

Draft Final Report

Working Group 4 Multi-stakeholder Partnership and Participation

Working Group 4 on Multi-stakeholder Partnership and Participation was called to examine the role that different stakeholders play in the successful implementation of environmental conventions, and identifying areas that benefit from improvements in awareness, participation, and partnership development, and the challenges faced by civil society, governments and industry.

The session was chaired by Dr. Hari Srinivas of the United Nations University, and rapporteured by Ms. Makiko Yashiro, also of UNU. Presentations made during the session included:

- **Dr. Brook Boyer**, Visiting Scholar, ESCAP
Institutional Coordination, Multi-Stakeholder Participation and the Implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements: National Experiences of Thailand and Malaysia
- **Mr. Willem Wijnstekers**, Executive Secretary, CITES Secretariat
CITES Experience
- **Mr. Jaime Aparicio**, Organization of American States (OAS)
The OAS Synergy Programme
- **Dr. Hari Srinivas**, UNU
Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs) and the Urban Arena: Localizing the Global Environmental Agenda
- **Mr. Holger Liptow**, German Technical Cooperation (GTZ)
- **Mr. Favis Ricardo**, UNESCO
UNESCO's Experiences
- **Malaysian Industry Representative**
- **NGO Representatives**
- **Mr. Hosni Khordagi**, ESCWA
ESCWA and Synergetic MEA Implementation
- **Mr. Kwadwo Tutu**, ECA
ECA and the Synergetic Implementation of MEAs

The proceedings of Working Group 4 derived its inspiration from the statements made in Agenda 21 on Major Groups:

Major Groups

One of the fundamental prerequisites for the achievement of sustainable development is broad public participation in decision-making. Furthermore, in the more specific context of environment and development, the need for new forms of participation has emerged. This includes the need of individuals, groups and organizations to participate in environmental impact assessment procedures and to know about and participate in decisions, particularly those which potentially affect the communities in which they live and work. Individuals, groups and organizations should have access to information relevant to environment and development held by national authorities, including information on products and activities that have or are likely to have a significant impact on the environment, and information on environmental protection measures.

Paragraph 23.2, Chapter 23, Section III, Agenda 21

RECOGNIZING AND PROMOTING INTERLINKAGES

Participants highlighted that key to recognizing and promoting interlinkages among MEAs, particularly at the national level, is to understand and consider constitutional obligations and supports. This recognition plays an important role in also driving the participation of relevant stakeholders in the MEA processes. Multi-stakeholder participation is also facilitated by international financial, logistic and scientific support to national governments and agencies.

But there is growing pressure within the donor community to synergise across MEA implementation process. This pressure is driven by internal financial considerations, and also due to increasing understanding of the cause-effect links between the different environmental problems and the solutions that are required.

Avoiding duplication and overlap of activities and actions, as well as overlap in organizational mandates and policies, necessitates the creation of an inventory of resources, and of the plans, projects and programmes that broadly meet

MEA objectives. Incorporating activities that are already underway is also critical.

Within the national implementation structures, participants outlined the need for better inter-ministry and inter-agency coordination, in terms of common visions and goals, and coordinated efforts. This has gained added importance due to the need to conserve human and financial resources, as well as – as mentioned above – to link the diverse solutions needed for MEA implementation, and environmental management in general.

Environmental issues are complex, and difficult to prioritise, particularly in developing countries. Issues such as poverty, job creation, income distribution take on higher priorities, but the way out of this, as pointed out by the participants is the interlinking of environmental action to these issues, and the indirect impacts and externalities that environmental action has on pressing local problems (for example, good local environments, through better sanitation, can lead to better human health, and better income earning abilities).

Calling the 21st century as the 'environment century,' the participants called for the incorporation of environmental issues as a common denominator in all plans, policies and programmes. This not only ensures coordinated action, but also takes advantage, as mentioned above, of its positive externalities.

CONNECTING THE LOCAL LEVEL WITH MEAs

Participants pointed out that there has been increasing pressure to meet MEA obligations efficiently and effectively at the national, and as an extension, at the local levels. But national coordination mechanisms have so far geared more towards satisfying MEA obligations, without serious effort to 'take the global message to the local level.'

This is true at the local level too – the impact of local actions, activities and lifestyles do not take global impacts into consideration – and therefore global and MEA objectives not included in local projects and programmes.

There is a clear need, as highlighted by the presentations and discussions in the sessions, to increase capacities of local governments and the stakeholders they work with, to address MEA obligations at the local level. This is a key starting point for better multi-stakeholder participation and partnership. Incorporation within this is the need to have clear understanding of local needs and priorities, the degrees of awareness among local stakeholders, and efforts to link/merge with global MEA needs and priorities.

PROMOTING MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION

The sessions went into great depth in discussing the promotion of multi-stakeholder participation. One of the key prerequisites mentioned was the need to build 'ownership' of problems and solutions – both local and global – in order to increase the local participation and partnership within MEA programmes and projects. Better participation is also facilitated by building trust among the various actors and stakeholders – highlighting the importance of communication, transparency and accountability among and within them.

But multi-stakeholder participation, though a highly desired prerequisite, is limited due to low awareness, capacities, and interests, and constrained by top-down decision-making structures, inadequate networking, and narrow involvement of actors.

To ensure better applicability of sustainability tools and mechanisms, participants called for the institution of clear modalities and increased legal and legislative support to ensure multi-stakeholder participation. This goes hand-in-hand with appropriate national funding mechanisms (while participants raised reservations on the limited funds available in developing countries, they also mentioned the need to highlight the broad applicability of better involvement of the local level in decision-making and implementation of environmental projects).

Better understanding of multi-stakeholder participation among local governments and decision-makers requires appropriate tools and demonstrations of good practices – to be developed and disseminated among various groups both horizontally and vertically for broader acceptability.

These tools and mechanisms have to be provided with sufficient local capacity and awareness built at all levels, of the importance of the local level.

Participants enthusiastically called for more active use of the Internet to promote active participation of multi-stakeholders, by creating channels of communication and sharing of critical information.

The discussions called for the building of local sustainability frameworks, within which plans of action could be developed. This would help diverse actors and actions to participate and partner - but with the flexibility to include local variations. Incorporating other issues and approaches, such as integrated community development, is also critical. Empowerment of the community, especially regarding sustainable livelihoods, plays an important role.

The position and role of NGOs and local community groups within the above processes and actions received considerable attention within the presentations and discussions. Participants clearly highlighted the need to increase the visibility and capacities of local and national NGOs at the global level, so that the 'voice of the people' could be heard at the appropriate MEA decision-making level. The importance of involving NGOs was also demonstrated by examples showing that they may serve the objectives of more than one MEA.

BROADENING BOUNDARIES OF PARTICIPATION

Participants also spent some time discussing the concept of participation itself. As illustrated in the following chart, the broadening boundaries of participation now includes various elements such as informed consent, public choice, decision making processes, education and awareness building, urban governance, decentralization and local autonomy, information disclosure, or capacity building, illustrating a better understanding and greater applicability of 'participation' at the local level.

The message was clear – 'community in the driving seat' was an important prerequisite for better involvement of all stakeholders in meeting MEA

obligations and implementation of programmes and projects at the national and local levels.



STRENGTHENING NETWORKS

Facilitating better multi-stakeholder participation by networking came up for discussion several times during the sessions. Among a range of local actors – the three main ones constantly highlighted were (a) businesses and industry, (b) NGOs and the local community, and (c) local governments.

The strong need for networking among these actors was emphasized – both within and in between these groups. This helps in strengthening the local stakeholders in finding innovative solutions to local problems, as well as in representing the local views in global fora – that is, taking the message of the local level to the national and global levels, and keeping the flow of information clear and transparent.

LINKING DIFFERENT LEVELS

Participants discussed the links between purely 'local' and purely 'global' issues. Were there any links? One example of the global and local links is that of Agenda 21 and Local Agenda 21 – where a global agreement (Agenda 21) has an embedded local element within it (Local Agenda 21), that provides for clear local implementation and action.

This calls for similarly recognizing, fostering and linking the various global MEAs processes and organizations and their implication relationships with the local concerns and capacities. Participants pointed out that while there is a strong link and systems of communication between global and national levels, the link between national and local levels has not been developed to its full potential.

In order to strengthen the link and develop better systems of communication, participants called for strengthening horizontal networking (for example, city to city cooperation in sharing best practices and capacities). Strengthening capacities at the local level also leads to strengthening the national governments' capacities to meet MEA obligations.

CONCLUSIONS

Three key messages from Working Group 4

1. We need to keep in mind the cyclical links between global environmental problems and their implications at the local level.

Besides the horizontal interlinkages between MEAs, and between MEAs and other regimes, it is imperative to understand the links between the problems addressed by the MEAs and their local implications – both in terms of their *contribution* to the problem, and being affected by the problem. Also, the solutions to solving the problems have a clear local starting point.

2. There is a need to create an environment to facilitate subsidiarity of

decision-making

The level and type of decisions taken have to match with the scale at which it happens, and this has long term implications for empowerment of communities – the ability to decide for themselves those aspects that affect their everyday lives. Creating an environment that facilitates such subsidiarity is a challenge indeed for local governments and the stakeholders they work with.

3. Policies and programmes need to be developed at the local level, incorporating strong elements of participation and partnership that goes beyond mere rhetoric

Policies, programmes and projects at the local level have to develop a clear understanding of the strengths and capacities of all local stakeholders, and what they can do to contribute to the overall development of the local environment – clearly keeping global implications in mind.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CASE STUDIES

The working group would like to make recommendations for case studies on the following issues. Both successful and not-so-successful case studies are welcome, in defining the direction to be taken, and tools and mechanisms that can be adopted for meeting MEA obligations.

- Participation of local NGOs and other major groups in global MEA processes – sizes, kinds, modes, messages, influences and status.
- Constitutional obligations and support, including standardization, that facilitate MEA implementation and multi-stakeholder participation at the national and local levels
- Analysis of the programmes and projects of international organizations and donor agencies that facilitate and foster MEA synergies, including their operational relevance at the local level
- Build a continuum of local actions and lifestyles to global impacts and

effects

- Building capacity and awareness raising at the local level to better address MEA obligations
- Information and knowledge management, and communication technologies, including the Internet, that facilitates/supports/enables multi-stakeholder participation
- The role of NGOs - community-based, local, sub-national, national and international - in building global-local linkages and multi-stakeholder linkages, including understanding the implications of implementing MEAs and consequences for different stakeholders.
- Evaluating innovative tools and mechanisms available within communities that assist in addressing MEA issues
- Effective mechanisms that strengthen networking and partnership among (a) businesses and industry, (b) NGOs and the local community, and (c) local governments - barriers to be overcome
- National and sub-national initiatives in linking global and local issues
- Policies, programmes, projects and plans at the local level that address national objectives and obligations of several/multiple MEAs, including understanding the economic consequences of MEA obligations
- Initiatives implemented at the local level that directly focus on MEA issues, including the definition of balanced roles for different levels of government.

- **Appendix**

Working Group 4 Multi-stakeholder Partnership and Participation

Minutes of the Session

Srinivas - introduction

- Stressed the need to recognize global-local linkages in issues addressed and implementation of MEAs, as well as to define the real meanings of participation and partnership in implementing MEAs.

Boyer - presentation

- Noted that institutional arrangements for MEA implementation are not sufficiently developed. It is critical to enhance institutional coordination and multi-stakeholder participation in order to fulfill MEA obligations.
- Highlighted that multi-stakeholder representation is insufficient in coordinating bodies.
- Presented three major reasons for promoting multi-stakeholder institutional mechanisms: 1) a venue for pluralist inputs and problem solving; 2) a framework to integrate responses and coordinate MEAs; and 3) a forum where global meets local.
- Identified the two major challenges in managing coordinating mechanisms with multi-stakeholder participation: 1) coordination dilemmas such as difficulties in coordinating and integrating a diverse basket of interests into policy-making process; and 2) need to take practical approaches and avoid unnecessary duplication with existing coordinating mechanisms.
- Introduced the case studies in Malaysia and Thailand on institutional coordination and multi-stakeholder participation in these countries. He noted that in both countries, the degree of multi-stakeholder participation is low, and sector-based approach has been taken, with little cross-sectoral or integrated planning. It was also noted that very few projects in these countries promote linkages in implementation of MEAs at the national level.
- Based on the findings from his case studies, the following actions are recommended: 1) strengthening national coordination (closer relations

between MEA coordinating committees and development councils, and more frequent meetings by national MEA committees and joint workshops among different committees); 2) enhancing multi-stakeholder participation (increased participation by NGOs, private sectors, research institutes, and academia in policy making and implementation discussions in national coordinating committees, and more specific policies on the modalities of multi-stakeholder participation in policy making processes); 3) building capacity and increasing public awareness (develop capacity building programmes designed to promote inter-linkages and coordination among MEAs, and implement capacity building programmes through existing structures), 4) promoting projects that are designed to address the objectives of multiple MEAs; and 5) developing virtual enabling frameworks (enhanced use of internet by governments in order to promote direct and frequent interaction with multi-stakeholder groups).

- Regarding the question on whether to start synergies at the international level or national level, Boyer mentioned that synergies should be started at the national or sub-national level, and stressed the need to take concrete action to promote inter-linkages. One effective way would be the identification of possible projects to promote inter-linkages by multi-stakeholder groups, government agencies, and multilateral and bilateral donor agencies.
- One of the participants noted the need to take into account constitutional, political, federal and administrative structure behind the inter-agency planning and inter-ministerial coordination.

Liptow - presentation

- Introduced initiatives to promote synergies and coordination in German technical cooperation, by highlighting some of the MEA related technical cooperation projects, including those carried out in Mauritania, Paraguay, and China.
- Identified major objectives of MEA related projects: 1) increasing focus through synergies; 2) working with a holistic approach; 3) assisting the strengthening of national/local institutions; 4) introducing new approaches to reactivate German interest in environmental issues. It was noted that the common actions that have been taken are: 1) regular internal convention meetings; 2) exhibition at environmental fairs; 3) presentation to the public

at EXPO 2000 in Hannover; 4) common presentation and discussions at GTZ internal expert meetings; and 5) preparation of a publication on all MEAs.

- Introduced some of the research initiatives in Germany on MEA related projects of German technical cooperation.
- Noted that, in the MEA related projects of German technical cooperation, there has been increased coordination in information management as well as increased political pressure to take synergistic approaches for MEA implementation.
- Regarding GTZ's role in raising public awareness on the global environmental issues, Liptow mentioned that a sense of ownership on the global environmental problems needs to be given to the public.

Srinivas - presentation

- Highlighted the importance for cities to adopt the "G.E.T" urban formula, focusing on governance, education, and technology, which has to be carried out along with a toolbox of measures available for environmental actions at the local level – including ISO14001, citywide environmental management systems, Local Agenda 21, etc.
- Introduced some of the initiatives carried out at the city level for MEA implementation, including Cities for Climate Protection, and Cities against Desertification.
- Stressed the necessity to strengthen linkages between global/regional/national level and local level in terms of understanding implication of MEA principles and obligations at the local level, as well as understanding the relationship between the issues addressed in MEAs and actions taken at the local level.
- Identified four environmental challenges for cities, including 1) using global trends to develop the local environment; 2) developing partnership among all local stakeholders; 3) transferring knowledge on local environmental practices; and 4) carrying out scientific research and capacity building activities with strong local dimensions.
- Noted that in order to overcome lack of resources, in particular in developing countries, it is important to highlight the interrelationship between social, political, and economic issues and environmental issues. Incorporating environmental issues in various development projects, as well

as highlighting emotional dimensions of environmental issues would be useful.

- Stressed the need for building trust among local stakeholders including businesses, NGOs, and local government. Local governments are no longer able to handle all the complex problems at the local level by themselves, and therefore, it is important to first understand contributions by local stakeholders, and promote partnership among them.
- Noted that the local dimensions of MEAs are not sufficiently recognized at MEA discussions at the global level, while responsibilities for global environmental issues are not sufficiently recognized at the local level.

Wijnstekers - presentation

- Mentioned that there has been increasing need for CITES secretariat to cooperate with WTO, other relevant conventions, regional institutions, and other organizations, in order to promote synergies at the regional level. He noted that such cooperation greatly contributes to making international wildlife trade sustainable.
- Highlighted the importance of developing legislation 'templates' that can be shared with other conventions and countries. It was mentioned that there is a good opportunity for sharing information regarding the Biosafety Protocol.
- Noted the insufficient representation by NGOs from developing countries in CITES discussions – most NGOs in CITES and CBD are dominated by those in developed countries.
- Stressed the importance of increasing transparency within the civil society. An effective means would be the utilization of the CITIES website: www.cities.org. It is also important to develop strategic action plans, with multi-stakeholder participation.
- Stressed the importance of increasing the local ownership of solutions and problems at the local level.

Nor - presentation

- Mentioned that, although there are many local NGOs in developing countries, in most cases, they do not have sufficient financial and human resources to represent at MEA discussions. Success of MEA implementation depends on significant participation by NGOs (in particular,

- grassroots organizations) that can translate aspiration of conventions to the local level. Honest and sincere relationship between two levels is critical.
- Highlighted the importance of introducing capacity building and awareness raising programmes at the local level – influencing and empowering local institutions, local government and authorities to address MEAs.
 - Noted that NGOs sometimes serve objectives of more than one MEA.
 - Noted the importance of information and knowledge sharing, as well as capacity building for NGOs. Visibility of NGOs at the global level is important.
 - One of the participants introduced UNDP's programme – Small Grants Programme carried out in 50 developing countries, as an example of the need for a bottoms-up approach.
 - One of the participants noted that NGOs' communication networks and capacities need to be strengthened. It was also noted that the role and capacities of local NGOs need to be recognized by international NGOs, whose inputs should also be considered in global agenda setting. Local NGOs should not be seen as a 'tool' of large NGOs, but as equal partners. Different roles that various types of NGOs play at different levels and situations need to be clearly understood.

Aparicio- presentation

- Presented the discussions at the Summit of Americas, regarding regional approaches taken regarding sustainable development issues. He presented the framework of the Santa Cruz Plan of Action introduced in 1996, as well as its follow-up participation strategy, entitled 'Inter-American Strategy for Public Participation (ISP)', in the areas of biodiversity and international waters.
- Noted that, although common political visions exist at the multilateral level, when it comes to the national and local level, there are many problems such as lack of resources, coordination, and priorities, introduction of too many initiatives, no integration of policies initiated by different institutions, lack of trust between NGOs and government, and lack of decision making power by local government. He noted that these issues would be included as agendas for the next summit.
- Noted the importance of recognizing MEA links with regional groupings (OAS, ASEAN, SAARC etc) for ensuring its effective implementation. It is

also important to develop a framework for plans of action, which would help diverse actors to participate and partner with.

- Highlighted the importance of creating an inventory of plans, project, programmes that broadly meet MEA objectives, by highlighting issues and aspects that have already been implemented.
- Keywords: transparency, accessibility and accountability

Favis- presentation

- Introduced UNESCO's approach on integrated community development, aiming at empowerment of the community.
- Noted the importance to consider the community's cultural and natural heritage (including traditional knowledge and resource management techniques) as a part of environmental management.
- Noted that implementing MEA at grassroots level is sometimes ineffective because local community is not consulted by national government on the significance of such activity. Local community can benefit only when they are ensured of their in-depth participation in the initiatives. He also noted that the techniques that national governments use sometimes contradict with local techniques and approaches. Identification and full utilization of resources available within the community is critical.

Kulleh- presentation

- Highlighted that the private sector also plays an important role in MEA implementation, but the approaches need to be market-driven. He also noted that the large businesses have well-developed management systems, and have the capability to help in drafting and implementing MEAs, while small and medium businesses need technical and financial assistance to implement MEAs. He introduced cases where multinational companies assist small and medium sized companies in the development of EMS under ISO14001.
- Noted the importance for the private sector to take voluntary and self-regulated approaches, with appropriate economic incentives being introduced, which will eventually lead to companies prioritizing MEA objectives.

Srinivas - comments

- Introduced the closing statement from the Urban Environment Forum (established by UNCHS, UNEP, UNDP, and World Bank), held in Cape Town on 26-28 September 2000, as a reference to the session. The statement describes some important elements for building local capacities for implementing global norms, agreements and conventions. Key issues described included: 1) operational relevance of global agreements, conventions and norms; 2) relationship of global norms, agreements and conventions to other development objectives and priorities; 3) participation of all relevant stakeholders; 4) the “balance” of standardisation and local differentiation; 5) economic consequences of implementation; 6) mixture of tools and mechanisms; 7) financial and economic incentives; 8) defining “balanced” roles for different levels of government; 9) awareness and understanding of the significance of the issues, and of the full implications of implementing the norms/agreements, consequences for different stakeholders; 10) building political and social commitment; 11) institutionalization; and 12) sovereignty.