

GREENROOM REPORT

*First Universal Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) of
UNEP*

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List of acronyms

ACORD	Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development
AGEDI	Abu Dhabi Global Environment Data Initiative (AGEDI)
CEFIC	European Chemical Industry Council
CIEL	Centre for International Environmental Law
EEB	European Environmental Bureau
EJOLT	Environmental Justice Organisations, Liabilities and Trade
GRASP	Great Apes Survival Partnership
ICCA	International Council of Chemical Association
ICRAF	The World Agroforestry Centre
IISD	International Institute for Sustainable Development
LDC	Least Developed Countries
MGFC	Major Group Facilitating Committee
PEI	Poverty Environment Initiative
PROVIA	Global Programme of Research on Climate Change Vulnerability, Impacts and Adaptation
RAED	Northern Africa Arab Network for Environment and Development
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
RSPO	Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil
SCP	Sustainable Consumption and Production
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
UNEA	United Nations Environment Assembly
UNEP/ DEPI	UNEP/ Division of Environmental Policy
UNEP/ DEWA	UNEP- Division Of Early Warning Assessment
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WEFC	Women In Europe for a Common Future
WMG	Women's Major Group
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

1. Introduction

The Greenroom is a dedicated space for major groups and stakeholders attending meetings of UNEP governing bodies. The Greenroom is a venue for holding side events, caucus or thematic clusters meetings, and major groups meetings and briefing sessions, etc. This year, the Greenroom was held in conjunction with the First Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP (UNEA), from Monday 23rd June to Thursday 26th June, 2014.

Various events that took place during the week, including: daily major groups and stakeholders briefings, thematic cluster meetings, ad-hoc meetings, press events, special events and bilateral meetings with government delegations. The daily major groups and stakeholders briefings were facilitated by the Major Groups Facilitating Committee (MGFC).

This report provides an overview of the events that occurred in the Greenroom, and is for information only.

2. Side events

Women's Empowerment at the heart of the SDGs by Women's Major Group (Women in Europe for a Common Future - WECF, Global Forest Coalition - GFC, Niger-Delta Women)

Monday 23 June 2014, 10.00- 10.45am

The event began with a brief introduction to the SDGs by Ms. Sascha Gabizon (WECF Germany and WMG) and Ms. Carmen Capriles (Reacción Climática Bolivia) who also focused on SDGs in relation to climate change. In the ensuing debate, it was highlighted that the biggest problem with the climate change related SDG was the potential overlap with the UNFCCC related objectives as expressed by some governments. It was however emphasized that it is important to formulate such a goal, taking into consideration the necessary collaboration with the UNFCCC. Having a separate goal on climate change is vital, given the current situation that tends to affect marginalized communities including women the most.

Ms. Isis Alvarez (Global Forest Coalition – Colombia) commented on the SDGs as well with a primary focus on ecosystems and biodiversity relating the benefits of SDGs on ecosystem protection and conservation, while Ms. Sascha Gabizon looked at the issue of environmentally sound management of chemicals and waste in the context of Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP), with a need to move to safer alternatives to replace toxic substances and reduce hazardous waste. Currently, the percentages of toxic waste materials are left for countries to decide on a national basis, resulting in disparities in the handling of toxic waste materials. One main recommendation was to establish national bodies to review and set national standards. However, in LDCs and SIDS where there is less capacity, assistance may be needed to set up such institutions and to enable reporting on their effectiveness. The event concluded by urging women in general to get involved in more activities that promote the Sustainable Development Goals like capacity building within their localities.

Excess nutrients in the environment - A global challenge for the 21st century by SCOPE/INI

Monday 23 June 2014, 11.00- 11.45am

This session focused the concept of nutrient management in the environment. Mr. Patrick Heffer (International Fertilizer Industry Association) discussed existing nutrient programmes in African countries and China. He highlighted base management practices, especially how fertilizers are used and managed by farmers, as well as the challenges encountered in handling them. He stressed the importance of forming partnerships in order to work with organizations to build capacities of farmers. Mr. Nelson Andrade (Coordinator, Caribbean Environment Programme) discussed sources of pollution from nutrients like poor agricultural practices (point sources) and untreated domestic waste water (sewage), and stressed the need for provision of guidelines, tools, methodologies, technologies and best practices for nutrient management. Mr. Kagel Amasse (Institute of Tropical Agriculture) discussed about nutrient balance through prevention of nutrient loss by minimizing erosion. Mr. David Osborne (Director, International Atomic Energy Agency- Marine Environment Laboratory) introduced the impacts of nutrients on the environment. He provided examples of how soil cover aids in nutrient absorption and how easily the nutrients are released into the atmosphere. He explained the role of riparian / wetland vegetation in nutrient release, absorption and recycling. He also commented on fiscal reforms and reiterated the need for an interdisciplinary approach, as well as goals that have specific targets to solve the multi-dimensional nutrient management problems.

Sustainable Palm Oil- Generating Global Demand and Raising Market Standards by Government of Indonesia / Great Apes Survival Partnership – UNEP

Monday 23 June 2014, 12.00- 1.30pm



Photo Courtesy of IISD

The side event was hosted by UNEP's Great Apes Survival Partnership (GRASP). Mr. Darrel Webber (Secretary General of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil- RSPO), stated that palm oil is "one of the few crops which

bring rural populations out of poverty, if done in an effective way.” Mr. Webber indicated that if palm oil would be taken out of the edible oil equation, the world would need 4 to 10 times more land to grow other crops. Additionally, Dr. Bernice Adiku-Heloo (Deputy Minister of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation in Ghana) explained about palm oil exploitation in Ghana. Ms. Sri Parwati Murwani Budisusanti (Assistant Deputy Minister of Environment of Indonesia) mentioned that standard operating procedures for palm oil production are implemented in her country.

Ms. Elizabeth Clarke, Zoological Society of London, offered solutions to balance biodiversity conservation needs and productivity of palm oil, including strategic spatial planning at the national policy level, multi-stakeholder landscape planning, development of best practice guidance and tools, data analysis techniques through monitoring and management systems and development of a transparency toolkit. In closing, participants shared information about lessons learnt in Asia related to palm oil exploitation which can be passed on to Africa, and the rest of the world in general.

Wind and Solar Workshop: A global perspective by ACTIS / Climate Action

Monday 23 June 2014, 2.00- 2.45pm

Over the last 5 years, wind and solar energy have become mass market technologies across the planet, as they are highly cost competitive and present alternative forms of energy generation. This is particularly evident in emerging markets such as Africa, Asia and America where electricity is a scarce resource and growing middle class populations have an almost insatiable hunger for reliable energy supplies. Meeting the energy requirements of the emerging markets is an investment opportunity.

Wind and solar technologies are attractive for a number of reasons. Utilising the natural resources of a country helps to reduce system price volatility and commodity exposure. Wind and solar technologies are quick and simple to deploy in comparison to conventional forms of energy generation, and they can provide a natural alternative to the system (for example it is windier in the dry season in Central America and this can provide an opportunity to harness wind energy).

ACTIS is an emerging markets investor with US\$6.5bn under management and has been investing in the energy sectors of those markets for the last 12 years. Ms. Lucy Heintz, who heads Renewable Energy for the Actis Energy Fund, highlighted Actis’ experiences investing in wind and solar projects in Honduras, Chile, South Africa and India. She drew attention to relevant themes and issues that the renewable global energy sectors face and are poised to negative impacts in the emerging markets.

Mainstreaming Poverty Reduction for an Inclusive Green Economy: UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Initiative (PEI) by UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Initiative (PEI) and UNEP Green Economy Team

Monday 23 June 2014, 3.00-3.45pm



Photo Courtesy of IISD

This session was hosted by the Poverty Environment Initiative (PEI), a joint UNEP-UNDP programme dealing with mainstreaming environmental sustainability into national development and poverty reduction strategies with the ultimate aim of reducing poverty. The panel was chaired by Ms. Mette Wilkie (UNEP – Director, Division of Environmental Policy Implementation). Mr. Nik Sekhran discussed the creation of decent jobs and social protection, and their interrelated challenges. He provided a possible scenario where workers had to make a choice between putting food on the table and protecting the environment as a result of living in poverty. He called for the transition from a low sustainable economy to a highly sustainable one.

H.E. Salifou Ouedraogo, Minister for Environment and Sustainable Development of Burkina Faso stated that an inclusive green economy requires cross-sectoral engagement. Therefore, poverty-environment objectives must be included in national policies, sector plans and budget frameworks. With the support of Poverty Environment Initiative (PEI), poverty-environment objectives have been added in both Burkina Faso's poverty reduction strategy and in its five year development plan.

H.E. Oyun Sanjaasuren (Minister for Environment and Green Development of Mongolia) highlighted how her country's rapid economic growth, is driven by the mining sector at the expense of environmental sustainability. She autoed the example of their Green Development strategy which considers national policy and integrates aspects of climate change adaptation.

Innovative environmental education models for the future: A MOOC on Disasters and Ecosystems

Monday 23 June 2014, 4.00-4.45pm

This session provided an opportunity to introduce the *Massive Open Online Course* funded by UNEP through the

German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), Global Universities Partnerships on Environment and Sustainability (GUPES), Cologne University of Applied Sciences (CUAS) and Germany. It will be UNEP's first online course on education for sustainable development and looks at how innovation can be used in dealing with ecosystems and disasters such as landslides, and how they can affect wetlands, flood plains, mangroves, saltmarshes and sand dunes. Teaching materials include case studies, field surveys, lecture material and assignments/exams.

The target audience for the courses is students, environment practitioners and leaders. It will deal with disaster reduction, climate change adaptation and resilience, linkages between ecosystem and disaster risk reduction and identifying international agreements, organization and initiatives related to disaster risk reduction. It targets three key areas: utility, skill and ability of an individual.

"What are the possibilities of hand on learning with MOOC?" It shall not eliminate face to face learning but allows sharing of information on a larger scale. The training also has the advantage of being inclusive and accessible to all level of education. The main challenge faced by this course is the lack of awareness of its existence and high drop-out rates by learners.

Water-Energy-Food Nexus- A key for Green Economy in the Arab World by Gulf Research Centre

Monday 23 June 2014, 5.00-5.45pm

This session reviewed a number of projects implemented by different Major Groups Organizations in the Arab World in the areas of water, energy and food. It urged policy makers to take into consideration linkages in the above three sectors to improve sustainability, efficiency and equity, and move towards a green economy. It also demonstrated the need for community participation in local projects.

The Projects include EU-GCC Clean Energy Network (open conference online) and National Community Water Conservation Program (NCWCP). They face problems such as improper use of water and energy, network leakage, low quality devices, poor or no pipelines and infrastructure. Some of the solutions suggested include conservation activities at the national and local level, stakeholders and community participation in decision-making. Additional solutions discussed include good political will, appropriate water kits and development of

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