

Major Group Joint Opening Statement, 30 April 2012

1) Thank you for this meeting today, etc

2) Explain that all MGs have agreed on a joint opening statement for points which concern us all, such as logistics and speaking rights. Then we will have the substantive discussions I know we all want to engage in, in 3 thematic sections.

3) Logistics in Rio

We thank the Brazilian Government and all others involved, who made it possible that we Major Groups will be able to use the shuttle services to be provided in Rio. This will make our participation much easier and we are very grateful indeed.

At the same time, we continue to be faced with other logistics challenges. The availability and especially the prices of accommodation pose serious problems for many of us. Any facilitation of this issue would be greatly appreciated. With only 52 days to go, news about the accommodation would be welcome as soon as possible.

4) Speaking rights

The General Assembly resolution for the UN Conference for Sustainable Development, Rio plus 20, gives the major groups' active roles in the preparatory process, at all levels and regions. The major groups are referred to in 8 of the 29 paragraphs in that resolution. We have a formal and active role in the Rio plus 20 Process.

Paragraph 21 in the UN resolution states this unequivocally, and I quote:

"§21. *Encourages* the active participation of all major groups, as identified in Agenda 21 and further elaborated in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and decisions taken at the eleventh session of the Commission, at all stages of the preparatory process, in accordance with the rules and procedures of the Commission as well as its established practices related to the participation and engagement of major groups;"

As negotiations at CSD 11 in 2003 ended, a set of modalities based on the JPOI had been developed concerning the major groups. Among these modalities are:

- strengthening Major Group participation in CSD activities, the interactive dialogue during the high level segment; make the multi-stakeholder dialogues more action and implementation oriented;
- enhance participation and effective involvement of civil society and other relevant stakeholders in implementation, promote transparency and broad public participation;

Delegates –

For ten years the major groups have under the rules and procedures of the Commission been allowed to address the plenary sessions at CSD – we have been allowed to give an opening statement have been allowed to address the sessions through questions and comments and have been allowed closing statements as well.

We now find ourselves bereft of these opportunities.

We are aware of the status of the present negotiations – they are called informals. We are also aware of the privilege of the UN assemblies to interpret procedural rules, and that informals are often run according to their own rules.

Co-chairs and Bureau members, we would like to draw your attention to paragraph 21 of the General Assembly resolution calling for Rio plus 20, stating that major group participation should be at at all stages of the preparatory process. We find that under a strict or a flexible interpretation 'all stages' also includes the informals.

Strengthening the institutional framework means taking major group participation to the next level. Thus, we must be integrated in the process as full-fledged actors and given the respect we deserve. This can be done without infringing on the rights of the governments.

Delegates, it is too late now to allow major groups opening statements at this informal meeting. It is however not too late to grant each of us closing statements. It would also be in complete accordance with the GA resolution to allow major groups opening statements, comments during the deliberations and closing statements at the third and final prep com in June in Rio.

Thank you for considering this request.

5) Give an overview of the three clusters and session flow, and lead over into first cluster