

DRAFT MODEL

**Rules and Procedures for NGO Representation
at United Nations Conferences
based on
the CONGO Voluntary Code of Conduct
for NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations**

i) These rules and procedures are not intended to replace but rather to support the voluntary code of conduct and the rules and procedures adopted by CONGO, as well as those accepted individually by NGOs which are accredited for consultative relationship with the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

ii) These rules and procedures build on Resolution 1996/31 of the Economic and Social Council on “Consultative relationship between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations”.

iii) These rules and procedures are conceived as a follow-up to the work of the eminent persons on the High-level Panel on United Nations – Civil Society Relations.

The following rules and procedures are intended to guide the motivation and conduct of representatives of NGOs in their relationships with the United Nations, with other NGOs, and with ever-widening civil society constituencies, particularly in the context of NGO participation in United Nations conferences. Full respect is accorded to the variety of self-understanding in both organizations and individuals but a common allegiance is assumed to the Charter, treaties and conventions of the United Nations as they apply at international, national and local levels.

Rules and procedures, both organizational and behavioural, can be proposed and accepted on the basis of certain common principles. These principles are related to the definition and vocation of an NGO, to procedures of transparency and inclusiveness, and to styles of behaviour which are grounded in respect for differences, openness for dialogue, and commitment to values of truthfulness, participation and justice.

Principles for Representation at the United Nations as NGOs

- 1. Respect for UN Charter and fundamental principles.**
- 2. Independence from Governmental Control**
- 3. Answerability of Individual Representatives to their Organizations**
- 4. Credibility of Organizations and their Representatives**
- 5. Co-operative Relationships with other NGOs**

General Rules for Organizations and their Representatives in relationship with the United Nations

1. Rules to ensure respect for United Nations Charter and for fundamental principles:
 - a) NGOs should seek co-operation with governments and United Nations officials in securing implementation of provisions for access and for mutual consultation, as required by Article 71 of the United Nations Charter;
 - b) NGOs should respect practices of engaging in consultative dialogue and of working for consensus, without forfeiting such principles as freedom of opinion, speech and assembly, which are fundamental both for the United Nations and for the NGOs themselves.

2. Rules to ensure independence of NGOs from governmental control:
 - a) By the very definition of being a non-governmental organization, an NGO cannot accept ultimate control of its policy, funding or staffing by any government;
 - b) The claim to be independent must not imply defiance of just laws or reasonable regulations, but within the rule of law, democracy requires that there must be room for critical and dissenting voices *vis à vis* governments.

3. Rules to ensure representativity:
 - a) Individuals who represent an organization in consultative relationships with the United Nations must reflect the policies of their organization;
 - b) If possible there should be a reflection in the representatives chosen by organizations of their inclusive nature (e.g. related to nationality, race, gender, age, etc.).

4. Rules to ensure transparency and credibility:
 - a) Organizations should submit to the United Nations, on request, full disclosure of their membership, leadership, funding, staffing, policies and projects;
 - b) Representatives should study and observe all rules and regulations related to their United Nations accreditation and to their participation in United Nations meetings, and projects.

5. Rules to ensure co-operation and efficiency:
 - a) Support should be given by NGOs and also by governments and United Nations officials to co-ordinating structures such as CONGO, but responsibility for improper conduct by individual NGOs should not be immediately imputed to the co-ordinating body nor to NGOs at large;
 - b) Financial empowerment of NGOs, especially of some NGOs in developing countries, should be budgeted and allocated from United Nations sources, and, where possible and appropriate, from governments and from wider civil society constituencies.

Procedures and Behaviour for Organizations and their Representatives at United Nations Conferences

1. Procedures and behaviour to ensure respect for the United Nations Charter and for fundamental principles:
 - a) The consultative role for NGOs prescribed by the Charter implies a relationship of ready access, of two-way confidence and of reciprocal courtesy between governments, NGOs and United Nations officials;
 - b) Accepted rules of procedure should be carefully observed, including respect for the chairpersons, avoidance of interruption, rejection of all forms of discourtesy such as shouting or distribution of unauthorized materials.

2. Procedures and behaviour to ensure independence of NGOs from governmental control:
 - a) NGO representatives should recall for themselves and enjoy the understanding of governments and United Nations officials for the essential role of NGOs as an independent voice of civil society which may be in agreement with or may dissent from the view of any government;
 - b) NGO representatives who are part of governmental delegations or who speak for an NGO which is controlled by a government should clarify when they are speaking on behalf of a government or of their NGO or of both.

3. Procedures and behaviour to ensure representativity:
 - a) An organization should clarify whether it has a diverse membership across many constituencies, nationalities or levels of society, or whether an international concern is being addressed from the perspective of a particular, national or focussed perspective;
 - b) Representation of particular national, professional, technical, cultural or gender perspectives by an organization should not claim on the basis of a “global” or “international” title to be representing constituencies that have not been included or consulted.

4. Procedures and behaviour to ensure transparency and credibility:
 - a) When complaints or accusations are made, there should be scrupulous attention to accuracy; sources should be revealed unless legitimate confidentiality would be betrayed or groups or individuals put at risk;
 - b) In particular, an individual representative of an NGO must be truthful and fair as a spokesperson, apologist or antagonist for or against any party, and should not allow self-interest to violate the interests, dignity or security of others.

5. Procedures and behaviour to ensure co-operation and efficiency:
 - a) Given the increasingly large number of both international and national NGOs, it is a question of responsible management of time that NGOs should measure their oral and written contributions for relevance, timeliness and originality;
 - b) Where appropriate, NGOs can create a caucus or make common cause with other NGOs in joint programmes, joint lobbying or joint statements; there must also be freedom for NGOs to stand outside a caucus.
 - c) In an international community the issue of translation and interpretation is important and every effort should be made to help those who are linguistically isolated.