

**“HOW TO INCREASE THE
ROLE OF MAJOR GROUPS
AND OTHER NON-STATE
ACTORS IN THE HLPF”**

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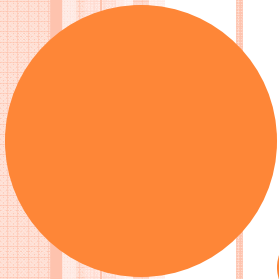
- Compressing 20 years of history into an opening statement is not easy, and generalisations are fraught with errors, but summing up civil society and sustainable policy work through the UN summits, I will venture forth the following:



MAJOR GROUPS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES

- 1992 was about major groups giving advice to governments and the multilateral system
- 2002 was about major groups and stakeholders being part of the implementation process
- 2012 was about major groups and stakeholders being part of the agenda setting process





WHAT IS THIS ALL ABOUT?



- The title of my presentation is “How to increase the role of major groups and other non-state actors in the HLPF”



FIRST A FEW COMMENTS ON STRUCTURE

- Civil society, major groups, stakeholders, non state actors engage in processes that make sense, and hold a promise of improving the well being of people, focuses on governance, accountability transparency etc



- Does engaging in the new sustainable development mechanism make sense?
- Only if forms and functions are available to civil society.
- This is no disrespectful statement, to downgrade the importance of what we are engaged in at the UN – it is just to say that civil society must also make priorities
- Hence the position of the new mechanism within the UN system is of utmost importance to civil society – or as we are referred to, the Major Groups and stakeholders and how this is decided on decided the relevance to our priorities.



- Martin Kohr and a number of speakers yesterday pointed to the present crises the world is in. The acceleration of change today reduces the time from recognizing the need to make a decision to completing all the steps to make the right decision. Hence the world needs an authoritative institution that can in a forceful way, deal with all issues, not the least emerging issues.



- Whenever the economy is in question, there is never a question of getting the right resources to make the right decisions –
- The picture is entirely different when it comes to sustainable development
- The world's economy is totally dependent on a world where sustainability works,
- Sustainable development is as many have observed – the infrastructure upon which every element of society rests



THE POSITION OF THE HLPF IN THE UN HIERARCHY:

- Paragraph 84: established a mechanism that would elevate the importance of sustainable development.
- The mechanism is loosely named a forum, but written with lower-case letters, indicating that the mechanism is yet neither placed in the political hierarchy of the UN nor is it given a political designation with a mandate.
- The agreement made in Rio in 2012 was to have a placeholder name.



A FORUM IS A SUBSIDIARY BODY

- Should the resulting outcome from the process dealing with the high level political forum be to establish a Forum, such as the UN Forum on Forests, it is of utmost importance to understand that a Forum within the UN system is treated like a subsidiary, functional committee of ECOSOC. This is the exact same position that CSD enjoyed in the intergovernmental hierarchy between 1992 and 2011. CSD was (and still is) a subsidiary body with subsidiary importance at the UN. Establishing a sustainable development forum along these lines would accordingly not be a move that would strengthen IFSD.



USE PRECEDENT

- The UN seems to function better and is more at ease with itself when reference can be made to something which already exists and functions at least reasonably well. What could serve as a reference and a model for the new 'high level political forum'? The UN has within its family a number of mechanisms and bodies that are functional in such contexts and in which also major groups and stakeholders work well. These bodies can lend their experience to the work we are doing at the moment. The Committee on Food Security and The Peace Building Commission (PBC) are two such bodies. The PCB might be of particular interest as it reports both to the GA and to ECOSOC.



HOW CAN MAJOR GROUPS MOVE?

- What are the rules of engagement, of procedure, the modalities of a new mechanism?
- Are we only talking about a Charter driven process in which we position the new SD mechanism?
- We are presently at GA and ECOSOC level – which does not allow for an easy interaction with the major groups –



ECOSOC – CAN IT BE REFORMED? SHOULD IT BE REFORMED TO ACCOMMODATE THE MAJOR GROUPS?

- With its broad mandate the Council's purview extends to over 70 per cent of the human and financial resources of the entire UN system.”
- ECOSOC oversees 28 intergovernmental mechanisms within the UN system, coordinates all the specialised agencies including the reporting from the UN’s five regional commissions. It also organises and runs spring meetings with the Bretton Woods Institutions and WTO
- Looking at the organisational map of ECOSOC and looking at its total workload, it is not totally wrong to assert that the relationship in ECOSOC’s work load and output between sustainable development issues and other issues is approximately 1 : 9.



RULES OF ENGAGEMENT AT ECOSOC AND MAJOR GROUPS

- The present rules of engagement for NGOs at ECOSOC are restrictive and do not allow for the kind of interactive modalities that were employed by CSD. Does this comply with the intent of paragraph 84 and 85?
- Rules can be reformed – obviously – but with some difficulties. The present rules for NGOs were revised in 1992. These rules may easily be set aside at a function, but if one nation objects, such a move falls;
- Major groups want something permanent, not something which is at the discretion of the chair, afforded major groups and non state actors at a time when the countries are feeling benevolent





WHAT IS ATTRACTIVE TO MAJOR GROUPS?

- We all talk about developing an institution that will meet our expectations.**
- I find this a rather narrow perspective, almost erroneous –**
- We need to develop and build an institution that can meet the expectations of the people of the world for the next 20 years – for the future generations**



- CSD was established in 1992/93 and became an institution that served us reasonably well for 20 years. What we are engaged in doing now is to build an institution that will serve the world for the next 20 years



- Major groups and non-state actors give multilateral processes legitimacy, and with their thematic expertise often enrich the discussions and outcome documents. A subsidiary body will however not be prioritised by major groups
- A mechanism with enough formal strength so it will be taken seriously and its decisions implemented is what we want.



AGENDA SETTING

- A number of questions come to mind in making the new mechanisms, questions that speak not the least to the relevance of the agenda –
- I would like to refer to what Tanya Raguz said this morning: who and how will the agenda be set in the new mechanism?
- What is the time-frame this agenda will cover? (1 year, 3 years, more?)
- We feel rather strongly that the major groups shall be able to fully participate in planning processes, agenda setting, policy-making, implementation and evaluation activities and processes.



- In many ways the major groups have been integrated in such issues at CSD, however we feel that, to effectively contribute to implementing the functions referred to in paragraph 85, we must be involved in the agenda setting process from the earliest possible stage.
- Major groups provide a valuable link to ‘we the peoples’ that will complement the contacts that our governments have to its constituencies, and because of our work in the fields, will be able to pick up early signals of issues that need to be seen to deal with ‘emerging issues’



IT IS ALL ABOUT ACCESS.

- CSD was developed around the Rio principles to allow the multilateral system to operationalize these principles, access, precaution etc
- Major groups and stakeholders have throughout the 20 years of CSD had access to all information and documents, including negotiating documents as negotiations proceeded. We felt such access was needed for major groups to fully participate and give useful contributions to the CSD processes. This needs to be continued.



NOTHING NEW -

- Throughout the entire CSD, major groups and stakeholder have had access to all meetings, processes and bodies including the final stages of decision-making. This access has been at all levels, such as, intersessional committees, bureaus, ministerial-level meetings, and drafting and contact groups, Friends of the Chair, etc. This needs to continue



- We have had speaking rights in all meetings, with the same opportunities as governments to express views and opinions; and even allowed to comment on the chairs text in plenary.
- We have had the right to submit documents equivalent to Member States. Task Managers reports even allowed and encouraged the writer to consult with and extract content from contributions from the major groups.
- Must be continued



- We have however at times been confronted by initiatives to turn the back the clock. Because of this, the principle of non-regression must be observed, so that new rules and practices regarding participation and transparency do not regress with respect to either current formal and informal practices at CSD or internationally agreed principles and rights, such as the human rights to participate in decision-making and to access to information.



- We do feel it important that a trust fund shall be created and maintained and that the present organizational structure need to be supplied with resources to support full participation by major groups and provide sufficient resources to facilitate full participation by all aspects of civil society, including external capacity building, funding of participation, and internal personnel.



TAKE THE BEST OUT OF CSD

- Non state actors are at times as representative as governments – and through the beauty of the major groups mechanism, they have found a way into the intergovernmental system while still respecting and recognising paragraph 71 of the Charter –
- But the world has changed since 1945, and elected mayors of large cities often represent a voting constituency larger than many governments still speak as NGOs at the UN.
- Should this be changed? If so – how? And without diluting the principles of equality in working the UN



THREE MORE ELEMENTS, ALWAYS IMPORTANT TO MAJOR GROUPS:

- Capacity building for and by the major groups has always been an integrated element of the CSD. This needs to be continued;
- Integrating regional concerns has always been a challenge, but was managed. It allows for greater major groups participation, and should be upgraded. This is not substitute for global participation, but an add on.
- Governance and accountability always a core issue for major groups; – “Effective governance is at the core of coherence” – from “In Larger Freedom”



AND FINALLY – WHAT WOULD MAKE THE
NEW MECHANISM HUGELY ATTRACTIVE
TO MAJOR GROUPS

- Make the new
mechanism the policy
home of the SDGs



AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE TO GIVE US CONTEXT:

- “In short, Rio was not a triumph. But it was not necessarily a disaster either. It was “one of the most significant international negotiating processes. That negotiating process is still going on, day by day and in one form or another around the world in a hundred different fora and with ever-shifting participants, rules and objectives. Though it is far too soon to predict the final outcome, it is not too soon to recognize that the conference has in a very real sense helped to define the terms of the debate.”



... QUOTE CONTINUED

- Measuring the success or otherwise of UNCED will be what happens in the future. UNEP's own analysis (in 1992) of environmental data and trends over the past twenty years as represented to UNCED, does not make encouraging reading. In the year 2012, on the fortieth anniversary of the Stockholm Conference and the twentieth anniversary of Rio, it will – hopefully – be a different story.



WHO SAID THIS?

- These were observations written by Stanley P. Johnson in his book called «The Earth Summit» published in 1993.

We made similar comments about Rio 20. How easy it is to forget history. Still -

- We created an institution then that actually served the world in many cases quite well for 20 years
- Now is the time to create a new institution that can serve the world well for the next 20 years.



FINALLY –:

- Let us not design this institution for failure
- Let us design this institution for (the) future
- And a quote for the sentiment we need to infuse into the new mechanism:
- “Optimism is the fuel of heroes, the enemy of despair and the creator of the future”



- Thank you for your attention

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