

Memo regarding the roles of observers to the Transitional Committee

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It is important to distinguish two different issues, namely the role and purpose of observers to the Transitional Committee (TC), and the role of observers to the Board of the Green Climate Fund (GCF). The latter will be formulated in the GCF Rules of Procedure, and it should be made clear that the proposals here are not to prejudice this process.

Keeping this in mind, it will be useful to distinguish ordinary observers, and (potential) representatives of the UNFCCC NGO constituencies in this context.

Ordinary Observers

I think the UNFCCC Process has a number of excellent examples of how to deal with the participation of (ordinary) observers, both physically and virtually. The Adaptation Fund Board, for example, admits all UNFCCC accredited observer organisations and aims to include the observer participants in the meeting room. If there is not enough space, then there is an overflow room to which the meeting is web-cast. Moreover, the web-cast is actually publicly available on the internet. It is also important to have the documents to be discussed at meetings publicly available on the internet prior to the meeting. Given that this practice is also followed on the CDM Executive Board, I do not think that there should be too much of a problem in establishing it for the TC.

NGO Observer Advisors

In order to harness expertise that may otherwise not be available to the TC process – either in its membership, or in the seconded support – it may be necessary to build on the CIF role of active observers and allow for what might be called “observer advisors“. They would be selected by the TC on the basis of their specialist expertise, to assist the TC in its work.

As Advisors, they would be allowed to actively participate in the different TC activities, i.e. during meetings (along the CIF active observer model), and in the work of the drafting groups), but they would not have any decision-making power – i.e. neither vote nor breaking of consensus. While it would be important that the TC has the ultimate say in who would be admitted in this capacity, it might be useful and indeed desirable for the whole TC process to have the UNFCCC observer constituencies involved in identifying the range of expertise that might be useful to choose from.

Selection Process. If the TC decides at its first meeting to go ahead with this scheme, it might in a first instance come up with a wishlist of types of expertise it thinks would be useful to be made available through such a scheme. The ES could then request the accredited UNFCCC NGO constituencies to produce, say, 10 person shortlists of qualified advisor candidates, keeping in mind the TC wishlist, but not restricted to it (it is important to give the NGO constituencies the freedom to also nominate people with expertise the TC did not think of when they put together their initial wishlist). To make the process more manageable, the six smallest NGO constituencies (representing less than 4% of accredited observers) could be asked to provide a joint list of candidates, which should also include the 16% of observers that are not part of a constituency. In other words, the TC would be presented with four lists (ENGO, BINGO, RINGO, Others) of candidates (10 each) to select NGO observer advisors. In order not to alienate the NGO observer community too much, it would be advisable to have a somewhat balanced choice of advisors, with all of the four lists represented. Should the scheme not deliver on the TC wishlist, then it could be repeated with more specific guidelines.