



Working Group of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention      Date:                    21 March 2017  
Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on Pollutant Release      Reference:            LLO/MEN  
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Dear Chair of the Working Group of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention,

Thank you for the opportunity to inform the Parties to the Aarhus Convention, through you, of the experiences gained and lessons learned from COP 22/CMP 12/CMA 1 regarding observer engagement.

Following the successful observer engagement by the Government of France in COP 21/CMP 11 reported last year, the Government of Morocco not only followed the French Presidency's footsteps, but also paved an exemplar path to future Presidencies in many ways:

1. The Moroccan Presidency organized the first-ever post-COP follow-up meeting with all the nine constituencies to take stock of the achievements the observers made and to agree on ways to further enhance the engagement throughout its Presidency in 2017;
2. the Moroccan Presidency financially supported participation of southern NGOs for this event in February 2017 and the pre-COP meeting between the Presidency and the constituencies in October 2016. In addition, the Presidency also financially supported participation of international civil society representatives as well as Moroccan representatives in COP 22 itself;
3. throughout 2016, the Moroccan Presidency frequently met with non-Party stakeholders to hear their views on substantive topics and presented to Parties as Moroccan positions, many of which the Moroccan Presidency confirmed were taken up by Parties at COP 22/CMP 12/CMA 1;
4. the Presidency held a series of high level events engaging non-Party stakeholders showcasing the progress that non-Party stakeholders are already making through their climate action;
5. the Presidency had multiple poles in the COP 22 Steering Committee that directly engaged non-Party stakeholders such as civil society engagement pole, scientific committee pole and public private partnership pole, which led to effective engagement because they could tailor the approach to different needs of stakeholders and delve into in-depth discussions for concrete actions on diverse issues of interest;



6. the Presidency orchestrated an impressive series of engagement events in the lead up to the COP covering not only on adaptation, mitigation and means of implementation but also on gender and climate change, climate justice, inter-faith, oceans, etc;
7. during the two weeks of the COP, the Presidency provided generous financial support to non-Party stakeholders whereby all exhibits and side event slots in the Green Zone (extra space for non-Party stakeholders outside but adjacent to the UN perimeters) were provided free of charge to all constituencies and civil society that applied for space;
8. the Presidency appointed the National Human Rights Council, a constitutional body of the Government, as the civil society engagement pole, which already had a wealth of civil society networks and trust from the public and allowed long term vision of the country for both domestic and international engagement of the non-Party stakeholders.

The conference scale also proved the unwavering participation interest – the secretariat received more than 19,000 registration requests from IGOs and NGOs alone for the venue capacity of 15,000 people. In terms of a ratio between the participation demand and venue capacity, COP 22 was severer than COP 21 in 2015. The in-coming Presidency also mentioned that there is no annual conference in the entire world that attracts civil society participation as much as UNFCCC does. While the UNFCCC is fortunate in this regard since we have the mandates for the Paris Agreement, this poses logistical challenges in terms of physical access of observers to negotiation meetings and allocation of time for them to speak. How a conference of 25,000 participants, where one national delegation comprises up to seven ministries, can efficiently and effectively address these challenges is a question that the UNFCCC Parties, the past, present and future Presidencies and the secretariat are constantly attempting to address. Point 3 of the aforementioned experiences gained by the Moroccan Presidency is one of such successful attempts.

With the entry into force of the Paris Agreement, further opportunities lie in the new phase of UNFCCC process as it focuses on implementation and requires enhanced engagement of non-Party stakeholders – be it in the development, implementation and analyses of nationally determined contributions or at the intergovernmental level. This phase also requires enhanced platforms for showcasing replicable and scalable climate actions and the progresses that both Parties and non-Party stakeholders can share in order to increase ambition for climate action, accelerate implementation of the Paris Agreement and provide support to developing countries.



In this context, we are pleased to inform you that the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) of the UNFCCC will, at its forty-sixth session<sup>1</sup>, convene an [in-session workshop](#) on opportunities to further enhance the effective engagement of non-Party stakeholders with a view to strengthening the implementation of the provisions of decision 1/CP.21. In this context, the secretariat would like to thank the European Union for making a submission ahead of the in-session workshop. We look forward to constructive discussions and innovative ideas by Party and non-Party stakeholders at the workshop, the subsequent formal discussions at the contact group and conclusions by the SBI for enhanced engagement of non-Party stakeholders in UNFCCC process.

Thank you again for the opportunity, and I wish you all fruitful discussions.

Yours sincerely,

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Observer Organizations Liaison Officer  
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<sup>1</sup> Taking place on 8 – 18 May 2017, in Bonn, Germany