

Submission by the Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development (nrg4SD)

Views on opportunities to further enhance the effective engagement of non-Party stakeholders aiming at strengthening the implementation of the provisions of decision 1/CP.21

The Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development – nrg4SD – makes this submission in response to the Subsidiary Body for Implementation’s invitation to submit “views on opportunities to further enhance the effective engagement of non-Party stakeholders” and very much welcomes this opportunity.

The engagement of non-Party stakeholders helps to ensure the legitimacy of the negotiation outcomes through the promotion of public acceptance, ownership and support. Such support is in turn crucial for the implementation and durability of negotiation outcomes. The increase in the participation of non-Party stakeholders represents the diversification of the stakeholders active in the matters relating to the Convention and nrg4SD strongly believes such to be of crucial importance to the progress of the negotiations.

Regional governments are particularly well-positioned in this regard, as they often have specific responsibilities on areas of climate action that directly influence GHG emissions, such as energy, environment, transport, industry, agriculture, land-use, or civil security. Besides, regional governments are strategically well positioned between the national and local levels, ensuring vertical integration and coherence of all levels of governments’ actions. Indeed, regional governments are able to transmit their populations’ needs to the national level, as well as to translate the national strategies and policies to their inhabitants and implement them on the ground. Also, regional governments mean a crucial support to local initiatives, especially to small or isolated human settlements often in rural areas, where such local governments do not have the necessary means in terms of human, technical or budgetary resources and regional governments act in their subsidiary capacity. In that sense, regional governments are responsible for the homogeneous, sustainable and fair development of territories as a whole, and act as guardians to eco-systems and other territorial services provided to medium and large cities.

The nrg4SD recognises that an increasing place has been given to non-Party stakeholders within the UNFCCC process over the last years, through inter alia the access to documents for non-Party stakeholders, the organisation of and participation in side-events, the attendance of meetings and the opportunity to present submissions, and through the creation of the NAZCA portal.

In order to consolidate the structures and processes that are already in place and make sure that they continue beyond 2020, we propose to:

- Develop mechanisms to increase the participation of non-Party actors to the Technical Expert Meetings with the aim of having non-Party stakeholders systematically associated to these meetings;
- Support non-Party stakeholders in developing long term mitigation and adaptation actions. The 2050 Pathways Platform could be promoted more broadly as the vehicle for such mobilization.

The nrg4SD welcomes the Decision 1/CP.21, which contains provisions for non-Party stakeholder engagement in the implementation of the Paris Agreement through the encouragement to “Parties to work closely with non-Party stakeholders to catalyse efforts to strengthen mitigation and adaptation action” (paragraph 18).

In this regard and given the special role of subnational governments previously mentioned, we would like to draw the attention of the Parties to the UNFCCC to the “Plan of Action of Subnational Governments, Cities and Other Local Authorities” under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The mission addressed to the Parties to the CBD to seek the engagement of their subnational governments to achieve the objectives of the Conventions should serve as an example also to the Parties to the UNFCCC.

The nrg4SD further acknowledges the engagement by the High-Level Climate Champions “with interested Parties and non-Party stakeholders, including to further the voluntary initiatives of the Lima-Paris Action Agenda” as provided in paragraph 112 (b) of Decision 1/CP.21.

Therefore, we welcome the launch of the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action designed to facilitate cooperative climate action among Parties and non-Party stakeholders, as well as the proposed thematic approach by the High-Level Climate Champions for multi-stakeholder engagement, which explicitly mentions local and subnational governments as actors in this process.

To further strengthen the Global Climate Action Agenda and the work of the High-Level Climate Champions we would like to suggest:

- Increasing regular stakeholder consultations in workshops and meetings, which should be open to non-Party stakeholders and provide opportunities for presentations and interventions;
- Increasing the opportunities for regular briefings;
- Ensuring that the Global Climate Action Agenda continues to hold high level events at each COP;
- Considering the possibility of nominating a non-Party stakeholder as Climate Champion. So far, the Climate Champions have been political representatives from the national governments but this role could also be occupied by non-Party stakeholders with exceptional engagement for climate, e.g. subnational leaders or representatives from the indigenous community;
- As an alternative for the above mentioned, for each Constituency to nominate a “non-Party Ambassador for Climate” who would work closely with the Climate Champions in organizing the COP high level events, but would also have the mandate to increase mobilization within the constituency.

Additionally, nrg4SD believes that submissions are key in the regard of information sharing, building mutual understanding and working transparently and inclusively. We therefore would like to propose a more user-friendly and efficient way to submitting and viewing information, especially for observer organisations:

- All calls for submissions should be posted clearly on the UNFCCC website, including those published in the reports of the UNFCCC bodies;
- Improvement of the submission portal for Parties to also allow for the upload and presentation of observer organisation submissions. This will further facilitate Parties’ accessibility to observer submissions, as well as ease the submission process for observer organisations.

In order to further engage non-Party stakeholders in the lead up to and during sessions, nrg4SD would like to encourage the hosts of future sessions of the COP, the CMP and the CMA to:

- Have stakeholder engagement teams for substantive and organisational matters;
- Following the example of past Presidencies to have regular meetings with non-Party stakeholders throughout the year and support events organised by them;
- Engaging representatives of the Constituencies in the pre-sessional period (dedication of a day or half a day);
- Make further use of the Climate Action Day as an opportunity to have high-level dialogues between Parties, UNFCCC bodies and non-Party stakeholders to give recognition to all stakeholders of their role in combating climate change.

Besides, it is important that a continuous follow-up and review process is pursued at the national level, led by each Party. With a view to NDCs and other national climate strategies, not only to ensure accountability and transparency, a permanent consultation and dialogue framework with non-Party stakeholders would enable a progressive improvement of climate actions in the national context.

Therefore, and ahead of the COPs, we encourage Parties, with the support of the UNFCCC Secretariat:

- To organize periodic subnational dialogues, forums, workshops, seminars and other events to collect inputs and contributions from non-party stakeholders acting at the subnational level on climate mitigation and adaptation. These could be facilitated by local and regional governments, in very local editions, which would then input into annual national dialogues to result in an integrated and coherent network of climate actions by all stakeholders;
- These national frameworks should be represented at continental and global gatherings of non-Party stakeholders, for example the Climate Chance Summit.

Additionally, regional governments consist of a very unique type of governmental stakeholders. As mentioned above and based on their competences, mitigation and adaptation plans of subnational governments will be fundamental to complement national efforts and enable achieving ambitious reduction targets and transformation action.

In this regard, enhancing non-Party Stakeholder engagement should also include:

- Capacity-building;
- Coordination and collaboration with subnational governments, especially in terms of providing them with the necessary resources and tools for the implementation of subnational climate strategies, in a harmonized and complementary way with the efforts of national government;
- For national governments to make use of existing global networks and initiatives working towards that direction, such as the RegionsAdapt, the Under2Coalition or the Covenant of Mayors.

Last, we would like to request the Secretariat to further allow the replacement of names of nominated representatives in the ORS not only before a deadline or when a participant is confirmed, but also during sessions and in exceptional circumstances.

We hope that our observations and recommendations are of assistance and we look forward to further engagement with all stakeholders on this issue.

About nrg4SD

The [Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development](#) - nrg4SD - was established in 2002, and currently has 57 members from 29 countries in four continents. The Network acts in three main fields: sustainable development, biodiversity and climate change; and has two main working lines: on the one hand, it seeks greater international recognition of regional governments, especially in the context of the global agendas at UN and EU levels; on the other hand, it promotes cooperation among regional governments from across the world, fostering the exchange of information, know-how and best practices. In the field of climate change, nrg4SD runs [RegionsAdapt](#), an initiative to inspire and support regional governments to act, collaborate and report efforts on climate change adaptation. Launched at UNFCCC COP 21, the initiative expanded from 27 founding members to 69 members from all continents and works through the following working groups: Water Resources and Management; Resilience and Disaster Risk Reduction; Agriculture and Zootechnics; Forestry, Protected Areas and Biodiversity; Infrastructure and Territorial Planning; Economic Impacts and Opportunities; and Social Adaptation and Impacts.

The "[RegionsAdapt 2016 Report: An assessment of risks and actions](#)" was launched early 2017 as the outcome of the first year of life of the initiative, which continues its efforts along the present year bringing contributions to the UNFCCC process.