

Major Groups and Other Stakeholders Coordination Mechanism (MGOS-CM)

Terms of Reference

Approved by consensus on 18 December 2020

ARTICLE I: PRINCIPLES FOR ENGAGEMENT

The Major Groups and Other Stakeholders Coordination Mechanism (hereinafter referred to as the “MGOS-CM”) comprises representatives of autonomous social groups and societal constituencies referred to as the Major Groups and Other Stakeholders (MGOS), as listed in Article IV, Section 1. The fundamental principles for engagement are:

- Centrality of human rights for all as the critical cornerstone of the sustainable development agenda and democratic governance at all levels;
- Utmost commitment to gender equality; to social, economic, ecological, climate, gender, racial and intergenerational justice, as well as to the eradication of all forms of discrimination and violence;
- Recognition that the inherent interconnectedness of all domains of life requires systemic and holistic responses in both policy-making and programme development and implementation;
- Centrality of inclusive and democratic multilateralism, centered on the United Nations and based upon human rights, people-centeredness, equity and justice, solidarity, cooperation and common but differentiated responsibilities, to ensure the democratic management of our commons and the advancement of the sustainable development agenda.

ARTICLE II: MANDATE

1. The MGOS-CM is an autonomous and self-organizing space for coordination among social groups and societal constituencies interested and committed to the advancement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its follow-up and review process, with special but non-exclusive reference to the all-year round preparations for the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF).
2. The mandate of the MGOS-CM emanates primarily from the self-determination and commitment of MGOS constituencies to collaborate and coordinate their engagement. It also supported by the following resolutions and outcomes:
 - (a) Article 71 of the Charter of the United Nations;

- (b) Agenda 21, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, which established the nine Major Groups (A/CONF.151/26), as adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 47/190 of 22 December 1992;
- (c) Section II.C, paragraphs 42 to 55 of the Rio+20 outcome document “*The Future We Want*” (General Assembly resolution 66/288 of 27 July 2012) explicitly involving Major Groups and Other Stakeholders (MGOS) in all matters relating to the United Nations and its work in sustainable development;
- (d) Section IV.B, paragraphs 84-86 of the Rio+20 outcome document, “*The Future We Want*,” (General Assembly resolution 66/288 of 27 July 2012) which incorporates all practices from the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) into the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF);
- (e) General Assembly Resolution 67/290 of 9 July 2013 which established the HLPF, particularly with reference to paragraphs 8c, 13, 14, 15, 16, 22, and 24 regarding active involvement of MGOS in all activities pertaining to the HLPF at all levels;
- (f) Report of the Expert Group Meeting on Enhancing Major Groups and Other Stakeholders Engagement in National Level Reviews held 25-26 March 2017 (Bogota Report); as well as other relevant decisions taken by the MGOS-CM.

ARTICLE III: OBJECTIVES OF THE MGOS-CM

The objectives of the MGOS-CM are the following:

1. Advancement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in directions and modalities which are coherent with the MGOS principles of engagement, as outline in Article I;
2. Widest possible substantive participation of all social groups and societal constituencies, inclusive of all those not formally represented within the Coordination Mechanism, in the follow-up and review process of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, ensuring geographical, constituency, gender, racial and age balance, while creating the widest possible space for under-represented and often marginalized voices;
3. Protection and strengthening of the rights to open, transparent and inclusive participation of MGOS in the follow-up and review process of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with special reference to the HLPF and the elaboration, discussion and follow-up of Voluntary National Reviews, and other relevant sustainable development processes as mandated by 67/290 and other relevant resolutions;
4. Recognition of the critical role of MGOS in advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its follow-up and review process;
5. Enhanced collaboration, coordination and solidarity among MGOS constituencies.

ARTICLE IV. CONSTITUENCIES OF THE MGOS-CM

1. The MGOS-CM might comprise representatives from any of the constituency groups defined as follows:

a. Major Groups as Identified in Agenda 21, General Assembly resolution 47/190 of 22 December 1992):

- i. Women;
- ii. Children and Youth;
- iii. Indigenous Peoples;
- iv. NGOs;
- v. Local Authorities;
- vi. Workers and Trade Unions;
- vii. Business and Industry;
- viii. Scientific and Technological Community;
- ix. Farmers.

b. Other Stakeholders mentioned in General Assembly resolution 66/288 of 27 July 2012 on “The Future We Want” (Rio +20 Outcome):

- i. Older persons;
- ii. Local communities;
- iii. Migrants.

c. Other Stakeholders mentioned in General Assembly resolution 67/290 of 9 July 2013 on “Format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development”:

- i. Private philanthropic organizations, foundations;
- ii. Educational and academic entities;
- iii. Persons with disabilities;
- iv. Volunteer groups.

d. “Other Relevant Stakeholders Active in Sustainable Development”: Admittance and number of seats under this category will be subject to decision by the MGOS-CM, based on demonstrable inability and/or inappropriateness to join any of the other existing groups as well as on characteristics and governance requirements as outlined in Article IV Clause 2:

- i. Rights-holder groups other than those already included in the previous categories, provided these groups are legitimate, inclusive and global platforms that are already

constituted or being constituted with the explicit objective to facilitate the inclusive participation of their respective social groups into UN processes;¹

- ii. Regional mechanisms that are constituted to facilitate inclusive engagement into the Regional Sustainable Development Fora and officially acknowledged by the respective Regional Economic Commissions;²
- iii. Open thematic mechanisms that facilitate inclusive engagement of social groups and societal constituencies in UN thematic platforms, frameworks and processes which are explicitly related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, have mandates formally linked to the HLPF and are expected to report through the HLPF, as per the provisions of their respective follow up and review modalities;³
- iv. Global public interest networks of significant scope with a track record of active engagement in the HLPF coordination mechanism, and that are constituted for explicit purpose of implementing the 2030 Agenda and whose mandate therefore directly refers to the HLPF. This category should be limited to two spots. Whenever more than two networks demonstrate interest and fulfil all membership requirements, the qualified networks will be requested to coordinate a rotational scheme in their official representation in the MGOS-CM. Information about the agreed rotational scheme should be provided in writing to the Chairs with names, contacts and a clear timeline for the rotation.

2. Application for constituency group membership of the MGOS-CM can be made in accordance with the following modalities:

- (a) For constituency groups not already represented within the existing MGOS constituencies, applicants must be able to provide evidence of:
 - i. Global, inclusive and open participation mechanism of significant scope;
 - ii. Democratic governance organizational structure, including reporting mechanism;
 - iii. Alignment with engagement principles of the MGOS-CM as outlined in Article I;
- (b) Applicants must submit to the MGOS-CM Co-Chairs a request which should include information on the applicant's mission, participating groups and organizations, activities, democratic governance structure, and meaningful established accountability,

¹ For instance, LGBTI groups; fisherfolk and other small-scale food producers; etc.;

² For instance, the ESCAP-related Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Engagement Mechanism, UNECE-related Regional Coordination Engagement Mechanism; etc.;

³ For instance, the Civil Society Financing for Development Group (AAAA, paragraph 132); the 10 Year Framework of Programmes for Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns (Future We Want, paragraph 226); the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR, paragraph 49), the Civil Society and Indigenous' Peoples Mechanism for the relations with the Committee on World Food Security (CFS 43, paragraph 23).

reporting and decision-making mechanisms. Applicants should also include information on how their organizing partners and/or focal points are elected, selected or appointed;

- (c) Membership is granted upon approval of the MGOS-CM and if unsuccessful, applicants will be informed of the reasons for the negative decision, with an opportunity to appeal by clarifying any factual misinterpretations.
3. Designation and participation of official representatives on the MGOS-CM should unfold in accordance with the following modalities:
- (a) Each MGOS will designate one principal and up to two alternate representatives to the MGOS-CM. It is required that these designated representatives belong to different organizations; in the case of regional and thematic mechanisms, it is encouraged for the designated representatives to be affiliated to different constituencies within these mechanisms. MGOS-CM representatives may include the MGOS Organizing Partners or Stakeholder Focal Points;
 - (b) Each constituency group is responsible for its own procedures to identify their representatives, ensuring regional, gender and age balance as much as possible;
 - (c) The list of representatives of the MGOS constituency groups will be made available on the MGOS-CM website and on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge Platform.

ARTICLE V: RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE MGOS-CM

1. Each constituency commits to actively supporting the work of the MGOS-CM, including attending its meetings on a regular basis, participating in task groups and other activities as required to advance the mandate and objectives of the MGOS-CM, which include the following:
- (a) Facilitating the participation of MGOS and provision of inputs, oral and written, in processes and meetings related to the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with special emphasis to the HLPF and its discussions and deliberations;
 - (b) Monitoring the status of preparations for the annual session of the HLPF, including status of reports that have implications for the work of MGOS, and the preparatory process for the Voluntary National Reviews and Thematic Reviews;

- (c) Facilitating the meaningful integration of broad and diverse perspectives at the HLPF, setting clear, transparent, and inclusive criteria for engagement, in accordance with Article II;
- (d) Liaising with the President of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the President of the UN General Assembly (UNGA), and other relevant UN bodies and functions, and collaborating closely with the dedicated departments and divisions of the UN Secretariat in the organization of expert group meetings, consultations with Member States and entities of the United Nations system, and other events and processes of the follow-up and review process of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the MGOS segment of the HLPF;
- (e) Soliciting and reviewing nominations and finalizing the selection of speakers, panelists, and moderators, as well as those to receive funding, for the HLPF, its preparatory sessions and other related meetings, following open and transparent calls for applications and in close coordination with the UN Secretariat. Selection processes shall be consistent with principles (Article I) and objectives (Article III) and shall be based upon a balanced approach towards constituencies, regions, genders and age groups, as well as expertise;
- (f) Preparing joint position positions, statements, campaigns and advocacy efforts, whenever possible, appropriate and feasible, on relevant issues addressed by the HLPF, ECOSOC and UNGA, including on the Global Sustainable Development Report and the HLPF Review process, as well as whenever a consolidated position from the MGOS-CM is considered necessary, throughout the year;
- (g) Organizing MGOS meetings during each annual cycle, including the pre-HLPF session to prepare representatives of the MGOS for their participation in the HLPF, the annual MGOS HLPF side event and other sessions as deemed appropriate by the MGOS-CM;
- (h) Advocating and mobilizing actions, concrete outputs and, when appropriate and necessary, financial resources, that will strengthen the overall credibility, visibility, and influence of MGOS in the HLPF and its preparatory process;
- (i) Developing and promoting communication and outreach strategies that support public awareness and increased understanding of the HLPF and role of MGOS, including the management of the mailing lists of the MGOS-CM as well as the maintenance the MGOS-CM website and the MGOS-pages on the UN website;
- (j) Speaking on behalf of the MGOS-CM as and when so requested by the MGOS-CM;

- (k) Exploring the need for direct resource development efforts to support the MGOS-CM activities and, if necessary, putting in place all necessary systems and procedures to ensure the proper administration of fund that might be raised.

ARTICLE VI: CO-CHAIRS OF THE MGOS-CM

1. Elections and terms of office:

- (a) The MGOS-CM will elect a minimum of two and maximum of three Co-Chairs from different MGOS, striving to ensure North-South and gender balance;
- (b) Each Co-Chair will serve for a period of two-years, though candidates might express their availability for a one-year term only when running for office;
- (c) The MGOS-CM will have a rotating Co-Chair system, on a two-yearly basis. One (or two) Co-Chair shall have a term of office from 1 February of one year and ending 31 January of the next year of term of office; one (or two) Co-Chair will have a term of office from 1 August of one year and ending 31 July of the next year of the term of office. However, this rotating system might be flexibly adapted to the circumstances, also depending whether 2 or 3 Co-Chairs are elected;
- (d) The Co-Chairs will be eligible for re-election for an additional term of a minimum of one year and a maximum of two years;
- (e) The incoming Co-Chairs will be elected by Members a month before the expiration of their respective terms of office;
- (f) If a Co-Chair cannot complete a term of office, the MGOS-CM will convene to elect replacement for the remainder of the term of office. If the remainder of the term of office is less than six months, the replacement Co-Chair will be eligible for a two-year term of office without re-election.

2. The Co-Chairs, who will determine allocation of tasks among themselves, will be specifically responsible for the following activities, among others:

- (a) Facilitating the participation and contribution of all the constituencies of the MGOS-CM;
- (b) Monitoring the status of preparations and processes for the HLPF and related events of the follow-up and review process of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, throughout the year;

- (c) Convening meetings of the MGOS-CM and proposing agendas, ensuring proper note-taking, keeping records of participation, circulating the minutes, facilitating follow-up action on agreed decisions, of representatives of the MGOS constituent groups;
- (d) Coordinating the activities of the MGOS-CM, through the task groups or thematic groups;
- (e) Coordinating the ongoing liaison with UN/DESA, the President of ECOSOC and its Bureau, the President of the General Assembly, other Member States, representatives of departments/divisions of the United Nations Secretariat and with any United Nations entity as necessary on matters of relevance to the role of the MGOS in sustainable development issues;
- (f) Ensuring the proper and regular flow of information and reports between the MGOS-CM and the appropriate departments and divisions of the UN Secretariat;
- (g) Ensuring that relevant information about the role and work of the MGOS-CM is brought to the attention of the President of ECOSOC, the President of UNGA, UN Member States, the UN System and all other relevant constituencies, within the limits of available resources for outreach efforts;
- (h) Speaking on behalf of the MGOS-CM as and when so requested by the MGOS-CM.

ARTICLE VII: METHODS OF WORK

1. Meetings of the MGOS-CM will be held on a regular basis and as needed, primarily through conference calls. The meetings will be convened by the Co-Chairs with 5 (five) working day notice, unless an urgent meeting is required;
2. A quorum of two-thirds of constituent groups is required to conduct a formal meeting of the MGOS-CM where binding decisions are taken, with 5 (five) working days of advance notice;
3. Each MGoS will have one vote only. The MGOS-CM aims to take decisions based on consensus; however, if consensus cannot be reached, a vote will be conducted with decisions being approved by simple majority of those present (if decisions are taken during meetings). Should decisions be taken in the absence of a meeting, the proposals need to be served by the Co-Chairs with 5 (five) working days of decision-making space, with decisions being carried with single majority of the MGOS-CM;
4. Representatives of MGOS constituent groups must demonstrate engagement in the work of the MGOS-CM and attend at least two-thirds of the meetings during a six-month period to be able to maintain their right to vote.

5. Representatives of the MGOS-CM are expected to participate in or lead at least one or more of the Task Groups, which may also include, where appropriate, other individual members of the MGOS constituencies beyond the designated representatives;
6. The MGOS-CM may decide that its work be supported by a small Secretariat. In this case, the staff, who will be selected by the MGOS-CM, will report to the Co-Chairs and provide support to the MGOS-CM in accordance with relevant job descriptions, terms of employment and operational procedures approved by the MGOS-CM.

ARTICLE VIII: TASK GROUPS, THEMATIC GROUPS, SUBCOMMITTEES

1. The MGOS-CM may create Task Groups, Thematic Groups or Subcommittees, to undertake activities related to the HLPF or other intergovernmental processes. Task Groups may include, among others, those for: Advocacy & Communication, MGOS Collective Events and Side Events, VNR Engagement, Speaker and Funding Selection, Website, Terms of Reference & SG Applications, and any other as decided by the MGOS-CM;
2. These Task Groups, Thematic groups or Subcommittees, comprising representatives of the MGOS-CM, as well as individual members of the MGOS when appropriate, will carry out their work and report back directly to the MGOS-CM. In principles, these Groups and Committee will be facilitated by selected members of the MGOS-CM, in coordination with the Co-Chairs;
3. Task Groups, Thematic Groups or Subcommittees can be disbanded by the MGOS-CM, when their tasks are considered completed.

ARTICLE IX: AMENDMENTS

Proposed amendments by any constituency group of the MGOS-CM shall be submitted in writing to the Co-Chairs, who shall transmit them to the Terms of Reference Task Group for review and recommendation to the MGOS-CM. Approval by the MGOS-CM will require a qualified two-thirds majority.

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