UNWTO-Civil Society Participation

Why it is time for the UNWTO to open its doors

Prepared by Tourism Concern on behalf of TEN members and ECOT
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Introduction

This document outlines four existing models of civil society organisation (CSO)-UN agency participation and cooperation, from which the UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) could draw in seeking to develop its own mechanisms to increase CSO participation in UNWTO processes. It follows a meeting with the UNWTO Secretary General and Tourism Concern and Tourism Watch on behalf of the European Tourism Network (TEN) and the Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism (ECOT) in October 2010. This meeting was initiated following a joint sign-on letter from the two NGO networks, which raised their shared concerns around: (i) the urgent need to address the human rights impacts of tourism development and; (ii) the need for the UNWTO to facilitate increased civil society participation in its processes.

Under its mandate as a UN organisation, the UNWTO is required to be transparent and accountable to all tourism stakeholders. However, its current levels of civil society engagement are insufficient and unrepresentative of the multi-stakeholder approaches commonly practiced by the majority of UN agencies. Meaningful civil society engagement, including with organisations challenging unsustainable tourism development practices and associated human rights violations, is essential for eradicating exploitation within the global tourism industry and for promoting a more ethical industry, as espoused in the UNWTO's Global Code of Ethics.

This document is in four parts. Parts 1 and 2 set out key recommendations and considerations to the UNWTO in relation to this issue; Part 3 contains recommendations specifically concerning Article 10 of the Global Code of Ethics and the World Committee on Tourism Ethics. The Appendix constitutes the fourth part, and outlines four existing models of civil society participation in relation to the following UN bodies:

1. United Nations Environment Programme
2. Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism
3. United Nations Economic and Social Council
4. United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

In addition, Stakeholder Forum's *Stakeholder Empowerment Project*[1] (2009) provides a wider contextual background to this discussion. It includes an evaluation of a comprehensive set of case studies exploring models of civil society engagement in UN processes and institutions. Examples include: civil society hearings, roundtables, multi-stakeholder dialogues, global civil society forums and UN conventions. The report also includes a *Stakeholder Empowerment Handbook*.

This briefing is merely the starting point. It is now incumbent upon UNWTO and its members to allocate the requisite resources to further research develop and implement mechanisms for sustained, enhanced civil society engagement, based on a clear policy and strategy, and devised in an inclusive, participative manner.

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*The recommendations in this document have been endorsed by the **Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism** (ECOT) and the following TEN members: **Tourism Concern** (UK); **EED Tourism Watch** (Germany); **Naturefriends International** & **Respect** (Austria); **Informatie Verre Reizen** (The Netherlands) ; **Arbeitskreis fur Tourismus und Entwicklung** (Switzerland).*

TEN is a network of NGOs working on tourism, human rights and development. ECOT works with faith-based and secular groups to promote socially, ecologically and ethically responsible tourism that benefits all.

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[1] The Stakeholder Forum (2009), The Stakeholder Empowerment Project: Stakeholder Forum for a sustainable future, Available: http://www.stakeholderforum.org/fileadmin/files/The%20Stakeholder%20Empowerment%20Project.pdf

1. Recommendations

- Meaningful civil society participation, including with stakeholders challenging unsustainable tourism development practices and associated human rights violations, is essential for eradicating exploitation within the global tourism industry and for promoting a more ethical industry, as espoused in the UNWTO's Global Code of Ethics.

- This document should be taken as a mere starting point. This issue requires a genuine commitment from the UNWTO and its members, including the requisite resources to further research, develop and implement mechanisms for sustained, enhanced and legitimate civil society engagement, based on a clear policy and strategy.

- To this end, we wish to draw the UNWTO's attention to a number of key documents, including the *Stakeholder Empowerment Project* (2009)[1], the *Cardoso Report*[2] and the *Aarhus Convention*[3], these providing examples of key documentation on civil society empowerment and the need for meaningful engagement of civil society in all UN processes at the decision making level.

- Meaningful engagement is likely to include the need to provide financial support to CSOs so that they may attend major conferences and events. Opportunities for providing written submissions would also be welcomed, including to the meetings of the WCTE.

- Civil society engagement in UNWTO processes should be open and accessible to all those with a stake in tourism, not just based on the self-selection of those who can afford affiliate membership. PLATMA, the UNWTOs online forum set up to increase dialogue between the private and public spheres of the industry, remains closed to those not affiliated with the UNWTO. The UNWTO needs to take a proactive role in ensuring the participation of all tourism stakeholders, particularly those who are socially marginalised and who otherwise struggle to have their voices heard.

- Besides considering the models referred to in the Appendix of this report, the UNWTO may also wish to consider its positioning within the wider UN system. For example, a closer alignment with treaty-monitoring bodies, such as the Human Rights Committee, could foster new lines of communication, support and intra-UN agency understanding on issues of tourism development, human rights and civil society engagement.

- Article 10 of the Global Code and the WCTE have the potential to provide an important non-judicial mechanism for victims of human rights violations related to tourism development to seek redress, as identified by the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) on business and human rights. Specifically, the SRSG's *Guiding Principles* for implementing the 'protect, respect, remedy' framework could provide some critical pointers for improving the WCTE in respect to accountability, transparency and accessibility, amongst other things: all areas in which it is currently lacking (see page 3).

- However, voluntary, non-judicial mechanisms, such as those provided through Article 10 are insufficient on their own and must not detract from the principle responsibility of UNWTO member states to protect and uphold human rights against corporate abuse and provide access to redress for victims through clear regulatory frameworks and robust judicial mechanisms. This should extend to the overseas operations of businesses based and/or headquartered in their jurisdiction.

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[2] The Cardoso Report (2004), A/58/817, http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N04/376/41/PDF/N0437641.pdf?OpenElement
[3] Aarhus Convention (1998), Available: http://www.unece.org/env/pp/documents/cep43e.pdf

2. Additional considerations for the UNWTO

- Almost all UN agencies have a **civil society Focal Point** whose role is to ensure mainstreaming of civil society into agency processes and effective communication with CSOs in this regard. The CSO Focal Point is usually a staff member of the particular agency, programme or fund. Their role is to act as a point of information for all civil society actors working around the issues, and also to innovate new interfaces with civil society (i.e. hearings, dialogues, advisory boards, partnerships, etc.).

- Many UN agencies have **'civil society hearings'** with relevant ministers, where CSOs can submit evidence for or against specific policy processes and have a general influence over decision making e.g. UNAIDS, Civil Society Hearing during the High Level Meeting on AIDS, 2008[4]. The UNWTO should adopt such hearings in respect to opening up the organisation to all stakeholders of tourism.

- The facilitation of **roundtables** that engage with civil society is another tool adopted by many UN agencies. Roundtables allow decision makers to explore issues more fully with smaller groups but also for civil society and other stakeholders to interact with the decision makers. When carried out effectively they can generate high quality discussion in a 'safe' and 'risk free' environment and as such should be implemented by the UNWTO when engaging with civil society. See UNEP Ministerial Roundtables case study in the Stakeholder Empowerment Project pp.21-3.

- **Multi-stakeholder dialogues** are useful in identifying points of convergence and divergence amongst a range of stakeholder groups. A key objective of multi-stakeholder dialogues is to enhance levels of trust between the different actors, to share information and institutional knowledge, and to generate solutions and relevant good practices. See case studies in the Stakeholder Empowerment Project pp. 24-27.

- **Global civil society forums** have become a popular method for gathering stakeholders, sharing knowledge and developing policy statements amongst different actors. They often run just prior to the intergovernmental high level meeting so that a set of recommendations, a declaration or a statement can then be passed on and included in the high level segment. See Stakeholder Empowerment Project case studies pp. 28-30.

3. Article 10 and the World Committee on Tourism Ethics

Specific steps are also required by the UNWTO to increase CSO awareness and engagement in relation to Article 10 of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, and the associated activities of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics (WCTE). Article 10 and the WCTE have the potential to provide an important non-judicial, non-state based mechanism for communities who believe their rights have been violated by specific parties involved in tourism development to seek redress.

However, in order to be effective, such mechanisms must be legitimate, accountable and transparent, as highlighted by the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General (SRSG) on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises[5]. We would argue that Article 10 and the WCTE are lacking on all accounts, given the low levels of awareness that exist amongst CSOs, the

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[4] The Stakeholder Forum (2009), 'Case Studies: Hearings', *The Stakeholder Empowerment Project: Stakeholder Forum for a sustainable future*, Chapter 2, pp.15-20. Available:
http://www.stakeholderforum.org/fileadmin/files/The%20Stakeholder%20Empowerment%20Project.pdf
[5] Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises (March 2011) *Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations "Protect, Respect and Remedy" Framework.* Available: http://www.business-humanrights.org/media/documents/ruggie/ruggie-guiding-principles-21-mar-2011.pdf

overarching exclusivity of the UNWTO with respect to non-industry based stakeholders and small CSOs generally, and the need for aggrieved parties to submit issues for consideration to the WCTE jointly. We suggest that the extracts below from the SRSG's *Effectiveness criteria for non-judicial grievance mechanisms* could be used by the UNWTO to inform improvements to the WCTE processes in respect to Article 10, so that it may become a more effective and accessible means for human rights victims to potentially seek non-judicial redress.

Effectiveness criteria for non-judicial grievance mechanisms[5]

In order to ensure their effectiveness, non-judicial grievance mechanisms, both State-based and non-State-based, should be:

*(a) **Legitimate**: enabling trust from the stakeholder groups for whose use they are intended, and being accountable for the fair conduct of grievance processes;*

*(b) **Accessible**: being known to all stakeholder groups for whose use they are intended, and providing adequate assistance for those who may face particular barriers to access;*

*(c) **Predictable**: providing a clear and known procedure with an indicative timeframe for each stage, and clarity on the types of process and outcome available and means of monitoring implementation;*

*(d) **Equitable**: seeking to ensure that aggrieved parties have reasonable access to sources of information, advice and expertise necessary to engage in a grievance process on fair, informed and respectful terms;*

*(e) **Transparent**: keeping parties to a grievance informed about its progress, and providing sufficient information about the mechanism's performance to build confidence in its effectiveness and meet any public interest at stake;*

*(f) **Rights-compatible**: ensuring that outcomes and remedies accord with internationally recognized human rights;*

*(g) **A source of continuous learning**: drawing on relevant measures to identify lessons for improving the mechanism and preventing future grievances and harms*

Such voluntary mechanisms do not, however, dilute the need for states to provide clear regulatory frameworks that ensure the protection of civilians, including against human rights abuses committed by third parties. This includes transnational corporations and business enterprises operating extraterritorially, and thus relates to many private sector tourism stakeholders. Where states have failed to adopt legislation that would impose extraterritorial liability on multinational corporations for the breach of human rights, the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises[7] provides a potential alternative tool for holding companies accountable for human rights abuses and is applicable to all companies from OECD countries.

Appendix

The following appendix outlines four existing models of CSO-UN agency co-operation, from which the UNWTO can draw in seeking to develop its own mechanisms for increasing CSO participation in UNWTO processes, which will enable the UNWTO to become more transparent and accountable to all tourism stakeholders, as is required under its mandate as a UN organisation. Examples referred to includes UNEP's Global Civil Society Forum, which tries to account for all environmental stakeholders from all global regions, and ECOSOC, which consults with over 3200 NGOs who can participate through written and oral forms of communication.

1. UNEP and the Global Civil Society Forum

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) aims to protect the environment through engaging with a multitude of stakeholders who share the same purpose. Working on a global scale it seeks the expertise of specialists to develop its strategy at the policy level. These stakeholders and specialists are categorised under the 9 Major Groups.

UNEP structure for participation in the Global Civil Society Forum

The Annual Global Civil Society Forum (GCSF) under UNEP became the main entry point for the participation of NGOs/CSOs in UNEP's work at the governance level. Within this forum, civil society comes under the collective term of 'The 9 Major Groups'. These are:

- farmers
- women
- the scientific and technological community
- children and youth
- indigenous peoples and their communities
- workers and trade unions
- business and industry
- non-governmental organizations and local authorities
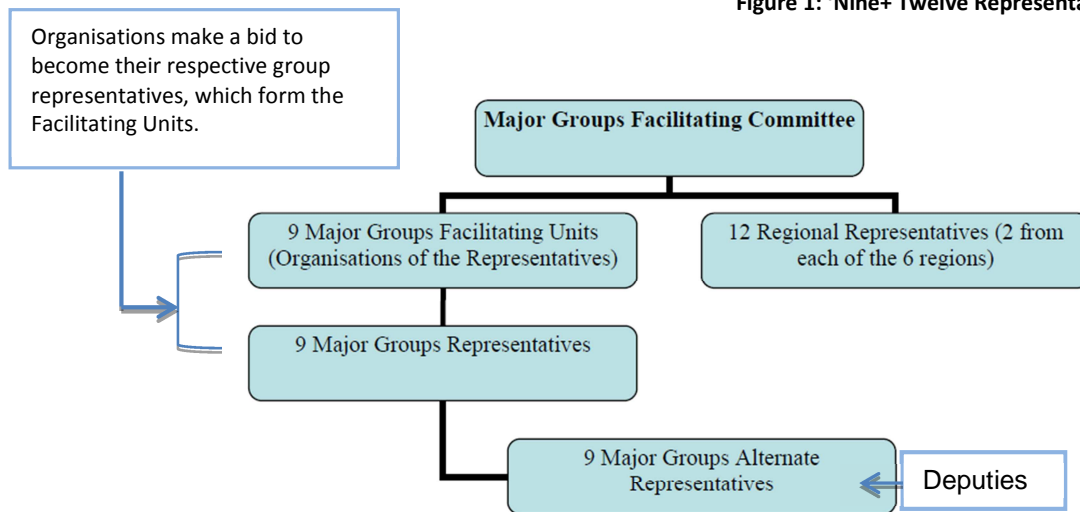- Other relevant stakeholders[6].

The Major Groups Facilitating Committee (MGFC) was set up to provide guidance to, and to coordinate the engagement of, major groups in the Global Civil Society Forum (GCSF) cycle.

The structural diagram (Figure 1) below illustrates how UNEP has tried to cover all groups and all global regions in organising the Forum. However, in doing so the freedom for individual voices to be heard is restricted as 'groupings' and 'representatives' channel autonomy into a form of hierarchical democracy. The level of engagement seen in ECOSOC (covered later), where individuals and NGOs have the freedom to make informal oral interventions are excluded from the participatory process at UNEP.

Within the United Nations system, ECOSOC is unique in establishing the right for NGOs to observe and contribute to the Council's work (including its subsidiary bodies).

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[6] Guidelines for improving the Global Civil Society Forum (2008), Accessed: 30.03.11. Available: http://www.unep.org/civil_society/PDF_docs/Guidelines-Round1-CSO-revised-31Mar08.pdf

Figure 1: 'Nine+ Twelve Representation Model'

Organisations make a bid to become their respective group representatives, which form the Facilitating Units.

Organogram : Nine+ Twelve Representation Model

Source: http://www.unep.org/civil_society/PDF_docs/Guidelines-Round1-CSO-revised-31Mar08.pdf

Alongside the 9 Major Groups Facilitating Units, 12 Regional Representatives from UNEP's six defined global regions are selected during the regional meetings to give a wide and evenly distributed global reach. These representatives also come from the original group of organisations accredited under the categories of the 9 Major Groups. This structure assures that all groups and all global regions are represented at the Forum.

Advantages and Disadvantages of the 'Nine + Twelve Model'

Advantages	Disadvantages
Strikes a balance between regional and major group representation	Assumes that all major groups have sufficient internal cohesion at both global and regional levels to undertake an internal selection process
Incorporates jointly appointed ex-officio members, to improve technical expertise of the Committee and address unresolved issues of balance	Disempowers individuals/organisations where all opinions must be that of the group
	Selection of the nine major group representatives may not be based on democratic principles
Allows major groups to identify individuals best able to represent the views/positions of that group	'Access' to the forum does not equate to the right to speak. The Chair decides to what extent civil society can participate- often translating in reality to an observer role
	Requires a large resource base
Selection of the nine major groups' representatives will respect the principle of self-organisation	Ensuring gender balance among the 9 Major Groups Representatives could be difficult

Adapted from: 'Guidelines for Improving the Global Civil Society Forum Cycle'[7]

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[7] Guidelines for improving the Global Civil Society Forum (2008), Accessed: 30.03.11. Available: http://www.unep.org/civil_society/PDF_docs/Guidelines-Round1-CSO-revised-31Mar08.pdf

Mechanisms of participation[8]

Access for Major Groups is given to all meetings during negotiations, unless certain committee meetings or breakout groups are described as 'closed'. During the forum, it is the responsibility of the Major Group representatives to deliver statements previously put together by the group members and to speak on behalf of the group when called upon to do so.

Major Groups can also contribute through organising side events, participating in side events, participating in the morning meeting at the green room and participating in the special policy sessions for each Major Group. Restricted access is granted to Ministerial panels and roundtables (See 'UNEP Roundtables' case study in The Stakeholder Empowerment report pp.21-23).

However, an often recurring issue at many UN meetings is the question of civil society and its access to the 'rooms' in terms of what 'access' really constitutes in reality.

'Access' is often confused, however, with the 'right to speak', which is in fact controlled stringently. Rule 69 of the UNEP proceedings stipulates that the Chair of the Forum is to decide to what extent civil society will be allowed to participate at meetings of UNEP and governing bodies. So whilst Rule 69 does allow for civil society to make oral statements (via the Major Group representative), it is the Chair's responsibility to ensure the levels of participation do not 'overburden' the forum. In other words, physical access allowing civil society to present at 'floor level' and to listen in to the debate should be at a minimum granted, although this often translates in reality to an observer role.

Summary

UNEP has made progress in regards to developing its commitment to NGO/CSO participation since creating an NGO section after the 1972 Stockholm conference. However, despite creating the GCSF, which meets annually to consult on key environmental issues to be addressed by the Member States, the structure excludes a channel for direct participation by NGOs such as that seen at the ECOSOC conferences. Instead, a hierarchical democratic system combined with the controls on CSO participation by the Chair as stipulated in Rule 69, weakens the Forum's intention of providing a space for NGO engagement by silencing the voice of the individual.

2. Global Partnership for Sustainable Tourism (GPST)

Background

The GPST is a global initiative launched in 2010 with the aim to make tourism worldwide environmentally, socially and economically sustainable. It was created from the conversion of the International Task Force on Sustainable Development. The secretariat of the initiative is hosted by UNEP. The partnership aims to focus on policy, projects, tools, and networks for all tourism stakeholders, at all scales, by working on:
- policy frameworks
- climate change
- environment & biodiversity
- poverty alleviation
- cultural and natural heritage
- private sector sustainable practices
- finance & investment

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[8] Strandenaes, J.G (2009), How to understand and use the 'Guidelines for Improving the Global Civil Society Forum Cycle', unanimously adopted at the Global civil Society Forum, 2008; International Environmental Governance at Operational level- A possible interpretation and user guide' Available:
http://www.unep.org/civil_society/GCSF10/pdfs/IEG-interpretation-user-guide.pdf

Funding

The GPST is funded by direct financial contributions and in-kind support from members. For the first year to set up and launch member services, it is estimated that the GPST will require a budget of 430,000 US dollars.

Membership fees vary depending on type of organisation and their associated budget/turnover/HDI level (see table 1 below). For example, a prospective NGO (or not-for-profit) with a budget below US$ 100m (the smallest bracket) would have to pay US$ 500 in order to join the GPST. For many small civil society entities this is impossible.

Table 1: Membership fees

	National Governments HDI	Local Governments & Cities HDI	Not-For-Profit Organizations Budget	For-Profit Organizations Turnover
High	US$ 30,000 Very high HDI countries	US$ 20,000 Based in very high HDI countries	US$ 5,000 Budget above US$ 500m	US$ 30,000 Annual turnover above US$ 50m
Medium	US$ 15,000 Medium or high HDI Countries	US$ 10,000 Based in medium or high HDI Countries	US$ 2,000 Budget between US$ 100-500m	US$ 10,000 Annual turnover between US$ 5-50m
Low	US$ 5,000 Low HDI Countries	US$ 5,000 Based in low HDI Countries	US$ 500 Budget below US$ 100m	US$ 1,000 Annual turnover below US$ 5m

Source: http://www.unep.fr/scp/tourism/activities/partnership/
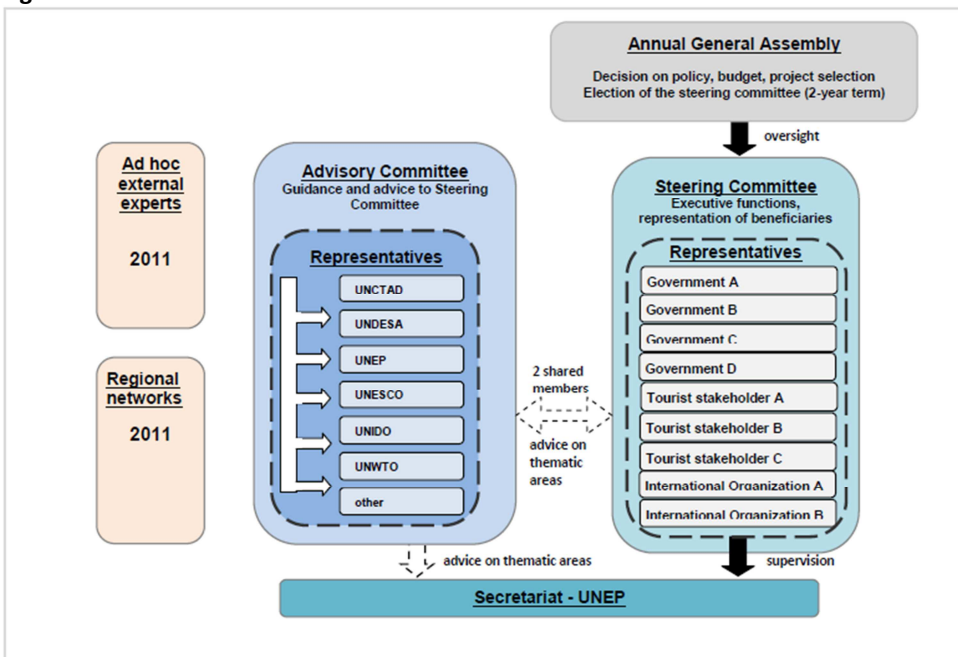
Figure 2: GPST Structure

Figure 1: Organigram of the Partnership
The Partnership is organized around the Annual General Assembly with the Advisory Committee for guidance and advice to the Steering Committee, which is the executive body charged with implementing the decisions of the Annual General Assembly. The Secretariat will support all activities and bodies.

Source: http://www.unep.fr/scp/tourism/activities/partnership/Documents/2010mar22-Partnership-sustainable-tourism_concept%20paper_summary.pdf

The GPST will be a UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) Type II Partnership: a multi-stakeholder, voluntary initiative. Its organisational structure will consist of an Annual General Assembly with a Steering Committee, which will be the executive body and will implement decisions of the Annual General Assembly. An Advisory Committee will provide guidance and advice to the Steering Committee. The Secretariat (UNEP) will support all activities and provide various services to members.

Mechanisms for participation

With the GPST in its first year, the extent of NGO participation and the tools for engagement at the decision making level remains to be seen. The first Annual General Assembly was held in Costa Rica in January of this year. The minutes from the meeting are available here: Link to Minutes.

Of the 35 GPST members present at the AGM, five were from NGOs and three were from Non-Profit organisations. Whilst the NGOs/NPOs present had the freedom to communicate in the discussions along with the other members, the meeting was purely for developing the organisational and structural procedures of the GPST (such as membership criteria).

It may be sometime before the GPST is able to start influencing policy. Therefore the extent to which NGOs will be able to engage in these decision making processes remains to be seen.

What is clear is that the NGOs/NPOs at the Annual General Assembly in January were not those from community-level, civil society organisations but from larger organisations (such as the Global Sustainable Tourism Council and the International National Trusts Organisation) able to front the membership fees and commit to the Partnership in its early unsettled and malleable state.

Summary

The GPST has taken some important steps towards a sustainable global practice for tourism. However, given the membership fees, the GPST still seems to be geared towards larger organisations and those with more influence on the tourism industry. Thus, despite the UNWTO's involvement, it should not serve as an substitute for the UNWTO establishing its own processes to encourage and enhance CSO engagement and participation.

3. United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

ECOSOC serves as the forum for discussing international economic and social issues, including human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for formulating policy recommendations addressed to Member States and the UN system[9]. Guided by the UN Charter, ECOSOC is the one UN body that has established rights for NGOs to observe and contribute to its work[10]. ECOSOC consults with over 3200 NGOs to discuss key issues on the international agenda in the area of economic, social and environmental development.

Source: http://www.ohchr.org/english/chart.pdf
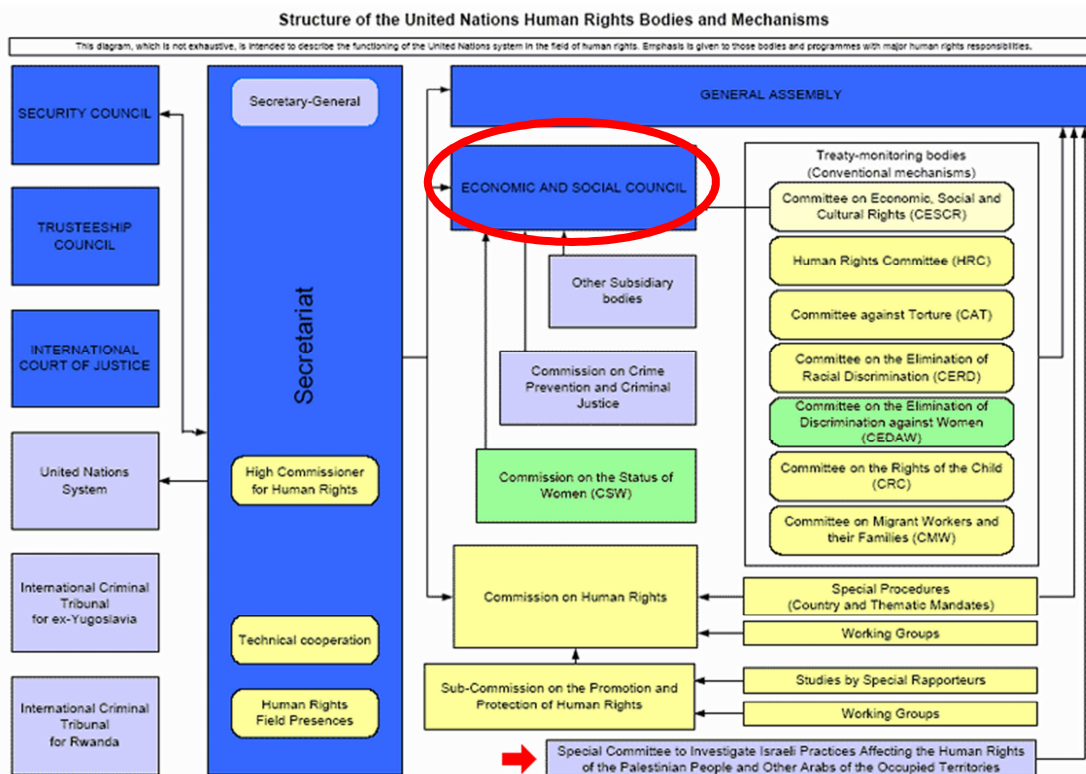
Figure 3- The diagram above shows the positioning of ECOSOC within the wider UN framework

The accessibility of ECOSOC for NGOs and CSOs

NGOs/CSOs can find opportunities for participation or mutually beneficial working relationships by seeking 'consultative status' with ECOSOC (based on Article 71 of the UN Charter and ECOSOC resolution 1996/31). Organisations must however adhere to a number of prerequisites that are stipulated to ensure a mutually beneficial relationship between parties. These include:

- a relevance of the organisations activities to the work of ECOSOC
- a commitment by the NGO/CSO to a democratic decision making mechanism
- an official registration under the appropriate government authority for at least two years (for full listing see ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31).

Application Process[11]

Prospective organisations seeking consultative status will adhere to the following application process;

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[9] ECOSOC website, About ECOSOC, Background Information, ECOSOC at work: http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/about/index.shtml

[10] UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service publication, 'Intergovernmental Negotiations and Decision Making at the United Nations How it works', [online], Available: http://www.un-ngls.org/orf/DMUN%20bprev1.pdf

[11] http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ngo/

1. Contact in writing the NGO section of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.
2. Wait to receive an application package from ECOSOC via email
3. Complete application and return before the 1st of June of each year.
4. Wait whilst application is reviewed by the Committee on NGOs of the ECOSOC which meets twice a year.
5. Wait whilst the committee (including 19 state members of the UN) recommends ECOSOC which organisations to be granted one of the three status categories (*General*, *Special*, *Roster*- see below)

Recommendation from the committee then goes to the ECOSOC meeting where the whole council make the final approval of the application.

General Status, Special Status and Roster Status

Table 2 illustrates the three types of status that NGOs/CSOs can be accredited with (General, Special and Roster) and how they vary from one another. Note how the type of status affects the overall level of engagement in ECOSOC activity by organisations and determines which channels of participation are available to utilise.

Table 2: Status Type

	General	Special	Roster
Relevance to the work of ECOSOC	All areas	Some areas	Limited
Are in consultative status with ECOSOC	✔	✔	✔
Attend UN meetings	✔	✔	✔
Designate UN representatives	✔	✔	✔
Invited to UN International Conferences	✔	✔	✔
Propose items for ECOSOC agenda	✔		
Circulate statements at ECOSOC meetings	2000 words	500 words	
Can speak at ECOSOC	✔		
Circulate statements at ECOSOC subsidiary bodies' meetings	2000 words	1500 words	
Can speak at ECOSOC subsidiary bodies' meetings	✔	✔	
Must submit quadrennial reports	✔	✔	

Source: http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ngo/faq.htm

Status Categories[12]

General Status
Organisations wishing to apply for General Category must be "concerned with most of the activities of the ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies". These tend to be fairly large, established international NGOs with a broad geographical reach.

Special Status
Special Status is granted to NGOs "which have a special competence in, and are concerned specifically with, only a few of the fields of activity covered by the ECOSOC". These NGOs tend to be smaller and more recently established.

Roster Status
Organisations which "can make occasional and useful contributions to the work of ECOSOC or its subsidiary bodies" are included in the Roster. These NGOs tend to have a rather narrow and/or technical focus.

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[12] http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ngo/faq.htm

Mechanism of NGO/CSO engagement[13]

Through the ECOSOC yearly conferences, NGOs/CSOs with consultative status have the chance to influence policy guidance (not necessarily in a negotiating role) on 'recommendations for action' to Member States and the UN System, with the potential to help draft a treaty.

Gaining consultative status enables organisations to make a contribution to the work of the UN by serving as technical experts, advisors and consultants to governments and Secretariat. Sometimes, as advocacy groups, they espouse UN themes, implementing plans of action, programmes and declarations adopted by the United Nations.

Part of the annual conference is the High Level Segment where most of the NGO/CSO participation occurs. During the High Level Segment (or HLS), NGOs/CSOs with consultative status have two mechanisms for participation and engagement. These are:

Written statements- circulated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the members of the Council. These must be submitted **prior** to the conference

Oral participation- made during Council meetings. Oral participation can take two forms, Oral Statements and Oral Interventions. Oral Statements must be submitted **prior** to the conference. Oral Interventions can be made informally **during** debate and discussion.

Scope of statements

Written statements from organisations are 'word-count limited' in the following manner-

General Status: 2500 words

Special Status: 500 words

Roster Status: 500 words

The HLS comprises of two parts, the Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) and the Development Co-operation Forum (DCF). In 2010 the AMR segment was *"Implementing the Internationally Agreed Goals and Commitments in Regard to Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women,"* and the DCF segment was *"Development Cooperation in Times of Crises: New Commitments to Reach the MDGs."*

In this conference the innovative approach by NGOs saw the submission of joint written statements from organisations, allowing for greater participation from all involved. Joint written statements create a greater civil society representation and can unite the voices of NGOs/CSOs worldwide. The NGO Branch of ECOSOC acknowledges and strongly encourages the submission of joint written statements in future conferences.

Oral Statements have to be submitted online and must await approval and selection before being recommended to the President of ECOSOC by the NGO Committee. Oral Statements from organizations do not appear to be confined to a word limit.

Oral Interventions are more informal allowing for short comments or questions to be made at the different debates and roundtable meetings that occur over the duration of the conference.

For example, an Oral Intervention made during the 2010 HLS by Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini (of Special Status, c.2006) took the form of a question addressed to the panelists: "What needs to be done to change minds of men in terms of gender equality?"

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[13] NGO Branch (2010), '2010 ECOSOC High Level Segment Report 28th June – 2nd July: Non-Governmental Organisations Participation', Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Available: http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ngo/

Summary

In summary the actual mechanisms of NGO/CSO participation in ECOSOC take three basic forms: written statements, Oral Statements and Oral Interventions. The length of written statements is capped depending on the type of status the submitting organisation is accredited with and Oral Statements must be approved prior to the conference. Oral Interventions can occur liberally throughout.

The influence of NGOs/CSOs at ECOSOC has grown considerably over the last few years. In the period 2009-2010, NGO participation saw a 50% increase in oral presentations and a 37% increase in the submission of written statements.

In addition, organisations granted consultative statuses are also invited to attend international conferences called by the U.N., General Assembly special sessions, and other intergovernmental bodies. (The participation modalities for NGOs are governed by the rules of procedure of those bodies).

4. United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII)[14]

"More than 370 million indigenous people in some 70 countries worldwide"[15]

Background

The UNPFII was established on 28th July 2000, by ECOSOC resolution 2000/22[16]. Discussion on the need of such a forum began in the 1980s and was proposed by indigenous peoples who feared that the UN system failed to address of indigenous issues. Today the forum deals with indigenous issues related to economic and social development, culture, environment, education, health and human rights. Through the forum, indigenous people have secured a position from which to participate in the UN system, by reporting to ECOSOC, on all issues concerning indigenous peoples. The Forum marks a new direction in opening UN decision making to non-state participation.

Position and mandate

The forum exists as a subsidiary body of ECOSOC (see figure 3, below), providing expert advice on indigenous issues. According to mandate the UNPFII will

- ‘provide expert advice and recommendations on indigenous issues to the [ECOSOC], as well as to programmes, funds and agencies of the United Nations, through the [ECOSOC]’.
- ‘raise awareness and promote the integration and coordination of activities related to indigenous issues within the UN system’
- ‘prepare and disseminate information on indigenous issues’.

Timing and location of sessions[17]

To date nine 10-day sessions have taken place. They can be held at the UN in New York, Geneva or any location the Forum wishes. These sessions tend to precede the ECOSOC annual conference allowing for any relevant issues regarding indigenous peoples to be raised without delay. The forum has a bi-annual working method of one-year themed policy discussion, for example, *‘Indigenous peoples: development*

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[14] http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/index.html
[15] http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/history.html
[16] http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/structure.html
[17] http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/sessions.html

with culture and identity' (2010) or *'Territories, Lands and Natural Resources'* (2007), the second year dealing with implementation of the recommendations outlined during the conference.

Figure 4. Position of the UNPFII within the UN System

Source: http://www.ohchr.org/english/chart.pdf
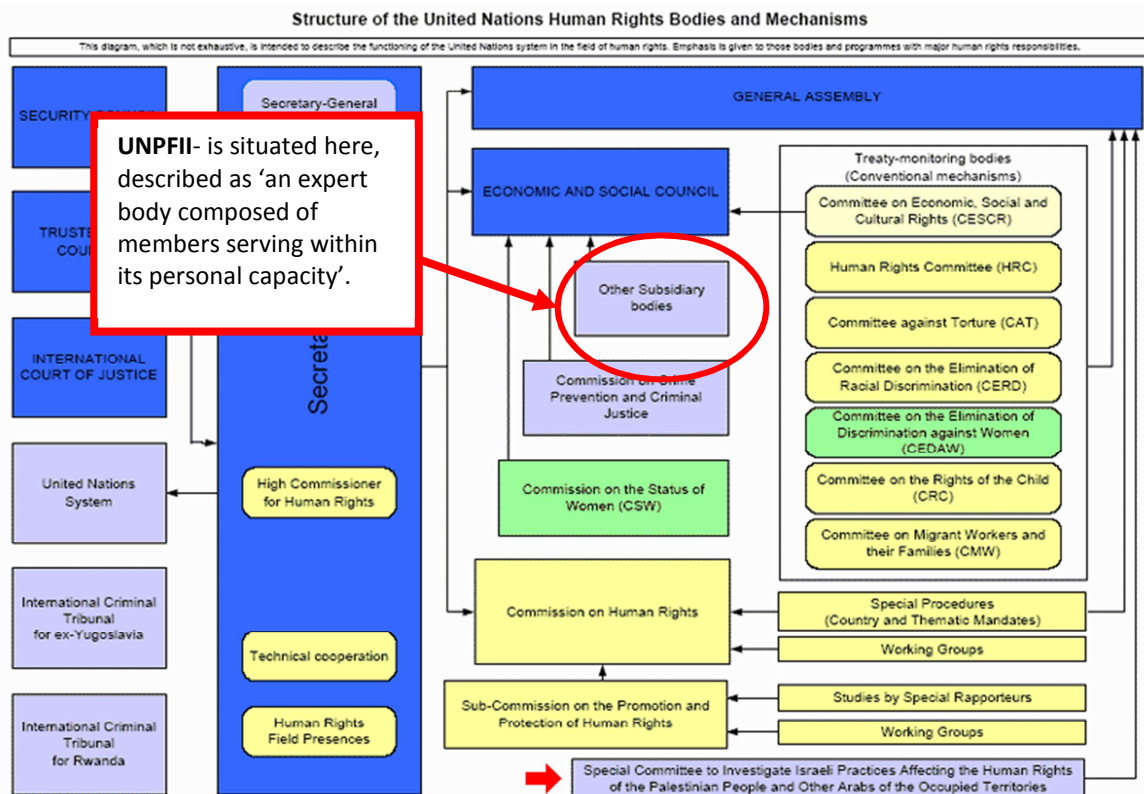
Supporting bodies

To support the Forum the **Inter Agency Support Group** (**IASG**) was set up alongside the Indigenous Peoples Forum to allow the UN system and other intergovernmental organisations to analyse recommendations made by the Forum with a view to facilitating comprehensive and coordinated responses to the UNPFII. The IASG is made up of 31 UN bodies.

Furthermore, in 2002 the **Secretariat for the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues** (**SPFII**) was set up to support and facilitate all work regarding the conferences and members. The role of the SPFII includes amongst other duties, preparing documentation, implementing logistics, strengthening communications, promoting the implementation of the Forums recommendations on indigenous issues unto the UN System and raising awareness.

Funding[18]

In 2005, the General Assembly adopted a resolution commencing the 'Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People'. This laid out a new set of focuses including five main objectives (Link to 5 Objectives), with the hope of furthering the work of the Forum.

A trust fund was set up for the 'Second International Decade', in order to promote, support and implement these objectives. The Trust Fund accepts voluntary contributions from Member States, foundations and other private and individual donors. The Fund gives priority to projects concerning the main areas of the Second Decade: culture, education, health, human Rights, the environment and social and economic development.

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[18] http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/second.html [Accessed: 31.03.11]

The Advisory Group for the Trust Fund for the Second Decade consists of members of the Permanent Forum's Bureau. Indigenous organisations or organisations working for indigenous peoples, can apply for small grants from the Trust Fund.

It is expected that the Fund will mainly be used for small grants projects with a budget for up to US$10,000 covering one year's expenses.

Examples of grants given by the Trust Fund in 2010 include the "Arts and cultural aboriginal youth leadership project", awarded to the Indigenous Peoples Program, Center for Continuing and Distance Education, University of Saskatchewan (USASK), Canada; and "Improving the Economy of Indigenous Women of Kulisusu through Micro-Credit Assistance", awarded to the Institution for Development of Rural and Indigenous People (IDRAP), Indonesia.

Members and participants[19]

The forum is comprised of 16 independent experts who serve for a term of three years as Members and may be re-elected or re-appointed for one additional term.

Governments nominate eight of the Members and the other eight are nominated directly by indigenous organizations in their regions.

The Members nominated by governments are elected by ECOSOC based on the five regional groupings of States normally used at the United Nations (Africa; Asia; Eastern Europe; Latin America and the Caribbean; and Western Europe and Other States).

The Members nominated by indigenous organisations are appointed by the President of ECOSOC and represent the seven socio-cultural regions determined to give broad representation to the world's indigenous peoples.

The regions are Africa; Asia; Central and South America and the Caribbean; the Arctic; Central and Eastern Europe, Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia; North America; and the Pacific—with one additional rotating seat among the three first listed above.

In addition, hundreds of participants hailing from indigenous communities and non-governmental organizations around the world join the 16 members of the Permanent Forum for an interactive dialogue. Some 1,200 people participate annually, including indigenous participants, civil society organizations, Member States and intergovernmental entities.

Only three categories of participants can pre-register for the annual session: (1) indigenous peoples' organisations; (2) non-governmental organizations in consultative status with ECOSOC; and (3) academic institutions. Based on evolving UN practice, it is left up to each indigenous peoples' organization to nominate a reasonable number of representatives to attend the annual session of UNPFII.

Summary

As a subsidiary body of ECOSOC the mechanisms for engagement comply with those outlined in the ECOSOC section above (i.e. in terms of status type and written/oral participation). Therefore, those with consultative status at ECOSOC can participate through written and oral statements prior to the conference and through oral interventions during the conference.

All stakeholders present at the conference have the ability to participate through oral interventions during discussions and debates as they see fit, bearing in mind that there are often many representatives wanting to speak and a time limit to various phases throughout the conference.

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[19] http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/members.html

The recommendations in this document have been endorsed by the following organisations, all of which are members of the Tourism European Network (TEN), as well as the Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism (ECOT), TEN's southern partner:

Tourism Concern (UK) www.tourismconcern.org.uk

EED Tourism Watch (DE) www.eed.de

Naturefriends International (Austria) www.nfi.at

Respect (Austria) www.respect.at

Informatie Verre Reizen (NL)

Arbeitskreis fur Tourismus und Entwicklung (CH)) www.akte.ch

Ecumenical Coalition on Tourism www.ecot.org

TEN is a network of NGOs working on tourism, human rights and development. ECOT works with faith-based and secular groups to promote socially, ecologically and ethically responsible tourism that benefits all.