

Notes on meeting: Success Factor for NGOs Engaging at the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) and Similar Fora

The main thing is to start early and prepare well.

Too many NGOs just turn up at the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA), and enjoy the honour of attending, without doing their homework – and not surprisingly they fail to make any impact on the outcomes.

This is a massive gathering with almost 5000 participants, and many parallel meetings and events. It is almost impossible to influence this type of gathering unless you come really organised and prepared.

Research:

Process ([UNEP stakeholder engagement handbook](#), [WAN guidance on UNEA for APOs](#))

Issues (WAN coordinates briefings for animal protection organisations)

Politics (country positions, especially key allies and opponents)

Start early:

Start now for UNEA 5, which will take place in February 2021

Influencing the theme and agenda.

It is possible for accredited organisations to attend meetings (in person or remotely) of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR), which includes member states representatives based at UN Environment in Nairobi.

There is a [roadmap](#) of meetings leading up to UNEA.

But there is more than just attending meetings. We also need to form animal protection alliances and coordinate with allies.

Advocacy - Influencing member states.

Get to know your UN Environment regional office.

Be strategic:

Decide where to direct your energy

Remember the Pareto Principle (80/20% rule) – where 80% of the outcomes come from 20% of the work.

Influencing the theme and agenda are key. Including ensuring animal protection participation.

NGOs spend lots of time on statements at meeting (the honour and the glory), and in discussions. But in reality, these have little influence on outcomes!

Key outcomes of UNEA:

Ministerial Declaration

Resolutions (UNEA 4: 23 resolutions and three decisions)

Ministerial declarations – opportunities to comment. But really just high-blown rhetoric!

Resolutions are most important:

Influencing content – Drafting sessions/working groups on resolutions.

Accredited organisation at UN Environment have to decide on the [Major Group](#) they wish to belong to. WAN is a member of the NGO member group, but we also cooperate closely with the Women's Major Group, the Farmers Major Group and Youth. If we can include our issues in their submissions, then they bear more weight.

There is also a pre-meeting of all Major Groups – the Major Groups and Stakeholder Forum, which is important to attend.

Regional consultations are also important, as these take place during the formulation stages.

Other opportunities for influence include:

- Side Events

- Booths

- Publications, such as the Major Groups newsletter and UN Environment's Perspectives articles. WAN had a [Perspectives article](#) published to coincide with the last UNEA.