

Annex 1

Principles and approaches to engagement with CSOs by selected International Organizations

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1. Comparative overview of how the UN family interfaces with civil society

Excerpt from Nora McKeon, Building links between global and local in the UN system: the civil society dimension, report of an interagency review, draft paper, FAO, Rome 2005.

How the UN family interfaces with civil society

UN secretariat entities

***CSD**: Adopts the classification of civil society into 9 Major Groups as defined in Agenda 21. Interface was initially with a CSD NGO Steering Committee. Now with Major Group Organizing Partners, self-selected major group organizations that have agreed to collaborate with the Bureau through the secretariat to facilitate input from Major Groups world-wide into the work of the CSD.

***DPI**: The 1500 accredited NGOs have elected an 18 member Executive Board which partners with the secretariat.

***UNDP**: Has established a CSO Advisory Committee to the Administrator with 15 members appointed in their individual capacity to advise and guide UNDP in its substantive policy areas.

***DAW**: The interface mechanism is a self-organized NGO Committee on the Status of Women.

***FFD**: Following the Monterrey Conference various CSOs have established an International Facilitating Group on Financing for Development. The business sector and parliamentarians have also developed their own independent interface mechanisms.

***DESA NGO Section**: Adopts the classification of NGOs into 3 categories of Consultative Status. Overall interface mechanism is the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CONGO).

Autonomous agencies

***FAO**: Two self-organized global interface mechanisms. The International NGO/CSO Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC) emerged from the parallel forums to the World Food Summit and its +5 review. It groups some 50 constituency, regional and thematic focal points concerned with food and agriculture, with emphasis on facilitating involvement of social movements in the South (peasants, fisherfolk, indigenous peoples, pastoralists, agricultural workers). The Ad Hoc Group of representatives of INGOs in formal status with FAO is a forum of Rome-based representatives of these INGOs.

***Habitat**: Has an Advisory Committee to the Executive Director with one civil society member.

***ILO**: In a special category because of its tripartite structure which fully involves workers' and employers' organizations in governance. No formal interface mechanism for other kinds of CSOs.

***UNCTAD**: Cooperation is with international organizations and self-organized networks. No global interface mechanism.

***UNEP**: No formal global interface mechanism. An effort is made to engage all potential stakeholders beyond the Major Groups identified in Agenda 21. Host CS committees established at country level in connection with Governing Council meetings.

***UNHCR**: Formal interface conducted through annual NGO consultations and through NGO umbrella groups and their forums.

***UNIDO**: No formal interface mechanism. Consultation with CSOs conducted through seminars, workshops and conferences.

*WFP: Annual consultation conducted with some 25 major NGO partners and networks.
*WHO: No single global mechanism. Interface is conducted through categories: academic, scientific, professional, development, special interest (youth, women, patient, consumers, trade unions, local authorities, parliamentarians.)

International Financial Institutions

*ADB: No global advisory committee Works through existing CSO networks like the NGO Forum on ADB. Some country-level Resident Missions hold regular meetings

*AfDB: African Development Bank – CSO Committee.

*IADB: No global interface mechanism. Civil Society Advisory Councils exist in about half of the 26 country offices.

*IFAD: The IFAD/NGO Consultation Steering Committee facilitates preparation of the biennial IFAD/NGO Consultation. Recently, steps have been taken to develop a forum of representatives of small-scale farmers and indigenous peoples' organizations which would interact with the Governing Council.

*IFC: No formal interface mechanism. It is felt difficult to establish one since NGOs are not representative of global civil society. Sector or issue specific groups are being considered.

*IMF: No formal interface.

*OECD: Formal Business and Industry and Trade Union Advisory Committees created at the same time as OECD. No formal mechanism for other CSOs.

*WB: Wide range of constituency and thematic mechanisms for consultation at all levels, using also new technologies like video conferencing. Interface conducted with CSOs on global policy reviews (e.g. indigenous peoples, environmental safeguards). World Bank-Civil Society Joint Facilitating Committee, an outgrowth of the former World Bank NGO Working Group, established to explore transparent and effective mechanisms for dialogue and engagement between civil society and the World Bank at the global level.

*WTO: Works with informal business and NGO advisory bodies.

2. Summary overview of Report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations–Civil Society Relations

In February 2003, the UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, appointed a panel of eminent person, to review the relationship between the United Nations and civil society. The panel, chaired by the former president of Brazil, Fernando Enrique Cardoso, was asked to review the guidelines and practices regarding civil society's relations with the United Nations and to formulate recommendations for enhancing such interaction. In June 2004, the panel submitted its report and recommendations.

Key perspectives and recommendations of the panel

The panel acknowledged the growing importance of civil society in international debates, as globalization expands and the scope of government power has been transformed. The panel recognizes three global trends relevant to their assignment:

- deficits of democracy in global governance
- growing capacity and influence of non-State actors
- rising power of global public opinion.

As a result, the voice of civil society has become more powerful. However, the lingering criticism by non-civil society actors questions representativity, legitimacy, integrity or accountability of CSOs.

The reason for the UN to reach out to civil society was stated by the panel as follows:

“The most powerful case for reaching out beyond its constituency of central Governments and enhancing dialogue and cooperation with civil society is that doing so will make the United Nations more effective. ... an enhanced engagement could help the United Nations do a better job, further its global goals, become more attuned and responsive to citizens' concerns and enlist greater public support.” (United Nations, 2004).

Thus, the panel proposes the following areas of reform:

- **Convening role of the United Nations: fostering multi-constituency processes**

The UN should continue to make use of its convening power, bringing together governments, but also other constituencies such as the civil society, private sector and local authorities relevant to the issue at hand. The panel proposes: (1) less generalized assemblies and more specific networks; (2) hold forums on issues of global concern; (3) retain the option for holding global conferences; (4) convene public hearing on progress on global goals; (5) recognize contributions that others can make to the General Assembly process

- **Investing more in partnerships and build on the experience of multi-stakeholder partnerships**

The panel recognizes that galvanizing, supporting and incubating partnerships between different constituencies and at different level are essential for achieving the development agenda. Therefore, it is suggested to help further mainstream partnerships through the

establishment of a Partnership Development Unit and the identification of partnership focal points throughout the United Nations organs and agencies. At the same time there should be an ongoing review of partnership advancement and mechanisms for ensuring systematic learning and its internalization in operation and management approaches. Besides, the panel proposes further strengthening partnership with the private sector as a key constituency.

- **Focusing on country level**

The panels view is that the strategic and policy work of the United Nations has to be informed by the realities on the ground in order to be meaningful. Therefore stakeholders at the country level need to be further engaged in strategic planning, coordination and learning, and an incentive structure for fostering innovative partnerships needs to be established within the UN (i.e. rewards, assessment of partnership qualities in annual performance assessment). In order to build networks of policy and operational partnerships with all constituencies, the panel proposes to establish civil society advisory groups to guide the UN country strategy and to appoint local constituency engagement specialists.

- **Strengthening the Security Council through enhancing their dialogue with civil society**

Mechanisms such as regular meetings of the Security Council field missions with appropriate local civil society leaders, and experimental Security Council seminars (with presentations by civil society and other constituencies) to discuss issues of emerging importance to the Council should help to further inform the Security Council for their decision-making.

Additional areas of reform are proposed, which relate to a more systematic engagement of parliamentarians and the streamlining and depoliticizing of the accreditation and access process for CSO.

3. The World Bank and civil society

In the early 1980s, leading international NGOs and the World Bank established the NGO-World Bank Committee which held regular meetings to discuss Bank policies, programs, and projects. Particularly during James Wolfensohn's tenure as Bank President from 1995 to present, the Bank has placed high priority on the engagement with CSOs. The Bank recognizes the fact that CSOs have become more influential actors in public policy and in development efforts, and therefore the importance of engaging CSOs as a key component of an effective institutional strategy for poverty reduction grows.

Since the 1980s the World Bank has undertaken numerous studies, promoted joint World Bank-civil society dialogues, and has adopted policies geared to promoting greater participation. However, by 2000 it became clear that the NGO-World Bank Committee needed to be replaced with a more inclusive and expanded mechanism for World Bank-Civil Society policy debate and engagement. After a period of consultation with different

constituencies, finally in October 2003 a World Bank – Civil Society Joint Facilitation Committee (JFC) was launched as a transitional body initially for 18 months. In comparison to the NGO Committee the JFC expanded its civil society participation beyond NGOs by including faith-based organizations, social movements, indigenous peoples networks and labour unions. The JFC seeks to (1) produce a guiding framework for World Bank –civil society engagement; and (2) establish transparent, accountable and democratic mechanisms for further engagement.

World Bank definition of CSO

The World Bank uses the term civil society to refer to the “wide array of non-governmental and not-for-profit organizations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) therefore refer to a wide of array of organizations: community groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), labor unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and foundations.”

Rational and Policy framework governing the Bank’s engagement with CSOs

The World Bank’s management and the Bank’s member governments have recognized that engaging proactively with a variety of other stakeholders, including CSOs improves development effectiveness and bring a variety of benefits to the development efforts (see Box below).

Benefits that civil society can bring to the development efforts include:

- **Give voice to stakeholders** – particularly poor and marginalized populations – and help ensure that their views are factored into policy and program decisions.
- Promote **public sector transparency and accountability** as well as contributing to the **enabling environment** for good governance.
- Promote **public consensus** and **local ownership for reforms, national poverty reduction, and development strategies** by building common ground for understanding and encouraging public-private cooperation.
- Bring **innovative ideas and solutions**, as well as **participatory approaches** to solve local problems.
- **Strengthen and leverage development programs** by providing local knowledge, targeting assistance, and generating social capital at the community level.
- **Provide professional expertise** and **increasing capacity** for effective service delivery, especially in environments with weak public sector capacity or in post-conflict contexts

Source:

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/CSO/0,,contentMDK:20093200~menuPK:220424~pagePK:220503~piPK:220476~theSitePK:228717,00.html>

The World Bank approach to civil society engagement

The World Bank approach to engage civil society organizations is through three distinct avenues: facilitation, dialogue and consultation, and partnership.

1. The Bank **facilitates dialogue and partnership between civil society and governments** by providing resources, training, technical support, and often

- playing a convening role in multi-stakeholder discussions. This role was expanded since 1999 into helping governments engage CSOs in the preparation of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and Country Development Frameworks (CDFs).
2. The Bank **dialogues and consults with CSOs** on issues, policies and programs, by listening to their perspectives and inviting suggestions. These interactions vary from consultations (e.g. alongside the Bank's Annual and Spring Meetings) on global policies, such as social safeguards and adjustment lending, to discussions on country assistance strategies and local Bank-financed projects.
 3. The Bank **partners directly** with CSOs in the area of operation and/or advocacy at national, regional and transnational levels through contracting technical assistance and training services, funding civil society initiatives, and managing joint programs..

Institutional infrastructure for CSO engagement

For implementing this approach the World Bank has positioned 120 Civil Society Engagement Specialists across the institution. These specialists are generally social scientists and communication officers with extensive knowledge and experience working with the civil society sector. The new structure introduced in 2002 has three levels and aims to both enhance coordination of the institution's civil society engagement work as well as provide greater civil society access to the Bank:

- At the country level, there are over 80 Civil Society Country Staff (CSC) working in 70 Bank country offices worldwide to actively reach out to civil society and encourage CSO participation in Bank-funded projects and programs.
- At the regional and departmental levels, the Civil Society Group (CSG) brings together more than 40 staff who work at World Bank Headquarters in Washington DC in various units, geographic regions, funding mechanisms, and with specific constituencies.
- At the global level, the Civil Society Team (CST) is the overall institutional and global level focal point which provides institutional coordination by formulating institutional strategy, providing advice to senior management, undertaking research and dissemination, and reaching out to CSOs at the global level.

However, there are also constraints on the Bank's ability to sufficiently engage CSOs. The disclosure policy is one, as it limits public access to information before decisions are made. Also the fixed nature of the Bank's project cycle often restricts the building of community and local government capacity to take ownership of development programs. Furthermore, there are reports (by Bank staff, OED and CSOs) that although CSO consultation is widely employed, the quality of these consultations is quite uneven. It seems sometimes that consultation is treated as a validation exercise rather than an opportunity to learn and inform decisions before they are finalized. This certainly can result in frustration and loss of active engagement by CSOs.

The Bank recognizes that the current approach to engaging with CSOs has to be seen as an ongoing process of learning and improving. In 2005, a paper on “Issues and options for improving engagement between the World Bank and Civil Society” was finalized after a multi-step consultation process inside the Bank and outside with civil society organizations. Four main issues and a set of 10 priority actions for the Bank to address were identified:

Issues identified:

- Issue 1: Promoting best practice for civic engagement
- Issue 2: Closing the gap between expectations, policy and practice
- Issue 3: Adapting to changes in global and national civil society
- Issue 4: Achieving greater Bank-wide coherence and accountability

The set of 10 priority actions are:

1. Establish new global mechanisms for Bank-CSO engagement to help promote mutual understanding and cooperation.
2. Establish a Bank-wide advisory service/focal point for consultations and an institutional framework for consultation management and feedback.
3. Pilot a new Bank-wide monitoring and evaluation system for civic engagement
4. Conduct a review of Bank funds for civil society engagement in operations and in policy dialogue, and explore possible realignment or restructuring.
5. Review the Bank’s procurement framework with a view toward facilitating collaboration with CSOs.
6. Institute a more structured and integrated learning program for Bank staff and member governments on the changing role, nature, and perspectives of civil society, and on how to engage CSOs more effectively, as well as capacity building for CSOs
7. Hold regular meetings of Bank senior management, and periodically with the Board, to review Bank-civil society relations.
8. Develop and issue new guidelines for Bank staff on the institution’s approach and best practices for working with civil society.
9. Emphasize the importance of civil society engagement in the guidance to Bank staff on the preparation of the CAS as well as in CAS monitoring and evaluation.
10. Develop tools for analytical mapping of civil society to assist country and task teams in determining the relevant CSOs to engage on a given issue, project, or strategy.

4. European Commission and civil society

The White Paper on European Governance (European Commission, 2001) is a key milestone in reforming European governance and thereby also acknowledging the importance of civil society participation in determining the political agenda. The paper calls for “a reinforced culture of consultation and dialogue.” Civil society involvement is seen as important for achieving the Union’s objectives and the Commission shows commitment to improving transparency and consultation between administrations and civil society. The Communication set out principles (participation, openness,

accountability, effectiveness and coherence), that should govern the Commission when it consults external parties.

In 2002 the Commission adopted a Communication which established a coherent framework for consulting external interested parties and established minimum standards for consultation.¹ The consultation standards apply to stakeholder consultations in the policy-shaping phase. They are part of the ‘Better lawmaking project’, which aims at clearer and better European legislation, and the practical follow-up of the White Paper on European Governance of 2001. In contrast to the UN, the Commission does not want to limit its consultations to a certain number of pre-screened or accredited organizations. Therefore, the European commission does not have an accreditation policy or a general registration or accreditation system for interest groups.

Moreover, as a result of the White Paper on European Governance, several internet-based mechanisms were established to bring more transparency and effectiveness into civil society consultation. This includes:

- **CONECCS**: a database for Consultation, the European Commission and Civil Society. The database is expected to provide information about the Commission’s formal or structured consultative bodies, in which civil society organisations participate.²
- Internet-based activities aimed at gathering information and feedback such as, ‘**Your Voice in Europe**’³, act as the European Commission’s “single access point” to a wide variety of stakeholder consultations⁸³, discussions and other tools which enable the individual to play an active role in the European policy-making process. Another example is the **Dialogue with Citizens** - a web site with plenty of information and links concerning citizens’ rights and opportunities for participation in Europe.⁴

In this context all Commission Directorates-General (DGs) are expected to have relations with civil society and other interested parties in their respective fields. The DGs are responsible for their own mechanisms of dialogue and consultation. This decentralized structure should allow the specific nature and conditions of different policy areas to be taken into account.

¹ European Commission, General principles and minimum standards for consultation of interested parties by the Commission’ **COM(2002)704**.

² http://europa.eu.int/comm/civil_society/coneccs/index_en.htm

³ http://europa.eu.int/yourvoice/consultations/index_en.htm

⁴ http://europa.eu.int/citizens/index_en.html

Box 2: Rationale of civil society participation in public decision-making

Civil society participation can help to:

- Strengthen the accountability and transparency of decision-making
- Improve the quality and legitimacy of decisions
- Create acceptance and a consensus concerning decisions
- Build trust between administration/an organization and civil society
- Raises public awareness and knowledge on specific issues
- Improves the active involvement of citizens in the democratic process
- Improve cost-efficiency

Source: European Commission (2003), <http://europa.eu.int?comm/science-society/>

For the purpose of this study the approach to civil society engagement of two DGs – DG for Research and the DG for Development – will be described in more detail.

3.1. Governance of the European Research Area: The Role of Civil Society

The White Paper on Governance influenced the establishment of the most recent directorate within DG Research - the directorate "Science and Society". This directorate was established in 2001 and a "Science and Society Action Plan" was developed. It is structured in three parts and addresses the following issues through a series of activities such as open dialogues, fora, e-networks, workshops, conferences and the consultation of advisory bodies:

- A science policy closer to citizens (involving civil society, producing gender equality in science, research and foresight for society)
- Responsible science at the heart of policy-making (the ethical dimension in science and the new technologies, risk governance, the use of expertise).
- Promoting scientific and educational culture in Europe (public awareness, science education and careers, dialogue with citizens)

During recent years, the European Commission has initiated or supported a tremendous number of new communication channels with experts and civil society organizations. Much effort has been invested in two areas in particular:

- the **exchange between the Commission and experts** (through EURAB, European Group on Ethics, the SINAPSE pilot project etc.), and
- the development of **Internet-based mechanisms for consultation** such as the online forum for dialogue and consultation at the Your Voice in Europe Website (IPM-initiative), supported by online databases (CONECCS, EURETHNET etc.).

An analysis of the current practices of civil society participation in European research and technology development policy-making indicates that there is an unsatisfied demand for a

more coherent and systematic dialogue with civil society that complements the recently established online consultations and that provides an added value to both the Commission and civil society. Besides, it becomes clear that workshops and conferences are important forums for a face-to-face exchange with civil society, but yet do not suffice to explore the full potential of civil society participation (European Commission, October 2003).

The study has a number of suggestions that may help to further improve the existing mechanisms:

- Civil society participation goes beyond civil society consultation. Participation is about **mutual learning**. It should be **interactive** and therefore it is neither a single-sided process (collecting opinions and information from civil society for example via online consultations) nor a process that could be limited to unrelated single events (such as individual conferences). In order to establish favorable conditions for a process of mutual learning, the Commission needs to ensure transparency with respect to the follow-up process, the justification and implementation of the policies discussed.
- The institutional bodies (advisory groups, committees etc.) for civil society participation have to be **flexible and dynamic**. Their composition has to be adjusted according to the issues at stake. They should work in a target-oriented fashion and within limited time frames.
- Civil society participation implies the **participation of citizens involved in the issues concerned**. Neither researchers on civil society participation, organised ‘stakeholder’ interests (such as representatives of the large European civil society organizations (labour unions, Environmental NGOs etc.) nor “professional citizens” (such as individual ‘consumer’, ‘local’ or ‘lay’ members of committees) can represent civil society to a full extent.
- There is a strong need for **professional standards** for civil society consultation;
- There is a strong need for a **more systematic, priority-driven approach** of civil society consultation. It would not make sense to get civil society involved in the discussion of every activity the Commission is pursuing. However what is needed is a master plan about who to consult, on which subjects and within what time frame. This should be drawn up jointly with civil society in a transparent process.
- The instruments applied for civil society participation should be more **demand-driven** rather than supply-driven.

The concluding policy recommendations from this study are

1. Enhancing civil society involvement throughout the policy-cycle through

- creating a dynamic and flexible **civil society forum** that interacts with a wide range of different civil society actors (e.g. including scenario workshop, policy background workshops, public forums, Citizens panels or juries)
- systematically anchoring elements of **participatory foresight** within the process of defining and implementing framework programmes.
- enhancing the **communication with civil society** within research projects funded under Framework Programme 6.

2. Individual and institutional capacity building to enhance professionalism in designing and implementing participatory processes through

- European Academy for Civil Society Participation in Science and Technology
- Citizens debating on science: Universities as platforms for “European Future Days”
- European Science and Society Exchange Program”
- Identifying benchmark projects
- Supporting Existing Advisory Bodies in the Application of Civil Society Participation

3. Establishing a legal framework which ensures participatory rights and principles of civil society involvement through convention on civil society participation in research policy-making

3.2 DG for Development: Dialogue with Civil Society

In November 2004, the DG Development published “Guidelines on Principles and Good Practices for the Participation of Non-State Actors in the development dialogues and consultations”. The guidelines identify stages in strategy/policy development and implementation, where consultation with non-state actors (NSA) is relevant:

- Consultation on National Development Strategies and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers;
- Consultation on EC Country Strategy Paper preparation;
- Consultation on sector strategies once the priority focal sectors have been defined;
- Involvement of NSA in project implementation in all areas of development, including activities specifically oriented towards their needs (capacity building etc.);
- Participation in the Country Strategy Paper review (annual, mid-term and final), as well as in the assessment of progress on implementation and of performance of individual projects and sector policies.

Thus, there is a two track approach to consultation: (1) at the level of national development strategies (by involving NSA in the public debate on setting development objectives and reinforcing good governance and the rule of law); and (2) at the programming level (limiting NSA involvement to those who have specific advocacy role on cross-cutting issues (e.g. poverty, gender, and environment).

Moreover, a mapping of NSA in the country or the region along characteristics such as mission, function, funding environment, legislative framework, and capacity is foreseen by the guideline.

Another guiding principle is the provision of capacity building support to enable NSA to play a constructive role in the development process. The intended approach to ensure capacity building support is through (1) mainstreaming NSA participation in programmes in focal and non-focal areas; and (2) Programmes on capacity building of NSA in specific sectors or in general.

Finally a monitoring system with a set of criteria for assessing the quality of the process of participation and the NSAs' value-added for policy formulation and implementation has to be established.

At the highest policy level, the main communication partner of the Commissioner I is CONCORD, the Confederation of European Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) for Relief and Development. The intention is to have regular meetings to discuss the Commission's present and future policy priorities and initiatives.