



Accreditation of civil society organizations at UNEP

Benefit to UNEP from the accreditation of civil society organizations

UNEP owes a great deal to non-governmental organizations. Its creation in 1972 during the Stockholm Conference can largely be attributed to the pressure and commitment of civil society (all the major groups as defined by the Rio Summit in 1992). Most of the well-known multilateral environment agreements (Basel Convention, Montreal Protocol, Kyoto Protocol, and Cartagena Protocol, among others) exist because of the hard work of your organizations. As you know, the priority today is on the implementation of intergovernmental agreements, bearing in mind the need and the right of the developing countries to have a significantly larger share in the distribution of the world's wealth.

But why should civil society organizations be interested in involving themselves more actively in the policy work of UNEP and, as a consequence, in strengthening UNEP itself?

Because UNEP recognizes that there is an imbalance of power in international governance, which is detrimental to environmental concerns, and this imbalance needs to be put right. Whatever the future of the intergovernmental institutional architecture after the reform of the United Nations, the sooner we work to correct these imbalances, the better it will be for the collective well-being of humankind.

In order to achieve this goal, a renewed and strengthened cooperation between UNEP and civil society organizations at the governance level is needed. To address environmental concerns in an adequate manner, the participation of civil society organizations is required, especially in the intergovernmental decision-making process, during which UNEP develops its operational policies and work programme. The re-launch of this productive cooperation is fully in line with decision SS.VIII/5 of the UNEP Governing Council, inviting "*the Executive Director to consider the best way to include the views of civil society in the proceedings of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environmental Forum.*"

We strongly encourage you to apply for accreditation at the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum. Accreditation will grant your organization consultative status at UNEP, within the rules of procedure of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum. We will implement our goal of closer cooperation with civil society organizations on an incremental basis, considering that UNEP is an intergovernmental organization in which the Member States have the final decision-making role.

Immediate advantages to accreditation

In the process leading up to sessions of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum the accredited civil society organizations have the possibility:

1. To receive unedited working documents of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at the same time as the Committee of the Permanent Representatives;
2. To submit to the UNEP Secretariat written contributions to these unedited working documents of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, for distribution to the Governments;

During the session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, accredited civil society organizations have the opportunity:

1. To attend the plenary, the Committee of the Whole and the Ministerial Consultations discussions as observers;
2. To circulate written statements to Governments through the UNEP secretariat;
3. To make oral statements during the discussions of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at the invitation of the chairperson.

Accreditation process

The civil society organization seeking accreditation should forward the following documents to the UNEP Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch:

1. **Letter requesting accreditation;**
2. **Proof of non-profit-making status** (copy of document of incorporation);
3. **Proof of interest in the environment** (such as annual reports; conference and seminar reports; recent press releases and copies of media statements; newsletters and other periodicals);
4. **Detailed account of the international scope of its activities** (such as headquarters and regional offices in different countries ; projects or programmes that are taking place in other countries ; activities that have international implication: for example international water management, desertification on trans-boundary areas, waste management of estuaries that affects a region; activities that have an international scope: for example coordinating regional or international position or work on a specific area).
5. Please note that a proof of participation in an intergovernmental meeting is good to be mentioned but is not sufficient to demonstrate the international scope of work. Similarly, agreements with another organization or membership of an international network are good to be mentioned but are not sufficient.

In addition, civil society organizations can send a copy of their accreditation to other United Nations bodies and agencies, including the United Nations Economic and Social Council. In this last case, the civil society organizations still have to provide a letter requesting accreditation, the proof of interest in the environment and the detail of international scope of activities.

The documents can be sent in hard copy or electronic version to the below address.

<p>Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch United Nations Environment Programme P.O. Box 30552 Nairobi, Kenya Email: civil.society@unep.org</p>
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The accreditation process comprises the following steps:

1. The Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch will review the file in cooperation with the Law Branch in the Division of Policy Development and Law. If any documents required for the application are missing or need clarification, the Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch will notify the civil society organization and request further information;
2. When the analysis is completed, the Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch sends the documentation together with its recommendation to the office of the Secretariat for Governing Bodies for its decision;
3. The Office of the Secretariat for Governing Bodies notifies the civil society organization of its decision.