

Outcomes of the Evaluation Questionnaires of the GCSF Cycle 2007 - 2008

Since 2002, the Major Groups Stakeholders Branch (MGSB) has been organizing the Global Civil Society Forum Cycle which comprise of Regional Consultative Meetings (RCM) in each of the six UNEP regions¹, and an Annual Global Civil Society Forum (GCSF), held prior to the Governing Council / Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC/GMEF) as an associated meeting. The overall objective of the Cycle is to provide a platform for exchange and consultation around key environmental issues to be addressed by the Member states during the GC/GMEF, and to facilitate Major Groups' contribution to the GC/GMEF and other international environmental forums. The cycle is also meant to build the capacities of major groups² from developing regions and from regions with economies in transition, in the field of Environment and International Environmental Governance.

Over the last five years, the GCSF consultation cycle has become the main entry point for participation at the highest level at UNEP, dealing with a range of environmental governance issues. This growing network of major groups' organisations also represents opportunities to further engage at programmatic level.

In 2006, changes were introduced to the Global Civil Society Forum (GCSF) cycle in order to improve the quality of engagement with major groups, with in particular the creation of the Global Steering Committee with representatives from all regions in the GSCF process. This has resulted in an increased ownership of the process by civil society organizations and in an improved major groups balance. In addition to these changes, there were also improvements in the type of dialogue sessions at the GC/GMEF with the introduction of ministerial round-tables. Two major groups representatives were invited to attend each of the 18 Ministerial Roundtables organized during the GC/GMEF, and 11 slots were given to CSOs during the GC/GMEF plenary discussions. They successfully participated in the plenary sessions during the GMEF on globalization, and on the UN reform, the Committee of the Whole as well as in the Mercury Contact Group demonstrating that major groups' voice is increasingly incorporated into the policy discussions at UNEP. This is anticipated to result in more partnerships with civil society for environmental policy development.

In 2007/8, further changes were introduced by the new Guidelines on Improving the Global Civil Society Cycle (http://www.unep.org/civil_society/PDF_docs/Guidelines-Round1-CSO-revised-31Mar08.pdf). These guidelines aim to create a balanced and actively facilitated framework for managing major groups input to the UNEP governance process. The Civil Society Steering Committee has been expanded to include nine (9) more members from the nine major groups. It has also been renamed the "Major Groups Facilitating Committee" (MGFC) so as to be more representative - underlining the higher emphasis on the major groups' criteria, and to provide guidance and coordinate the engagement of major groups in the GCSF cycle.

¹ UNEP regions: Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America, West Asia.

² Major groups of civil society as per the Agenda 21: farmers, women, the scientific and technological community, children and youth, indigenous peoples and their communities, workers and trade unions, business and industry, non-governmental organizations as well as local authorities.

This report summarises the outcome of the comments made by participants, of the GCSF cycle, namely, the Regional Consultative Meetings (RCM), and the Global Civil Society Forum (GCSF), 2007-2008.

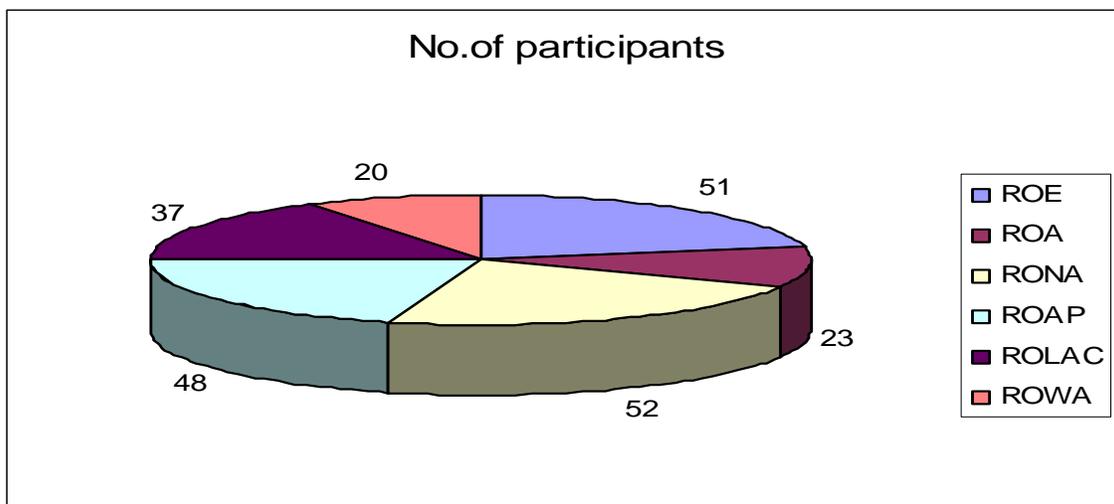
Part I. Regional Consultative Meetings

A. Background Information;

The Regional Consultative Meetings (RCM) were held in the six UNEP regions of Africa, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America, Asia and the Pacific and Western Asia between October and November 2007. The meetings were to prepare the regions' civil society's participation in the 9th Global Civil Society Forum that was held on 18 February 2008 prior to the 10th Special Session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environmental Forum that took place on 20-23 February 2008, in the Principality of Monaco. The theme of the consultations was Globalisation and the Environment: Mobilising Finance to meet the Climate Challenge. The meetings also deliberated on other issues as outlined below in section 2.

1. Participation:

The 2007 Regional Consultative Meetings (RCM) were attended by a total of 236 participants from 202 organisations and from 84 countries distributed as follows: 24 participants from Africa, 47 participants from Asia and the Pacific, 51 participants from Europe, 41 participants from Latin America and the Caribbean, 52 participants from North America, and 21 participants from West Asia. As has been the case since the Regional Consultative Meetings started, Europe and North America have had led in numbers of participants although participation of the rest of the regions has steadily grown over the years. Out of the 236 participants, 94 were female, making it 40% of the total participants. UNEP sponsored a total of 137 participants and the rest were self sponsored or received external sponsorship.



The fields of expertise of the participants, varied from animal protection, biodiversity and natural resources conservation, environment at large, to carbon trading, energy, indigenous knowledge, trade and environment, urban development, women and

environment, environmental law, poverty reduction/sustainable livelihoods to name but few.

This year the meetings mobilized 8 of the 9 major groups, as well as additional categories such as inter-governmental organisations (i.e. World Meteorological Organisation - WMO, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe - UNECE etc.), media, charity and faith based-groups. However, the large majority of participants still belong to the Non-governmental organisations category as reflected in the table below.

Type of major groups	Total
1. Business and industry	9
2. Children and youth	15
3. Farmers	2
4. Indigenous peoples and their communities	5
5. Local authorities	0
6. Non-governmental organisations	138
7. Scientific and technological community (research and academia)	15
8. Women	8
9. Workers and trade unions	12
Other / Charity	2
Other / Consultant	1
Other / Faith based organisations	7
Other / Inter-governmental body	4
Other / Media	1
Other / National Committee	17
Grand Total	236

It is worth mentioning that there is growing interest from organisations that do not exactly fit within the Agenda 21 categorization of the 9 major groups. In the table above there is a total of 36 “other” organisations such as faith based and charity organisations that attend the meetings. Also increasingly attending these meetings particularly in Asia and Europe are the UNEP National Committees (UNEP Natcoms). These are partner organisation of UNEP that promote environment related work in their constituencies, for example they have been very instrumental in UNEP’s - The Billion Tree campaign.

2. On-line registration

Also this year UNEP introduced electronic registration to these meetings whereby participants could apply on-line. This was done to ease and streamline the registration process. One can report that the process was successfully done and in instances where participants were not able to apply on-line, the regional officers and or the Major Groups and Stakeholder Branch were there to assist in registering participants on-line. Two regions - Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia and the Pacific - which had fewer on-line registrants will require more concerted training of invited participants on how to apply on-line. There were minor hitches in the system e.g. some entries disappearing from the list were readily rectified and reinstated.

3. Topics for discussion

The Regional Consultative Meetings covered several topics, including:

1. Globalization and the Environment: Mobilizing Finance to meet the Climate Challenge;
2. The UNEP Medium-Term Strategy 2010-2013;
3. The key findings of the Global Environmental Outlook (GEO 4);
4. Enhancing major groups participation at UNEP's governance level; and
5. International environmental governance

The meetings provided an opportunity to go beyond the traditional thematic scope of engaging at UNEP Governance level, and entertained a substantive dialogue with other UNEP Divisions such as DEWA and DTIE mainly, on other operational issues and programmes. As an example, sessions on GEO 4 and on the Medium Term Strategy contributed greatly to the success of the meetings: they were highly appreciated by the participants as they provided grounds for interactions with senior policy makers and scientific experts of UNEP. Sessions on financing climate change were equally appreciated as they contributed to further build the capacities of the participants.

All meetings yielded statements or summary reports containing recommendations that formed part of the information documents for the GC/GMEF, as per the Rule 69.2 of procedure of the Governing Council and are available at http://www.unep.org/civil_society/GCSF/index.asp

B. Evaluation:

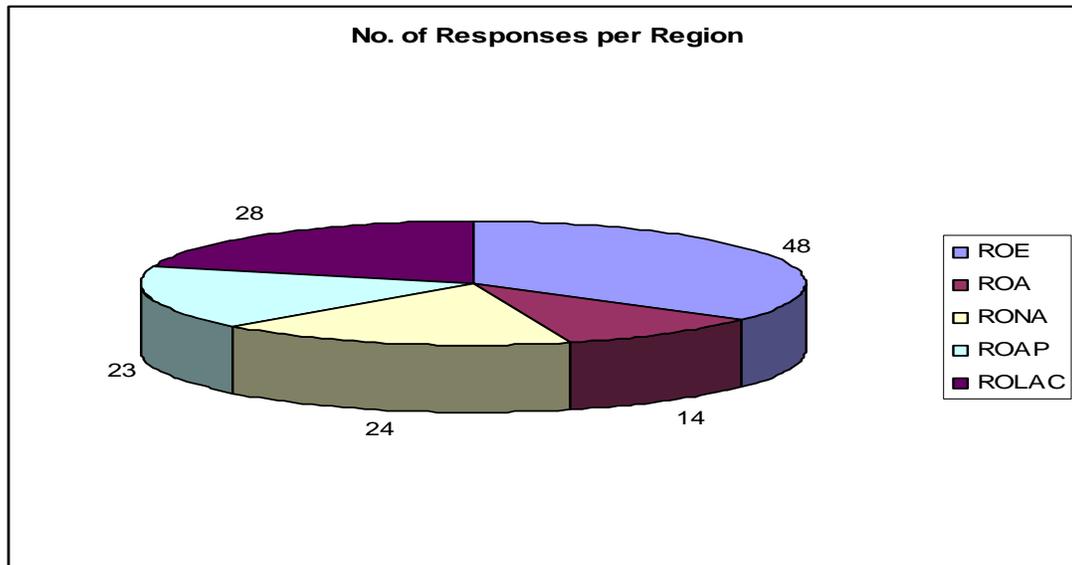
At the end of each meeting, participants were asked to evaluate the meeting. The purpose of the evaluation was to:

- Assess the extent to which the workshop achieved its stated objectives, expected results;
- Provide feedback to improve the quality of the agenda, sessions, plenary discussions, and group work.
- Provide feedback so that the lessons learned in terms of participation, representation, content and format could be used to improve the design of future meetings;
- Better respond to the specific needs and requirements of the participants;
- Assess of the quality of communication between UNEP and CSOs; websites etc
- Assess the organisation and logistics of the meetings.

The methodology used for this evaluation was in form of a questionnaire (**Annex I**). Participants were asked to give a quantitative indication, on a scale of 1 to 5, (with 5 being the highest and 1 the lowest rating) of their overall assessment of the workshop. The rating for each question was converted to an average figure which gave an indication of the overall assessment by the participants for each of the questions. In addition, participants were also asked to give a short written assessment of the overall workshop. This allowed them the opportunity to comment on any aspect of the

workshop. All evaluation forms were anonymous so that the respondents were free to give their honest opinion about the workshop.

Out of the 236 that attended the meetings, 128 participants from 5 regions completed the evaluation form. The results from the Regional Office for Western Asia were not available. The response rate was 52% with 61% of that as sponsored participants and 39% were female participants. There was a slight decrease in the number of women participants as opposed to the previous year (45.8%). The number of respondents per region is illustrated by the chart below.



1. Meeting Sessions

i). Presentation and dialogue sessions on key issues for the 10th session of the GC/GMEF

The rating used was on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being the highest and 1 the lowest rating. The session receiving the highest rating of 4.0 was on the Overview of UNEP's Global Environment Outlook Assessment (GEO 4). There was a lot of interest in this subject since the Report was simultaneously launched at the workshops in most regions. It was followed by the review of the Guidelines for Enhancing Major Groups Participation at UNEP Governance Level at 3.9. This was an important topic as it directly impacts on the activities of the CSOs. The session on Globalisation and the Environment; Mobilising finance to meet the Climate Challenge tied with the latter also at 3.9. The Medium Term Strategy session was rated as lowest at 3.6 because participants said they did not receive prior information about it to substantively discuss it. A comment from Europe summed up the feelings of most participants about this session: "It is very naïve of UNEP to call upon civil society organizations to discuss UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy without sharing the document with the participants. Civil society can not provide input to a document without seeing it and analyzing it in detail." The lowest rating for this session was from Europe at 3.0. and highest at 4.1 from LAC followed by 4.0 in Africa

and 3.9 from Asia and Pacific. The MTS session was delivered by teleconference or video-conference and this may have contributed further to the low rating because of the indirect medium of presentation.

Generally speaking, the response to the key issues for the 10th. Special Session of the GC/GMEF were highly rated. Africa went on to intimate that there should be effective follow-up of the recommendations made on the topics discussed. There is a need to move beyond process consultation into action and implementation, in order to ensure the ongoing relevance of the consultation process and to take full advantage of the strengths of civil society organizations.

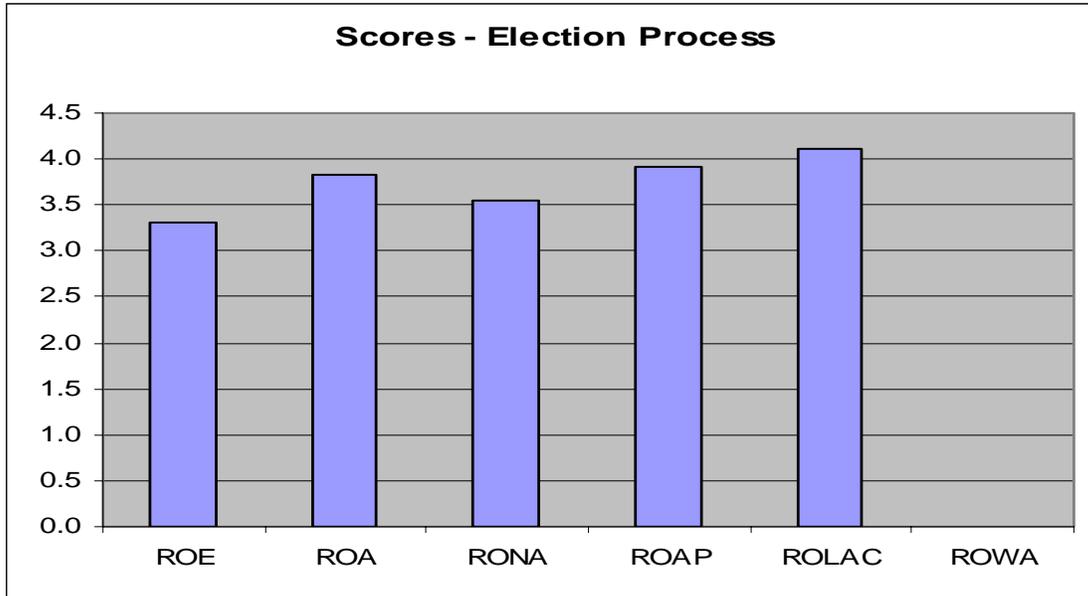
The participation of UNEP Staff to these meetings was considered important for instance in Europe, the participation of two staff members was extremely constructive and provoked more interactive dialogues during the meetings. It also provided a valuable networking opportunity. On the other hand, in North America, respondents said there was disappointingly little opportunity to engage directly with UNEP staff as they only participated in the opening session. This confirms the value added of UNEP staff at these meetings, not only to contribute to the proceedings but also provide a link between the organisation and the major groups as well as to network.

ii). Working Groups

The working groups were evaluated highly at 4.2 indicating a preference for working groups rather than plenary sessions. The highest score was in 4.3 in Europe with the lowest in Africa at 4. The reports from the working groups also scored highly at 4.3. North America did not have working sessions and felt that this was one of the weaknesses of the meeting because of insufficient discussion of issues coupled with inadequate major groups balance. For instance there should have been more groups with specific specialisation and more trade/labour unions, local government invited. This weakness may be related to the short duration of the meeting and of course major group's balance. A suggestion from Europe was that UNEP should find a way to allocate/assign the group discussion in the future and not rely on voluntary sign ups because often, you end up having a large group focusing on one issue and very few people in other groups making it difficult to adequately elaborate and address on other issues.

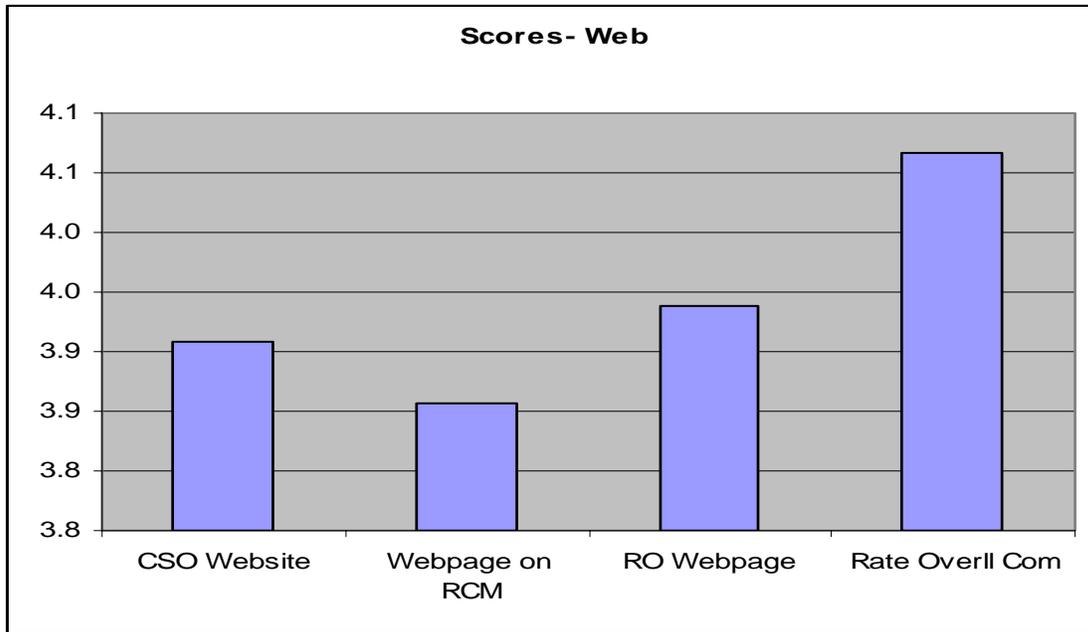
2. Election process

With an average score of 3.7, the election of representatives to the Global Civil Society Forum was poorly rated in all regions and was particularly low in Europe and North America and highest in Latin America and the Caribbean at 4.1. In Africa participants said that UNEP should define the modalities for the elections. This suggests the need for transparent and uniform election rules. In Europe the suggestion was that the emphasis on transparency is a must however the selection criteria must focus entirely on the issues to be discussed at the GCSF, GC/GMEF. Geographic and gender balance are important criteria but UNEP must work out together with the participants the best combination of representation on the issues to be discussed. Implying that, expertise and knowledge of the issues, should be central in selecting representatives. Be that as it may, the selection criteria or guidelines of the GCSF participants should be elaborated.



3. Communication and pre-meeting consultation

The UNEP Civil Society website was highly rated at 3.9 with the highest score given by Europe at 4.4 and the lowest by North America at 3.5 which showed a consistency with the previous year. The regional website was also highly rated at 3.9 with North America having the lowest at 3.0 and Latin America and the Caribbean having the highest rating at 4.2. The thematic webpage received a similar rating at the CSO webpage at 3.8. with North America giving it the lowest point at 3.3. and Europe giving it the highest rating at 4.2. The rate of overall communication was highly rated at 4.1. Even though communication was highly rated, there was suggestion from Europe that communication between UNEP and CSOs and between CSOs themselves, could be increased and that a system for such should be devised.



4. Agenda

With regard to subjects covered in the Agenda, respondents gave an average rating of 4.1 and gave the length of sessions a rating of 3.8. North America gave the lowest rating for both sessions because it felt that the agenda was too large for the time (equivalent of one day only) allocated. The suggestion was to either shorten the agenda or extend the meeting time. There was also a suggestion to use web-conference technology so that other members who are not financially able to attend can participate through this medium. The Asia and the Pacific also felt that the 2 days allocated for consulting a large region (5 sub-regions namely: North East Asia, South East Asia, South Asia, Central Asia and the South Pacific) was not sufficient and suggested that sessions that are more inclusive could be designed for more participation on regional and sub-regional levels. The Latin America and the Caribbean region mentioned that while the subject matter was very good, the sessions were too long with lengthy interventions from participants. They proposed to establish a protocol for participation which would define the length of interventions; compliance to the thematic issues; summaries at the end of each presentation. Obviously there is a need to plan better for future meetings and have a balance in the time allocation and number of sessions held.

A participant from Europe felt that a closer involvement of the participants in setting the agenda could be helpful. Another one suggested there should have been space on the agenda for each CSO to present their work. This suggestion however is not realistic as it would take up a lot of time.

A broader introduction of the agenda items and themes at the start of the meeting would also help make the meetings even more efficient and elicit more active participation. There was a suggestion from North America that the meeting should have started with a more in-depth introduction to UNEP (as an organisation) targeting mostly the first timers to these meetings.

In Summary, the agenda could include the following:

- a presentation of UNEP and its priority areas of work;
- a presentation of the GCSF cycle process, the format of the GCSF and of the GC/GMEF, including the role and functions of each meeting;
- a presentation of emerging global and regional environmental issues;
- a brief summary of the previous GC/GMEF and the achievements made by CSOs; and
- a presentation of emerging global and regional environmental issues.

Another suggestion from Europe was that the breaks in between session could be longer for participants to digest all the information and discuss with fellow participants.

From the suggestions above, there appears to be a need for the selection of topics for discussions to be further discussed with the Divisions in charge of producing the background papers for the GC/GMEF, as early as June when the topics are identified. Advice should be sought from them as to the aspects of the issues to be discussed with major groups and the level of detail and complexity to be addressed. More targeted background documentation would be helpful, to be prepared by the UNEP substantive division charged with preparing the GMEF policy discussion papers. The provision of background material in advance allows time for processing complex information. An arena for discussion on the issues (possibility of sub-regional consultations/workshops as suggested by Asia and Pacific region) prior to the event is also possible, making use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), workshops and other tools such as web-based discussion forums.

5. Participation

The participants evaluated positively the gender balance (3.9), the expertise of the participants (3.8), the regional balance (3.7) and major groups balance (3.5). The Africa regions rated gender balance the lowest considering the fact that women only made up 35% of the participants to that meeting. The Asia and the Pacific Region on the other hand, rated it highest as the female participants made up 52% of the participants to that meeting. Major groups balance was rated the lowest with 3.5 because in all meetings across the board, there was preponderance of Non-governmental Organisation (NGOs) as is shown in the graph below. Obviously more work has to be done to ensure that selection of participants including sponsorship by UNEP to the meetings is balanced particularly targeting major groups like local authorities which was not represented at all; farmers, indigenous people, women, and business and Industry.

In the North America meeting, more farmers and religious groups could have been invited.

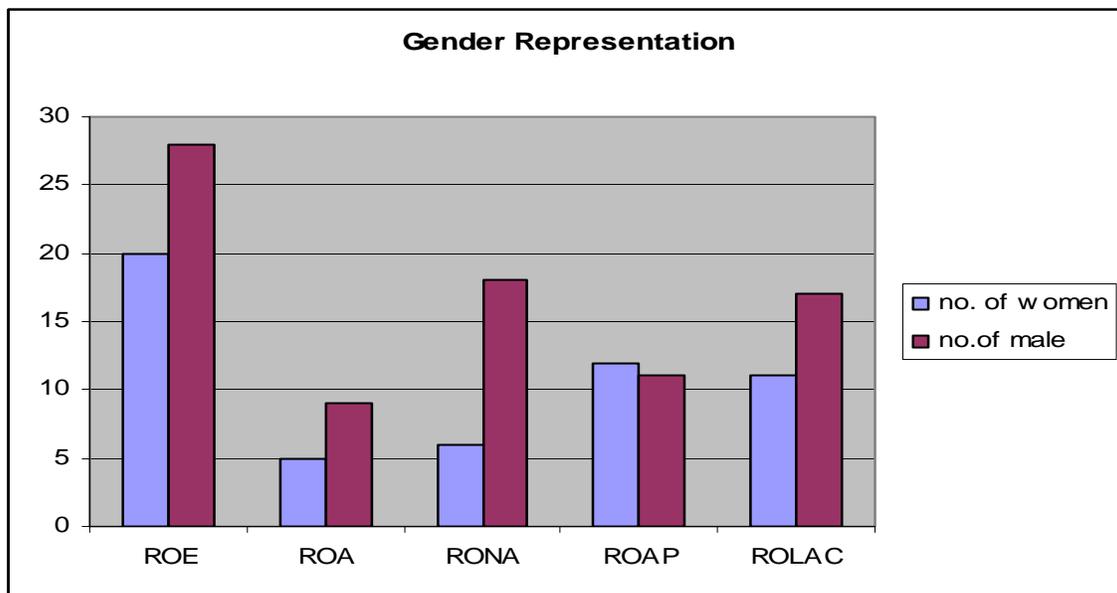
The North America regional meeting recommended that resources be made available to marginalized groups to help them organize and mobilize internally and to further engage with the consultation process. For instance effort should be made to include the IP from developed countries who are at a disadvantage because they come from developed countries and therefore do not meet the criteria for capacity building grants. As such some groups regularly fall through the funding “cracks” and are thus left out of the dialogue.

For the regional balance, Asia and the Pacific would have wanted a more balanced regional representation. On the other hand, Europe saw an evident shift from environment oriented participants to more heterogeneous groups including more representatives of other major groups; the quality of and expertise of participants have improved tremendously; there is better representation of states/countries than before including from rich developed countries of the “North”; participants were much more focused and better oriented about what they like UNEP to do for them. The quality of discussions and participation has improved tremendously.

In addition to these participants, this year also noted a larger number of UNEP staff participating in the meeting as keynote speakers, facilitators and panellists. In total, 15 UNEP staff participated in the substantive discussions, in addition to the UNEP DRC Headquarters and Regional Offices staff.

As alluded to above, a more proactive strategy should be adopted with regard to the identification of the participants to enable a renewal of the participants’ profiles, as well as attract new organisations that are increasingly specializing in thematic issues such as financing climate change, carbon trading, and other policy based networks. Alternatively, it is possible that a more selective kind of meeting (by invitation only) would lead to higher-quality participation. Furthermore, the process of identifying sponsored participants could be improved on by increased brainstorming between the MGSB and the regional offices and the MGFC.

An issue that came up is that several participants raised concerns that business and industry were getting too much of a voice, and queried the definition of civil society, debating the merits of combining private and public interest organizations in such forums.



6. Organisation

Respondents evaluated the organisation of the meeting highly at 4.2 with Europe giving the maximum score of 4.5 followed by Latin American and the Caribbean and ROAP at 4.4. The Africa region rated it at 4.0 and the lowest of 3.7 came from North America. Mixed responses were experienced from North America with one respondent saying the meeting went very well despite technical difficulties with the conference call. Another said it was not as good as previous meetings. The logistics particularly the seating order in the conference hall and a more sustainable catering system could be improved.

In Asia, respondents believed, the process could be enhanced by earlier invitation/consultation for the meeting and engagement with existing sub-regional networks to identify key issues at regional level. Respondents from Africa while rating the substance of the meeting highly, rated the planning and logistic as very poor. The flights were at awkward hours and the facilities at the venue were substandard without the basic amenities. Some of the sponsored participants including resource people/key note speakers failed to attend meeting. The organisation and planning of the meeting for the Africa region was contracted out to one of the CSOs to manage through an MOU. The lesson learnt here is that in future it is important to assess the capability of CSOs to manage a meeting before they are contracted to do so or ensure that UNEP sufficiently backstops that organisation so as to avoid such incidences. Latin America and the Caribbean which also experienced absences because of travel problems propose that to improve management of itineraries and optimise the cost for travel, confirmation of participation has to be done well in advance and participants should commit themselves to it and respect it. As one respondent from Africa said, “the process of planning and implementation of the meeting was poor and missed the sub-regional and major groups balance; UNEP should evaluate the process and avoid such turbulence in future meetings”.

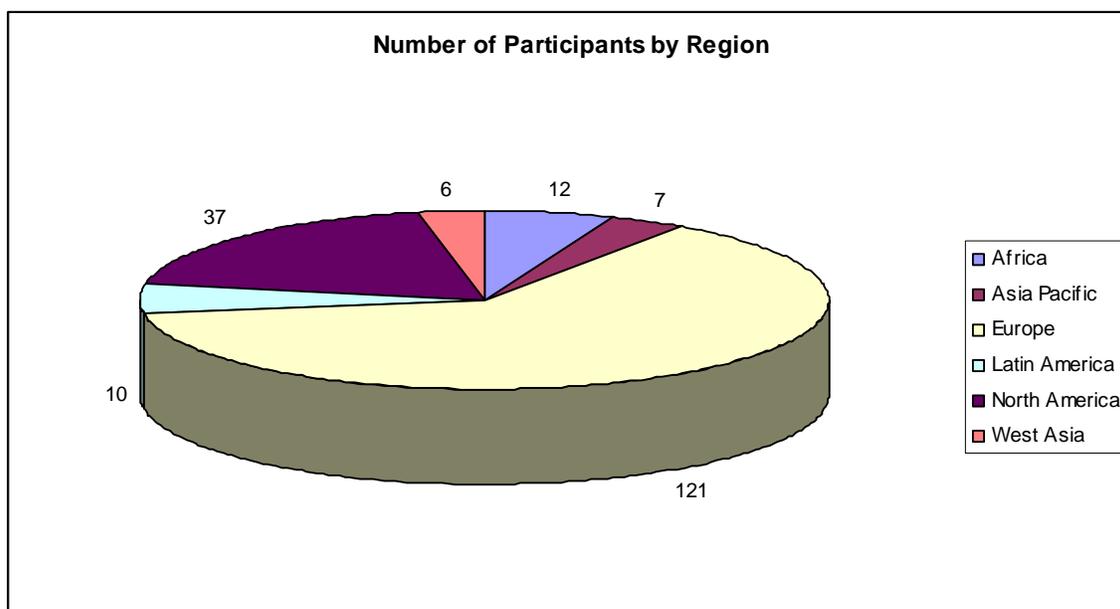
Part II. 9th. Global Civil Society Forum

A. Background information

The 9th Global Civil Society Forum (GCSF) is an associated meeting of the 10th Special Session of the UNEP Governing Council / Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC-/GMEF) and met on 19 February 2008, in the Principality of Monaco, prior to the GC-/GMEF. The theme of the consultations was Globalisation and the Environment: Mobilising Finance to meet the Climate Challenge. Other topics discussed were Medium Term Strategy, the Guidelines on improving the current GCSF cycle and participants had a dialogue with the Executive Director of UNEP. Participants also had the opportunity to engage in the Governing Council and Global Ministerial Environment Forum by attending meetings of the Committees of the Whole (COW) and some selected representatives attended the Ministerial Round Tables. The report of the GCSF can be accessed at http://www.unep.org/civil_society/GCSF9/pdfs/Report-GCSF9-2008.pdf

1. Participation

The GCSF was attended by 193 participants representing 108 civil society organizations (CSOs) from 42 countries. Participants used the new electronic registration system to register on-line. Out of the 221 who registered on-line, only 118 actually participated. The 75 participants who did not register on-line, registered through the Secretary to the Governing Board and others on the day of the meeting. A total of 36 participants were sponsored by UNEP and they included members of the Major Groups Facilitation Committee, Regional Representatives as well as invited panellists to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum.



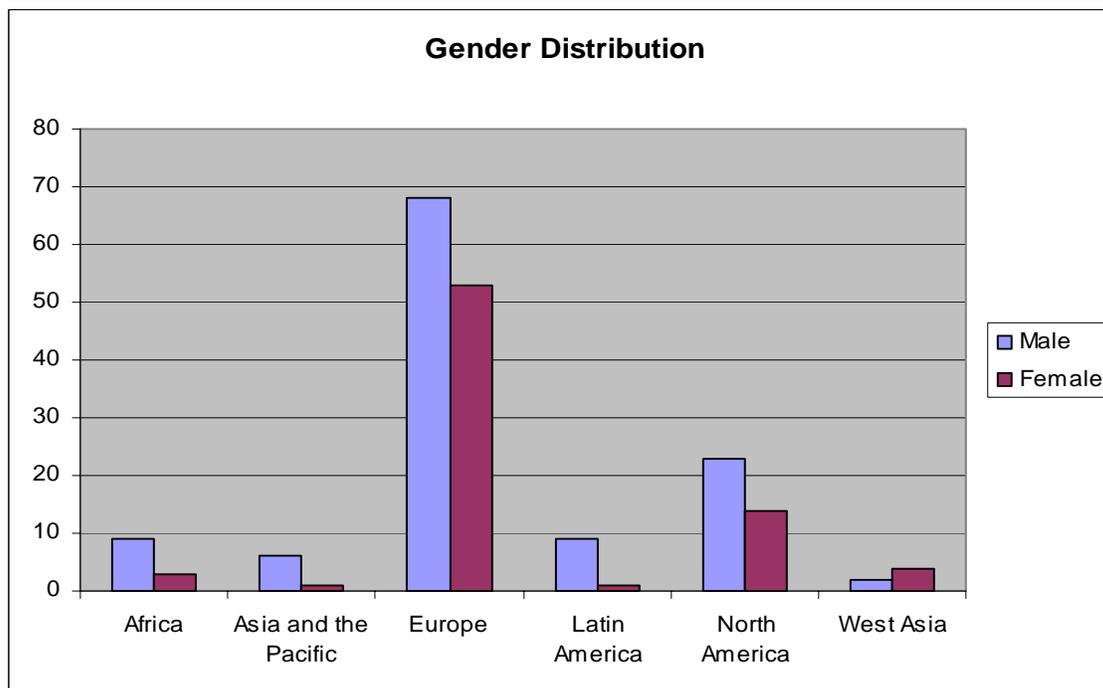
Europe had the largest number of participants largely because the meeting took place in Europe and in Monaco. Secondly Europe has the largest number of organisations accredited to UNEP. It was followed by North America, Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Pacific and West Asia respectively. This is in line with the regional distribution of accredited organisations.

With regard to major groups represented, as usual there was a preponderance of Non-governmental organisations. It was followed by Business and Industry mainly because of the topic of discussion – globalization and the environment, mobilizing finances to meet the climate challenge. Secondly, because in August 2007, efforts to bring on board this major group was carried out by inviting various institutions to apply for accreditation to UNEP. From the table below, it is obvious that the majority of major groups i.e. farmers, indigenous peoples, children and youth, women, local authorities, workers and trade unions, were very poorly represented.

Number of Participants by Civil Society Organisation Type	
Business and Industry	18
Children and Youth	3
Consumer Group	1
Faith/Charity based	6

Farmers	1
Indigenous peoples and their communities	2
Local authorities	6
Media	1
NGO	123
Scientific and technological community	10
Women	5
Workers and Trade Unions	8
Other	9
TOTAL	193

In terms of gender, out of the 193 participants, only 76 were female making it only 39% of the participants. Understandably, the largest number came from Europe. It was followed by North America, Africa and Latin America and Asia and the Pacific. Surprisingly, it was from the West Asia region that female outnumbered male participants.



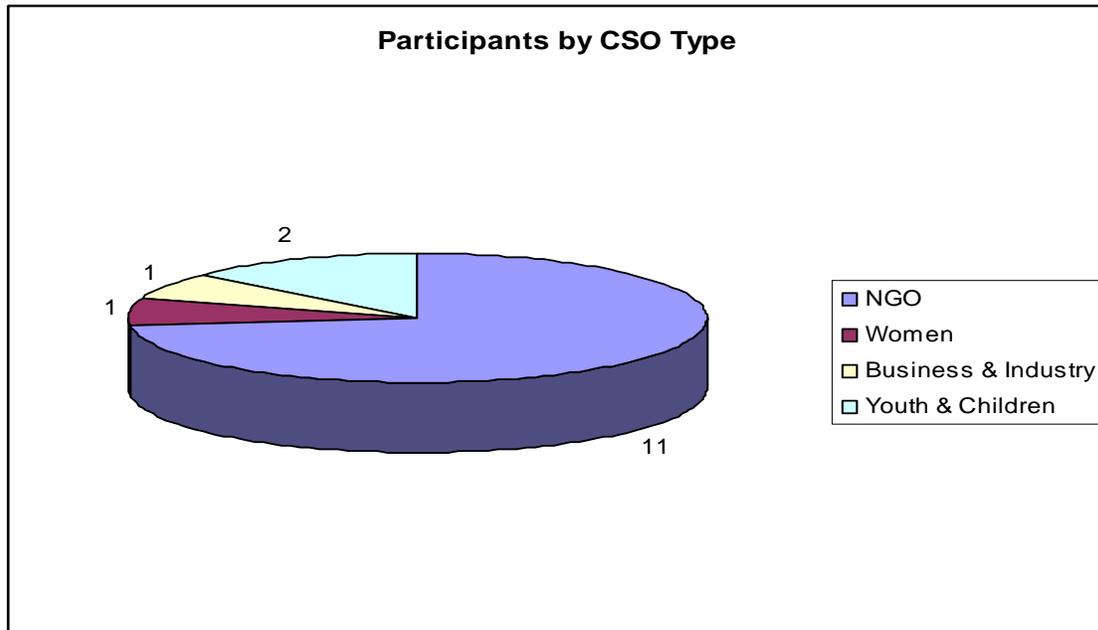
B. Evaluation

The evaluation process this time around leaves a lot to be desired. Out of the 193 participants only 15 evaluations were done or collected. This state of affairs could be attributed to a lot of factors, the main one being that there was not sufficient backstopping at the meeting in terms of staff to ensure that evaluations were completed and submitted. This is a persistent problem that can be solved only if sufficient staff is assigned specifically for this important exercise.

An evaluation form/questionnaire (see Annex II) was used for the Global Civil Society Forum.

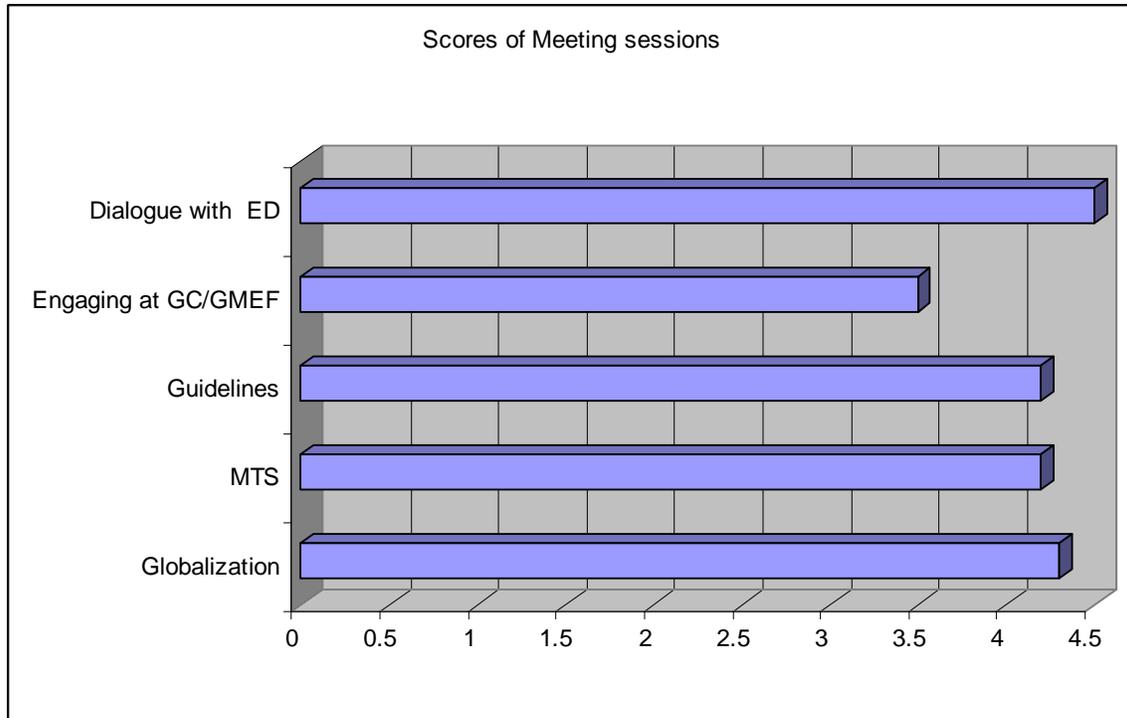
Out of the 15 respondents, only 4 were women. The sponsored participants were 8 and the non-sponsored were 7. This goes to show that the sponsored participants are more likely to complete the evaluations because they fell obliged to do so. In terms of major groups, the NGOs made up the highest number of 11. There were 2 Children and Youth participants, followed by 1 representative each from Women and Business and Industry.

The results of the evaluations below, may not be representative but it is however useful to draw a global picture from them.



1. Meeting sessions

The session that was most appreciated was the dialogue with the Executive Director at 4.5. This session garnered the highest rating as the similar meeting of the year before. This is an indication that participants value very much the interaction with the Chief Executive of the organisation. The session on Globalisation was also highly rated at 4.3 followed by sessions on the Medium Term Strategy and CSO Guidelines which tied at 4.2. Respondents rated their involvement/engagement in the GC/GMEF at 3.5.



2. Communication:

Respondents rated the overall communication with UNEP highly at 4.1 and the CSO Website at 4.0 indicating that they were fully satisfied with the information exchange and flow with UNEP.

3. Agenda

Respondents were satisfied with the agenda and rated it at 4.0 although there is room for improvement in terms of length of the sessions. One respondent intimated that the format of the sessions could be improved to give more time to discussions and interventions from all participants and to also find out the points that they may have (or not have) consensus on. Another felt that there was no time for real interaction on these issues.

4. Participation

In terms of balance of participation, respondents rated the gender balance at 3.7, higher than what they rated regional balance at 3.3. The lowest rating of 3.0 was the major groups balance which was very much skewed to the NGOs. Most respondents would have liked to see more Indigenous People, Farmers and Business and Industry represented. Respondents rated expertise of the participants highly at 4.1.

5. Organisation

Respondents rated the organisation of the meeting very highly at 4.3 saying that it was well organised with very good prior preparation and communication from UNEP Major Groups Stakeholder Branch. One respondent noted that UNEP should be

supported and honoured for its efforts to establish a regular organised and efficient dialogue process with CSO. Another one appreciated the excellent steering of the meeting by the Chairperson. While the overall organisation of the meeting was very satisfactory, the travel arrangements were rated at 3.8 with a respondent suggesting that UNEP could save money and get cheaper travel itineraries and better flight options, if purchases of tickets were done by the local UNEP or UNDP offices in the respective countries. Another respondent was not satisfied with the on-line registration because he did not get a confirmation until very late and as a result he was could not properly arrange his travel and accommodation.

C. Recommendations:

Based on the Regional Consultative Meetings and the Global Civil Society Forum, a number of lessons learnt and recommendations can be identified for further consideration:

Agenda setting and selections of thematic issues:

- The agenda should include the following items: a presentation of UNEP and its priority areas of work; a presentation of the GCSF cycle process, the format of the GCSF and the GC/GMEF, including the role and functions of each meeting; a brief summary of the previous GC/GMEF and the achievements made by CSOs; a presentation of emerging global and regional environmental issues.
- Agenda should be balanced with adequate time allocated to plenary, group work and discussion time.
- Selection of topics for discussions needs to be further discussed with the UNEP Divisions in charge of producing the background papers for the GC/GMEF, as early as June when the topics are identified. Advice should be sought from them as to the aspects of the issues to be discussed with major groups and the level of detail and complexity to be addressed.
- The major groups should be part of the process for setting the agenda of the GC/GMEF as well as in the drafting of the background documents for the GC/GMEF through ad-hoc consultations, be they on MTS priority issues or other emerging environmental issues. For example have a period of consultation on the agenda of the GC and then writing the documents by August, in order to have a “decent” timeframe for collecting CSO inputs and contributions.

Background material:

- Need to provide background material in advance in order to allow time for processing complex information.
- An arena for discussion on the issues (possibility of sub-regional consultations/workshops) prior to the event is necessary also making use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), workshops and other tools.

Identification of participants & major groups / issues of representation:

- A new strategy should be adopted with regard to the identification of participants to enable a renewal of the participants' profiles, as well as attract new organisations that are increasingly specializing in thematic issues such as financing climate change, carbon trading, and other policy based networks.
- The process of identifying sponsored participants could be improved on by increased brainstorming between the MGSB and the regional offices and the MGFC.
- UNEP should explore ways to ensure gender, geographical and major groups' balance in the attendance of these meetings.
- With regard to the selection of the regional representatives to the GCSF and GC/GMEF, election criteria or guidelines to facilitate the session on the selection of the GCSF participants should be elaborated.
- Carry out a capacity assessment of CSOs before contracting them to manage/convene a regional consultative meeting.

Continuous engagement:

- There should be more continuous engagement throughout the year and at the regional level (i.e. following up the implementation by national governments of decisions taken at the GC/GMEF).
- There is need for moving beyond process consultation into action and implementation, in order to ensure the ongoing relevance of the consultation process and to take full advantage of the strengths of civil society organizations.

On-line registration:

- Further training of the regional offices on the on-line registration process as well as the excel participants lists.

UNEP presence during the RCM and GCSF:

- Ensure that sufficient UNEP staff members attend the meetings.
- Staff should be assigned to ensure that evaluations are completed and collected at each end of meeting because it is through such evaluations that we can try to do better.

List of Annexes

Annex I	Evaluation Report Form – RCMs 2007
Annex II	Evaluation Report Form GCSF 9