The role of non-state actors in intergovernmental negotiations on pollution and other environmental issues

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One of the main lessons I have learned during my five years as Secretary-General is that broad partnerships are the key to solving broad challenges. When governments, the United Nations, businesses, philanthropies and civil society work hand-in-hand, we can achieve great things.

Ban Ki-Moon

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What are non-state actors?

- Non-Governmental Organizations/Major Groups
  - Women; Children and Youth; Indigenous Peoples; NGOs, Local Authorities; Workers and Trade Unions; Business and Industry; Scientific and Technological Community; Farmers
  - Others: Elderly, disabled, LGBQT…
- Private Sector, including consultants
- Journalists/Media
- Individuals: Experts, Students, affected persons

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Why to engage with non-state actors: what do governments want?

- ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31 on Consultative relationship between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations

- Rio+20 and HLPF: member states call for enhanced participation of civil society and to include "other stakeholders", e.g. private philanthropic organizations, educational and academic entities, persons with disabilities, volunteer groups

- Guidelines on Cooperation between the United Nations and the Business Sector (Issued on 20 November, 2009)

- Rule 70 of the Rules of Procedure of the United Nations Environment Assembly

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Why to engage non-state actors: the added value

- Stakeholder *expertise* and knowledge enriches the inter-governmental decision making

- Adds transparency and legitimacy

- They challenge decision makers

- They channel the voices of those most likely to be directly affected by environmental problems and related policies

- They call needed attention to emerging issues as they reach out to their respective communities and the public at large

- They may play an important role in the implementation of decisions, including by providing financial means and expertise

- Committments

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Three levels of engagement

Agenda-setting

- Policy shaping
- Global political agenda setting
- Assembly agenda setting

Decision-making/shaping

- Policy deliberations leading to decision-making
- Transparency and access-to-information

Implementation

- Strategic partnerships for implementation of UN Environment's policies
- Strategic partnerships for achieving sustainable development

Expert input and advice

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Participation of non-state actors and the intergovernmental nature of the decision making process

- Non-State actors contribute to decisions but do not take them, e.g. do not participate in voting

- Participation is regulated, e.g. by rules of procedure and accreditation

- Meetings may be hold in private

- Oral interventions at discretion of the chair persons

Non-state actors at meetings of the Committee of Permanent Representatives and the United Nations Environment Assembly

- Accredited organizations only, in all *public* meetings, including sub-committees

- Reserved seats for the nine Major Groups

- Interactive online participation

- Opportunity for written and oral interventions

- Accredited organizations receive relevant documentation and have access to the CPR portal

- No private sector unless as part of accredited organization or as speaker/expert

- Silent observers: students, experts, media

Resources

- ECOSOC Resolution: https://goo.gl/nyiDjt

- UN Guidelines for Engagement with the Business Community: https://goo.gl/w9p8af

- Assembly Rules of Procedure: https://goo.gl/hPrnwg

- Stakeholder Engagement Handbook: https://goo.gl/xfMMIo

- Civil Society Website: ttp://web.unep.org/about/majorgroups/

- Accreditation: https://goo.gl/uNHd0Y

- List of Accredited Organisations: https://goo.gl/JNkZVA

- UNEP Access to Information Policy: https://goo.gl/jysx0o

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Thank you very much !

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