

Towards Stockholm+50 Webinar 6: **Civil Society, the Environment, and the United Nations Environment Programme**

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4 May 2022



Introduction by Javier Surasky,
followed by a 10-minute video – Stockholm 1972

**Click here to view the 1972 Stockholm Conference
Summary video on YouTube**



UNEP

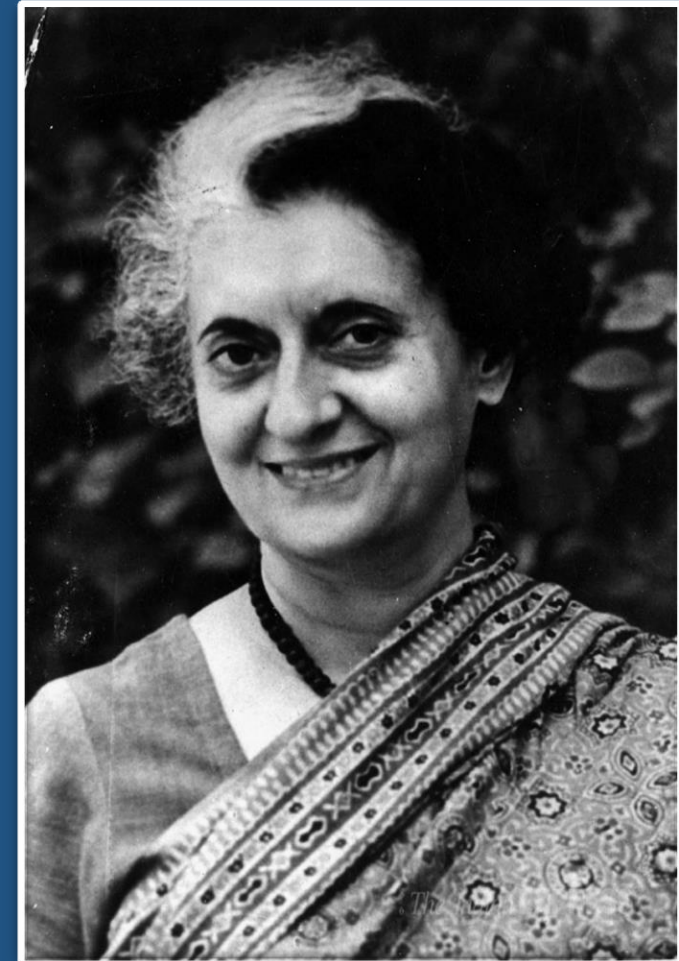
United Nations Environment Programme

**Civil society,
stakeholders and
major groups**

**In UN and at UNEP
Jan-Gustav Strandenaes,
Stakeholder Forum**

Now, in 2022 50 years have elapsed since the Stockholm 1972 Conference and the birth of UNEP – Will we celebrate 50 years of environmental work?

- From the opening session of the Stockholm Conference in 1972, Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India speaking, and a picture of her in 1972 (far right), and UNEP's first Executive Director, the Canadian Maurice Strong (below).



From Stockholm in 1972 to Stockholm+50, 2-3 June 2022

- **The Legacy of the 1972 Conference:**
- The environment firmly on the global agenda;
- **The beginning of environmental governance: It was the first time civil society was allowed to address an official plenary at a multilateral conference – this changed the nature of all successive UN meetings;**
- Environmental law was given an institutional home;
- Science and the environment
- Some claim this was the beginning of environmental diplomacy.



Olof Palme Swedish PM, 1972 / From the plenary in Stockholm

The Legacy from Stockholm 1972 stretches through Rio in 1992 and on to the 2030 Agenda and beyond, invoking change

- **A few key elements:**
- *The Prevention of Environmental Harm*
- *The Right to Development in an Environmental Context*
- *Precautionary Action*
- *Procedural Safeguards*
- *Public Participation*
- *The Interface of Trade And Environment*
- *Indigenous Peoples*
- *Women in Development*
- *Environmental Liability and Compensation*





A key legacy: Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration

“Environmental issues are best handled with participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level. At the national level, each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available. Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy, shall be provided.”

Principle 10 and environmental governance

- Principle 10 sets out three fundamental rights: access to information, access to public participation and access to justice, as key pillars of sound environmental governance.
- The “access rights” have emerged to be very important in promoting transparent, inclusive and accountable environmental governance.





How is civil society regarded at the UN?

And how does this apply to UNEP?

UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Subsidiary Organs

Disarmament
Commission

- Human Rights Council
- International Law Commission
- Joint Inspection Unit (JIU)
- Main Committees
- Standing committees and ad hoc bodies

Funds and Programmes

UNDP United Nations
Development Programme

UNCDF United Nations
Capital Development Fund

UNV United Nation
Volunteers

**UNEP United Nations
Environment Programme**

UNFPA United Nations
Population Fund
UN-HABITAT8 United
Nations Human Settlements
Programme

UNICEF United Nations
Children's Fund

WFP World Food
Programme (UN/FAO)

Research and Training:

UNIDIR United Nations Institute for Disarmament
Research

UNITAR United Nations Institute for Training and
Research

UNSSC United Nations System Staff College

UNU United Nations University

Other Entities

ITC International Trade Centre (UN/WTO)

UNCTAD1,8 United Nations Conference on Trade
and Development

UNHCR1 Office of the United Nations High
Commissioner for Refugees

UNOPS1 United Nations Office for Project
Services

UNRWA1 United Nations Relief and Works
Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

UN-WOMEN1 United Nations Entity for Gender
Equality and the Empowerment of Women



This particular structure means that...

- UNEP presents the outcome report from the UNEAs to the GA Second Committee and there is a resolution on UNEP – (see for instance *A/RES/74/222* - Report of the UNEA 4 of UNEP) by which the UNGA adopts the outcomes from the UNEA. In reality this means that UNEA decisions are not binding for UN Charter bodies unless the GA and ECOSOC adopts them.
- Rio+20 in 2012, in its outcome report *A/RES/66/288*, named *The Future We Want*, recommended that the GA establish UNEA (para 88), respecting the original structure from 1972. The UN GA in resolution 67/251 named “Change of the designation of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme”, following recommendations by the UNEP Governing Council in February 2013, agreed to the designation “the UN Environment Assembly» which has universal membership.

Who are the formal actors at the UN



- Member states - 193
- International governmental organisations,
- Non-Governmental Organisations



Article 71 of The UN Charter

“The Economic and Social Council may make suitable arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations which are concerned with matters within its competence. Such arrangements may be made with international organizations and, where appropriate, with national organizations after consultation with the Member of the United Nations concerned.”

1996/31. Consultative relationship between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations

- Recalling Article 71 of the Charter of the United Nations,
 - Confirming the need to take into account the full diversity of the non-governmental organizations at the national, regional and international levels
 - Acknowledging the breadth of non-governmental organizations' expertise and the capacity of non-governmental organizations to support the work of the United Nations
- Calling the governing bodies of the UN family to develop coherence
 - Arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations
 - What is an NGO
 - Consultation at meeting, statements,
 - Accreditation

- NGO is a legal entity, formal recognition
- Stakeholder is a person or organisation with a stake in something
- Stakeholder is context dependent, can be government, can be civil society
- Stakeholder has no legal or formal position
- Civil society suffers from the same as stakeholder, BUT:
- All civil society organisations are NGOs (at the UN) but not all NGOs are of civil society
- What are Major Groups?

Concepts of importance

Agenda 21: the 9 Major Groups

- Women
 - Children and Youth
 - Farmers
 - Indigenous Peoples
 - NGOs
 - Trade Unions
 - Local Authorities
 - Science and technology
 - Business and Industry
- (They all adhere to Article 71)**





Why do we participate in Intergovernmental Processes?

There are at least four important functions:

- Setting agendas
- Be in decision-making processes
- Negotiating outcomes
- Conferring legitimacy
- Implementing solutions

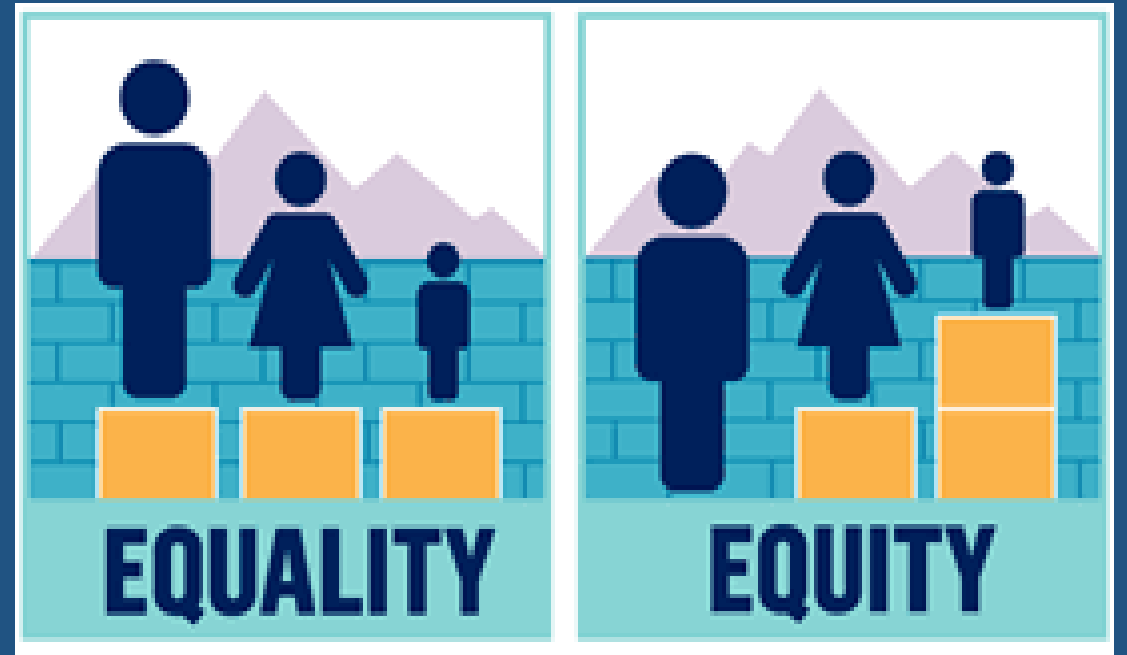
A/Res 67/290 on HLPF

§15. *Decides*, in this regard, that, while retaining the intergovernmental character of the forum, the representatives of the major groups and other relevant stakeholders shall be allowed:

- (a) To attend all official meetings of the forum;
- (b) To have access to all official information and documents;
- (c) To intervene in official meetings;
- (d) To submit documents and present written and oral contributions;
- (e) To make recommendations; and
- (f) To organize side events and round tables, in cooperation with Member States and the Secretariat.

The importance of governance – Access?

The sinister “no objection mechanism” – not a rule



Negotiated language matters

- The Stockholm Declaration, 1972 – speaks of rights to a clean environment
- The Copenhagen Declaration, 1995, speaks of being entitled to a clean environment



To be heard and have an impact, we need to:



- Understand the themes
- Make sure that our input is relevant to the theme, including our criticism
- Make sure that new and additional themes are relevant to the main theme
- Have a strategy during and beyond UNEA
- Understand how the UNEA system works

Negotiating Outcomes: Chemicals - Providing Content and Influencing

- By always being present, and always providing substantive and relevant input, the network of NGOs working on chemical issues helped create the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM), which is a policy framework to promote chemical safety around the world, a part of UNEP.
- NGOs also helped develop the Minamata Convention on mercury.
- After providing substantive and relevant input in refugee matters and health, UNOCHA and UNAIDS now have representatives of NGOs at the highest level.
- Greenpeace provided substantive input on the ocean's chapter in the Rio+20 Outcome document.



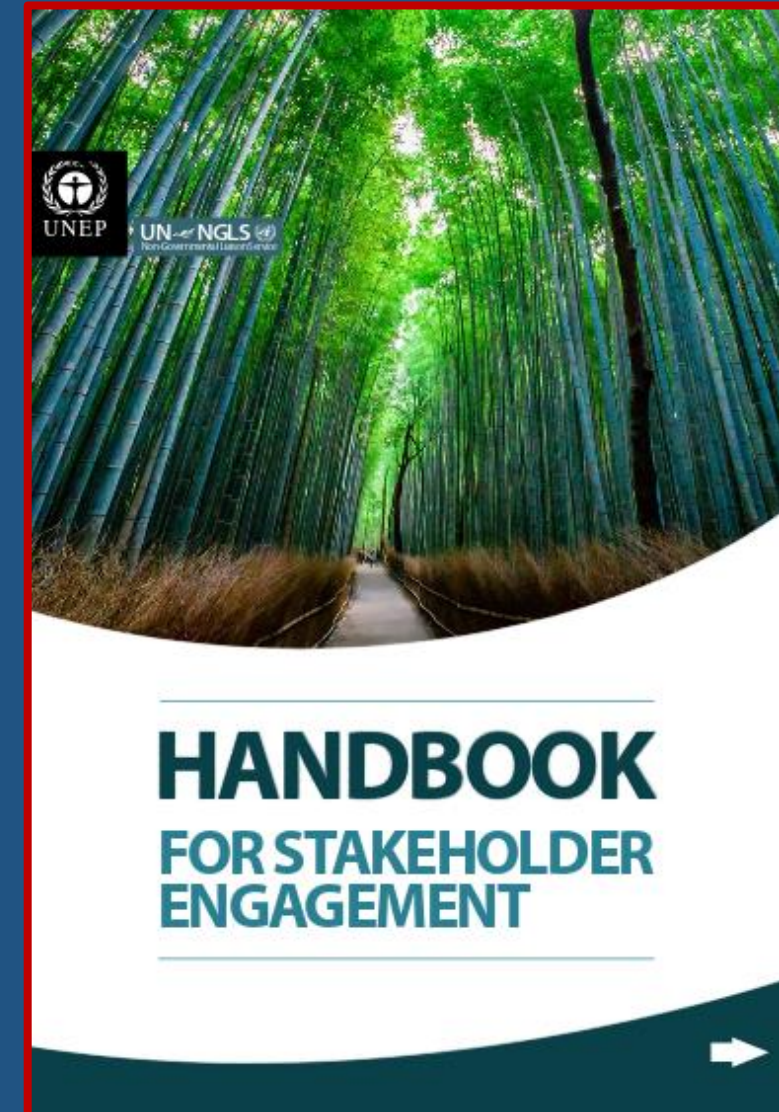
Rules and procedure apply at international meetings and inside is different from outside ...

- And we abide by responsible code of conducts in all meetings and all communication within the framework of the UN
- We are at intergovernmental processes and must respect that
- We play by rules and procedure and if we understand them – and they are key to influence – we become decision-shapers and decision makers – for “we, the peoples”



A book about the Major Groups, procedure, elections and a code of conduct – all must read!

- On Process: The MGFC is the coordinating body, elected, with 2 reps from each of the nine. These people are mandated to represent the major groups and decisions made on behalf of the major groups at UNEP are taken by them. Appointed groups, friends' groups, working committees or thematic groups report to them.
- On behaviour: Representatives of civil society admitted to sessions shall cooperate and comply with requests and instructions from United Nations officials and security staff regarding the use of facilities and access to and conduct within the venues. No participant shall harass or threaten any other participant.



A photograph of a wind farm situated in a lush, green forest. Several white wind turbines are visible, with one in the foreground being the most prominent. The background shows rolling hills and a cloudy sky. The text "PEACE WITH NATURE" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font on the left side of the image.

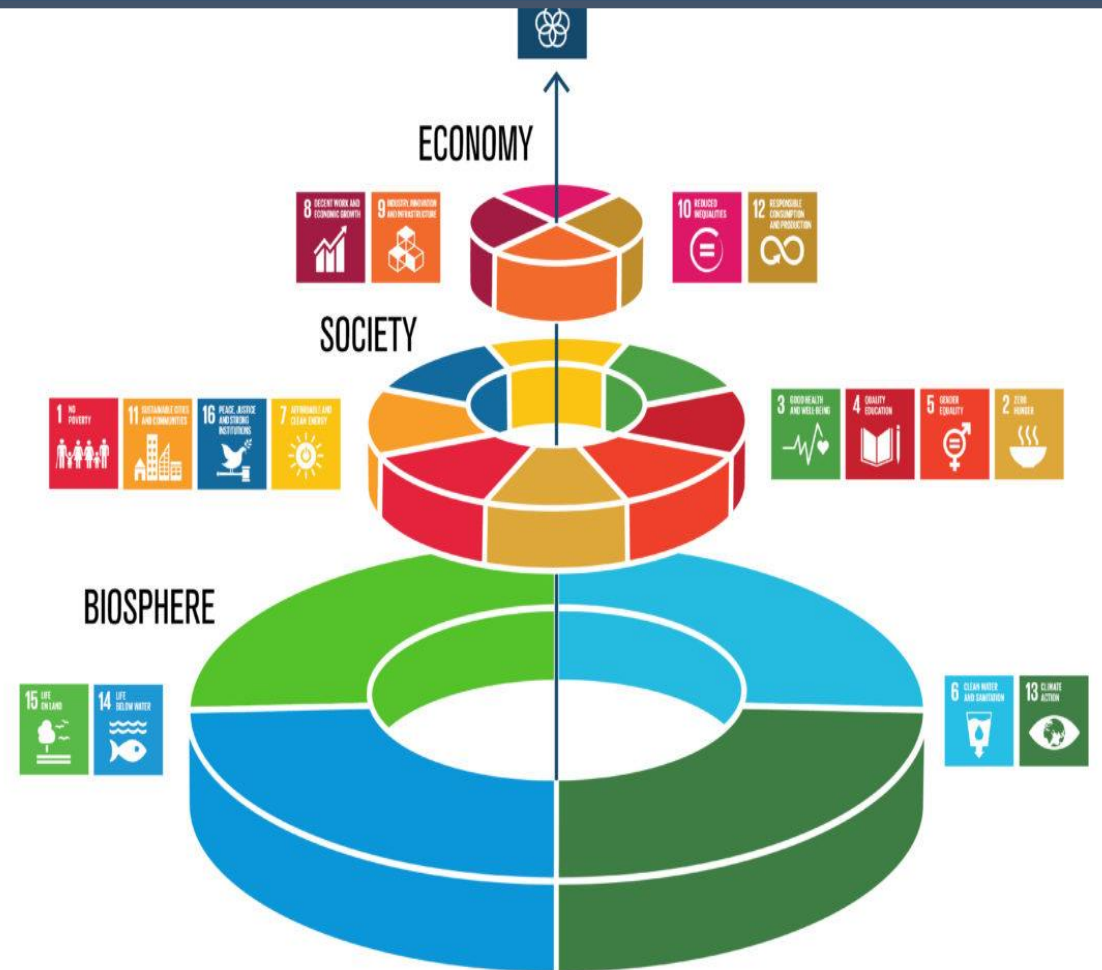
**PEACE WITH
NATURE**

Stockholm+50

**June
2 & 3
2022**

Professor Rockström, University of Stockholm on the SDGs:

“The lower level,
the biosphere, is
non-negotiable.”
Without nature,
nothing exists...



As a historian, I would say we have come a long way in a short period of time; as an environmentalist, we have not come far enough – Action now is needed. Stockholm in 1972 was a daring conference, let us make the next one as daring and more forward looking. Thank you for listening.

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Open Dialogue:

Javier Surasky
Isis Alvarez
Jan-Gustav Strandenaes

Questions & Answers

An interactive session with
panelists and stakeholders

Recommendations for the Future from the audience

Conclusions & Recommendations:

- For UNEP
- For countries
- For stakeholders

Javier Surasky

Legacy Webinars

Thank you, and please register to join the next webinars!

12 May 16:00 CET Webinar 5: Connecting the Dots – Making a Forceful Canon of the Rio Conventions & the Multilateral Environmental Agreements

(Date TBC) Webinar 7: Science & the Environment

SAVE THE DATE – ‘The Peoples Environment Narrative’

An Online Stakeholder Consultation in the run-up to Stockholm+50

May 18 & 19, 2022: 4 PM – 8 PM CET / 10 AM to 2 PM EDT