

**KENYAN NON-GOVERNMENTAL STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIVE WORKSHOP IN PREPARATION
FOR THE THIRD SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT ASSEMBLY 2017**

***Briefing for Non-Governmental Organizations on Engagement with UN Environment and the
United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA)***

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“I would like to start by saying that:

“Pollution has become a global pandemic of the 21st Century, affecting not only humans but the entire nature. We must all stand up against it for a better and more sustainable world”.

I am delighted that UN Environment selected the theme on Pollution as indoor air pollution has been a menace to women and girls for a very long time.

I am delighted that Kenyan Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are now ready to ensemble their environmental tools, equipment and methodologies to deal with pollution.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) Engagement with UN Environment

I began working with UN Environment in 2008, referred to as UNEP by then. My organization joined the Women Major Group (WMG), where I was also one of the Alternate WMG Facilitating Committee members.

Regarding our engagement with UN Environment, CSOs are divided into 9 Major Groups (Women, Farmers, NGOs, Business and Industry, Workers and Trade Unions, Children and Youth, Local Authority, Scientific and Technical Community, and Indigenous Peoples and their Communities) and each CSO must find the right group where it fits best to make relevant and constructive contributions. Before this happens, there is need for the CSO to be accredited to enable participation through:

1. Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) and sub-committee meetings- these meetings are open to all CSOs and they need to take advantage of them so that they make contribution on issues important to them at the Agenda setting stage. Kenyan CSOs should all participate as UN Environment is located in the country and expenses are minimal. The meetings have increased in number and therefore, each CSO can have the 5 Representatives allowed by the UN Environment so that they are able to be present in as many meetings as possible.

2. Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum (GMGSF) – these meetings take place before the UNEA and CSOs in their different groups discuss important issues that they present to UN Environment and which later are taken to UNEA.
3. UNEA- during the Assembly, the Agenda has been set and Major Groups have drafted their resolutions. The CSOs then Lobby member states to support their views.

Gaps/Challenges/Solutions

The CSOs in Nairobi do not participate adequately, yet UN Environment is located in Nairobi. They now need to participate more frequently, particularly in the coming UNEA.

There is always the challenge of financing oneself to participate in these meetings as UN Environment does not fund participation. This means that CSOs need to take environment work seriously and provide their budget to environmental activities. They also need to appoint Representatives (up to 5) on environmental issues so that they are consistently represented in the meetings.

Participation in UN Environment is based on science and CSOs should capacity build themselves so that those they send to meetings can adequately contribute to the Agenda and stay in the meetings to bring back information to others. I believe, UN environment, when invited can provide the information.

Sometimes your idea may not be taken but it is important to be persistent. CSOs should also be ready to share their ideas and adequately discuss them before presenting them on the floor. Sometimes some CSO members are unwilling to share ideas.

Advocacy

CSOs should appreciate that Environmental issues are broad and complex, for example, Land degradation that may be linked to soil pollution, Climate change (linked to air pollution and indoor air quality), Water scarcity (may be due to water pollution), food contamination (may be linked to chemical pollution), etc.

Ensure that you understand the issue. Discuss it adequately and present it to the UN Environment.

It therefore important for CSOs to note that:

“Civil Society Organizations have a voice that shakes, moves, and brings change. That voice must be strategically used to ensure the continuity and sustainability of our societies and the planet”.