Public Participation in Decision-making and the UNFCCC

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Jonas Ebbesson, Stockholm University

Climate change features: impact on public participation in decision-making

• Diffuse pollution: difficult to link specific harm to specific activity.
• Transboundary effects: indeed global in character
• Uncertainties: ecological, social and economic
• Complexities: ecological, social and economic
• Integration of environmental, social and economic considerations

Public participation, “traditional” means of control: relevance for climate change

• Permits
• Environmental impact assessments
• Strategic impact assessments
• Supervision
• Plans and programmes
• Standard-setting through general norms and regulations e.g. on emissions and technologies
• Liability and restoration schemes

Public participation and specific means for preventing climate change

• Emission trading
• Clean development mechanism
• Joint implementation
• Taxes
• Fees
• Eco labelling
• Auditing
• National policies

Aarhus Convention and climate change – I: Issues covered

• Decisions on specific activities, art 6
  Several CO₂ emitting activities
• Decisions on plans and programmes, art 7
  Also plans and programmes on climate change
• Decisions on general norms/regulations, art 8
• Non-discrimination, art 3(9)
• Public participation in international organisations, art 3(7)

Aarhus Convention and climate change – II: Issues not covered

• Emission trading
• CDM (may require environmental permit)
• JI (may require environmental permit)
• Taxes
• Fees
• Eco labelling
• Auditing schemes
• Emission allocation schemes
• Liability schemes
UNFCCC and Public Participation
Promote and cooperate in education, training and public awareness related to climate change, art 4(1i)
Promote and facilitate:
• "education and public awareness programmes on climate change and its effects",
• "public access to information" and
• "public participation in addressing climate change and its effects and developing adequate responses", art 6
Participation of NGOs etc. at MoPs, art 7(6)

Kyoto Protocol and Public Participation
All parties are to:
• Formulate programmes to improve quality of local emission factors
• Formulate programmes on measures to mitigate climate change
• Promote diffusion of env’l sound technologies
• Promote public awareness
• Include info on these issues in national report

Why public participation in decision-making on climate change?
• Transparent climate change governance
• Effectiveness of climate change policy
• Legitimacy of climate change policy
• Climate justice