local government NGOs sought special status for local government organizations. Local government NGOs state that the COP should authorize a special modality, based on Rule 61 adopted by the General Assembly during its 50th session, that enables local authorities - through their accredited international associations - to participate on a non-voting basis in the COP and its Subsidiary Bodies in order to facilitate the flow of information and experience from local authorities to the COP on matters relating to reductions of greenhouse-gas emissions and local adaption to a changed climate.

In particular, local government NGOs consider that they have hands-on experience with implementing innovative policies and measures to reduce GHG emissions, and feel that they can assist Parties in assessing and monitoring emissions. Further, education and raising public awareness (as provided for in Article 6 UNFCCC) are also in the sphere of their responsibility.

In strengthening mechanisms, there is the suggestion that local government NGOs be designated as official reporting units by the COP and for COP/ICLEI cooperation in defining a common methodology that includes local government NGO inputs. The avoidance of double-counting in national inventories, as well as the desire for explicit recognition of the local government NGO contribution to securing abatement of greenhouse gases, remain motivating factors. Emphasis is also given by local government NGOs to the variety of financing mechanisms that have been developed by local governments, and that pro-active participation by local governments will assist the Parties in meeting their commitments.

Local government NGOs stress that a consultation process distinct from "Technical Advisory Panels" is explicitly sought. It is felt that the process of implementing the UNFCCC requires a broader range of inputs than simply technical inputs.

Improved access to information, in particular documents distributed on the floor, remains a key concern. In broader terms, local government NGOs feel that mechanisms to promote communication to support the implementation of the UNFCCC is important. ICLEI is launching information services that can provide technical and scientific advice from LGOs.

Further, ICLEI's Cities for Climate Protection World Wide Web site provides examples of local efforts in climate protection and energy efficiency worldwide. A database of quantified emissions and emission reductions is being developed.

The ability to intervene at the end of sessions, though welcomed, could more usefully provide for interventions on issues of specific relevance to local government NGOs.

III. Environmental NGOs

In examining consultative mechanisms under the UNFCCC, environmental NGOs ask a fundamental question: does the creation of any mechanism further the ultimate objective of the Framework Convention on Climate Change as set forth in Article 2 of the Convention? The view of most environmental NGOs is that no new or additional input consultative mechanism/process is needed from the perspective of achieving the Article 2 objective.

However, it was recognized by environmental NGOs that a common input process operating via the world wide web could be "extremely valuable", provided that participation of developing country NGOs for whom e-mail/internet access remains rarer, is ensured. In promoting transparency, environmental NGOs suggest that information flows could allow for NGOs to view, possibly comment on, or at least make reference to, each others' contributions so as to promote parity, while allowing each to state views, positions and provide inputs.

Nevertheless, the enhancement and deepening of existing input mechanisms/processes is advocated by environmental NGOs. More specifically, the positions of a number of environmental NGOs focus on the following (in no particular order):

Enabling better access to the Floor and capacity to intervene

Environmental NGOs seek the ability to intervene from the floor on specific agenda items when requested to do so by the Chairman as, for example, in the Commission on Sustainable Development, Montreal Protocol and IPCC Plenaries. It is argued that the present practice of a 5 minute intervention at the end of the session after decisions are taken does little to enhance dialogue. Guidelines should be developed to enable better access, including provision for timely intervention and reprimanding individual representatives, rather than all NGO constituencies, for inappropriate behaviour should it occur.

Seeking formal inputs to agenda items

The secretariat may wish to solicit the views of NGOs on specific agenda items which could be added to official reports in a miscellaneous documents section, for example. A precedent is provided by the AG13 questionnaire, circulated to intergovernmental and non-governmental bodies as well as to States Parties (see FCCC/AG13/1996/MISC.2).

One NGO has suggested that the participation of the three constituencies extend beyond the procedural privilege of intervention at meetings to consultation regarding agenda-setting for informal workshops and other activities.

Improved information dissemination

Improved information dissemination is seen as one of the major factors in strengthening existing mechanisms/processes. Environmental NGOs seek fast and easy access to documents prior to meetings, and access to draft negotiating documents during sessions. In particular, the role of the world wide web and electronic mail is seen as key. Environmental NGOs stress the need for the secretariat to consider putting official documents on hyper-text marked language (html) on the world wide web (in addition to adobe portable document format (pdf)), as well as develop an electronic mailing list for fast forwarding of documents. Recent efforts being made by the secretariat are appreciated in this regard.

During sessions, access to draft negotiating documents is seen as imperative for NGOs to follow discussions. Further, it was suggested for pigeon holes for every delegation and NGO constituency be put in place to keep information flowing.

Facilitating NGO inputs

Environmental NGOs suggest that the secretariat incorporate and facilitate NGO involvement and inputs in the information processes of the UNFCCC. It would be constructive, for example, that the secretariat undertake both formal and informal soliciting of inputs from NGOs on relevant issues. In particular, NGO inputs could be undertaken by electronic mail which may facilitate the involvement of and inputs from NGOs for consideration by the secretariat.

As mechanisms which would trigger such a processes, with regard to formal requests for inputs, it is suggested that COP should direct the secretariat to invite the views of environmental NGOs on issues whenever governments are invited to present views and to circulate any comments to governments via a miscellaneous document.

With regard to informal requests for inputs, it is suggested that the secretariat could seek the views of environmental NGOs on a range of issues as and when appropriate in the opinion of the secretariat. The request for inputs could be undertaken via electronic mail as an effective means of undertaking such an exercise in order to assist the secretariat in becoming more fully aware of the range of issues and interests at stake.

National communications

As organizations that can assist in promoting a more transparent process, environmental NGOs feel that they need to be more involved in the process of establishing guidelines for the national communications. Further, once guidelines are established,

environmental NGOs could be invited to participate in the national reporting teams, conducting monitoring and reporting as appropriate.

It is also felt by environmental NGOs that a formal mechanism for input into the review of national communications with governments and the secretariat could be facilitated. In respect of non-Annex I communications, it is suggested that environmental NGOs should be invited to participate in national capacity building programmes.

NGOs on national delegations

There are examples of Parties including NGO representatives in their delegations. Environmental NGOs promote and commend this practice by member States. Overall, environmental NGOs feel that this should become common practice and that they should be given the opportunity to be included in national delegations.

Demonstration projects

Environmental NGOs argue for a level playing field in all respects. As one example, they argue that access to GEF funding (NGO funds presently limited to \$50,000) should be opened up to all NGOs for the implementation of demonstration projects which work to reduce GHG emissions at the national level.

Policy Dialogue Forum

A few environmental NGOs consider that there is a strong need for Policy Dialogue Forums, based on a round-table approach, open to delegates, members of NGOs, and members of intergovernmental organizations, participating in their personal capacities. The purpose would be to provide an opportunity for discussion of policy options in a transparent and de-politicized forum so as to consider the optimum policies that may be available. The forum agenda and schedule should be driven and supported by the secretariat. One example cited was the organisation of thematic workshops, scheduled so as not to conflict with official meetings, before, during or after regularly scheduled meetings of UNFCCC bodies.

A related proposal by one environmental NGO was that time needs to be set aside so that small groups of 5-8 people, each from different regions can exchange, at a personal level, their experience and perspective of a problem as it affects them. Again, the secretariat could assist in running the sessions.

Other constituencies

Increasingly, there are organizations which feel that they do not readily fit within the existing three identified constituency groupings.

Procedurally, this was reflected at the end of COP 2 where two organizations were afforded the opportunity to make separate statements. In some cases, depending on the issue,

such groups are willing to participate within existing groupings. However, the view has been expressed by these organizations that on certain issues they may contribute an additional dimension which requires special consideration.

One NGO, on similar lines with a suggestion by environmental NGOs, stated the need for a Policy Dialogue Forum (PDF). It is suggested that a number of such PDFs on various issues of policy be organized by the secretariat as appropriate. It is felt that a Chairman be appointed by the secretariat for each Fora, with the responsibility to ensure that equal time be given to the various groups to speak. As an output of these Fora, a 3-4 page summary paper for each Forum could be produced and distributed to all delegates and observers.

In the future, it is perceived that categorizing groups may become increasingly difficult as, inter alia, agriculture, trade, development and other NGOs join the process.

PROPOSALS/OPTIONS

As judged from responses and consultations with the NGOs, some proposals/options may be as follows:

Strengthening existing mechanisms

There is consensus among all groups that existing input mechanisms/processes need to be strengthened. These include:

- improved and speedier access to information and documents;
- improved access to the floor and enhanced rights to intervene;
- soliciting inputs from NGOs on specific issues by the secretariat.

Transparent communication mechanisms which work to enhance the process and information flows could be considered. Without filtering information received from NGO constituencies on various issues, the secretariat could act as a guardian/facilitator to the process. If any meetings arise as a result, then a record of the meeting would need to be kept.

Facilitating NGO inputs

The secretariat may consider both formal and informal mechanisms for soliciting inputs from NGOs on relevant issues.

As mechanisms which would trigger NGO input processes, with regard to formal requests for inputs, it is suggested that COP could direct the secretariat to invite the views of NGOs on issues whenever governments are invited to present views and to circulate any comments to governments via a miscellaneous document. A precedent is provided by the

AG13 questionnaire, circulated to intergovernmental and non-governmental bodies as well as to States Parties (see FCCC/AG13/1996/MISC.2).

With regard to informal requests for inputs, it is suggested that the secretariat could seek the views of NGOs on a range of issues as and when appropriate in the opinion of the secretariat, including for the purposes of agenda setting. Such an exercise could be undertaken to assist the secretariat in becoming more fully aware of the range of issues and interests at stake. The invitation to and response by NGOs could be disseminated via post, electronic mail, and/or the world wide web.

Focal points for each of the main NGO constituencies and other constituencies could be nominated by the NGOs in question, to whom the secretariat could direct its request for inputs. The focal point would then be responsible for distributing the request/information among the constituencies' networks as appropriate for response/comment.

The secretariat should also consider a more transparent operation of its related information services, including CC:INFO, CC:INFO/Web, CC:TRAIN, and CC:FORUM. The CC:INFO/Web sites could include an optional NGO component. NGO involvement, inputs and information should be actively pursued and incorporated in available information, including CC:INFO. For these and other purposes, a listserv could be set up for accredited NGOs to the UNFCCC process for open discussion and exchange of views at the initiative of the secretariat, as well as for fast distribution of new documents.

National Communications

Many environmental and local government NGOs feel that they need to be more involved in the process of national communications. In particular, these NGOs wish to be involved in establishing and reviewing IPCC guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories.

With regard to these guidelines, local government NGOs seek to define a common methodology that includes local government NGO inputs. The avoidance of double-counting in national inventories, as well as the desire for recognition of the local government NGO contribution to securing abatement of greenhouse gases, remain motivating factors. Emphasis is also given by local government NGOs to the variety of financing mechanisms that have been developed by local governments, and that pro-active participation by local governments will assist the Parties in meeting their commitments.

It is also felt by environmental NGOs that a formal mechanism for input into the review of national communications with governments and the secretariat could be facilitated. In respect of non-Annex I communications, it is suggested that environmental NGOs should be invited to participate in national capacity building programmes. Further, once guidelines are established, environmental NGOs have suggested that they could be invited by governments to participate in the national reporting teams, conducting monitoring and reporting as appropriate.

Policy Dialogue Forum

A number of NGOs consider that there is a strong need for a Policy Dialogue Forum. These Forums would be open to all delegates, members of NGOs, and members of intergovernmental organizations, participating in their personal capacities. The purpose would be to provide an opportunity for discussion of policy options in a transparent and de-politicized forum so as to consider the optimum policies that may be available.

It is felt that a Chairman for each Policy Dialogue Forum would need to be appointed by the secretariat, with the responsibility to ensure that equal time be given to the various groups to speak during the Policy Dialogue Forum. As an output, a 3-4 page summary paper for each Policy Dialogue Forum could be produced and distributed to all delegates and observers as a non-paper. The agenda and schedule would best be driven and supported by the secretariat. The secretariat may seek inputs from NGOs for agenda-setting purposes. One possibility cited was the organization of thematic Policy Dialogue Forums, scheduled so as not to conflict with official meetings, before, during or after regularly scheduled meetings of UNFCCC bodies.

Access to the Floor

Many NGOs seek improved access to the floor and enhanced rights to intervene. The secretariat should consider developing guidelines on access to the floor and interventions by NGOs during the COP and sessions of Subsidiary Bodies for consideration by the Parties. This is particularly of concern to NGOs, as current practices differ and change without prior notice. As one suggestion, requests for intervention from NGOs in a particular session could be called for and received prior to or at the beginning of the session in question. The requests for intervention could then be dealt with by the Chairman of the session at his/her discretion on a first-in first-serve basis only where there is sufficient time to receive the interventions, or at a time when the Chairman feels that a particular issue deserves input/comment from the NGO constituencies in question. An appropriate time to receive interventions may be after hearing presentations from delegates. Parity among the NGO groups regarding interventions should serve as a rule, and it is felt by most that individuals or individual NGOs should be reprimanded for inappropriate behaviour (if any), rather than whole NGO constituencies.

NGO representation on National Delegations

The practice of a number of Parties who include NGO representatives in their delegations is commended and promoted by many NGOs. Most support the notion that this practice become a common practice among all Parties in future meetings of the COP and its Subsidiary Bodies. As such, while depending on the country and the NGO itself, many NGOs feel that they should be given the opportunity to be included in national delegations.

Financial Mechanism(s)

Consideration may be given to the development of an appropriate financial mechanism, such as a trust fund for NGO participation from developing nations (analogous to the existing trust fund for developing state Party participation) generated and administered by the secretariat for, and to ensure the participation of, developing country NGO representatives (an apparent particular concern of environmental NGOs). Should it be required, for the purposes of developing a funding proposal, and at the secretariat's request, environmental NGO groups are prepared to provide inputs concerning appropriate criteria and mechanisms needed thereon.

Other issues

There is an apparent need for further reflection on the issue of NGO categorization, particularly within the NGO groupings. Accurate categorization of groups could be used to enhance greater participation of NGOs in the processes of the convention. It was suggested that categorization could extend to identifying NGOs according to their interest in participating in the UNFCCC process, type of membership, and financing available so as to allow delegates and others a better understanding of NGO representation, abilities and participation. Effective categorization may support the participation of additional and other NGOs, including increased participation of all sectors of business, industry, labour and agriculture NGOs from both Annex I and non-Annex I Parties.

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