

African Civil Society Meeting at the Global Civil Society Forum, Nairobi

Wed 17 Feb, Greenroom

Agenda

A: Internal Governance issues

1. Introductions & election of chair
2. Apologies
3. Background and report back from Regional Steering Committee of Global SCF (Mildred)
4. Background and report back from African Civil Society Steering Committee (Rajan)
5. Input by African Regional Office (David Ombisi)
6. Redesign of African civil society participation and engagement system
 - a. Representation
 - b. Communication
 - c. Decision making

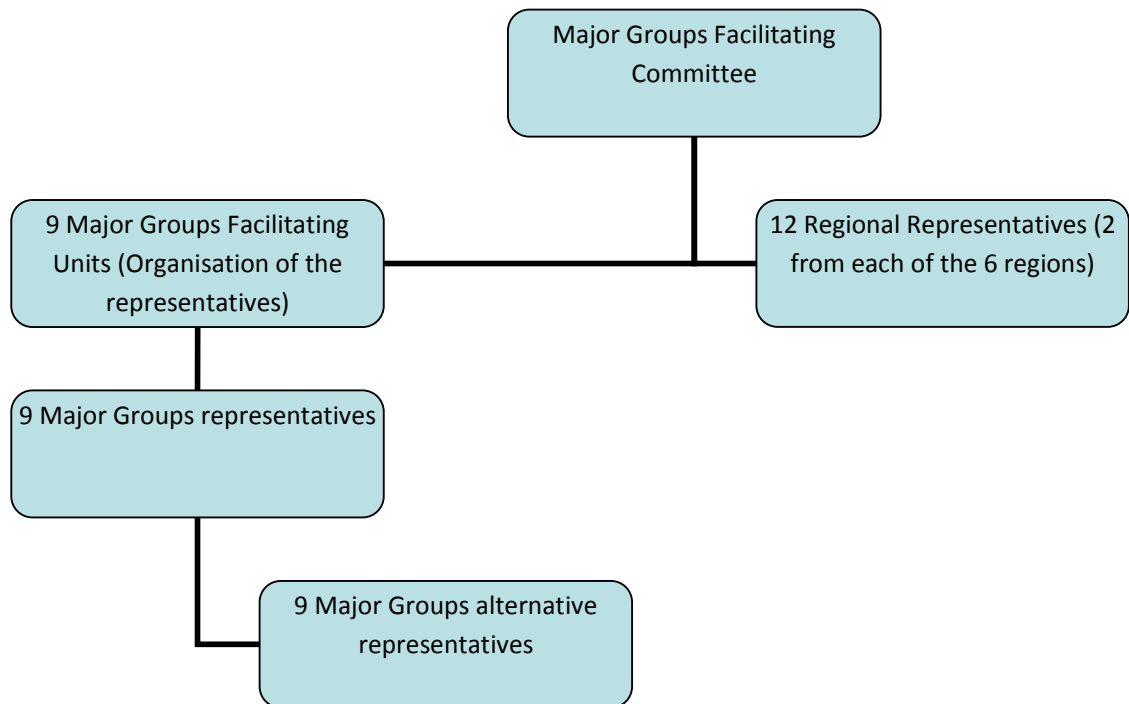
B: Substantive issues

7. Climate Change
8. REDD
9. Energy
10. Agriculture/Pastoralism
11. Meeting with AMCEN?

C: Meeting with Dr Peter Acquah (DD ROA & AMCEN)

Notes:

1. A round of introductions took place and Patrick was elected as Chair
2. Apologies tendered included Davindra, Gace Akumu, Dominic Wabengo, Libasse BA, Mensah Tzodzoro
3. Mildred gave an overview of how GCSF is structured. She noted that initially the committee she is on was called the Steering Committee, now it's called Major Groups Facilitating committee. It is made up of 9 representatives from major groups and 12 from the regions (see diagram below). 2 major groups have facilitating units (Business & NGOs). There are no African representatives from the major groups. She stressed that each of our major groups could nominate for representatives to take over after the current reps terms end in 2010. To do this delegates can send nomination to the office's of the Major Groups and ROA at UNEP. Alexandra pointed out that the major groups facilitating units are not funded, they have to have their own funds to participate.



Mildred noted that we need to influence who gets invited to the Regional consultation meetings where the regional representatives are elected to the GCSF and then who funded to come to the GMEF. UNEP currently has a list they work from, they also looks at the topics, go back to the list of orgs and their profile to see if they fit the topics. Then there are balancing acts – representation across the 9 major groups; regional and gender balance is also considered. David noted that there are other difficulties – eg people pull out, and are replaced by weaker candidates or sometimes they cannot come.

4. Rajan was not present to give a report back. In his absence participants in the meeting tried to piece together the history of the African Civil Society Steering Committee (ACSSC). The ACSSC is a loose connection of CSOs with no formal relationship with UNEP. It was explained that in 2007 at a meeting like this, due to the same problems we face today, representatives were elected onto the ACSSC with Rajan as chair. It seems as if they have not had a meeting since then. It was clarified that the ACSSC predated 2007 when Davindra was chair and that it was formed as delegates felt that meeting only once a year at the consultative preparatory meetings in November and at GSCF was too seldom. So the suggestion was to form a ACSSC. A draft funding proposal was submitted to ROA but it was too large a budget and David was not sure the outcome of it. There was also a proposal to set up an African Gender network, but that also died. What was apparent was that the relationship between the 2 committees (ACSSC and the representatives to the GCSF) is not with clear. The whole steering committee of the African Civil Society Forum was absent.

5. David explained that ROA supported the idea of a SC for Africa and concrete proposals of how UNEP better engage with CSOs. But there has been little movement. He had hoped the meeting would come up with ideas of how to ensure there is contact outside of these 2 events.
6. We then moved on to how to organise ourselves better in order to engage UNEP and prepare for the GC meetings. Alexandra explained that the Asia Pacific region has an online Facebook meeting space. They use this facility to prepare for the regional consultative meetings or other meetings , so that they go with one voice. Simeon 10 countries are being co-ordinated through the IGAD Network, East African regional network;
7. The meeting time was coming to a close before a resolution could take place so it was agreed to meet on **18th Thursday 4pm – 5pm Greenroom, Room 13**. If the space is not available Alexandra will put up a notice indicating an alternative meeting venue. It was suggested all who intend to participate in the meeting to read the GCSF / Major Group & GEMF guide documents that were available in the weekend GSCF packs or to go online to access the documents of how the GSCF works, the TOR of the GSCF etc. so that we participate on equal footings.
8. The meeting ended with Strike Mkandle of the Regional Office, representing Dr Peter Acquah (DD ROA & AMCEN), providing an overview of AMCEN. AMCEN is the Ministerial Conference of African Environmental Ministers and is in its 12th session and was established in 1995. A report on the history of AMCEN is available from David Ombisi. He attempted to answer the question: How does AMCEN relate to the African union? In summary it is under the Exec council 'Specialised technical committee' on Agriculture, rural dev, water & natural resources. He noted that the Climate Change meetings are chaired by Algeria (on day to day issues) while AMCEN is chaired by South Africa (who also deals with Climate Change but on Policy and position paper level)
 He noted upcoming events:
 - a. In March in Bonn African negotiators meeting
 - b. 25 – 26 May of African high level expert panel on climate change
 - c. 27th May special session of AMCEN in Gaborone
 - d. Draft position paper on the African common position on Climate Change to be fed to the African Union summit in Madagascar
 - e. Then Bonn then Copenhagen
 He noted that the link between AMCEN and our process was missing

Thursday 18 Feb, Greenroom

Proposed Agenda

1. Introductions and election of the chairperson
2. Recap of yesterdays discussion
3. Way forward on strengthening our participation in the GC and prepare for the next GC
 - a. Task teams proposal and group discussion on internal governance
 - i. Mechanism/Structure – how do we organise ourselves to engage with the formal UNEP process
 - ii. Communication – how do we communicate amongst African CSOs
 - iii. Resource people – how do we access experts from Africa to input on substantive issues
 - b. Invitees and support to attend GC – how do we ensure equal participation of African CSOs in regional consultation meeting and GC meetings
4. Substantive issues
5. Any other business
6. Confirmation of next steps and closure

Notes:

1. Patrick was elected as Chair, no introductions were done due to time constraints.
2. Mildred gave an overview of the meeting of 17 February stressing the need for the right people to come to the regional consultation meetings every Nov (where elections take place). A comment from Floor was that ownership of the process has been taken away from CSOs and that the mechanism of regional consultation meetings needs to be change to include more people and more representatives. The Chair noted that UNEP threw the question back at us yesterday. Libasse shared his experience of how he had tried to create an internet forum to communicate with CSOs after his election in Nov 08 where no one responded. Rajan & Mensah gave another round of the history of African CSO attempts to organise itself.
3. The chair took recommendations from the floor on the way forward and entertained some lamenting on the state of affairs:

It was noted that if there is thematic specialisation it would be easier to participate and identify participants in terms of expertise and interest. Some experiences of ELCI was shared, ie that there were sub-regional level meetings and that identified experts names were identified at that level then passed on. UNEP noted that they can adapt the current website list and provide a list by theme and region. UNEP also noted that it doesn't have resources to invite lots of people to the meetings. The chair asked the crucial question again of 'Who is/will co-ordinating with UNEP, communicate with CSOs and keep the database?'

Criteria for selection of people to the 2+2 was raised and noted – they should have capacity to communicate, raise funds, co-ord, area expertise etc. The need to cover the 5 subregional nodes as Africa is large (amongst other challenges). They need to be able to sponsor themselves or raise funds to do so. An alternative recommendation was that Government Delegations include CSOs. A further recommendation was that from year A Oct to year B Oct, 2 people are elected on a balanced bases and they co-ordinate and communicate. It was recommended that in addition to the agreed on formal 2+2 we include representatives from regions that are absent on the formal 2+2 .

It was noted that we have something to start with.

The final recommendations were that :

- a. The 4 (2+2) elected in Nov 08 (regional Reps Leila – southern Africa & Libasse, West Africa) and Nov 07 (Mildred – Eastern Africa & Mensah) drive the process to strengthen the participation of African CSOs in UNEP
- b. They are to be assisted by volunteers from regions that are not represented. Language, gender and age and possibly theme is needs to be considered when selecting representatives
 - i. The North Africa representative volunteered was Esam Nada of Arab Network for the Environment & Development of
 - ii. There were no representatives from Central Africa region. Alexandra offered to find a representative organisation and pass on the details. The representative should preferably be a women and of the youth sector.
- c. This team will
 - i. co-ordinate across the 5 sub-regions, and liaise with UNEP office
 - ii. expand and update the database of CSOs and ask them to indicate whether they are accredited or not/ their region/their area of expertise etc
 - iii. develop a database or top up UNEP list of regional thematic specialists / representatives
 - iv. ensure communication and report back to the group
 - v. Decide how to organise themselves to fulfil the above tasks
- d. The CSOs responsibility is to respond.

No. 4 – 6 of the agenda was not dealt with due to time constraints. The meeting ended at 5.15pm