



CANADA'S VOICE
IN GLOBAL GOVERNANCE:

A CIVIL SOCIETY HANDBOOK

UNITED NATIONS
ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME
-UNEP-

COORDINATED BY
FRIENDS OF THE EARTH CANADA

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Overview and Acknowledgments

Welcome to *Canada's Voice in Global Governance: A Civil Society Handbook*. The handbook is a resource for civil society organizations (CSOs) interested in understanding and influencing Canada's role in some of the world's most important global institutions. Each section of the handbook answers key questions and provides important contact information on a particular international institution, including: the Group of Eight (G8); World Bank Group; the World Trade Organization (WTO); the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD); the Organization of American States (OAS); the International Labour Organization (ILO); the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); and the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR). There is also a section that provides an overview of the key pillars of the Canadian Government's foreign policy-making process. See the www.foecanada.org/intl/handbook.htm for a complete list of the documents that make up the handbook.

Please note that this version of the handbook is a "Working Draft". We hope that it can be of immediate use to CSOs across Canada and beyond, but we are also seeking comments and suggestions in order to improve it and ensure that it is useful to the widest possible range of organizations (please send comments to gsaul@foecanada.org).

Also note that the HTML version of this document includes hyperlinks to additional information. These links are indicated in the PDF version by underlined text, but they can only be opened through the html version. The handbook will be updated regularly, so to benefit from the hyperlinks and ensure that you have the most up-to-date version, please check the website: www.foecanada.org/intl/handbook.htm.

The many sections of the handbook represent the collective effort and input of a wide range of human rights, labour, environment and development organizations from across Canada and beyond. The process of bringing this information together was coordinated by Friends of the Earth Canada and advised by a steering committee that included representatives from the Halifax Initiative Coalition, the Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC), and Kairos: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives. We would like to thank the Walter and Duncan Gordon Foundation and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation for their generous support. While Friends of the Earth deeply appreciates the support of all of the organizations and individuals involved in the development of this project, we take sole responsibility for any inaccuracies or mischaracterizations that may have survived the editing process.

We are still in the process of compiling individual acknowledgements and will include them in the re-edited First Edition that will follow soon.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
What is UNEP?.....	3
What Does UNEP Do?.....	4
How is UNEP Structured?.....	5
How Does UNEP Work?.....	7
Where Does UNEP Get its Money?	7
Who Speaks for Canada at UNEP?.....	8
Who Decides What Canada Says at UNEP?	9
Tips for Civil Society.....	10
Conclusion.....	12

Canada's Voice in Global Governance: A Civil Society Handbook:

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Introduction

Many of today's most pressing environmental concerns cannot be addressed at a purely national level. Problems like global warming, water shortages, and the presence of harmful substances in our environment cut across national boundaries, and their solutions require

cooperation among states.

The most successful attempts to achieve such cooperation usually take the form of treaties that address specific issues, referred to as International or [Multilateral Environmental Agreements](#) (IEAs/MEAs). Unfortunately, this level of cooperation has not been enough. Most of the world's most serious ecological threats have worsened over the past few decades, despite an unprecedented increase in the number of MEAs. Complex and overlapping problems simply cannot be solved through single-issue agreements. Many

Box 1: What is International Environmental Governance?

International Environmental Governance, or IEG, is a term you will encounter frequently when working on issues related to UNEP. It refers to a complex web of organizations and agreements aimed at addressing environmental problems at an international (sometimes global, sometimes regional) level. It is made up of:

- 1) international organizations like UNEP, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the UN Commission on Sustainable Development;
- 2) multilateral environmental agreements – a growing number of legally binding environmental conventions and treaties on specific issues (e.g. greenhouse gas emissions), many of which have created independent secretariats to oversee their implementation;
- 3) financing mechanisms, like the Global Environment Facility (GEF), which support the implementation of environmental projects and programs; and
- 4) international environmental "summits", such as the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg and the 1992 Rio Earth Summit.

Two environmental bodies affiliated with UNEP are located in Montreal: the [Secretariat for the UN Convention on Biological Diversity](#) and the [Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol](#)

Many would like to see UNEP strengthened to coordinate this entire system in order to make it more effective, avoid duplication of efforts, and manage competing demands on member countries. UNEP currently plays a limited coordinating role.

argue that a more coordinated approach to [International Environmental Governance](#) is needed.

This is the role that the [United Nations Environment Programme](#) (UNEP) aspires to play. Born out of the 1972 [United Nations Conference on the](#)

[Human Environment](#), UNEP was established as the principal UN body in the field of the environment and is the leading environmental authority within the UN system.

While UNEP may have been the pioneer in this field, it is no longer the only game in town. Since 1972, a decentralized (and often fragmented) system of International Environmental Governance (IEG) has emerged

Box 2: Civil Society and UNEP

“When the Earth Summit was organized in 1992, two revolutions were in the making: first, the focus of global governance on planetary management; and second, the movement of civil society to the centre-stage of defining global agendas on the basis of ecology, equity and democracy.

But the revolutions of 1992 stalled. The focus on planet was replaced by the focus on commerce, citizen leadership was set aside for corporate leadership.

Both planet and people have paid a high price for the marginalization of ecology and democracy in the management of world affairs. Every ecological problem, which the Earth Summit addressed, has worsened.

...Engagement between UNEP and civil society is necessary, both for UNEP and for the protection of the planet's fragile web of life. In this engagement lies the potential for resurgence of democracy and ecological awareness, the processes that were interrupted over the past decade by the euphoria that all decisions can be left to the market and deregulated global commerce can take care of the planet's health.

Commerce ministries alone do not run countries. Global governance cannot be left only to free trade treaties. We need environmental policy and management at the global level. UNEP needs to be strengthened to provide the ecological context for trade and commerce to be sustainable and equitable....”

Dr. Vandana Shiva

Source: Foreword, *Natural Allies: UNEP and Civil Society*

that includes numerous organizations and agreements whose mandates sometimes overlap, and who often make competing demands on their member countries or signatories. This proliferation of international environmental decision-making bodies has challenged UNEP's mandate – a challenge UNEP's Governing Council attempted to answer with its 1997 [Nairobi Declaration](#), which asserted UNEP's primacy as an international environmental authority.

In many ways, this is more of a goal than a

reality. UNEP continues to be hampered by a lack of financial resources, by mandate overlaps with other UN agencies, and by a lack of coordination with the various treaty secretariats. Still, UNEP does flex sufficient agenda-setting muscle to attract the attention of many NGOs seeking to get new initiatives off the ground. Indeed, it is one of the few places where environmental issues not covered by an existing treaty, or issues overlapping with several agreements, can be effectively raised with the international community.

Many NGOs and a number of governments would like to see UNEP strengthened, in order to play a more central role in global environmental governance. The disjointed efforts at global environmental management have so far failed to reduce environmental degradation.¹ Furthermore, there is a growing concern that UNEP has been sidelined by the

overwhelming power of the global trading system under the World Trade Organization as well as the international financial institutions, whose decisions have dramatic impacts on the global environment.² A number of countries are calling for better coordination of international environmental efforts and a strengthened UNEP. The European Union is currently proposing additional measures that would transform UNEP into a UN specialized agency: the UN Environment Organization.

This guide begins by describing what UNEP is, what it does, how it is structured, how it works, and how it is financed. This is followed by an explanation of who speaks for Canada at UNEP and who the key governmental players are in determining what Canada says at the institution. The guide concludes with tips for civil society activists who are interested in better understanding and influencing UNEP. The information that follows will be periodically updated, and we welcome your comments and suggestions.

What is UNEP?

The [United Nations Environment Programme](#) is the UN body with principal responsibility for environmental protection. Its stated mission is to “provide leadership and encourage partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations.”³ It is both a policy-making body and an implementing agency, though its budget for program implementation is relatively small.

Box 3: An overview of the current system of International Environmental Governance:

See the following:

World Resources 2002-2004: Decisions for the Earth: Balance, voice, and power, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, World Bank, World Resources Institute, http://pubs.wri.org/pubs_content.cfm?PubID=3764, Chapter 7.

Another useful resource is Yale University's Global Environmental Governance Project, whose work can be found at www.yale.edu/gegdialogue.

Particularly important in international environmental governance are the various treaties and conventions, known as multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), which make up much of international environmental law. These agreements are binding on the states that sign them, and many have independent secretariats that are in charge of their implementation. A list of some of the most often cited MEAs can be found in Appendix One of this Guide. A more comprehensive database, listing over 700 MEAs and bilateral environmental agreements, has been compiled by a group of researchers at the University of Oregon. See:

Ronald B. Mitchell. 2003. *International Environmental Agreements Website*. Available at: <http://www.uoregon.edu/~iea>

UNEP's mandate was rearticulated and expanded by the [Nairobi Declaration](#), adopted by its Governing Council in 1997, which stated that UNEP's role was “to be the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, that promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable

development within the United Nations system and that serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment.”⁴ Based on these roles, the Declaration also enumerated three core functions for UNEP: to provide analysis, advice, and information on environmental trends, threats, and policies; to coordinate and catalyze actions addressing threats to the environment; and to facilitate cooperation among governments, civil society, implementing agencies, and the scientific and technical communities to make these efforts more effective.

What Does UNEP Do?

UNEP is frequently described as having a “catalytic and coordinating role” in protecting the global environment. It convenes most of the world’s Environment Ministers (or their representatives) on an annual basis to consider environmental trends and what to do about them. Decisions to negotiate new treaties or conventions sometimes emerge from these meetings – for example, UNEP initiated the negotiations that led to the [Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants](#) (POPs), the [Montreal Protocol on Substances That Deplete the Ozone Layer](#), the [Convention on Biological Diversity](#), and the [Convention to Combat Desertification](#). In other cases UNEP may urge states to take action on environmental issues or establish programs to support states in addressing a particular environmental problem.

Box 4: UNEP as an Implementing Partner:

Some NGOs also work with UNEP as implementing partners.

For more information on the various roles civil society organizations play in relation to UNEP, see *Natural Allies: UNEP and Civil Society*, available at www.unep.org/PDF/Natural_Allies_en/Natural_Allies_english_full.pdf

UNEP also implements a number of programs and projects aimed at increasing environmental protection, though their scope is restricted by budgetary constraints. Its programming priorities are outlined in its program of work, which is adopted by the UNEP Governing Council every second year at its regular session. UNEP focuses its work program on six areas of concentration: environmental information; assessment and research (including work on how to strengthen early warning and emergency response capacity); enhanced coordination of environmental conventions and the development of environmental policy instruments; freshwater; technology transfer and industry; and support to Africa.⁵

UNEP is also a major source of environmental data and scientific analysis. It monitors environmental trends and publishes a wealth of analyses and technical reports. Its flagship publication, [Global Environmental Outlook](#), provides comprehensive reviews of global

environmental trends and the policy instruments available to address them.⁶ In addition, UNEP's [Earthwatch](#) program, which works with numerous monitoring networks and thousands of scientists and technicians, collects and disseminates information on the global environment in 170 countries. One component of this program is the [Global Environmental Monitoring Service](#) (GEMS), housed in Environment Canada's National Water Research Institute in Burlington, Ontario, since 1978.⁷

How is UNEP Structured?

UNEP's highest decision-making body is its [Governing Council](#), which consists of 58 members elected by the [UN General Assembly](#) to four-year terms on the basis of equitable regional representation.⁸ The Governing Council is made up of the Environment Ministers of the countries elected as members or their representatives (known as Heads of Delegation), and acts like a board of directors. Canada is currently on the UNEP Governing Council until December 2005. The Council meets every second year in February at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, to make decisions about UNEP's budget, policies, and program of work. It makes almost all of its decisions by consensus, and reports to the General Assembly through the [Economic and Social Council](#) (ECOSOC). Non-member states can attend Governing Council meetings and participate in the debate as observers, as can representatives from other UN agencies, convention secretariats, other international organizations, and NGOs.

Box 5: UNEP and Multilateral Environmental Agreements

UNEP houses eight [Convention Secretariats](#) which oversee the implementation of some of the world's most important environmental agreements. A list of these secretariats can be found in Appendix A.

In addition, a division of the UNEP Secretariat, called the [Division of Environmental Conventions](#), tries to identify synergies and to promote collaboration both among the MEAs and between the MEAs and UNEP.

Finally, UNEP's Executive Director chairs the UN's [Environmental Management Group](#) – a coordinating body with representatives from all of the bodies in the UN system that deal with the environment and human settlements, including specialized agencies and the secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements. The EMG usually takes up one issue at a time, trying to increase cooperation and effectiveness among the UN bodies dealing with that issue using a "problem-solving" approach.

In 1999 the UN General Assembly gave the Council a new role as the Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GMEF), which meets annually to review important and emerging policy issues in the field of the environment.⁹ This means that the Environment Ministers now meet every year instead of every two years, but the regular session of the Governing Council still happens on a two-year cycle. Thus, every second year, the Ministers have a longer meeting and spend part of their time making management decisions about UNEP as the Governing Council, while in the intervening years they focus exclusively on environmental trends and situations, and how to address

them. The longer biennial meetings are known as the “regular sessions” of the GC/GMEF, and have bigger agendas and more committees; the shorter meetings are known as “special sessions” of the GC/GMEF. While the membership of the two bodies is technically different (the Governing Council consists of 58 elected members, while the GMEF is open to all UN member states), in reality this distinction has little importance: all countries can participate in Governing Council debates, and the 58 Governing Council members play a larger role only when a vote is taken, which is very rare.

The Governing Council can create sub-committees or working groups it desires, either to accomplish its work at the annual sessions or to extend its work beyond those sessions. The Council usually creates one large committee called the Committee of the Whole at each session, which then establishes sub-committees as it sees fit. In recent years, the Council has also created several high level or ministerial working groups to prepare strategies or reports for its consideration. Examples include the [Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Ministers or Their Representatives on International Environmental Governance](#) (2001) and the [High-level Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on an Intergovernmental Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building](#) (2004).¹⁰

A [Bureau](#), comprised of a President, three Vice-Presidents, and a Rapporteur, manages the proceedings of the Governing Council. These officers are elected at the beginning of the session, with the President and Rapporteur rotating on a regional basis, and the vice-presidents elected from the remaining three regional groups. Canada last held the Presidency of the Governing Council in 2001–2003.

Next to the Governing Council, the highest decision-making body of UNEP and its only other governing body is the [Committee of Permanent Representatives](#) (CPR). The CPR oversees the implementation of Council decisions, reviews Secretariat reports, and oversees the preparation of UNEP’s program of work and budget. The CPR, which is also based in Nairobi, holds four regular meetings each year, and can hold extraordinary meetings if requested by at least five members. The CPR frequently strikes sub-committees, but these are generally ad hoc committees formed to address specific agenda items, rather than permanent standing committees.

UNEP also has a Secretariat of about 890 staff members, headed by an [Executive Director](#). Apart from its headquarters in Nairobi, UNEP has six [regional offices](#) (Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America, and West Asia) and a number of field offices and collaborating centres.

UNEP's [Regional Office for North America](#) (RONA) is located in Washington, D.C. The Director of RONA is typically an American citizen and the Deputy Director is a Canadian.

How Does UNEP Work?

When the Ministers making up the Governing Council of UNEP want to negotiate a new environmental treaty or convention, initiate a new program, or approve the budget or work-plan of the organization, they do so by adopting a "Decision." These Decisions invariably relate to the agenda items discussed during the Council meeting.

The Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GMEF) elects its bureau on the first day of its meeting, and then decides how to proceed with its agenda. As mentioned above, the Council always creates a Committee of the Whole, which meets in parallel to the GMEF. The Ministers/Heads of Delegation consider the report of the Committee of the Whole and adopt their Decisions on the final day of the session.

Leading up to the Governing Council meetings, especially from about October forward, the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) and its sub-committees meet regularly to prepare materials and draft Decisions for the Governing Council. A somewhat unique feature of the UNEP process is that NGOs who have accreditation with UNEP receive preparatory documents, including any draft Decisions submitted to the CPR, at about the same time as government representatives. They can then make comments that are transmitted to the governments by UNEP.

It is important to note, however, that not all draft Decisions come out of the formal consultation process associated with the CPR. Some are developed through informal consultations among states, and may not be publicly proposed until the Governing Council session itself. In these cases NGOs usually have no opportunity for input until the draft is formally introduced, which may be very late in the process.

In some cases, NGOs have developed "draft Decisions" of their own. NGOs cannot introduce proposals to the Governing Council directly, but they can sometimes convince member states to sponsor and introduce them for debate.

Where Does UNEP Get its Money?

UNEP's budget depends heavily on its ability to bring in voluntary contributions. A relatively small portion (about 5 percent) of UNEP's

US\$105 million budget in 2004 came from the UN regular budget. The bulk of its funding (roughly 50 percent) came in the form of voluntary contributions to its main fund – the [UN Environment Fund](#) – with about another 30 percent coming from voluntary contributions to trust funds, and the remaining 15 percent made up of earmarked contributions from Governments, UN agencies and other organizations to finance specific UNEP activities.

UNEP has put in place a [Voluntary Indicative Scale of Contributions](#) based on the size of countries' economies, but actual contributions do not always match

Box 6: Canada's International Environmental Commitments

The Canadian government maintains a "compendium" of international environmental agreements that Canada has signed. You can find information about these agreements on Environment Canada's website, at:
http://www.ec.gc.ca/international/multilat/mea_e.htm

"invited" contributions. Canada has contributed about 2.6 percent of the total contributions to the UN Environment Fund in recent years (roughly US\$1.7 million per year) and ranks 13th in total contributions for the three year period running from 2002–2004 (roughly US\$5.4 million).¹¹ The top contributors during the same period were the United Kingdom (US\$21,053,794), the United States (US\$17,885,100), Germany (US\$17,821,104), the Netherlands (US\$15,364,314), and Japan (US\$11,000,000).¹² Other significant sources of funding for UNEP are contributions for specific activities received through trust funds and earmarked contributions. Support to UNEP activities through the trust funds for the two-year period 2002–2003 totalled US\$80.7 million, while earmarked contributions totalled US\$41.5 million for the same period.

Who Speaks for Canada at UNEP?

Canada's Minister of the Environment usually attends the annual sessions of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environmental Forum, and serves as Canada's highest representative at UNEP. In the Minister's absence, a senior official (such as the Ambassador for the Environment, or Environment Canada's Deputy Minister or Assistant Deputy Minister for International Affairs) attends instead as Head of Delegation (HOD). A delegation accompanies the Minister/HOD, and speaks on Canada's behalf at the meetings of the various sessional committees. The delegation is composed of officials from Environment Canada and Foreign Affairs and may include other departments as required by the agenda. In 2005 Canada's 17-person delegation also included three representatives of civil society (broadly defined): a youth representative, a university professor, and a representative of a non-governmental research organization.

Canada is represented in the Committee of Permanent Representatives and its sub-committees by Foreign Affairs officials stationed at the [Canadian Permanent Mission in Nairobi](#), including the High Commissioner to Kenya, who is Canada’s Permanent Representative to UNEP.

Who Decides What Canada Says at UNEP?

Environment Canada manages Canada’s relations with UNEP in cooperation with Foreign Affairs Canada, and works with other government departments to develop Canadian positions. Its role includes “coordinating Canada’s participation in UNEP activities, including providing advice on UNEP reform and governance issues; overall preparation for UNEP meetings; coordination of departmental input into the North American chapter of UNEP’s Global Environmental Outlook (GEO) report; and preparations for ministerial or senior official participation at UNEP meetings.”¹³ Interdepartmental policy discussions related to UNEP are open to all interested departments, and this interest varies according to UNEP’s agenda. Natural Resources Canada is frequently involved, as is CIDA.

Box 7: Contacting the Government:

To contact a person or office in the **Government of Canada**, check the Government Electronic Directory Services (GEDS), a searchable online database of government contact information. See: <http://direct.srv.gc.ca/cgi-bin/direct500/BE>

The **Parliament of Canada** website maintains contact information for Members of Parliament and records of parliamentary proceedings. See: <http://www.parl.gc.ca/>

Environment Canada’s [International Affairs](#) Branch is responsible for relations with UNEP. As of September 2005, Environment Canada was in the process of finalizing an internal reorganization. This handbook will be updated when there is additional clarity on reporting relationships within the department.

Environment Canada in Ottawa communicates directly with the Canadian High Commission in Nairobi on matters being considered by the Committee of Permanent Representatives, but Foreign Affairs officials in Ottawa are always kept informed of this correspondence. The involvement of Foreign Affairs Canada is managed by its Environment and Sustainable Development Relations Division (ESDRD). This is a Division of the Environment and Sustainable Development Affairs Bureau, which reports to the Assistant Deputy Minister for Global Issues. The Director of ESDRD usually attends the Governing Council meetings, and there is a Deputy Director assigned to UN Environmental Institutions.

Tips for Civil Society

As noted above, the institutions of International Environmental Governance are many and varied, and NGOs looking to have an impact on this system are hard pressed to decide where to invest their energies. UNEP is not the obvious choice in every case, but it does have certain characteristics that can be important to an effective advocacy effort. It convenes most of the world's Environment Ministers in one place every year, and so it can be an important forum to push for new agreements or to influence priorities and policy debates. UNEP's influence with international financial institutions, the World Trade Organization, and the numerous independent environmental treaty secretariats is very limited. Civil society groups should be realistic about how much of an impact they can have on other bodies by working through UNEP. Still, if you want to influence the priorities of the international community on environmental issues, and especially if you want to create momentum for a new initiative, in many cases UNEP is not a bad place to start.

Few Canadian civil society groups are currently engaged in UNEP policy processes. One exception is a research organization called [Unisféra International Centre](#), which has produced a number of reports related to UNEP's work and sent a representative to the last GC/GMEF as part of the official Canadian delegation, as did the [Youth Environmental Network](#) of Canada (YEN). The [International Institute for Sustainable Development](#) (IISD) also has accreditation with UNEP and provides online coverage and analysis of UNEP Governing Council sessions through its [Earth Negotiations Bulletin](#). Other civil society organizations (CSOs) engaged in UNEP's work can be found through a database on UNEP's [civil society website](#). UNEP's [Regional Office for North America](#) (RONA), which in recent years has been urging NGOs to play a more active role in UNEP's policy processes, may also be able to put you in touch with groups working on similar issues.

There have been some concerted advocacy campaigns by NGOs targeting the UNEP Governing Council. One example is the effort by a coalition of NGOs, including the [Natural Resources Defence Council](#) and the [Mercury Policy Project](#), to get a mandatory agreement on phasing out the production, use and trade of mercury. Although only [partially successful](#), due mainly to US obstruction (UNEP's Governing Council opted for a voluntary agreement rather than calling for a mandatory agreement), the campaign mobilized significant support

Box 8: The Earth Negotiations Bulletin

The **International Institute for Sustainable Development** (IISD), a Canadian NGO, provides daily online coverage of UNEP Governing Council sessions through its **Earth Negotiations Bulletin** (ENB) service. ENB also covers negotiations related to environmental treaties and conventions and other environment and development-related bodies.

You can find archived coverage at <http://www.iisd.ca/voltoc.html>

in the international community and put the issue on the global environmental agenda. The terrain seems wide open for Canadian CSOs to use UNEP as a vehicle for similar campaigns. Both UNEP's Regional Office for North America and the Canadian government have expressed openness to greater involvement of Canadian NGOs in UNEP-related policy processes.

If you are going to do work related to UNEP, you should consider getting [accreditation](#) with the organization. Accredited NGOs can make oral statements and circulate written statements at the Governing Council sessions. More importantly, they also get access to UNEP preparatory documents, including the proposed budget, program of work, and any draft Decisions submitted to the Committee of Permanent Representatives – at the same time as government representatives. This will allow you to be better prepared for what's coming up at the GC/GMEF, and to provide comments which will be circulated to governments, including the Government of Canada, in the months leading up to the Governing Council session. Be aware that the UNEP budget and work program are large, dense, and complex documents, and require substantial resources to review meaningfully. Applications for accreditation must be submitted to the Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch, and the application process can take up to six months.¹⁴

Box 9: UNEP's Civil Society Page:

For more information on the accreditation process, see UNEP's "Resources for Civil Society" page at:

www.unep.org/dpdl/civil_society.

UNEP has also developed a formal process for collecting comments from civil society organizations in the run-up to the GC/GMEF. Each of UNEP's six regional offices holds a meeting with civil society organizations. Each of these meetings produces a statement and elects one representative who attends a global drafting meeting where the six statements are combined into one. Both the regional and global statements are presented to the Ministers just prior to the opening of the GC/GMEF. Unfortunately, Canadian representation at the North American regional civil society meetings has been limited. For instance, there were no Canadian participants at the 2004 North American regional meeting in Washington DC.

Each of the regional meetings also elects four representatives to attend UNEP's [Global Civil Society Forum](#) (GCSF) that immediately precedes the GC/GMEF. NGOs accredited with UNEP are also automatically invited to participated in the GCSF.

NGO participants from North America generally have to pay their own way to the GCSF, though Environment Canada has sometimes sponsored attendance by Canadian representatives. Official

consultations like the GCSF and the meetings that lead up to it are not sufficient in and of themselves to influence policy. They do, however, provide an opportunity for civil society groups to network and to agree on priority issues they want to communicate to the Ministers.

Conclusion

Friends of the Earth Canada hopes that this handbook will serve as a useful point of reference for organizations interested in better understanding and influencing UNEP. This is a work-in-progress that will be periodically updated in order to better serve the needs of civil society organizations in Canada and abroad. We want to encourage readers to provide feedback and advice on how to improve this working draft. Please send any questions and comments to gsaul@foecanada.org.

¹ *World Resources 2002-2004: Decisions for the Earth: Balance, voice, and power*, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, World Bank, World Resources Institute, http://pubs.wri.org/pubs_content.cfm?PubID=3764, Chapter 7.

² On the relationship between trade liberalization and the environment, see the publications of UNEP's Trade and Environment Program, available at <http://www.unep.ch/etb/index.php>, the Trade Publications of the Centre for International Environmental Law, available at <http://www.ciel.org/Publications/pubtae.html>, and International Institute On Sustainable Development/UNEP, *Environment and Trade: A Handbook*, available at <http://www.iisd.org/trade/handbook/toc.htm>.

³ www.unep.org.

⁴ *Natural Allies*, 7.

<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=67&ArticleID=4622&l=en>

⁵ The UN and Sustainable Development: The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), www.unac.org/en/link_learn/monitoring/susdev_unep_origin.asp.

⁶ www.earthprint.com.

⁷ For more information, see UNA-Canada Fact Sheets: The UN and the Environment, www.unac.org/en/link_learn/fact_sheets/environment.asp, and the Earthwatch website at <http://earthwatch.unep.net>.

⁸ 16 seats for Africa; 13 seats for Asia; 6 seats for Eastern Europe; 13 seats for Western Europe and Other Group; and 10 seats for Latin America.

⁹ General Assembly resolution 53/242 (Report of the Secretary-General on environment and human settlements) of 28 July 1999. In essence, the Governing Council's responsibility to "assess the state of the world environment" has been taken over by the GMEF.

¹⁰ The work of these groups is chronicled at www.unep.org/dpdl/IEG/Meetings_docs/index.asp.

¹¹ Over the history of UNEP (1973--2004), Canada has contributed US\$31,584,482, making it the 14th highest contributor. Contributions to UNEP's Environment Fund - by country: 1973--2004, www.unep.org/rmu/en/Table_donors1973to2004.htm.

¹² Major Donors to UNEP's Environment Fund: 2002--2004, www.unep.org/rmu/en/Table_majordonors.htm.

¹³ www.ec.gc.ca/international/unorgs/unep_e.htm.

¹⁴ For more on this process, see *Natural Allies*, 18.