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**Civil Society Consultation on
an Intergovernmental Strategic Plan for
Technology Support and Capacity-Building**
Nairobi, 21 and 22 June 2004

Report of the Civil Society Consultation on an Intergovernmental Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-Building

I. Opening of the meeting

1. The Civil Society Consultation on an Intergovernmental Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building was held at the headquarters of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) at Nairobi, Kenya, on 21 and 22 June 2004.
2. The meeting was opened by the Director of the Division of Policy Development and Law of UNEP, Mr. Bakary Kante, at 10 a.m. on Monday, 21 June 2004.
3. In his opening remarks, Mr. Kante welcomed participants to Nairobi and underlined the commitment of UNEP to work with civil society organizations in future challenges. The fruitful cooperation between UNEP and civil society had been ongoing for some time, with successful interaction on the topic of international environmental governance to date. He highlighted the importance of decision SS.VIII/1 adopted by the Governing Council at its eighth special session, in Jeju, Republic of Korea, on 31 March 2004, on the establishment of a High-level Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum with the mandate to prepare an intergovernmental strategic plan for technology support and capacity-building for its consideration at its next regular session. He observed that the improvement of support provision to respond to the capacity-building and technology transfer needs of developing countries and countries with economies in transition was crucial.
4. Mr. Halifa Drammeh, Deputy Director of the Division of Policy Development and Law, noted that capacity-building had been at the heart of international debate for some time with specific chapters of agenda 21 dedicated to the matter. He noted the forthcoming first session of the High-level Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on an

Intergovernmental Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building, the first in a series of three meetings to be held in 2004. In the review of 30 years of UNEP work, it had become clear to governments that a number of activities needed be undertaken, including strengthening decision-making in the Governing Council of UNEP and Global Ministerial Environment Forum; making the financing of UNEP more predictable through the introduction of the indicative scale of contribution; allowing for universal membership of the Governing Council of UNEP; harmonizing of environmental actions and efforts within the United Nations system; and the elaboration of an intergovernmental strategic plan for capacity-building and technology support.

5. He reviewed a number of topics for discussion at the present meeting, including the report by the Executive Director of UNEP entitled The intergovernmental strategic plan for capacity-building and technology support: perspectives on needs and gaps; financing of capacity-building initiatives; management of the strategic plan at global, regional and national levels; the role of international institutions and intergovernmental bodies such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development; expectations of south south cooperation; use of multilateral environmental agreements; and how to respond to the needs of developing countries including least developed countries and small island developing states. He wished participants fruitful deliberations and urged them to be radical, dispassionate and free-thinking in their discussions.

6. Mr. Olivier Deleuze, Chief, Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch of UNEP, welcomed participants to the meeting and underlined the importance of civil society organizations in the global environment agenda. He recalled that the existence of UNEP and a number of multilateral environmental agreements was largely due to lobbying by civil society organizations.

A. Organization of work

7. It was agreed that participants would elaborate a brief document during the meeting summarizing their recommendations to the High-level Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on an Intergovernmental Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-Building.

B. Attendance

8. The meeting was attended by 28 participants from civil society organizations from various regions.

9. It was also attended by representatives of UNEP. The full list of participants is contained in annex II to the present report.

II. The perspective of major groups

A. Needs and gaps

10. Ms. Maria Julia Oliva, Centre for International Environmental Law (CIEL), Geneva, gave a presentation on the needs and gaps in technology support and capacity-building. She noted that limited success had been achieved in capacity-building activities to date, which justified clearly the need for a strategic plan. She suggested, however, that current needs and gaps should be further analysed in order to ensure the plan solved existing problems. The challenges fell into two broad categories: lack of capacity in developing countries and the gaps in capacity-building mechanisms currently in place. With regard to the areas in which developing countries needed capacity-building, while a strategic approach to capacity-building must be developed in the context of their existing and emerging needs, the countries should outline their own needs. As to the gaps in existing capacity-building initiatives, she highlighted a number of shortcomings that had been pointed out repeatedly by beneficiaries. Capacity-building activities had generally been:

- (a) Uncoordinated, with duplication of efforts and resources often occurring at all levels and requiring a fundamental change at the outset in the way capacity-building strategies were formulated;
- (b) Not sustainable. Efforts had often been formulated without sufficient prior assessment of needs and without building on existing projects;
- (c) Not evaluated, through a more systematic use of indicators or benchmarks, in order to monitor successes and build on them to increase accountability and impact;
- (d) Not results-oriented. Activities should produce a change in order to have impact on the target beneficiaries;
- (e) Without regional or south south coordination, for which the establishment of networks of information dissemination on activities could greatly improve efficiency and help to empower the regions to help themselves;
- (f) Not efficient. A revision of funding mechanisms and usage was required to increase efficiency, coordination and accountability;
- (g) Not participatory. More widespread and effective participation from the level of analysis and design through to implementation, by the stakeholders and by capacity-building institutions.

11. In the ensuing discussion, a number of participants noted that some countries still did not have a ministry of environment while in others the ministries of health, education and environment that were at the heart of sustainable development, lacked importance and influence. Several participants urged that the capacity of those ministries should be built while others felt that other sectoral ministries including ministries of finance and planning should be targeted for environmental awareness-raising. In developing countries, ministries of environment did not always have access to adequate funds and environment was often not considered a national priority. There were also gaps between the objectives of donors and those of governments and non-governmental organizations.

12. Many stressed that a situation analysis reviewing the mistakes of the past would be an important feature of the strategic plan as much of the capacity-building and technology support undertaken to date had simply not worked. Several participants underlined that sustainability of capacity-building activities was crucial and this required appropriate funding.

13. One participant, describing his country's experience in acceding to the European Union recently, observed that environmental capacity-building was required in developed countries, particularly as they used the overwhelming majority of the earth's natural resources.

14. Several participants suggested that south south and south north cooperation should be included in capacity-building activities and a number of participants underlined the importance of women's expertise in biodiversity and management and indigenous knowledge.

15. Other issues considered to be of importance included capacity-building of negotiators; activities related to poverty alleviation; activities to assist developing countries to be included in world markets; awareness-raising on the importance of environmental policies; national coordination; building trust between governments and civil society; the guiding principles of the strategic plan to ensure it was effective and equitable; anchoring capacity-building initiatives in project implementation at the grassroots level; directing of activities to non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders; and emphasis on

demand-driven activities and a bottom-up approach with focus on implementation and environmental goals.

B. Technology support and capacity-building

16. Ms. Georgina Ayre, Stakeholder Forum for our Common Future, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, gave a presentation on the possible elements of the intergovernmental strategic plan for technology support and capacity-building. She saw the objective of the process as the achievement of sound environmental management and governance to ensure effective implementation of environmental agreements, targets and commitments through provision of appropriate capacity-building and technology support. The strategic plan was necessary due to the lack of effective and appropriate capacity-building and technology support provision and, where it did exist, there was fragmentation in delivery. Although it was generally understood that capacity-building and technology support were intended to benefit developing countries and countries with economies in transition, it should be recognized that capacity deficits also existed in developed countries. Capacity-building and technology support should benefit different sectors of society including governments, intergovernmental organizations, civil society and other stakeholders.

17. The following set of recommendations were made as possible elements of the strategic plan; guiding principles should include; neutrality of the delivery agent; transparency; participation; accountability; equity; beneficiary approach; participation; and appropriateness. An evaluation and assessment of existing initiatives both within and outside the United Nations system and at all levels should be conducted, with the objective of developing an inventory of activities, to avoid duplication and enhance synergies and the efficient allocation of resources. In moving away from the project-based ad-hoc approach which had typified capacity-building and technology support efforts to date, there should be a move away from donor-led initiatives to long-term programmes which were based on self-needs assessment; creation of an enabling environment through the development of complementary and supporting policy frameworks; at the national level capacity-building was required to enable governments to engage more effectively with their civil societies, and for ministries, environment ministries in particular, to interact with other national departments and to negotiate in international forums. The role of south south and south north capacity-building should be recognized; the development of centres of excellence and networks between those should be explored; the strategic plan should examine financial implications and requirements right from the outset, exploring efficient resource allocation, avoiding the diversion of resources away from implementation activities; ongoing monitoring, evaluation and review of capacity-building and technology support activities was critical, including the setting of targets and performance-related indicators.

18. In the discussion that followed, many participants underlined the need for continuity and sustainability of capacity-building activities. Past capacity-building activities had not been sustained due to various reasons including migration of capacity; lack of staff retention in institutions, the impact of HIV/AIDS. One participant observed that measures to counteract the problem might include the creation of incentives; provision of ample opportunity for people to put into practice what they had learned; and the development of knowledge banks. One participant suggested that rather talking about capacity-building, a new phrase should be coined to reflect the idea of building lasting capacity. Another participant underlined that the lasting basis of activities should be recipient-driven in order that they recognize the positive effects of that basis.

19. While one participant noted that, in her experience, capacity-building of negotiators had only limited effect as national delegates were given their instructions by their capitals, another suggested that members of government were often influenced effectively by civil society organizations. Although several participants felt that governments were slowly including civil society in their negotiations, others suggested that those inclusions were

tokenistic and that civil society representatives were often not provided with all relevant information. There was a need, therefore, for more effective involvement of civil society.

20. One participant emphasized the crucial importance of changing attitudes of governments toward making environmental issues the priority. He said that one way of initiating change was building lasting capacity for economic development and underlined the need to make economic arguments about the value of biodiversity and environment.

21. Other issues raised were: the importance of mutual respect, trust, transparency and empowerment; the need for targeted change and monitoring; capacity-building should be impact-based with impact-based indicators on priorities that could be tracked; involving civil society at in regional processes such as the African Ministerial Conference on Environment; looking at different models of civil society engagement processes, translating them into best practices and encouraging their replication; the importance of defining the roles and responsibilities of civil society organizations and those of governments; how to incorporate gender mainstreaming in capacity-building.

III. Consideration of inputs to the High-level Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on an Intergovernmental Strategic Plan on Technology Support and Capacity-building

22. Participants at the meeting elaborated a document containing a set of recommendations for submission to the High-Level Open-ended Working Group on an Intergovernmental Strategic Plan on Technology Support and Capacity-building. The document is contained in annex I to the present report.

IV. Organization of the work of the major groups and stakeholders branch, and the twenty-third session of the Governing Council of UNEP

23. Mr. Deleuze, presented a summary of recommendations stemming from the Fifth Global Civil Society Forum, held in Jeju, Republic of Korea, 27 and 28 March 2004, specifically to improve the interaction between UNEP and civil society. Recommendations included: to convene regional preparatory meetings in collaboration with UNEP regional offices; to convene drafting meetings in which selected regional representatives and a regional civil society focal point would meet to finalize a global civil society statement; to disseminate the global civil society statement as an information document to governments well in advance of meetings of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum to allow the statement to be considered in the governmental position paper; to convene a Global Civil Society Forum two days before meetings of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum to review issues and prepare statements for discussion at the ministerial meeting; to organize a civil society side-event at biennial Governing Council meetings to encourage interaction between civil society representatives and ministers; to ensure that civil society representatives were allowed to speak on specific substantive issues under discussion at the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum subject to conditions set out by the ministerial discussions; and that the integration of UNEP engagement with civil society should be promoted into other United Nations bodies. He added that a further possible recommendation was for civil society organizations to be able to submit brief written statements on topics for discussion at ministerial meetings.

24. In the discussion that followed one participant welcomed the recommendation of capacity-building of regional preparatory meetings, noting the success of such meetings in

preparing for the eighth special session of the Governing Council/ Global Ministerial Environment Forum of UNEP held in Jeju, Republic of Korea, in March 2004. There had been fruitful interaction between representatives of civil society organizations and policymakers and ministers prior to the meeting in Jeju and he requested that UNEP continue to support such meaningful engagement. He also requested that UNEP provide ample preparation time for meetings with timely distribution of appropriate documentation.

25. Another participant observed that although UNEP had championed the role of civil society in the intergovernmental process, it appeared that meetings were timed to keep representatives of civil society organizations and ministers separate. Several participants highlighted examples of intergovernmental meetings convened by other organizations, which included civil society representation. Of particular note were recent meetings of the Commission on Sustainable Development, which involved civil society experts on panels to inform discussions. They called on UNEP to facilitate greater interaction between civil society and governments.

26. Other participants urged representatives of civil society organizations to work at the national level to inform and lobby their ministers prior to intergovernmental meetings. Many participants called for greater inclusion of civil society representation in national delegations to intergovernmental meetings with representatives selected according to expertise in line with meeting agendas.

27. One participant suggested that meetings of civil society in the wake of meetings of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum of UNEP would allow for greater dissemination of the outcomes of the intergovernmental meeting.

28. A representative of UNEP suggested that incremental improvements in civil society participation at intergovernmental meetings, starting with written statements from civil society being read at those meetings, might lead to greater understanding of the need for civil society involvement.

29. Several participants noted the need for continuity in civil society participation at intergovernmental meetings in order for participants to be fully aware of the issues being discussed. One participant noted that this did not necessarily mean that the same civil society representatives should always attend international meetings but rather that there should be a continuous update of information among civil society organizations after meetings.

30. One participant called for expert groups established by UNEP to include civil society to harvest knowledge in the context of application or implementation. He called for the establishment of a civil society expert group on capacity-building and technology support to produce input for the Sixth Global Civil Society Forum. Other participants noted that in their experience, the composition of UNEP expert panels was well-balanced and included representatives of government, academia, civil society and other stakeholders.

31. Other matters raised included suggestions that time spent on presentations at forums and meetings might be allocated to more useful activities; the elaboration of a global civil society statement well in advance of meetings of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum of UNEP to inform the positions of governments would be useful; civil society might work more effectively by focusing on select few draft Governing Council decisions and exerting influence on governments in areas where possible; greater civil society participation in negotiations would be useful and there was a need to focus on mechanisms of engagement and awareness-raising on the function and value of UNEP for civil society to broaden the scope of UNEP interaction with civil society organizations; information dissemination at country and regional level after intergovernmental meetings to assist civil society to organize implementation of the outcomes of UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum meetings would be useful.

32. A number of participants called on UNEP to extend per diem allowances for civil society representatives so that they could extend their stay at meetings to allow for

interaction around ministerial sessions of the Governing Council / Global Ministerial Environment Forum of UNEP. They also requested UNEP to work to encourage governments to increase civil society representation in official government delegations in order for them to have access to meeting rooms and be able to influence the position of their national delegates.

33. In response to questions regarding the selection criteria for regional civil society representatives, a representative of UNEP noted that they would be selected by civil society organizations themselves and that UNEP would play no part in that selection process. He observed that although civil society organizations did not have decision-making power their greatest tool to that end lay in their ability to influence public opinion. Another representative of UNEP noted that draft decisions for meetings of the Governing Council / Global Ministerial Environment Forum of UNEP were not available for public distribution. There were often, however, advance unedited copies of documents on the UNEP web site. As a principle, UNEP communicated and disseminated information in advance of meetings.

V. Closure of the meeting

34. After the customary exchange of courtesies, the meeting rose at 5.30 p.m. on Tuesday, 22 June 2004.

Annex I

Elements of an Intergovernmental Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-Building

Recommendations from a civil society consultation on an intergovernmental strategic plan for technology support and capacity-building convened by the Executive Director of UNEP, held in Nairobi on 21 and 22 June 2004

Introduction

This document is provided from a civil society consultation on and intergovernmental strategic plan for technology support and capacity-building convened by the Executive Director of UNEP and held in Nairobi, on 21 and 22 June 2004.

We, the participants, recognize the intergovernmental strategic plan aims to strengthen capacity-building and training and to increase national level coordination of the environmental component of sustainable development. In addition, we suggest that the strategic direction of the plan should promote the operationalization of principle 10 and Chapter 3 of Agenda 21.

We strongly urge governments to consider and take into account the perspectives and role of civil society in the plan, including the following:

Guiding Principles

General principles for the development and implementation of capacity-building and technology support initiatives, such values as those recognized in the Earth Charter, should include:

- Transparency;
- Accountability;
- Participation;
- Fairness;
- Responsiveness;
- Sustainability;
- Equity;
- Diversity;
- Appropriateness;
- Gender mainstreaming.

Recommendations

1. Adopt a beneficiaries perspective

(a) Identify synergies, overlaps and gaps in existing capacity-building and technology support efforts through a systematic assessment and development of an inventory. Allowing new initiatives to be based on effective models, such as the GEF NCSA;

(b) Capacity-building and technology support should be demand-driven stimulated by a self-conducted needs assessment involving all stakeholders;

(c) A systematic and long-term approach should be adopted towards sustainable capacity-building, ensuring dynamic and positive impact-oriented outcomes based on the concept of the learning organization.

2. Build the capacity of decision-makers, including in the context of international negotiations, to ensure appropriate decisions are taken at the national and international levels to support **national** and regional environmental priorities. This requires an integrative perspective, which addresses relationships between: multilateral environmental agreements and multilateral trade agreements, and relationship between multilateral environmental agreements and multilateral human rights agreements.

3. Enhancing the role of civil society

(a) Civil society groups are stakeholders of capacity-building and technology support efforts at local, national, regional and international levels, and as such they should be involved in all elements and stages of capacity-building programmes including assessment, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation;

(b) Governments are encouraged to conduct consultations at the national level in a timely manner to ensure the views and perspectives of civil society are included within their deliberations both before and during negotiations;

(c) Governments are encouraged to meaningfully include members of civil society who have the confidence of their constituencies on their official delegations at regional and international meetings – recognizing and drawing on their expertise;

(d) Building the capacity of civil society and governments to meaningfully engage each other in policy, decision-making and implementation activities is emphasized.

4. The role of the private sector both as a provider and a receiver of capacity-building and technology support, and as a source of financial resources, needs to be given due consideration. The principle of corporate social responsibility should guide their involvement.

5. Providers and receivers

(a) Capacity-building and technology support should be a two-way process both between governments and civil society, but also between the north and the south;

(b) Civil society should be recognized as a source of experience and knowledge regarding the development and implementation of local and regional strategies for sustainable development;

(c) Capacity-building and technology support is required by a broad range of stakeholders including international organisations, non-governmental organizations, Women, Youth, Indigenous Peoples and other local communities.

6. Monitoring and evaluation

(a) Capacity-building and technology support programmes need to undergo ongoing monitoring and review, with the support of civil society, through the setting of targets and the use of performance indicators based on the achievement of learning and the change this achieves;

(b) Governments are encouraged to provide appropriate and timely feedback to civil society on the appropriateness and use of their submissions and dialogue for national and international policy making purposes.

7. Resources

(a) Recognizing that there are significant resource requirements associated with the development and implementation of the intergovernmental strategic plan, due consideration should be given from the very beginning to the costing and allocation of financial, human and institutional resources;

(b) It is particularly important to ensure the plan is effectively implemented through the commitment of long-term funding without directing resources away from other programmes;

(c) The intergovernmental strategic plan should seek to address the efficient, equitable and transparent resource allocation between implementers, including governments, United Nations agencies, and civil society organizations.

Annex II

List of participants

Habiba Al Marashi (United Arab Emirates) Chairperson, Emirates Environmental Group

Ibrahim Al Zu'bi (United Arab Emirates) Environment Department Director, Emirates Diving Association

Georgina Ayre (United Kingdom) Stakeholder Forum for our Common Future

Matteo Castillo (Mexico), State Council of Ecology

Sandro Vasquez Chavez (Peru), Coordinator, Nacional Foro Ecologico

Aseghedech Ghirmazion (Kenya), Director, Heinrich Böll Foundation

Geoffrey Howard (Kenya), Regional Programme Co-ordinator - Eastern Africa, IUCN, Regional Office at Nairobi

Zarina Amirali Ishani (Kenya), Mazingira Institute

Thomas Kabii (Kenya), Conservation Programme Director, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Eastern Africa Regional Programme Office

Michael Koech (Kenya), Sustainable Development and Environment Network of Kenya (SENKE); and Centre for Environment and Development (ACFED)

Andras Krolopp (Hungary), Central and East European Working Group for the Enhancement of Biodiversity

Davinder Lamba (Kenya), Mazingira Institute

Pinter Laszlo (Canada), International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)

Bora Masumbuko (Cote D'Ivoire), NESDA

Paul Matiku (Kenya), Director, Nature Kenya

Susan Matindi (Kenya), IUCN, Regional Office at Nairobi

Malyun Hawa Mohamed (Kenya), Indigenous Information Network

Mugure Muchai, (Kenya), The Green Belt Movement

Lillian Wakiya Mwaura (Kenya), Advocate, International Council of Women

Patrick Muraguri (Kenya), Environmental Liaison Centre International (ELCI)

Essam Nada (Egypt), Arab Network for Environment & Development Cairo

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Maria del Carmen Solis (Cuba), Fundacion Nunez Jimenez

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Eunice Stella Warue (Kenya), Groots Kenya

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