

The UN Advisory Committee to the Marrakech Process on Sustainable Consumption and Production

Introduction and background

At the 3rd International Expert meeting, which took place in Stockholm in Sweden in June 2007, it was decided to set up an Advisory Committee to the Marrakech process¹. On the 14th of April 2008 Consumers International was appointed to represent the NGO major group in the Advisory committee. I am taking this opportunity to provide a short outline of the responsibilities of the committee, some background to Consumers International and how we plan to ensure a proper consultation in connection with the work of the Advisory Committee with the NGO major group as well as the global NGO community.

The Advisory Committee is tasked with the following responsibilities:

- To assist in the development of the 10YFP, giving guidance to UNEP and UNDESA in this regard and providing feedback and inputs on draft proposals of the 10 YFP,
- Provide expert advice to UNEP and UN DESA on other activities under the Marrakech Process,
- Support the dissemination and communication strategy of the Marrakech Process being developed by UNEP and UNDESA, by:
- Assist the Secretariat in efforts to mobilize financial resources and develop international partnerships for the various activities being organized under the Marrakech Process, including future international expert meetings, the work of the Marrakech Task Forces, and meetings of the Advisory Committee.

The Advisory Committee has the following composition:

Co-chair: A representative from a developed country government

Co-chair: A representative from a developing country government

Secretariat: UNEP and UN DESA

Members:

- 1 member (a government official) from each of the following regions: Africa, Asia, Europe, LAC, North America and West Asia (total 6 members)
- 2 members representing the Task Forces
- 1 member representing the Development Cooperation Dialogue
- 1 member representing the Business and Industry major group sector
- 1 member representing the NGO major group sector
- 1 member from the host country for the previous International Expert Meeting
- 1 member from the forthcoming International Expert Meeting on SCP, once preparations for that meeting begin

Total membership 15 members in addition to the Secretariat.

¹ The Marrakech Process is a global effort to promote progress on the implementation of SCP and the elaboration of a 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (10YFP). The process responds to the call of the WSSD Johannesburg Plan of Implementation to develop a 10YFP to support regional and national initiatives to promote the shift towards sustainable consumption and production (SCP) patterns...

What is Consumers International and how do we plan to work in the Advisory Committee?

Consumers International (CI) is the world federation of consumer groups that, working together with its members, serves as the only independent and authoritative global voice for consumers. Founded in 1960 CI has over 220 member organisations in 115 countries, and is building a powerful International movement to help protect and empower consumers everywhere.

We aim to secure a fair safe and sustainable future for consumers in a global marketplace increasingly dominated by international corporations. We aim to put the rights of citizens at the heart of decision-making and to ensure everyone has access to safe and sustainable goods and services. CI has offices in London, Kuala Lumpur, Santiago and Johannesburg.

CI is a democratic organisation governed by a Council (board), elected by full members at CI World Congress, held every four years. The Council consists of a President, elected directly, and 19 members. The Council in turn appoints an eight-member Executive to which some responsibilities are delegated. Staff managed by the Director General, who reports to the Council, carries out CI's work. CI is a founding signatory of the International NGO Accountability Charter and is fully committed to its principles of legitimacy, transparency and accountability.

CI's values include:

- The highest standards of ethical conduct
- Independence from business, government and party politics
- Integrity, transparency and accountability
- Inclusiveness

Ensuring proper consultations is at the heart of the way CI works with our members and will be at the heart how we plan to work in the Advisory Committee. Our main pathways of consultation will be with the SDIN network² and their affiliated constituency (to ensure we fulfil the core of our mandate as a representative of the NGO Major Group), the NGO Forum as a space for dialogue, which is also associated with the Marrakech process, as well as CI members – the consumer organisations all over the world. In addition we will also utilise our international NGO network ensuring outreach to major NGOs currently not involved in the process.

We will of course try and ensure prompt reporting from the meetings of the Advisory Committee (in an actionable form) as well as seeking input prior to the meetings. The ability of us being able to do the last part of course depends on the notice we are given prior to the meetings/phone conferences (planned to be 4 per year). At www.consumersinternational.org there will be an area where relevant documents are posted.

The first meeting of the Advisory Committee is scheduled to take place on the 8th of May 2008 at the CSD in New York. The draft agenda was published on the 25th of April and I would very much be looking forward to your initial comments to especially point 3 and 4 (with apologies for the short notice). Please make sure any comments are copied to Mercy Kaggwa (mkaggwa@consint.org), Policy and Campaigns assistant at CI.

I am looking forward to hearing from you and do not hesitate to contact me should you need further information.

Best regards,

Bjarne Pedersen
Deputy Director
Consumers International

² SDIN is the Sustainable Development Issues Network, made up of TWN, Third World Network headquartered in Malaysia, ELCI the Environment Liaison Centre International, headquartered in Kenya and ANPED, the Northern Alliance for Sustainability, headquartered in the Netherlands. For more information visit the SDIN website at <http://www.sdin-ngo.net> .