Development of National Profiles and Action Plans to Implement Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration With a Focus on Climate Change

A Contribution to the Implementation of Public Participation Provisions of Article 6 of the UNFCCC

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Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration

- Adopted by Heads of State and Government (UNCED, 1992)
- Includes three pillars:
  1. “Each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities
  2. “Each individual shall have the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes”
  3. “Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings shall be provided”
- Aarhus Convention adopted in 1998 in UNECE Region
- Compatible with Article 6 of the UNFCCC
Interface of Principle 10 and Article 6 of UNFCCC

- Public Awareness
- Education
- Public Access to Information
- Public Participation in Decision-making
- Training of scientific, technical and managerial personnel
Potential Benefits of Public Participation

Effective public participation may…..

• bring new important information to the table
• improve quality of decision making and outcomes
• enhance ownership of stakeholders
• foster implementation and enforcement
• promote transparency and accountability
• strengthen public trust in government
• enhance confidence of donors
• Foster environment and development objectives
Participatory Environmental Governance:
Questions and Challenges

• What information should be made available to ensure meaningful public participation?
• For which type of environmental decisions is public participation particularly important?
• When, how, and through what channels should the public be engaged?
• How can capacity of civil society for effective participation be strengthened?
• What degree of influence on decision-making should be granted to the public?
• What skills and resources are needed in government to facilitate effective public participation processes?
UNITAR’s Environmental Governance Programme: Background and Objectives

- Knowledge generation, methodology development, and training/capacity development activities to strengthen capacities for effective stakeholder engagement in environmental decision-making

- Linked to the implementation of the UNECE Aarhus Convention and Principle 10 the Rio Declaration

- Recognition that a one-size-fits all approach to participatory governance is not suitable

- Ongoing projects in 12 pilot countries to support development of National Profiles and Action Plans to assess and strengthen capacities for participatory environmental governance and Principle 10 implementation

- Project executed by countries with methodological and technical support provided by UNITAR
National Profile Country Projects
Aarhus Convention and
Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration

UNECE (Aarhus Convention)

- Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, and Serbia (completed)

Central America (Principle 10)

- Costa Rica, Honduras, Dominican Republic, Panama, El Salvador, Nicaragua (ongoing)

Africa (Principle 10)

- Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Tschad (ongoing)

Asia and the Pacific (Principle 10)

- Currently no projects
National Project Objectives

- Raise awareness of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration
- Take stock of existing capacities for participatory environmental governance in the country
- Identify areas for priority action and capacity development
- Strengthen inter-sectoral collaboration concerning public participation in environmental decision-making
- Enhance collaboration and build trust between government and stakeholders
National Profile on Principle 10 Implementation

- Provides a comprehensive and systematic baseline document which documents national capacities related to the implementation of Principle 10

- Covers legislation, policies, ministerial responsibilities, activities, public participation practices, etc

- Starting point for priority setting and action plan development to strengthen participatory governance

- Peer-reviewed guidance document available
National Profile Process:
Features and Principles

• Country driven process and ownership ("by county-for country")

• Multi-sectoral approach: engagement of all relevant ministries

• Multi-stakeholder approach: engagement of civil society including environment and community groups, academia, private sector, media, trade unions, etc.

• Foster linkages with and support relevant national environmental policy processes (e.g. MEA implementation)
Key Phases of a National Project

- National Planning Meeting
- Preparation of National Profile
- National Priority Setting Workshop
- National Action Plan
Exploring Linkages of Principle 10 and Article 6 of UNFCCC

• Effective public participation and stakeholder engagement in climate change essential to achieve UNFCCC mitigation and adaptation goals

• Many government sectors (e.g. energy, transport, health, agriculture) and multiple levels government (national, sub-national, local) affected

• UNITAR interested in exploring collaboration with countries and UNFCCC Secretariat to support National Profile and Action Plan development with a special focus on climate change governance

• Initiative seeks to support information and public participation provisions of Article 6 of the UNFCCC

• Interested countries are encouraged to contact UNITAR
Thank you for your attention!