

Representation and equitable access

Background Information and Guiding Questions

Inclusion (developed-developing country balance)

Observer participation is currently suffering from a number of **representational deficits**, most notably the lack of participation from stakeholders from *developing countries*. It is important to find ways to enable diverse observers to be represented, particularly those from marginalised communities or countries experiencing the greatest climate impacts, yet participation at the COPs is dominated by the Western Europe and Others (WEOG) regional group. This trend persists regardless of which region the COP is hosted in. This agenda item aims at discussing the possible ways to encourage broad participation of observer organizations, in particular of those from developing countries, including through remote participation.

- How can the UNFCCC support a better balance between access to subsidiary body (SBs) meetings and COPs from representatives from developed and developing countries?

Representation

The representativeness of the *NGO Constituency system* has also been brought into question during phase one of this process to strengthen observer engagement in the UNFCCC. The TUNGO Constituency represents 200 million workers in 163 countries. The Women and Gender Constituency speaks on behalf of half the population. Yet all NGO Constituencies are treated in the same way when it comes to access to the UNFCCC process. This agenda item offers the opportunity to discuss potential ways forward to address the issue of representativeness without resorting to a general increase in the number of observers.

- Can access be based on representation? How can an increased level of representative and equitable access not result in an overall increased number of observers during COPs?

Principles of participation

Equitable participation does not just concern access to the process, but the provision of a safe space for different views to be voiced. In order to ensure this, the establishment of principles of participation may be needed.

In addition to that, a number of stakeholders who contributed inputs to the scoping phase of this process expressed concerns over how to manage the participation of observers who represent organizations whose aims may pose a *conflict of interest* with the goals of the Convention. On the other hand, others pondered that restricting access of specific stakeholders to the process may go against the principle of open, transparent and inclusive participation. Noting the Party-driven nature of the process, and the distinctiveness of UNFCCC issues and actors, it may be helpful considering centring the discussions around aspects of transparency and disclosure in participation when addressing potential conflict of interest in non-Party stakeholders' engagement.

- How can the UNFCCC serve as a safe place for people to raise their voices in diverse ways? How could principles of participation help build understanding around the respective roles played by different actors in the UNFCCC?

- What should be the principles of participation for different stakeholders in the UNFCCC and how could they be applied? Should they be formalized and, if so, what would that entail?
- Across all modes of observer engagement, what steps can be taken to help address the potential for or actualization of conflict of interest when engaging with or between observers, the secretariat, COP Presidencies, SB Chairs and the High-Level Champions (HLCs)?

The first survey carried out within this process asked participants to think about issues and solutions around concrete ways to facilitate meaningful observer engagement (especially from developing countries), not only during COP, but throughout the year and in other venues (e.g. during SBs, regional climate weeks, etc.), and how to support more diverse participation (e.g., from developing countries and groups with less financial resources), such as through the platform of side events/ exhibits.

Inputs addressing these questions from the perspective of Agenda Item 2 have been summarized below to help frame the discussions:

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Proposed solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matchmaking for side-event mergers ahead of the first round of selection, with incentives to pair with developing countries [or include developing country speakers] (8).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quotas of representatives from developing countries as a condition for side events to be approved (3).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One or more themed days focusing on topics directly relevant to developing countries (3).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set aside a given proportion for developing country-led side events only.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring of first time COP attendees from developing countries to ensure they get the most from the process.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide more engagement opportunities to support NGO observers from developing countries.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual engagement with translation availability as a priority.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal quota percentage for observers from developing and developed countries.