

VOICES NOT VOTES

Major Group Participation at the World Summit on Sustainable
Development in Johannesburg 2002

by

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ABBREVIATIONS

CSD	United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development
EU	European Union
FNCSD	Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development
JS2002	A National Johannesburg 2002 - Preparatory Committee
MSD	Multi-stakeholder Dialogue
MSP	Multi-Stakeholder Process
NCSD	National Council on Sustainable Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PrepCom	Preparatory Committee
UN	United Nations
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development

ABSTRACT

Participation in decision-making is among the strongest themes that have emerged over the last thirty years of intense reflection about sustainable development. This thesis is a study of major groups' participation during the preparations for and at the World Summit on Sustainable Development. It focuses on the meaningfulness of major groups' participation from the perspective of the Finnish major groups' representatives. Their perspectives are analysed in relation to eight attributes of meaningful participation identified in this study. Considered is the extent to which the eight attributes were fulfilled and how important these attributes were for major groups ability to participate in a meaningful manner. The study concludes that whilst the participatory possibilities provided for the major groups did not fulfill the eight attributes of meaningful participation, the interviewees considered that their participation was meaningful as it enabled them to voice their concerns, create networks and partnerships, learn and to be visible. Yet, the Finnish major groups' representatives felt that the means for major groups participation could be improved by better integrating multi-stakeholder dialogues with the official decision-making procedures, clarifying the objectives of participation, including major groups in all country delegations, providing better resources and carrying out thorough evaluations.

INTRODUCTION

The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) was held in Johannesburg, South Africa from 24th August to 4th September 2002. It was the finalisation of all preparatory work done since 2001 at national, regional and global levels. The overall objective of the process was to review progress achieved in the implementation of the outcomes of the Rio Conference in 1992, and to identify new solutions for future challenges of sustainable development. To achieve this objective the United Nations (UN) General Assembly stressed "*that the preparatory meetings and the 2002 Summit itself should be transparent and provide...for contributions from and active participation of Major Groups*", as identified in Agenda 21" (UN, Para. 19, A/RES/55/199).

As a result, different participatory processes were organised and encouraged equally at the national, regional and global levels. In Finland, during the early stages of the WSSD preparations, it was decided to provide a means for broad based participation in which everyone had the possibility to influence decision-making directly without any delays. To this end, a national Johannesburg 2002 - Preparatory Committee (JS2002) was established under the Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development (FNCSD) to prepare for the WSSD. The JS2002 consisted of civil servants, representatives of major groups and other organisations. Furthermore, it was decided that the major groups' representatives would be included in the Finnish national delegation at the regional and global preparations, as well as at the WSSD.

To be included in the national delegation placed the Finnish major groups' representatives in a special position. Firstly, it provided them with access to all the negotiations that only state representatives were allowed. Secondly, they were able to get first hand knowledge from experienced negotiators and provide them with additional input. Thirdly, the major groups' representatives were able to follow and participate in their respective major groups' caucuses, which were organised in every regional and international preparatory meeting, as well as at the WSSD. Despite these advantages there were also some limitations. The Finnish major groups' representatives were primarily representatives of Finland rather than representatives of major groups. Thus, their possibilities to act as major group representatives were hindered.

To provide the major groups with participatory possibilities during national, regional and global preparations, as well as at the WSSD is an enormous task. An even greater challenge is to organise and allow for meaningful participation instead of just paying lip service to the participatory requests. To organise meaningful participation in local, national or project levels is already difficult and to manage it at an international level is many times more difficult. In the case of WSSD, not only did participation take place at the international level but additionally the issues discussed were all the matters related to sustainable development in the world.

Different theories and studies done in the field of participation consider that there are various attributes for good, meaningful and/or successful participation. These are continuous participation, equality, transparency, influence, interactivity, inclusivity, legitimacy and outcome. To fulfil the attributes of meaningful participation in international decision-making is difficult, because states are the only entities with standing in international relations. In other words, states and major groups are not equal participants in the decision-making and the level and extent of their powers are very different, which poses challenges to meaningful participation in international decision-making. However, most studies point out that meaningfulness of participation is mainly dependent on the participant's perceptions, rather than on fulfilling all the possible attributes.

¹ Agenda 21 identifies nine major groups. These are Women, Children and Youth, Indigenous People, Non-governmental organisations (NGOs), Local Authorities, Trade Unions, Farmers, Business and Industry, and Scientific and Technological Community.

Major groups participation in international decision-making is a relatively new phenomenon. The lack of research in this area, the claimed importance of participation and partnerships for sustainable development, non-state entities participatory restrictions in international decision-making and the fact that the WSSD took place while this research was being conducted influenced greatly the objective of this study.

OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

The objective of this study is to analyse major groups' participation within the preparatory processes before and during the WSSD. The aim is to both review the scope of their participation possibilities during the process, and to analyse the meaningfulness of major groups' participation from the Finnish major groups representatives' perspective. This analysis will be conducted using eight attributes of meaningful participation, these being continuous participation, equality, transparency, influence, interactivity, inclusivity, legitimacy and outcome. The analysis focuses on the interviewees' perceptions in relation to the attributes on two accounts.

- Firstly, did the interviewees perceive that the eight attributes were fulfilled and to what extent?
- Secondly, did the interviewees perceive that the attributes were important for meaningful participation and how important in comparison to other things?

The study also addresses whether the major groups have recommendations on how to increase the meaningfulness of participation.

Although the representatives of the major groups came from various countries this study focuses only on the Finnish representatives of the major groups. The reasons for the limited focus on the Finnish representatives of the major groups' were twofold. Firstly, the Finnish representatives of the major groups were included in the national delegation and secondly, it was a practical option to conduct a study on those representatives whom could be interviewed without any geographical problems.

STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

To evaluate the meaningfulness of major groups' participation in the WSSD process this study has been divided into five chapters. Chapter one defines levels, justifications and limitations of participation in relation to sustainable development. Meaningful participation will also be discussed and a framework for analysing major groups' participation in the subsequent chapters will be developed. Chapter two addresses participation at the international level. The problems of major groups' participation, their rights and roles will be identified and a short summary of the history of the major groups' participation will be provided. Chapter three explains the stated aims of major groups' participation during the preparation processes and at the WSSD. The different modes of participation provided and recommended for the major groups by the UN at national, regional and global levels is shown. Additionally, the modes of participation provided by Finland for the Finnish representatives of the major groups will be discussed. In chapter four the results of the interviews will be analysed. Finally in chapter five the results of the analysis will be discussed and recommendations on how the process could be improved will be provided.

METHOD AND MATERIAL

The research method used in this thesis is a qualitative one. Out of different qualitative methods, an in-depth interview method directed toward learning about events and activities that cannot be observed directly was chosen. In this type of interview the interviewees are the informants in the truest sense of the word. Thus, the role of the interviewee is not simply to reveal their own views, but to describe what happened and how others viewed it. (Taylor and Bogdan 1998:87)

This method was selected because the aim of the study is to develop an understanding of major groups' experiences and perspectives in regards to the meaningfulness of their participation in international environmental decision-making and in this case, participation during preparations and while at the WSSD. It has to be underlined that the interest of the study is only in the perspectives and experiences of the major groups and the reflections of them on the theories of participation rather than in any truths. As Taylor and Bogdan, (1998:109), point out, the issue of truth, objectivity with qualitative research is complicated. Thus, the interests in qualitative research lie in perspectives rather than in truths.

The interviewees were chosen from the Finnish representatives of the nine major groups, as identified in Agenda 21, who took part in the preparations before and during the WSSD. Since none of the representatives of the major groups' participated in all of the preparations and at the Summit the selection criteria was modified to choose major groups whose representatives participated in most of the preparation meetings. As a result, the groups that were chosen were

- NGOs
- Women
- Local Authorities
- Indigenous People
- Youth

Since the number of representatives of the fore mentioned five groups was so large only some of the representatives were interviewed. These were yet again selected on the basis of number of meetings they participated in or on the role they played. As a result twelve people were chosen for the interviews. Although it would have been interesting to interview the representatives of the remaining four major groups; Farmers, Trade Unions, Scientific and Technological Community, and Business and Industry, it was not considered necessary.

All interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner, meaning that the same information was desired from each of the interviewees but the particular phrasing of questions and their order were redefined to fit the characteristics of each interviewee. The semi-structured format of the interviews was hoped to encourage and allow a more in-depth discussion about the experiences and perspectives of the interviewees.

The format of the semi-structured interviews was the following:

- Where did you participate and in what way?
- Was major groups' participation meaningful?
- Were the attributes of meaningful participation fulfilled and to what extent? These being continuous participation, equality, transparency, influence, interactivity, inclusivity, legitimacy and outcome.
- How important were the fore mentioned attributes for meaningful participation?
- Could participation be more meaningful and if so how could it be done?

As the results of the study are based on interviews it is important to point out that there are limitations to interviewing. '*People say and do different things in different situations. Since the interview is a particular kind of situation, you cannot assume that what a person says during an interview is what that person believes or will say or do in the other situations.*' (Taylor and Bogdan 1998:91) In addition, the interviews for this study were conducted in Finnish and later on translated into English, which offers a danger for misinterpretation. However, it felt more natural to conduct the interviews in Finnish since the interviewer and interviewees were all Finnish speaking. Performing it in English might have created misunderstandings.

Prior to conducting the interviews a review on the relevant literature, documents and agreements was done in order to develop a conceptual framework in which to embed the interviews and the study. The

main sources reviewed can be broken into three categories. The first category is related to theoretical interpretations of participation (i.e. benefits, limitations and levels of participation) and various evaluations done on the meaningfulness of participatory processes. The second category contains various UN documents, declarations, conventions, and agreements in relation to participation and the logistics of the WSSD. The third category contains different monthly and daily publications like Network 2002, Outreach 2002, Taking Issue and Earth Negotiations Bulletin which addressed the preparation work for the WSSD as well as daily events at the WSSD.

In addition to literature sources, a wealth of information was gained through personal correspondence via email from Kari Karanko (Head of Unit, Ministry for Foreign Affairs), Kaarin Taipale (ICLEI Chairperson), Riina Loukola (Senior Adviser, Ministry of Environment), Satu Reijonen (Senior Adviser, Ministry of Environment) and Irene Gerlach (Energy Co-ordinator, Stakeholder Forum).

Literature sources and personal correspondence were supplemented by observation at the Summit and in some of the preparatory meetings. Attendance increased the understanding of the complex procedure and gave the opportunity to talk informally about the meaningfulness of major groups participation with the major groups' representatives, which proved to be of vital help when conducting the interviews and analysing the material.

1 PARTICIPATION

Participation in decision-making can take a variety of forms. It can range from being informed about decisions to being part of an interactive decision-making process. Overall, there is little consensus on what participation looks like in practice, and little consensus on what exactly participation is supposed to accomplish. As a result, participation is one of the most contested concepts. (Day, 1997:428) On one hand participation holds the promise of better decisions, but on the other hand participatory decision-making processes have their limitations. Yet, pressure for greater participation in decision-making is increasing (Rowe et al., 2000:3). Equally, pressure to improve participation processes is high (Stave, 2002:140). The challenge is to accomplish good and meaningful participation. Theoretical and empirical literature offers certain characteristics that provide for good and meaningful participation. Nevertheless, participation is always situation related. Thus, there is no one category that constitutes meaningful participation, but there are several attributes that can increase or hinder it. It is these issues that this chapter will highlight as the basis for the later evaluation on the Finnish representatives of the major groups' experiences and perceptions on major groups' participation during the preparations for and while at the WSSD.

1.1 CONTESTED CONCEPT

Participation is a concept that is used to define a variety of activities. Participation is usually perceived as positive. Rahnema, (1992:116), describes participation as a word that is used in the way children use Lego pieces. "*Like Lego pieces, the words fit arbitrarily together and support the most fanciful constructions. They have no content, but do serve a function. As these words are separate from any context, they are ideal for manipulation purposes. Participation belongs to these words*". In other words, participation can be defined in various ways and even manipulated depending on the situation. Day, (1997:423), asserts that the problem with participation is that there is little consensus on what participation looks like in practice, and little consensus on what exactly participation is supposed to accomplish. Thus, there is no universal definition on what participation is or ought to be.

The Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines to participate as "*to take part, to have a share or part in something*" and participation as "*the act of participating or the state of being related into larger whole*" (Merriam 1977:835). Taking part or having a share in something can take place in various ways, on different levels and with different powers.

1.2 PARTICIPATORY PRACTICES AND DEGREES OF POWER

To conceptualise participation several researchers have tried to categorise participation according to different participatory practices. For example, Pretty et al., (1995:51) have classified participation into seven types of practices (See Table 1). The first practice is passive participation, meaning that ‘participants’ are being told what is going to happen or has already happened. The second practice is participation in information giving, in other words, participants provide decision-makers with information by answering questions or questionnaires. The third practice is consultation in which participants are being consulted and external people listen to their views. In these participation practices participants do not have a real opportunity for active participation, participants are just being informed or heard for the needed information. The fourth practice is participation by material incentives meaning that participants get something in return for their participation. The fifth practice, functional participation is participation to meet predetermined objectives. It can take place at any stage of decision-making. The sixth practice, interactive participation is participation that allows for joint analysis among the participants and involves inter-disciplinary methodologies that seek multiple perspectives. The last, seventh practice refers to self-mobilisation in which initiatives are taken independent of external institutions.

7.Self-Mobilisation
6.Interactive Participation
5.Functional Participation
4.Participation for Material Incentives
3.Participation by Consultation
2.Participation in Information Giving
1.Passive Participation

Table 1: Pretty et al. 1995:51

Out of Pretty et al.’s seven participatory practices, one to five are the most common forms of participation in decision-making today. Achievement of interactive participation is often desired and self-mobilisation in forms of protest and activism against the established decision-making systems is prevented.

Different participatory practices provide the participants with different degrees of power. Arnstein has classified participation in a similar manner to Pretty et al., but in addition to identifying different participatory practices, Arnstein has ranked the practices according to the degree of power they provide the participants (Arnstein 1969:216-224). It could be argued that different degrees of participants’ powers are also implied in Pretty et al.’s model, but they are not expressed.

Arnstein illustrated participation through eight-rung ladder, in which each rung of the ladder corresponds to the extent of power the participant posses. To emphasise and clarify the extent of power Arnstein has divided the rungs into three general categories of non-participation, degrees of tokenism and degrees of citizen power (see Table 2).

Only from rung three upward according to Arnstein participation is taking place. Rungs from three to five are token gestures of participation, since the participants have the opportunity to only listen and to be heard. Thus, there is no guarantee that those taking the decisions will pay attention to the views of participants. Placation on the fifth rung is the highest level of tokenism, because in placation the ground rules allow have-nots to advise, but retain for the power holder the continued right to decide. Only from the sixth rung participation takes place in a meaningful way for the participants, because it gives participants real power. Without real power “*participation is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless. It*

Degrees of citizen power	8.Citizen control
	7.Delegated power
	6.Partnerships
Degrees of tokenism	5.Placation
	4.Consultation
	3.Informing
Non-participation	2.Therapy
	1.Manipulation

Table 2: Arnstein 1969:217

allows the power holder to claim that all sides were considered, but makes it possible for only some of those sides to benefit.”(Arnstein, 1969:216)

Although these two models are simplifications, they help to crystallise that participation is a multifaceted issue. Participatory practices are very different, and the extent of power the participant has is largely dependent on practice. In other words, participation in general refers to involvement in decision-making through a series of formal or informal mechanisms. Participation in decision-making does not necessarily mean that influence is exerted (Day, 1997:426).

The most appropriate level of participation depends on the issues being discussed. Rowe et al., (2000:3), argue that more knowledge-based decisions (e.g. technical risk assessments) will require lower levels of involvement than the more value-based decisions. Often direct or deliberative democracy, i.e. democracy in which all those subject to the decisions are able to participate in authentic deliberation, is considered the ideal form of participation and/or decision-making. However, deliberative democracy implies a commitment to the maximisation of free, equal, and authentic access to debate, which should extend to individuals, interests, and groups traditionally excluded from decision-making (Dryzek, 2000:85-86). Therefore, deliberative democracy is usually better suited for project-level participation rather than in wider political fora. Confusion frequently arises from use of the same term to mean different things.

In recent years, participatory processes have changed from simply complaining about policies and programmes after they have been implemented, to being involved in designing policies into alternative visions (Bezold, 1987:66). Such practices have until now worked best at community or project levels, where there are bonds of solidarity among the people (Sharp, 1995:311). However, participation can be beneficial in any level and equally these processes have their limits, which will be discussed next.

1.3 RATIONALES FOR PARTICIPATION

Different discourses use a variety of arguments to advocate the need and possibilities of participation. Broad-based participation is of course a cornerstone of democratic ideals, but it can also be a beneficial way of making and implementing decisions. In the discourses of sustainable development, the objective is to achieve development that ‘*meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs*’ (WCED, 2002:30). To meet the present need of development without sacrificing the future possibilities requires integration of economic, social and environmental objectives at all levels of policy development and decision-making. Combining these three areas can be difficult. It has been realised that top-down approaches and narrow disciplinary boundaries yield unsatisfactory results (Ferenz and Susskind, 2002:10). Therefore, broad-based participation is considered to be the key for sustainable development to become reality.

The Brundtland report, (WCED 2002:44), which is one of the most famous blueprints on sustainable development, identifies the need for participation in the following manner: “*...humanity has the ability to make development sustainable, yet painful choices have to be made. Making the difficult choices involved in achieving sustainable development will depend on the widespread support and involvement of an informed public and of non-governmental organisations, the scientific community, and industry. Their right, roles, and participation in development planning, decision-making, and project implementation should be expanded*”.

Broad-based participation is especially important for achieving sustainable development because its goals are multiple. Furthermore, the issues being addressed are complex, involve many uncertainties, have a vast spatial scale and the development effects are often irreversible on the environment (van den Hove, 2000:456-462). Thus, broad-based participation processes in comparison to other decision-

making processes have the ability to generate benefits and possibilities, which are crucial to achieving sustainable development.

Broad-based participation can help to improve the knowledge base of all those involved. An increased knowledge base in different requirements, possibilities and expectations of decision-makers, participants (if not in a position to make decisions) and the environment has a promise of a good decision (Wiser, 2001:101; Al-Kodmany, 1999:37). In addition, participation enables the participants to learn about the decision-making process, issues being discussed and about each others standing points. Thus, participation can increase the mutual understanding between participants (Cohen, 2001:18).

Participatory processes also open a space for the expression of marginalised voices and those for whom environmental degradation is symptomatic of a broader structural oppression and silencing like women and indigenous peoples (Elliot, 1998:147). Furthermore, through participation the possibilities for forming partnerships, networks and collaboration are increased. By getting to know all the people who work in the same field and understanding their standing points may broaden the scope and impact of the work (Pye-Smith et al., 1995:303).

Participation has the likelihood of increasing participants' compliance and support. Through participation people may cultivate a stronger sense of commitment, have realistic expectations of outcomes and increase their trust towards the project (Al-Kodmany, 1999:37). Equally, participation can strengthen the legitimacy of decision-making. If participants are consulted with the proposed changes, they become participants in the process and can play a larger and more explicit role in proposed-project conditioning and thus achieve a significant degree of enfranchisement in decision-making (Thiel, 1994). If all (or a majority of) participants agree on the development plans, its legitimacy is strengthened.

Hence the rationales for participation are manifold. Although broad-based participation offers many positives, there are also limitations to it. As Benneviste, (1989:145), says: "*One of the dilemmas of planning is that at the same time that it cannot succeed without some participation, it cannot afford to be dominated by participatory processes*". Thus, sometimes other forms of decision-making are considered to be better alternatives.

1.4 LIMITATIONS OF PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES

Participation usually requires many resources. In order to make a worthwhile contribution and participate throughout the process can be costly and time consuming for the participant as well as for the organisers. The demands of time are also exacerbated by increased information, which the participation processes provide (Kweit et al., 1987:33). As a result, participatory processes tend to be biased in favour of the dominant actors who have time, energy, money and competence necessary to participate. More over, broad-based participation might delay decision-making. Participation is time consuming for the participants and, additionally, participation tends to delay decision-making processes. The more people involved, the more time is required. Thus, wider participation may strain the capacity to address complex and urgent challenges with sufficient coherence and expedition. (Farer, 1995:20) This is especially problematic in terms of sustainable development, environmental degradation is taking place at a fast pace and its effects are irreversible (Peters, 1996:56).

Decisions made through a participatory process might not lead to the best outcomes. For example, the experiences with Local Agenda 21s in Western-European countries show that issues and themes chosen by the population mainly concern the 'here and now' and less the 'there and then' (Cohen, 2001:8). In terms of sustainable development, decisions need to be holistic and forward looking.

There is also a limitation with the representativeness of participatory processes. It is difficult to include all those who are interested and influenced by the decisions. Often the strongest participants, like

transnational corporations, who speak only on their behalf might lead the discussion (Bruhl, 2001:1). Additionally there is the problem that outcomes of participatory processes might not truly reflect people's preferences or interests, because relatively few people take advantage of participatory opportunities (Day, 1997:434). People often lack the interest to participate. Even in established democracies, the majority of citizens will only participate if a given issue directly affects their personal interests or seriously affronts their sense of justice (Sharp, 1995:311). A study done by Bryne (1997:3) concluded, "political activism of all types is a minority sport in Britain". Whether at the community or national level, for people to actively participate and without reward in public affairs costs them time and effort. In some cases it may also entail financial or physical risks for those who find themselves in opposition to the majority. It is therefore not surprising if most people prefer to leave the business to others (Sharp, 1995:311).

The ability to participate often creates expectations of real influence. Yet, the possibility to influence decisions might be very limited in participatory processes. However, as Cohen, (2001:8), points out, participation does not imply direct democracy, it should be seen as a complement rather than a replacement of 'conventional' strategies.

Thus, other kinds of decision-making processes may be better suited in many projects. Due to the possible limitations and inequalities of participatory practices some consider it best not to participate. Those who decide not to participate might self-mobilise around issues important to them. There have been various examples of self-mobilisation activities that confront rather than engage in deliberations, such as street marches, boycotts and sit-ins. Many rights have been won in democratic societies by means of courageous activism: the eight-hour day, votes for women and the right to sit at any lunch counter. (Young, 2001:670)

1.5 BETTER NOT TO PARTICIPATE?

Many people consider that if participation implies having to compromise one's opinions and ideals, or not having any real influence, it is better to stay outside the process. Some people may protest against institutions they disagree with and some remain passive.

Young points out that, people who want to stay outside the system often feel that the idea to engage with others they disagree with is a fine recommendation for the ideal world where everyone is included and equal to one another. However, this is not the real world of politics. At the moment powerful elites represent structurally dominant social segments that have significant influence over political processes and decisions (Young, 2001:675). As structural inequalities influence both procedures and outcomes, democratic processes that appear to conform to norms of deliberation are usually biased towards more powerful agents. Thus, those who care about promoting greater justice prefer to engage primarily in critical oppositional activity (Young, 2001:670). In other words if engaging in deliberation means compromising or in the worst case having to sacrifice your own ideals because some participants are more powerful, it might be more rational to stay outside such processes.

Dryzek, (2000:83) argues that a group's inclusion in political decision-making is possible only when two conditions are realised. First, a group's defining concern must be capable of assimilation to an established or emerging imperative. Secondly, the group's discursive capacities must not be unduly depleted by the group's entry into the negotiations. If the participants' right to veto the outcome is retained, a group's participation in deliberation is in bad faith (Dryzek, 2000:167).

Participating in decision-making through consensus has always the disadvantage of silencing critique. Dryzek, (2000:87-88) argues that if a group leaves the oppositional sphere to enter the state then dominant classes and public officials have less to fear in the way of public protest. There may be democratic gain in this entry, but there is also democratic loss in terms of a less discursively vital civil

society, the erosion of some existing democratic accomplishments, and a reduced likelihood of further democratisation in future. Moreover, the democratic gain is itself uncertain. Dryzek, (2000:87-89) argues that such gain can only be secured when the defining interest of the entering groups can be connected quite directly to an existing or emerging state imperative.

1.6 GOOD AND MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION

Participation may answer specific problem-solving requirements imposed by environmental issue characteristics, but the challenge lies in the practical design and organisation of a participatory problem-solving process. (van den Hove, 2000:464) There is little guidance about how to produce good and meaningful participation.

The difficulty involved with producing meaningful participation is that everyone has a different perception on what is a meaningful or good participatory process. Webler et al., (2001:447), found out in their study on what constitutes good public participation that people hold dramatically different perspectives on it. For instance, one perspective emphasised that a good participation process acquires and maintains popular legitimacy through a consensual democratic process. A second sees a good process as one that facilitates an ideological discussion among a core of stakeholders. A third focuses on the fairness of the process, paying special attention to creating high-quality democratic deliberation and to achieving participation by all segments of society. A fourth perspective conceptualises participatory processes as a power struggle, in this instance a power play between local land owning interests and outsiders. A fifth perspective highlights the need for leadership and compromise in combination with collecting insights and fostering deliberation among a wide range of the public. Thus, meaningful participation can have various attributes. However, these attributes are not mutually exclusive, neither do they all need to be fulfilled for participation to be meaningful for the participants.

Meaningful participation does not necessarily mean that the participatory process would lead to concrete outcomes. Furthermore, even if the participant's powers are rather weak and indirect, it does not mean that participation has to be meaningless (Dryzek, 2000:131). Neither does extensive involvement equal meaningful participation (Gregory 2000:34). Participatory processes are always situation related. Participation is dependent on its specific application and the appropriateness of methods used, thus there is no a single category that constitutes meaningful participation (Bickerstaff et al., 2002:62).

Researchers usually evaluate participation through the process or the outcome of the process. However, regardless of the goals selected for the outcomes, evaluating the outcome of participation is problematic because researchers cannot be sure if an effect is due to participation efforts or to other variables, such as simultaneous events, the social context in which the activities take place and/or the nature of the environmental problem (Chess et al., 1999:2685). As a result many researchers consider that the criteria of good and meaningful participation should meet some balance of both outcome and process goals (Chess et al., 1999:2686).

Yet the participatory process could be meaningful even if the process or outcome of the process does not meet the expectations of participants. Wolfe et al., (2001:445), point out that participation processes can be meaningful and good in the sense that through the process awareness is enhanced, participants obtains valuable input and the process might inspire for future research agenda.

1.7 CHARACTERISTICS OF MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION

Various empirical and theoretical normative studies have identified different attributes for successful, effective, good and/or meaningful participation. (Bickerstaff et al., 2002; Carness et al., 1998; Chess et al., 1999; Coenen, 2001; Hemmati, 2002; Navroz et al, 2002; Rowe et al., 2000; Schweitzer et al., 1998; van Valey et al., 1987; Webler et al., 2001; Wiser, 2001; Young, 2001) Most of the studies address the

same attributes. They are not mutually exclusive; on the contrary, many of them are complementary. The main attributes that became apparent in some or all of the studies are listed below. These attributes will be used in chapter 4 to analyse the results of the interviews. The aim is not to reach any conclusions on how each attribute should look in order to achieve meaningful participation, since this depends both on context and on perception of participants. Instead the aim is to show what the attributes are and why they are often referred to as important for meaningful participation.

1.7.1 CONTINUOUS PARTICIPATION

Continuity is concerned with the extent to which participants are able to follow and participate in the decision-making process. Most of the literature on participation emphasises that in order for participation to be continuous it should take place from the beginning of the decision-making process or as soon as is reasonably practical. Equally, participants should have regular participatory opportunities throughout the decision-making process and in the end the outcomes should be monitored and evaluated (Bickrstaff et al., 2002; Rowe et al., 2000; Van Valey et al., 1987). Continuous participation is considered important as it provides the participants with the possibility to affect decisions while they are being made, increases their understanding of the process and enables them to have an effective voice (Van Valey et al., 1987:40).

1.7.2 EQUALITY

Equality in participatory processes refers to equality between participants and decision-makers. In other words, equality in participatory processes means that the process is fair and unbiased for all the participants and that decision-making powers are distributed equally (Webler et al., 2001:443). ‘Levelling the playing field’ is considered important attribute for participation as it reduces the likelihood of the “strongest” participants leading discussions, influencing processes and taking decisions to their favour (Young, 2001:675).

1.7.3 TRANSPARENCY

Participatory processes are transparent when the participants are able to follow the decision-making process in an open manner and have access to appropriate and relevant information. The more transparent the participatory processes are, the less suspicion and opposition they usually create (Navroz et al., 2002:53). Hence, the participatory process should avoid conveying any sense of secrecy (Webler et al., 2001:443). If any information needs to be withheld, on the grounds of security or sensitivity, the reasons for its withholding should be addressed rather than risking the discovery of such secrecy, with subsequent adverse reactions (Rowe et al. 2000:8). In addition to reducing suspicion, the participatory process should be transparent so as to enable participants to formulate their opinions based on all available information. Lack of openness tends to reduce the meaningfulness of participation.

1.7.4 INFLUENCE

In participatory processes influence is concerned with participants ability to provide input and the extent to which participants inputs are taken into consideration (Schweitzer et al., 1998:265). The extent and the ability to influence may vary, but for participation to be meaningful and effective it is often considered that participants should have various possibilities to provide their input into decision-making. Moreover, their input should have a genuine impact on the outcome of the participation process and equally, it should be obvious (Rowe et al. 2000:7). If the participation process does not provide the participants with the possibilities to affect outcomes, participants may consider participation as ineffectual, i.e. meaningless, leading to scepticism and distrust concerning the motives of decision-makers (Rowe et al., 2000:7). Hence, influence is an important attribute for meaningful participation as it provides the participants with the possibility to affect the decisions rather than passively observing while others decide.

1.7.5 INTERACTIVITY

Interaction in the context of participation refers to two-way discussion or face-to-face contact i.e. engagement in deliberation rather than listening monologues (Bickrstaff et al., 2002; Schweitzer et al., 1998). Most of the studies consider that interactive participatory processes enhance participation's meaningfulness as it increasing participants' opportunities to share their concerns, experiences and proposals in specific areas and react to others' opinions directly. Providing and getting feedback helps to understand the different requirements, possibilities and expectations of all the participants (Wiser, 2001:101).

1.7.6 INCLUSIVITY

Inclusivity is concerned with participatory processes' capacity to include all the relevant participants, i.e. range of views and voices (Navroz et al., 2002:55). In addition, inclusivity refers to the number of opportunities and the manner in which participants are included in decision-making process (Bickrstaff et al., 2002; Van Valey et al., 1987). It can vary from symbolic to real inclusion. Inclusion is considered important as it gives wider number of people opportunities to learn about the decisions being made and their voices are being heard. Inclusive participatory processes may also improve the quality of opinion forming and decision-making, and the risk of conflict is reduced when people are offered the possibility of articulating their interests (Coenen 2002; Hemmati 2002a; Wiser 2001). The more people are included in decision-making, the more legitimate it becomes (Navroz et al., 2002:55)

1.7.7 LEGITIMACY

Joshua Cohen's classical formulation of democratic legitimacy is that outcomes are legitimate to the extent they receive reflective assent through participation in authentic deliberation by all those subject to the decision in question (Cohen 1989:17-34). In general, a decision is considered legitimate when it is accepted by all the participants, implying that decisions should be made by consensus (Webler et al., 2001:441). Yet, legitimacy of decisions can be strengthened and increased through broad-based participation, even if the decisions are not reached by consensus (Schweitzer et al., 1998:256). Increased acceptance of the decisions is important as it means most people are pleased with the outcome, which in turn may increase overall compliance and support towards the outcomes. In addition, increased acceptance of the decisions tends to reduce the level of conflict between different actors (Coenen, 2002:6).

1.7.8 OUTCOME

Outcome is the end result of the participatory process and in terms of participation it refers to the extent to which the outcome was improved by participation as well as the extent to which the objectives of the participants were met (Carnes et al., 1998; Schweitzer et al., 1998). Good outcome can improve the meaningfulness of participation as it pays back the efforts invested in participation.

Overall, participation is a multifaceted issue, as has been shown in this chapter. Broad-based participation has a lot of potential to improve decision-making, but at the same time there are many limitations to extended participation. Despite the limitations embedded in any participatory process, the costs of failing to engage interested parties in decision-making is considered to be even more expensive in the discourses of sustainable development. Therefore, the challenge is to produce participation that is meaningful for the participants and outcomes. However, to fulfil the attributes of meaningful participation identified in this chapter or to meet the ideas proposed by Arnstein, (1969:216-224), of good participation at any level would be a challenge. Even more so at the international level than in any small-scale decision-making processes where equality of powers and consensus between actors is desirable and achievable.

2 PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

To accomplish meaningful, broad-based participation at the international level is exponentially more difficult than at the local, national or project levels. At the international level, decision-making is more complex in general, since intra- and interstate politics, carrying social and economic patterns, and multiple environmental landscapes have to be considered from the perspectives of about 200 nation-states (Wolfe et al., 2001:436-437). Furthermore, the participatory possibilities and limitations in international politics differ greatly from local or national politics.

This chapter will address the participatory challenges of non-state actors in international decision-making as to conceptualise some of the possibilities and limitations the major groups' representatives faced during preparations and while at the WSSD. Discussed will be the extent of non-state actors' role in general and especially in relation to sustainable development. In addition, a brief summary of non-state actors participation in international environmental politics will be provided.

2.1 SOVEREIGNTY AND STANDING

Traditionally nation-state's sovereignty was unrestricted in international politics. As in international politics there is no formal system of government or authority above the level of the state, states were not responsible to anyone else. With the growing internationalisation and interdependency, states faced problems, which they could no longer control themselves. In terms of the environment, these problems included matters such as acid rain, nuclear hazards, general pollution, climate change and the likes. In order to secure themselves from environmental problems originating outside their borders, most states have entered into different international agreements, which restrict their sovereignty. Yet under international law, states have still the validity to appeal for sovereign immunity unless they voluntarily enter into agreements that limit their activities (Nanda, 1995:1)

Through entrance into different international agreements, states have been able to control the actions of other states to a certain degree, however their competence to achieve sustainable development alone has not been that great. As a result states have enlisted the aid of non-state actors and drawn on their expertise and commitment to use power, resources, and competencies at their disposal. These arrangements have placed states side-by-side with non-state actors (Kärkkäinen, 2001:8).

Although the importance of non-state actors has increased, nation-states are still the only entities given standing² in international politics under international law. States are also the only actors in international relations who posses the right to vote on matters discussed. However, non-state actors have been increasingly included in international negotiations. Furthermore, there have been claims for a wider concept of standing in newer areas of global security, most notably in those occupied by environmental issues and human rights (Farer, 1995:7).

The need to alter standing is reflected in many international legal documents in relation to sustainable development. As sustainable development is a discourse of and for international civil society, its function in the international system is to provide a meeting place for many actors for their communication and joint action (Dryzek, 2000:122-123). The idea of having global deliberative democracy seems impossible since deliberative democracy is a theory for which democratic legitimacy depends upon the ability of all those subject to a decision to participate in authentic deliberation. This implies a commitment to the maximisation of free, equal, and authentic access to debate, which should extend to individuals, interests, and groups traditionally excluded from decision-making. (Dryzek, 2000:85-86) As such, achieving deliberative democracy at the international level seems impossible.

² Lawyers use the word "standing" narrowly as a summary reference to "formal entitlement" to participate (Farer1995:1).

However, the non-state actors have been incorporated into international politics more extensively in the past thirty years. The two most important texts that recognise and call for the further development of the role of the non-state actors in almost all aspects of environment and development are, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and Agenda 21, adopted at the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro 1992.

2.2 RIO DECLARATION

The Rio declaration on the Environment and Development consists of 27 principles. Principle 10 explicitly addresses the importance of non-state actors' participation in decision-making:

Environmental issues are best *handled with the participation of all concerned citizens*, at the relevant level. At the national level, each individual shall have appropriate *access to information* concerning the environment that is held by proper authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities and *the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes*. States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available. Effective access to judicial and administrative proceeding, including redress and remedy, shall be provided. (UN, Rio Declaration, Principle 10) (*Emphasis added*)

Also Principles 20, 21 and 22 of acknowledge the importance of including women, youth and indigenous people in decision-making.

2.3 AGENDA 21 AND THE MAJOR GROUPS

Agenda 21 is probably the most significant outcome of the UNCED. It is a blueprint on how to achieve sustainable development. Agenda 21 consists of four sections: 1) Social and Economic Dimension, 2) Conservation and Management of Resources for Development, 3) Strengthening the Role of Major Groups and 4) Means of Implementation. Section three, Strengthening the Role of Major Groups, emphasises the need for non-state actors participation and partnerships. The Preamble of section 3 states the following:

'Critical to effective implementation of the objectives, policies and mechanisms agreed to by governments in all programme areas of Agenda 21 will be *the commitment and genuine involvement of all social groups*' (UN, Agenda 21, Paragraph 23.1, Chapter 23, Section III). (*Emphasis added*)

'One of the fundamental prerequisites for the achievement of sustainable development is *broad public participation in decision-making*. Furthermore, in the more specific context of environment and development, *the need for new forms of participation has emerged*. This includes the need of individuals, groups and organisations to participate in environmental impact assessment procedures and to know about and participate in decisions, particularly those which potentially affect the communities in which they live and work, individuals, group and organisations should have access to information relevant to environment and development held by national authorities, including information on products and activities that have or are likely to have a significant impact on the environment, and information on environmental protection measures'(UN, Agenda 21, Paragraph 23.2, Chapter 23, Section III). (*Emphasis added*)

In addition to stating clearly the importance of non-state actors' participation, Section 3 also identifies groups that should be included in the participatory processes. These groups called major groups are:

1. Women
2. Children and Youth
3. Indigenous People
4. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)
5. Local Authorities

6. Trade Unions
7. Business and Industry
8. Scientific and Technological Community
9. Farmers

Furthermore, Section 3 addresses, in specific chapters, the roles and responsibilities of the major groups. Besides Section 3, each section of Agenda 21 refers to the roles that major groups have to take in order to put the blueprint into practice. As such Agenda 21 is the first UN document to address extensively the role of the different non-state actors in the implementation of a global agreement (Hemmati, 2002b:3).

2.4 MILLENIUM DECLARATION

In addition to the two outcome documents, Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 of the UNCED, broad-based participation has been emphasised on many occasions after 1992. For example, in year 2000 the UN states reaffirmed their commitment and the importance of inclusivity in the Millennium Declaration. States agreed, “*To give greater opportunities to the private sector, non-governmental organisations and civil society, in general, to contribute to the realisation of the organisation's (UN) goals and programmes*” (UN, Millennium Declaration 2000:9).

Equally, the Millennium Report of the Secretary General of the UN defines good governance as governance that provides the means for broad-based participation. Section II, Globalisation and Governance states the following:

Better governance means greater participation, coupled with accountability. Therefore, the international public domain – including the United Nations – must be opened up further to the participation of the many actors whose contributions are essential to managing the path of globalisation. Depending on the issues at hand, this may include civil society organisations, the private sector, parliamentarians, local authorities, scientific association, educational institutions and many others. (UN, Millenium Declaration, Para 46)

2.5 VOICE NOT A VOTE

For non-state actors to participate in the decision-making process, i.e. the actual negotiations in the relevant international institutions, they need to be accredited. Having an accreditation generally grants an open access to all official, formal meetings; in other words, it provides non-state actors with an observer status. Accreditation usually gives the right to table documents, speak at plenary and other sessions, and often now, participate in working and expert groups. However, accreditation rarely involves participation in small and informal groups in which key compromises are usually worked out and final decisions are made (Elliot 1998:139).

However, even when non-state actors have been accredited, there are significant differences between the participatory practises in international organisations. For example, in Multilateral Environmental Agreements, Commission on Sustainable Development and United Nations Environmental Programme participation of non-state actors is encouraged and efforts are made for their voices to be heard. Whereas in international economic organisations such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organisation, participatory possibilities tend to be limited or non-existent. Although some institutions allow for wider participation they all rely heavily on practice. In addition, much is dependent on the Chair's willingness to include actors other than states into the negotiations (Oberthür, 2002:206).

Another method for non-state actors to be included in international decision-making is to be part of a national delegation. However, this practice is still less common. Non-state actors have been included in the national delegations usually on two bases. Firstly, some governments include non-state actors in

their delegations without any specific task. In this case, non-state actors benefit from more extensive opportunities to participate in the proceedings of meetings (including, for example, access to closed meetings), which provides them with broader access to information. The price of such enhanced access to information is usually a restraint on their ability to lobby and influence delegates, since all members of national delegations will be associated with the country they are representing and are therefore subject to certain guidelines of behaviour, although this is not always the case. Secondly, non-state actors can be recruited by governments as direct advisers; they even act as negotiators on occasions. (Oberthür, 2002:44)

In general, the participatory practices of non-state actors have varied, in terms of Pretty et al.'s seven-step participatory typology, from passive participation to functional participation. (See Ch.1) To conceptualise the extent of power non-state actors have had on the basis of Arnstein's eight-rung ladder, it has ranged from non-participation to degrees of tokenism. (See Ch.1) However, as Farer, (1995:1), points out, the opportunity to participate comprehensively in international negotiations, that is to be consulted and to have one's views taken into account, is an important form of power. "*An interest or a group that is consulted only when foreign ministers or head of state are negotiating a high profile accord is politically impoverished, albeit affluent in comparison to the group that is not consulted at all*"(Farer, 1995:1)

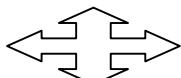
In addition to the common participatory practices i.e. observation, consultation and so forth, a new participatory practice has emerged at the international level - the multi-stakeholder process (MSP). MSPs are processes of decision finding and possibly of decision-making (Enayati et al., 2001:4). They differ from traditional forms of participation in that they are processes of interaction between non-state actors and states. Depending on the issues, participants, time frames and linkages into official decision-making, MSPs can be processes of dialogue, consensus-building, decision-making, implementation and/or monitoring and evaluation (Enayati et al., 2001:4). In MSPs the role of the non-state actors is a more direct and robust one.

The multi-stakeholder dialogues and panels provide opportunities for major groups to share their concerns, experiences and proposals in specific areas and discuss them in detail with governments. Such exchanges help promote meaningful participation among non-state actors and governments in the intergovernmental decision-making process (UN ECOSOC 2002). The multi-stakeholder dialogues and panels in which the major groups have taken part have been organised so that the representatives of the major groups have all been seated together in front of the state representatives and other observers (See Table 3). A chairperson or a facilitator usually directs the discussion. However, as Paul Hohnen, (2001) has remarked "*MSPs are a new species in the political ecosystem*". Hence, MSPs are not an established participatory practice yet and they are being improved as they are being used.

TABLE 3: MSP

NGO	Women	Farmers	Trade Unions	Business and Industry	Science and Technology	Indigenous People	Children and Youth	Local Authorities
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Facilitator



Representatives of states and other observers

Despite the fact that the range of activities in which major groups can engage has expanded considerably and the importance given to them as participants has increased, these groups are not equal to states in international negotiations. The obvious distinction between being a participant and being a

member of a UN body is the absence and possession of the right to vote (Willets, 2000:13). Superficially, it is obvious that those who cannot vote cannot negotiate. However, even if their participatory status is not particularly strong, in practice it is not clear where to draw the line between what is and what is not a contribution to negotiations (*Ibid*:13). Voice is not a vote, but voice can be powerful.

2.6 CLAIMS FOR MORE POWER

Occasionally the argument develops into proposals for non-state actors to have direct decision-making authority in international environmental politics. Although at local and national levels non-state actors can, to a certain, be equal partners in decision-making, the extent to which these practices can, or should be “ramped up” to international scales is unknown. In addition, there is a weak to non-existent experimental or theoretical foundation upon which to determine how best to adapt localised practices (Wolfe et al., 2001:436-437).

If non-state actors were given equal powers to that of states, it would pose many difficult questions. Primarily, there would be the problem of democracy. The non-state actors have not been elected democratically, thus their representation would be arguable. Providing non-state actors with the right to vote does not seem realistic. However, there is still space to improve and strengthen the participatory practices, which have already been developed from consultation to partnership, towards a multi-actor system (Willets, 2000:13-14).

2.7 EXAMPLES OF NON-STATE ACTORS' PARTICIPATION

The non-state actors have participated in international environmental politics in various ways for many years. There has been resistance to their participation by some countries, but nowadays non-state actors' participation is a norm rather than an exception. According to Elliot, (1998:138), non-state actors' participation in international environmental politics dates back to the UN Conference on the Human Environment, in Stockholm, in 1972. During the conference non-state actors were mainly engaged in pressure group activity on the fringes of the conference. Since the Stockholm conference, the extent of non-state actors' participation has changed considerably.

Dodds, (2002:33), claims, that the first, real international participatory process involving representatives of non-state actors or major groups, was established at the UN Habitat II Conference in Istanbul, in 1996. The reason why Dodds considers non-state actors' participation at the Habitat II Conference as real participation and different from the Stockholm Conference, is for example, that non-state actors were allocated the means and rights to express themselves, whereas in Stockholm they were acting on the fringes of the conference. At the Habitat II Conference and at its preparatory meetings, a series of half-day dialogues were organised between major groups. In addition, NGOs and local governments were allowed to submit proposals for textual amendments as a negotiating block. (Dodds, 2002:33)

Another example of including the representatives of major groups in the international level, are multi-stakeholder dialogues (MSD) on sustainable development themes at the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). The MSDs have been held as part of CSD's official meetings since 1998. Their purpose is to inform the inter-governmental decision-making process of the CSD by allowing equal-level and direct exchange of views and experiences on problems and consideration of possible solutions between major groups and governments (Ferenz and Susskind, 2002:11).

Until now there have been dialogue segments on sustainable industry (CSD-6), sustainable tourism (CSD-7), sustainable agriculture (CSD-8) and sustainable energy and transport (CSD-9). The multi-stakeholder dialogue segment in 2002 (CSD-10) was part of the preparatory process leading to the WSSD. The MSPs in the preparatory meetings and at the Summit differ from earlier ones in that all the

nine major groups as identified in Agenda 21 took part as distinct entities (Ferenz and Susskind, 2002:15).

As a whole, non-state actors' participation at the international level is more complex than at local, national or project level. Their participatory practices are also more restricted. Yet, the role and extent to which non-state actors are able to participate in the decision-making, especially in environmental field, has been strengthened and improvements are taking place continuously. The preparatory processes for the WSSD and the Summit itself serve as an example of this tendency. The next chapter will outline the different participatory practices provided for the major groups' during the WSSD process.

3 WSSD AND THE PARTICIPATORY PRACTICES

The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), in Johannesburg 2002 was the follow up Summit to the Rio conference in 1992. The objective of the WSSD was to assess the efforts made in sustainable development since Rio and to identify new solutions for the future challenges of sustainable development. To achieve this objective, countries agreed that preparations would begin at the national, sub-regional and regional levels, moving towards the global stage. By using a 'bottom-up' approach, i.e. starting from national and moving towards global level, it was hoped that all voices would be heard and that governments and major groups could join forces effectively in all regions of the world.

At each stage, from national preparations to the WSSD, major groups were encouraged to participate. During the WSSD-process a number of participatory practices were established to enable meaningful participation of all major groups. Their views and experiences were given prominence in multi-stakeholder panels, multi-stakeholder dialogues, round-table discussions, statements made from the floor, side events and briefings. This chapter will highlight firstly, where, when and in what way major groups were able to participate in the WSSD-process, and secondly, how the Finnish major groups' representatives were able to participate. The national preparations will be mainly discussed using Finland as an example, and regional preparations will be highlighted from the Europe and North-America region's perspective.

3.1 OUTCOME DOCUMENTS

Unlike any other international conference, the WSSD provided two different kinds of outcome documents – Type I and Type II. Type I refers to the two government negotiated documents: Plan of Implementation and The Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development. Whereas a Type II document is a list of partnerships and initiatives, agreed to by interested parties, to implement Agenda 21³.

Although the negotiations regarding Type II document raise many interesting questions on participation, this study focuses on Type I documents. This is mainly because Type II document, or the action plans listed in Type II document, are not negotiated by all the UN countries as Type I documents are. Furthermore, governments do not need to be part of the action plans; these partnership initiatives are all voluntary and formed between interested parties. As such, they represent a major advance in the idea that more than just governments are needed to implement sustainable development and that the resources and expertise from all quarters of society must play a part in achieving sustainable development. (WSSD Secretariat, 2002:6) However, Type II document does not substitute for full agreement between countries. Therefore, Type II document is only a complimentary mechanism to Type I as it facilitates the move from negotiated text to implementation on the ground level.

³ Type I and II outcome documents can be found at www.johannesburgsummit.org/html/documents/undocs.html

3.2 PARTICIPATORY AIMS

The overall objective of the WSSD was to review the progress achieved in the implementation of the outcome of the Rio Conference. A unique and major feature of conducting the reviews was the bottom-up approach. It was hoped that the main issues for the Summit would arise from participatory national and regional assessments and discussions drawing from all segments of society and regions of the world. In order for this to happen, the UN General Assembly encouraged “*effective contributions from and the active participation of all Major Groups*, as identified in Agenda 21, at all stages of the preparatory process, in accordance with the rules and procedures of the Commission on Sustainable Development, as well as its established practices for the participation and engagement of Major Groups (UN, Para.12, A/RES/55/199). Furthermore, the General Assembly stressed “*that the preparatory meetings and the 2002 Summit itself should be transparent and provide for effective participation and inputs from Governments and regional and international organisations, including financial institutions, and for contributions from and active participation of Major Groups, as identified in Agenda 21*” (UN, Para. 19, A/RES/55/199). The recommendations of the UN General Assembly were followed at the national, regional and global levels in the following manner.

3.3 NATIONAL PREPARATIONS AND MAJOR GROUPS PARTICIPATION

Overall, countries were expected to prepare a national assessment on sustainable development and a country profile to help guide the discussions leading up to and during the Summit. The preparatory processes were also expected to include a series of consultations with a wide spectrum of civil society actors to get new ideas on the citizens’ practical experiences and interests in sustainable development. In countries where National Councils for Sustainable Development (NCSD) exist, the NCSD was expected to be the key preparation mechanism and engage in undertaking national assessments, raising awareness and mobilise major groups at national and local levels (UN ECOSOC 2002). As about 200 countries from all over the world undertook national preparations respectively, the preparations varied. Some countries followed the participatory aims set by the UN General Assembly whereas other did not. Due to space limits all the preparations cannot be discussed here⁴. Since this study focuses on the Finnish major groups’ representatives’ participation, the Finnish national preparations and major groups’ participation will be discussed as an example of national preparations later in this chapter.

3.4 REGIONAL PREPARATIONS AND MAJOR GROUPS PARTICIPATION

Regional preparations were held during late 2001 in five regions. These were Africa; Asia and the Pacific; Europe and North America; Latin America and the Caribbean; and West Asia. The objective of the regional preparations was to preview the key challenges, opportunities and constraints that each region has faced since the Rio Conference. Additionally, future priorities, new initiatives and the commitments needed to make progress in the respective regions in coming years were identified. The meetings in each region consisted of Eminent Persons Round Table, Sub-regional Preparatory Meetings and Regional Preparatory Committee. The results of the regional preparations were documented in reports, which were then distributed to the global preparatory committees.⁵(UN ECOSOC 2002)

⁴ Most of the national preparations can be found at www.johannesburgsummit.org/html/prep_process/national/html

⁵ Reports can be found at www.johannesburgsummit.org/html/documents/prepcoms.html

TABLE 4: Regional Preparations, Europe and North America

TIME	3.5.2001				25.9.2001	
REGIONAL PREPARATIONS	EXTENDED BUREAU MEETING 3.5.2001	EMINENT PERSONS ROUND TABLE, USA 6-8th JUNE	CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE, ROMANIA, 27-28th JUNE	REGIONAL CONSULTATIVE MEETING, SWITZERLAND 12-13th JULY	CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRIES, KAZAKHSTAN 20-21th SEPTEMBER	REGIONAL PREPCOM, SWITZERLAND, 24-25th SEPT.

The Europe and North America region started preparations in May 2001 at an extended meeting of the Committee on Environmental Policy's Bureau. From May to the final ministerial level meeting in September, different meetings were held to prepare a political declaration in which sustainable development challenges were previewed and future priorities for both the regional and global levels were identified. (Refer to Table 4) These meetings were: Eminent Persons Roundtable (June, Colorado), Central and Eastern European sub-regional meeting (June, Romania), Regional Consultative Meeting (July, Switzerland), Open-ended drafting group meeting (July, Switzerland), Central and Asian countries sub-regional meeting, 2nd Regional Consultative Meeting (September, Switzerland) and NGO multi-stakeholder dialogue meeting (September, Switzerland). The Ministerial Level Regional Meeting was held in Geneva, Switzerland from 24th to 25th of September.

The major groups were told that the regional preparatory process would provide an opportunity for interaction and dialogue (Middleton 2001:2). As a result, representatives of the major groups were able to participate in all of the meetings, however, the level and extent of their participation varied. The meetings leading to the final ministerial level meeting offered all the major groups the opportunity to sit alongside governments to form the ministerial declaration from the region to the WSSD (Ibid:2). Major groups' representatives were even included in a Friends of Chair drafting group, which assisted the Meeting Chair in the preparation of a draft ministerial declaration. In addition, the major groups were invited to comment on the preliminary draft Ministerial Declaration via email (UNECE, 2001a).

Thus, a broad participatory process preceded the final Ministerial level meeting. For the final meeting, the representatives of the major groups were told that they might be given a brief opportunity to address the floor. For this purpose, they were requested to organise themselves into issue-based and sub-regional-based constituencies, such as caucuses or coalitions, with each constituency speaking through a spokesperson. However, they were also told that due to the likely meeting room constraints and limited time available, the number of statements and participants in the meeting rooms could be limited by the Chair (UNECE, 2001b). Thus, in the final and most important meeting participation was in the hands of the Chair and far from the ideal regional preparatory process that would provide an opportunity for interaction and dialogue. According to Toby Middleton, (2001:2), the major groups' representatives "*ended up running around in the meeting just to secure a four-minute speaker slot*". In other words, representatives of the major groups were able to participate extensively in the regional preparations, but at the final ministerial level meeting their role was reduced drastically.

3.5 GLOBAL PREPCOMS AND MAJOR GROUPS PARTICIPATION

At the global level, preparations for the WSSD took place in four inter-governmental preparatory committee (PrepCom) meetings during 2001-2002. The first three were held in New York and the last in Bali, Indonesia. In order for representatives of major groups to participate in the PrepComs and at the WSSD they needed to be accredited as discussed in chapter 2. Those major group entities who had a consultative status with Economic and Social Council or were on the roster of the Commission on Sustainable Development only needed to register through the Secretariat and those not accredited but interested to participate were invited to apply for accreditation to the Summit by submitting information on their relevance and involvement in sustainable development issues, particularly in the follow-up

process to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The Secretariat, with support from United Nations Non-governmental Liaison Service and relevant others as appropriate, evaluated the applications and recommended lists of major group entities for accreditation. Accreditation was a continuous process during which a total of 737 major group entities were accredited by consensus. Only at the WSSD the number of accredited entities equaled 8000 major groups' representatives. (DESA, 2003)

Global preparations provided major groups with many opportunities to participate. In some of the PrepComs, major groups were able to participate in multi-stakeholder panels and multi-stakeholder dialogues. (As shown in Table 5)

TABLE 5: Global Preparations

TIME	30.4.2001	7.6.2002
GLOBAL PREPCOMS	PrepCom I MSP	PrepCom II MSD

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graph LR
    A[PrepCom I MSP] --> B[PrepCom II MSD]
    B --> C[PrepCom III -]
    C --> D[PrepCom IV MSD]
  
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The first global PrepCom meeting was held from 30th April to 2nd May 2001, in New York to discuss organisational matters of the Summit. The representatives of the Major Groups were allowed to bring their views to the discussions in a multi-stakeholder panel at the beginning of the meeting and through submitting papers, which were later documented.⁶

The second international PrepCom, which was held from January 28th to February 8th 2002 in New York, was the first substantive preparatory meeting for the Summit. It incorporated a two-day multi-stakeholder dialogue from 29th to 31st January. The major groups were asked to submit a dialogue paper prior to the multi-stakeholder dialogues to identify their progress in terms of sustainable development over the last ten years, as well as their hoped future role in achieving sustainable development.⁷ Dialogues consisted of four sessions. There was a plenary discussion focusing on the overall progress achieved and hotspots for future actions. Two parallel discussion groups were organised, one on integrating approaches to sectoral and cross-sectoral areas of sustainable development and the other on enabling and promoting multi-stakeholder participation in sustainable development institutions. A final plenary aiming to identify new opportunities for partnerships to implement sustainable development was also included. Present during the dialogues were representatives of the nine major groups, representatives of different governments, as well as other interested parties.

The third PrepCom, in New York, did not include a multi-stakeholder dialogue segment or any other formal participation mode for the Major Groups. Yet the representatives of the Major Groups were allowed to participate in the meetings as observers but not to engage in a dialogue.

The fourth PrepCom, in Bali, was a ministerial level meeting. It was held from 27th May to 7th June 2002. After one PrepCom break, a two-day multi-stakeholder dialogue was organised in Bali from 27th to 29th May. This multi-stakeholder dialogue segment focused on issues relevant to capacity building

⁶ Dialogue papers can be found at www.johannesburgsummit.org/html/major_groups/multistake_dialogue_prep1papers.html

⁷ Dialogue papers can be found at http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/html/major_groups/majorgroups_prep2papers.html

and partnerships for implementation. The major groups submitted dialogue papers in the same manner as the second PrepCom⁸.

3.6 WSSD AND MAJOR GROUPS PARTICIPATION

The World Summit on Sustainable Development was held in Johannesburg, South Africa from 24th August to 4th September 2002. It was the finalisation for all the work done in national, regional and global preparations. During the Summit a number of opportunities were set for the major groups to participate. (See Table 6)

TABLE 6: WSSD

TIME	25.8	26.8	27.8	29.8	30.2	2.9	3.9	4.9
WSSD	-	Agriculture	Water and Sanitation	Cross Sectoral Issues		Making It Happen Roundtable	Making It Happen Roundtable	Making It Happen
	Health	Biodiversity	Energy	Plenary: Non-state entities	Plenary: Non-state entities			Multi-stakeholder Event

As a change to the PrepComs, the Summit allowed major groups to participate in a more integrated manner. In the PrepComs, the multi-stakeholder dialogues were organised at the beginning of negotiations, whereas at the Summit there were different participatory practices organised throughout the two weeks for the major groups.

From the first day of the Summit until the 29th September, the WSSD official sessions consisted of seven thematic plenaries. These were on health, biodiversity, agriculture, cross-sectoral issues, water and sanitation, energy, and regional implementation as illustrated in table 6. Plenaries were organised as multi-stakeholder panels. In all of the dialogues the procedure was the same. Firstly, two experts gave a presentation on the topic. Secondly, there was a panel discussion between the representatives of the major groups facilitated by a third party facilitator and in the end, the floor was given to the comments of different countries, if they so wished. Each of the plenaries was assigned half a day.

After the thematic plenaries, from 29th to 30th August, the official sessions were plenaries where non-state entities could give their statements. Various entities used their right to express their opinions in the plenaries. The expressions were as diverse as the presenters were. Speakers included approximately 43 UN agencies and intergovernmental bodies, 23 regional and other governmental bodies, and 31 non-governmental organisations (ENB, 2002: 4).

The General Debate began in plenary on the 2nd September, with statements from over 100 Heads of State and Government, ministers, heads of delegation and other high-level government officials. The number of major groups' permitted to listen to this plenary was limited.

Four high-level roundtable discussions called "Making It Happen" also started on 2nd September. All the major groups were allowed to participate in the round table negotiations and raise their voices on questions important to them. However, the number of people allowed to attend the roundtables was limited. There were only seats for the Head of State or Government and one assistant. Other heads of delegation could come by themselves, but there were no seats for them. There were only 20 seats for the participants of International Organisations and major groups and the only ones allowed in were the heads of organisations or Chief Executive Officers, with no substitutes (Jordan, 2002). In the round

⁸ Dialogue papers can be found at
http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/html/major_groups/majorgroups_prep4papers.html

table discussions, the Heads of State and Government, other officials and Major Groups' representatives shared perspectives on sustainable development priorities, described domestic programmes, and announced or recommended new international initiatives (ENB, 2002:3).

On the final day of the Summit, 4th September a high-level multi-stakeholder event was organised, whereby representatives of each major group restated their commitment to implementing sustainable development.

In addition to the official sessions, there were numerous side events where the same matters were discussed. Although there were some drawbacks in the participation practices, the strong emphasis on participation and the various formal means to engage the non-state actors in preparatory process "*makes the WSSD the most innovative approach in developing global policy agreements to date*" (Dodds, 2001:xx).

3.7 FINLAND AND MAJOR GROUPS PARTICIPATION

If the participatory practices used at the WSSD made it the most innovative approach in developing global policy agreements to date, then participatory practices provided for the Finnish major groups by the Finnish State made Finland probably one of the most innovative states at the WSSD. This can be argued on the basis that Finland enacted its decision to provide the means for a variety of actors to participate in a genuine manner and in real-time in the decision-making throughout the WSSD process. (Karanko, 2003) In terms of Pretty et al.'s, (1997), conceptualisation of participation practices the Finnish major groups' representatives were able to participate interactively with the Finnish State representatives and in reference to Arnstein's, (1969), ladder their participation was between placation and partnership.

3.7.1 NATIONAL LEVEL

The national preparations were organised through two co-ordinating units: Civil Servants Preparation Group and Johannesburg 2002 - Preparatory Committee (JS2002). The former group was run by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and was responsible for the official Finnish standpoints, as well as, participation at the international negotiations. The latter, was a special committee established under the Finnish National Commission on Sustainable Development (FNCSD)⁹ to help to prepare for the Summit. The members of the JS2002 committee were civil servants, representatives of the major groups and other organisations. (See Appendix 1) Although the two co-ordinating units were separate, according to Karanko, (2003), their work division was not.

Through the JS2002 the major groups were able to participate in the decision-making on many occasions. The JS2002 met more or less every month. In these meetings all participants were able to engage in discussions related to the Summit, exchange information and bring forth new ideas. Its main aim was to create discussion in Finland on sustainable development around three selected themes; sustainable use of natural resources, sustainable information society, and health and security. In addition, the JS2002 committee commented on the international preparations on occasions. (Reijonen, 2002)

Besides the monthly meetings, the JS2002 organised five seminars around the sustainable development issues. These were 'Towards Johannesburg Summit 2002'; 'State and Future of Natural Resources'; 'Eco Efficiency and the role of society in Sustainable Development'; 'Environment, health and safety'; and

⁹ The website address of FNCSD is <http://www.vyh.fi/eng/environ/sustdev/tmkeng.htm>

'Johannesburg 2002 - on the road to sustainable development'.¹⁰ In these seminars the JS2002 and the Civil Servants Preparatory Group were able to collaborate and engage in discussions. For example, in the last seminar 'Johannesburg 2002 - on the road to sustainable development' a multi-stakeholder panel was organised in which the representatives of all the major groups were given the chance to express their groups' wishes and hopes in regards to the Summit.

3.7.2 INTERNATIONAL LEVEL – NATIONAL DELEGATION

Since the Finnish aim was to provide means for various actors to participate in the WSSD process directly and promptly, representatives of the major groups were included in the Finnish national delegation at the regional and global preparations, as well as at the Summit. (See Appendix 2 for the list of participants and the meetings)

In deciding who to include in the national delegation various issues were taken into account. One of the central considerations was to guarantee that all the Finnish major groups could participate at the Summit. Additionally, major groups' representatives who were taking part, for example, in the parallel meetings were included in the delegation (e.g. Arctic happening, university partnership etc.). (Loukola, 2002) In general the selection process followed the same pattern. Firstly the Ministry for Foreign Affairs identified the number of places to be filled by major groups' representatives in the delegation and then the major groups chose among themselves whom they would recommend (Karanko, 2003). Thereafter, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs nominated the representatives of the major groups to the delegation with the consent of the Government.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Environment financially supported the representatives of the major groups. (Karanko, 2003) The over arching principle with financial assistance was to support those groups who could not have participated otherwise. However, the financial assistance was agreed to before the meetings and it did not compensate all cost. Therefore, some expenses were left for the major groups to cover themselves. (Loukola, 2002)

Before each EU meeting, PrepCom or the Summit, the official negotiation delegation met. In these meetings the Finnish stand on the issues being addressed in the international meetings were discussed. When the Finnish agenda was finalised, all the members of the delegation were present. (Karanko, 2003) Before the Johannesburg Summit, the entire delegation met once and in addition the major groups' representatives met with President Tarja Halonen (Reijonen, 2002).

During the PrepComs and the WSSD, the entire delegation met every morning to discuss what had happened during the previous day and what were the important discussions for that day. In other words, the civil servants briefed about the negotiations and the major groups conveyed their feelings within their groups. In Johannesburg, as an example, the official negotiation delegation met every morning at 7.15am and the whole delegation met from 8 to 9.30am. On 3rd August, President Tarja Halonen held the morning meeting giving the major groups an opportunity to address the President directly, as well as the ministers who were present at that meeting. The daily morning meeting was open to all Finns present, even if they were not part of the national delegation.

Since the Finnish representatives of the major groups were part of the national delegation, i.e. they had a national accreditation in contrast to other accreditation options; they were able to access all negotiations. As part of the national delegation, the major groups were primarily representatives of Finland instead of their respective major group. Yet, some of the Finnish major group representatives had double roles i.e.

¹⁰ In Finnish: Kohti Johannesburg 2002 huippukokousta; Luonnonvarojen tila ja tulevaisuus; Ekotehokkuus ja tietoyhteiskunnan rooli kestävässä kehityksessä; Ympäristö, terveys ja turvallisuus; and Johannesburg 2002 - kestävän kehityksen tiellä

they were part of their major group delegation, as well as the Finnish national delegation. For example, the Chair of International Council of Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) Kaarin Taipale gave speeches on the role of Local Authorities. Equally, the Indigenous People's representative Irja Seurujärvi-Kari represented her own group in the roundtable discussion, in Johannesburg. These speeches were of course given as representatives of the respective major groups and not as representatives of Finland (Loukola, 2002).

All members of the delegation actively participated in the work of the delegation. Delegates helped in passing information by writing short descriptions from different themes and happenings to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs web site. (Loukola, 2002) Furthermore, each delegate had been assigned to follow particular meetings. Reports of these meetings were produced daily (Karanko, 2003). Major groups were also active in 'corridor negotiations', which dealt with issues that came up in the actual meeting. In many cases it was a question of fighting for Finland's special aims, which the major groups felt was important (e.g. fight around reproductive health issue).

After the WSSD the delegation met twice, first at the end of September and the second time at the beginning of March when the President invited them. (Loukola, 2002)

In conclusion, the preparatory processes, as well as the Summit, provided the major groups with various possibilities to participate in the decision-making as a whole. The participatory practices varied from passive participation to interactive participation. In the case of the Finnish major groups' representatives, their participatory possibilities, in regards the Finnish decision-making, were enhanced through their membership in the national delegation. Considering the various participatory practices outlined in this chapter for the major groups in general, and especially for the Finnish representatives, the next chapter will analyse the meaningfulness of participation. The analysis is based on the experiences and perceptions of the Finnish major groups' representatives.

4 ANALYSIS – MEANINGFULNESS OF PARTICIPATION

As was seen in the previous chapter, major groups representatives were provided with number of participatory opportunities during the preparations and at the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The extent to which the major groups could participate varied. At times they were able to engage in dialogues whereas other times they were in the role of observers. Major groups were never in a position to take decisions. Although the number and extent of participatory possibilities might enhance the meaningfulness of participation, they do not guarantee that participation will be meaningful for the participants. Meaningful participation is a sum of many attributes, none of the attributes are universal and all of them are situation related. Thus, meaningful participation is dependent on the participant's perceptions.

It is in this light, that the Finnish major groups representatives' perceptions in regards to participation are analysed and the criteria of meaningful participation identified in chapter 1 is used as a structure. The analysis focuses on the interviewees' perceptions in relation to the criteria on two accounts. Firstly, did the interviewees perceive that the criterion in question was fulfilled and to what extent? Secondly, did the interviewees perceive that the criterion was important for a meaningful participation and how important in comparison to other things?

4.1 INTERVIEWEES

Agenda 21 identifies nine major groups whose participation is considered fundamental to the effective implementation of the objectives, policies and programmes of sustainable development. These groups are Women, Children and Youth, Indigenous People, Non-governmental organisations (NGOs), Local Authorities, Trade Unions, Farmers, Business and Industry, and Scientific and Technological

Community. Out of these nine major groups five were interviewed for this study. The major groups and their representatives interviewed were:

- Women: Elina Hatakka, Sirpa Hertell and Eeva- Maria Vuorenmaa
- Indigenous People: Irja Seurujärvi-Kari
- NGOs: Hanna Matinpuro, Aleksi Neuvonen, Olli-Pekka Turunen and Oras Tynkkynen
- Children and Youth: Karoliina Öystilä and Sami Kontola
- Local Authorities: Maija Hakanen and Kaarin Taipale

The interviewees differ in many ways and these differences colour their perceptions on participation. In the first place, the groups they represent have different aims and resources. In addition, the interviewees did not all participate in the same meetings. At the national level, most of the interviewees were involved with the preparations as members or substitute members of the national JS2002 committee. (See Appendix 1) At the international level, the interviewees took part in different number of meetings. The Women representative Elina Hatakka, the NGO representative Oras Tynkkynen and Children and Youth representative Karoliina Öystilä participated only at the fourth PrepCom in Bali. Equally, the Indigenous People's representative Irja Seurujärvi-Kari, the Children and Youth representative Sami Kontola, the Women representative Sirpa Hertell and Local Authorities representative Maija Hatakka took part at the WSSD only. The Local Authorities representative Kaarin Taipale participated in all of the international meetings and the NGO representatives Hanna Matinpuro participated at the II, IV PrepComs and at the WSSD, the NGO representatives Aleksi Neuvonen and Olli-Pekka Turunen participated at the III, IV PrepComs and at the Summit, and the Women representative Eeva-Maria Vuorenmaa participated at the I PrepCom and at the Summit. (See Appendix 2)

Furthermore, the personal characteristics and experience in international negotiations of the interviewees' differed. The representative of the Indigenous People Irja Seurujärvi-Kari and the Women's representative Sirpa Hertell have both years of experience in the UN international negotiations in comparison to the NGO representatives Aleksi Neuvonen, Olli-Pekka Turunen and the Women's representative Elina Hatakka who had no prior experience.

Although the major groups and the interviewees differ, the aim of this study is to analyse the meaningfulness of participation in general, rather than identifying the different positions, perceptions and possibilities of specific groups or their representatives. Furthermore, despite the differences among the interviewees, their perceptions on participation's meaningfulness in the preparations for and during the WSSD were fairly similar. The differences were more in the details, rather than in the general picture, which will be discussed next.

4.2 CONTINUOUS PARTICIPATION

All the interviewees considered that theoretically it was possible for the major groups to participate throughout the process, according to the Youth and Children representative Sami Kontola "*in Finland, the Finnish major groups involvement was encouraged from the beginning, which made it easier for the major groups to do so*" (Kontola, 2003, own translation).

But in practice, despite the encouragement and participatory possibilities, the major groups' representatives found it difficult to take part in all of the meetings. According to the NGO representative Oras Tynkkynen, "*hardly any of the Finnish NGOs were able to organise time and resources to follow or participate in all of the meetings*" (Tynkkynen, 2003 own translation). Many of the interviewees were able to participate in the JS2002 meetings at the national level, but participating at the regional or international level was more complicated. Most of the interviewees participated in the international meetings only when part of the Finnish national delegation, however, some participated in the meetings

with accreditation from their major group. None of the interviewees participated in all of the national, regional and global preparation meetings. It was more common that one representative participated in one international preparatory meeting and possibly also at the Summit. Often the representatives changed but the same major groups were present in the national delegation. In addition, some of the interviewees came to the process later and a couple took part only in one or two of the meetings. Although the interviewees were not able to participate in all of the meetings physically, most of them followed the process in a continuous manner and commented on the procedures via email.

In general, the interviewees felt that continuous participation was an important factor for meaningful participation. Many pointed out that, since decisions were made throughout the process, it was important that the major groups participated in all of the meetings, thus giving them the opportunity to influence or to be heard while decisions were taken. For example, the NGO representative Hanna Matinpuro said, “*that by the time of the fourth PrepCom in Bali many decisions were already made which were not negotiated later*” (Matinpuro 2003, own translation).

Some considered that it would have been good if the same people from the major groups could have participated in all of the meetings. The Youth and Children representative Carolina Hostile, for example, felt that “*it would have been more effective if one person from Finland would have represented Youth and Children all the way through to build up their experience and the contacts they had made*” (Hostile 2003, own translation). On one hand the interviewees considered that continuous participation of the same major groups representatives made or would have made participation more meaningful, but on the other hand the interviewees thought that it was also positive that different representatives from the same major group participated in the international meetings from the learning aspect. In addition, the NGO representative Olli-Pokka Tureen pointed out that “*although continuous participation of the same representatives adds to the meaningfulness of participation sometimes it can be more meaningful for people with special expert knowledge to participate in the meetings where those areas are discussed even if it is once during a longer process. Also civil servants do not know all the areas, thus having expert representatives from the major groups can be beneficial for them.*” (Tureen 2003, own translation).

The interviewees considered that continuous participation of the major groups increased the meaningfulness of their participation. However, they did not think that continuous participation of the same representatives to be fundamental. Many interviewees thought that participation was meaningful even if different representatives from the same major groups participated in the meetings, after all those who took part in the meetings were briefed and consulted by other representatives of that respective major group. For example, the women representative Elina Hatakka who was incorporated into the process at a later stage still thought that participation was meaningful even though it was not continuous for her personally (Hatakka, 2003).

4.3 EQUALITY

The interviewees felt that the major groups were treated in a similar manner and given equal participatory opportunities in the formal processes at national, regional and international preparations, as well as at the WSSD. Many pointed out that major groups equal treatment was apparent in the multi-stakeholder dialogues and panels, in which each of the major groups were given equal amount of time to express their opinions and be heard.

Although the formal opportunities to participate were the same for all the major groups, the interviewees pointed out that the major groups were not equal in other terms. The NGO representative Oras Tynkkynen thought that “*the multi-stakeholder dialogues and panels were like micro cosmoses where the major groups were equal but in reality they are no*” (Tynkkynen 2003, own translation). The

interviewees' felt that the obvious difference between groups was their resources. Some groups were more experienced, better represented and organised. These initial differences provided the groups with different means to participate. In terms of influencing the decisions through informal means such as lobbying, instead of formal dialogues, the groups were positioned differently. According to the Youth and Children representative Sami Kontola, "*the Youth and Children group was badly positioned since they did not have powerful political tools, knowledge and experience to lobby effectively*" (Kontola 2003, own translation). However, overall the interviewees thought that inequalities were diminished to some extent during formal participatory processes through organisational methods.

The interviewees also considered that the major groups were treated equally in the Finnish national delegation. Whereas when the interviewees were asked whether all members of national delegation, i.e. civil servants, politicians and major groups were equal, the opinions varied. However, most of the interviewees considered that the major groups' representatives were equal with the other delegates. The Women's representative Sirpa Hertell said, "*equality between civil servants, politicians and major groups was very good. They were all treated in the same way. Major groups were able to express their opinions and these were taken into account in the decision-making process all the time*" (Hertell 2003, own translation). The Indigenous People's representative Irja Seurujärvi-Kari pointed out that "*the Finnish decision-making culture is based on consensus building. Therefore, the main thing for the delegates was not to have an opportunity to get their voices, ideas and demands through but rather to be working together*" (Seurujärvi-Kari 2003, own translation). However, some of the interviewees thought that the major groups were not equal with the civil servants and politicians. Yet, even those who thought that there were some inequalities between the different Finnish delegates did not perceive any major differences. The NGO representative Hanna Matinpuro considered that "*civil servants, politicians and the major groups do not necessarily need to be equal, but if they aren't, as they weren't, then it should be openly recognised*" (Matinpuro 2003, own translation).

In regards to equality between major groups and the states, none of the interviewees really commented on that, since it was so evident that major groups and states were not equal. States were the ones with votes in the negotiations, whereas major groups only had a voice.

Although states and major groups were not equal, the interviewees did not think that the inequality between the two was a major factor affecting the meaningfulness of their participation or major groups' participation in general. Most of the interviewees considered that in international negotiations states should be the ones with the vote and major groups with the voice even in the future. Rather than all participants being equal the interviewees consider having an opportunity to participate, even not as equals, was more important than all having the same rights. The Women's representative Eeva-Maria Vuorenmaa commented, "*the aim should not be making states and major groups equal in terms of their powers, but it would be important that the major groups, as area experts, would be allowed to enter all the meeting. This way they could inform the state representatives on the implications of the issues discussed from their expertise perspective*" (Vuorenmaa 2003, own translation).

4.4 TRANSPARENCY

Overall, the Finnish major groups' representatives considered that the preparations for and the Summit itself were transparent. However, there were some instances when transparency was challenged.

None of the interviewees mentioned any lack of transparency either in the national preparations or in the Finnish national delegation. Instead the interviewees considered that being part of the national delegation was an advantage in terms of getting information and increasing the transparency of the international meetings. The interviewees pointed out that since major groups were part of the Finnish national delegation they were able to attend meetings, which were closed to non-country delegates. In

addition, the daily morning meetings, during the international negotiations, with the entire Finnish delegation were highly valued by all the Finnish major groups. In the morning meetings, the major groups were able to discuss and receive information about all important matters that had happened the previous day and what was likely to come up during that day in a very open manner. Many of the interviewees felt that the morning meetings enabled them to follow the international meetings better. According to the NGO representative Olli-Pekka Turunen, “*the Finnish delegation did an excellent job in informing the Finnish major groups’ representatives on what was happening in the negotiations. Compared to the NGO representatives from other countries the Finnish ones were more aware of what had happened in the negotiations and what where the heated issues*” (Turunen 2003, own translation). The Local Authorities representative Kaarin Taipale said, “*the extent of transparency in the Finnish delegation was extra ordinary. Besides the uniqueness of the information policy in the morning meetings, if there was anything I needed to know I could call or send a text message to any of the Finnish delegates*” (Taipale 2003, own translation).

However, many of the interviewees felt that the international meetings in general were not completely transparent. Entrance to the negotiations was often restricted. There were many meetings, which were only to country delegates. As a result the major groups representatives who were not part of a country delegation were not able to follow the process in a transparent manner. Instead they had to find out from others what had happened in the meetings. The Women’s representative Elina Hatakka mentioned that “*in the major groups caucuses the lack of transparency in terms of not being able to participate in all of the meetings was discussed a lot*” (Hatakka 2003, own translation). The interviewees who participated at the Johannesburg Summit and in other international preparatory meeting thought the shortcomings with transparency were more obvious at the WSSD. In Johannesburg the negotiations were more restricted and at times the major groups representatives had problems even entering the conference centre where the negotiations were taking place.

On the other hand, some of the interviewees found it difficult to conceptualise whether the international meetings were transparent or not. For example, the Youth and Children representative Sami Kontola said, “*I felt like I was watching the whole process from the side and therefore it is difficult for me to say if it was transparent*” (Kontola 2003, own translation). Equally, the other Youth and Children representative Karoliina Öystilä thought that “*the process felt transparent, but it might have been, because the Finnish delegation was so open and informative towards all of its delegates*” (Öystilä 2003, own translation).

The interviewees considered that transparency affected the meaningfulness of participation, yet it was not the most important factor. The fact that the Finnish delegation was open and informative was considered to increase the meaningfulness of major groups’ participation.

4.5 INFLUENCE

The interviewees found it difficult to assess the extent of the major groups’ influence. One obvious reason for this difficulty is that major groups do not have formal authority as decision-making entities. In addition, the interviewees pointed out that the possibilities and the degree to which they were able to influence decisions varied. For example, the interviewees thought that the Finnish major groups were able to influence issues discussed in Finland. Equally, the Finnish major groups’ opinions were taken into account in the Finnish national delegation. The Women’s representative Eeva-Maria Vuorenmaa said, “*when-ever the major groups representatives convinced the other members of the delegation their ideas were incorporated with the Finnish stand*” (Vuorenmaa 2003, own translation).

In comparison to the rather good abilities to influence the Finnish civil servants, many of the interviewees mentioned that there was a lack of abilities to influence the EU. The only way to do so was

to get Finnish civil servants to raise the issues important to the Finnish major groups at the EU co-ordination meetings. According to the interviewees, major groups considered it troublesome. The Local Authorities representative Maija Hakanen said, “*major groups could influence the Finnish stand, but how influential is the Finnish voice in the EU and furthermore will the ideas of the Finnish major groups ever reach the UN*” (Hakanen 2003, own translation).

Although the Finnish major groups’ influence was more obvious in Finland and within the national delegation, the interviewees thought that major groups, in general, had influence at the international level. In terms of different methods influencing decisions, the interviewees thought that direct lobbying was more influential than formal participatory practices. Many thought that the official multi-stakeholder dialogues failed to produce any tangible results. According to the interviewees, the major groups criticised the timing and some states’ lack of interest in the dialogue sessions. According to the Youth and Children representative Karoliina Öystilä, “*the members of the Youth group were frustrated in Bali over their possibilities to influence through the dialogues. They felt that there was no point in saying anything since no one noticed them or moreover only half of the states were present in the dialogues. However, those who where present at the dialogue seemed to listen what the Youth had to say*” (Öystilä 2003, own translation). Equally, the NGO representative Hanna Matinpuro pointed out that “*many NGO delegates, in Bali, felt that they should not participate in the dialogues, since they were not listened to*” (Matinpuro 2003, own translation).

Even though major groups were frustrated over their possibilities to influence, especially through officially organised methods like the multi-stakeholder dialogues and panels, the numerous paragraphs in the WSSD outcome documents addressing major groups are tangible examples of their influence. The Youth and Children representatives Karoliina Öystilä and Sami Kontola thought that paragraph 153; was included in the Plan of Implementation as a result of Youth and Children group’s continuous influence on countries on the role of youth. Paragraph 153 states that states should: “*Promote and support youth participation in programmes and activities relating to sustainable development through, for example, supporting local youth councils or equivalent, and by encouraging their establishment were they do not exist*” (Plan of Implementation 2002).

Equally, the Local Authorities representative Kaarin Taipale thought that local level was mentioned in the Johannesburg Declaration, because the Local Authorities were pushing it through at every opportunity possible. The Johannesburg Declaration, point 5 now states: “*Accordingly we now assume a collective responsibility to advance and strengthen interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars of sustainable development – economic development, social development and environmental protection – at local, national, regional and global levels*” (Johannesburg Declaration, 2002:point 5). Yet, Taipale thinks, “*it is difficult to say where the influence really came from or why the local level was included in the text. It would be interesting to see if the Local Authorities had not been part of the meeting what the outcomes would have looked like then*” (Taipale 2003, own translation).

The Indigenous People’s representative Irja Seurujärvi-Kari mentioned point 25 of the Johannesburg Declaration was the result of Indigenous People’s work and influence. The Johannesburg Declaration, point 25; states, “*We reaffirm the vital role of indigenous people in sustainable development*” (Johannesburg Declaration, 2002:point 25). It is a great achievement for Indigenous People to be recognised as Indigenous Peoples instead of people, because it means that indigenous people will have collective rather than individual rights. In that sense, the final outcome was good. However, Seurujärvi-Kari thought the goals of Indigenous People’s groups were set too low (Seurujärvi-Kari 2003).

The Women’s representatives Sirpa Hertell, Elina Hatakka and Eeva-Maria Vuorenmaa all thought, that in addition to the many parts where women were mentioned, the Women’s group was crucial in highlighting the harmful implications of one sentence in paragraph 47 in the Plan of Implementation.

The sentence stated that women's reproductive health should be '*consistent with national laws and cultural and religious values*' (Plan of Implementation 2002, para 47). As such, the sentence implies that contraceptives and abortion could be banned in catholic countries, circumcision in countries with Islamic belief would be allowed and 'assassination in the name of honour' would be accepted. In addition to alarming the states about the implications of paragraph 47, Women's group also pushed governments to act upon it. The sentence remained in the final version, but another sentence was added "*in conformity with human rights and fundamental freedoms*" to improve the paragraph. The final paragraph now states the following: "*Strengthen the capacity of health-care systems to deliver basic health services to all, in an efficient, accessible and affordable manner aimed at preventing, controlling and treating diseases, and to reduce environmental health threats, in conformity with human rights and fundamental freedoms and consistent with national laws and cultural and religious values, taking into account the reports of relevant United nations conferences and summit and of special sessions of the General Assembly*" (Plan of Implementation, 2002:para 47).

Despite the Women group's high level of activity on paragraph 47, Elina Hatakka pointed out that "*it is difficult to say who influenced and what, but I believe that paragraph 47 was altered partly due to the fact women were part of the WSSD process*" (Hatakka 2003, own translation). Sirpa Hertell thinks that "*governments would have acted upon paragraph 47 even without the major groups presence, but it might have been left to a later stage*" (Hertell 2003, own translation).

The NGO representatives interviewed were not able to point out any tangible results of NGO influence. Hanna Matinpuro said that "*the NGOs worked a lot to oppose World Trade organisation's influence in the environmental negotiations and since it did not go through at the end it could be considered as a tangible result of NGO influence. However, NGOs were not the only ones fighting against it*" (Matinpuro 2003, own translation). As another tangible example of NGOs influence, Olli-Pekka Turunen mentioned, "*the fact that matters related to biodiversity stayed so strong was partly thanks to NGOs. Other than that there are many parts in the final Johannesburg Declaration that the NGOs pushed forward but all the phraseology and all the endings and annexes to the sentences water them down*". (Turunen 2003, own translation).

The interviewees considered major groups' influence an important factor for meaningful participation during the preparations and at the WSSD. However, they were all very realistic about major groups' possibilities to influence decisions at the international level. Thus, the interviewees thought that influence in the sense of giving major groups the opportunity to raise their voices in official situations as well as being able to lobby informally was one of the most important attributes for the meaningfulness of their participation. None of the interviewees thought that their participation was not meaningful even though they were not able to alter the outcome documents, as they would have liked to see them.

The NGO representative Olli-Pekka Turunen said, "*major groups presence was already influential and made participation meaningful*" (Turunen 2003, own translation). The Youth and Children representative Sami Kontola thought, "*it was unlikely that major group's opinion would over rule the opinions of the state's official stand. Considering this it was good to think about what was possible. Influence was in small things, which made participation meaningful*"(Kontola 2003, own translation). The NGO representative Hanna Matinpuro considered that "*even if the major group's opinions were not obvious in the final outcome documents of the Summit the fact that they were allowed to speak already made it possible that important issues were brought up and discussed. The ideas the major groups raised could have influenced their listeners even though these do not show in any official document. Compared to a situation where they would not have a possibility to participate it is a lot better*" (Matinpuro 2003, own translation). In other words, the interviewees felt that major groups influence does not need to reach the point where the major groups would be able to overrule decisions for

participation to be meaningful. The fact that they had an opportunity to influence or be heard was one of the most important attributes for the meaningfulness of their participation.

4.6 INTERACTIVITY

During the preparations for and at the WSSD multi-stakeholder dialogues and panels, roundtable discussions were held to create space for the major groups to participate in an interactive manner. Despite being provided the time and place for deliberative participation, all the interviewees agreed that the dialogues and panels were not very interactive. The interviewees' opinions differed on the extent to which the formal participatory possibilities enabled major groups to engage in interactive dialogues.

The Women's representatives Eeva-Maria Vuorenmaa and Elina Hatakka, Youth and Children representative Karoliina Öystilä and the NGO representatives Hanna Matinpuro and Oras Tynkkynen did not think that the multi-stakeholder dialogues were alive enough to be called dialogues. They thought that the opportunity for real interaction was reduced due to the fact that both major groups and states presented readymade speeches. After the presentations there was no time, for example, to clarify opposing viewpoints or to engage in any kind of dialogue. The Women's representative Elina Hatakka described the dialogues in the following manner "*dialogue is a wrong word for the multi-stakeholder dialogues rather they were monologues after another. Each major group was just trying to get their own issues to be heard*" (Hatakka 2003, own translation).

On the other hand, Women's representative Sirpa Hertell, Youth and Children representative Sami Kontola, Indigenous People's representative Irja Seurujärvi-Kari, NGO representatives Aleksi Neuvonen and Olli-Pekka Turunen, and Local Authorities representative Kaarin Taipale considered that the formal participatory practices were somewhat interactive and that the dialogues were more dialogues than monologues. None of them thought that the participatory possibilities allowed for perfect interaction and all of them emphasised that considering the circumstances where participation took place, i.e. little time and many speakers, the possibilities for interaction and dialogue were limited. The Indigenous People's representative Seurujärvi-Kari said, "*if there is a forum for discussion then there has to be some kind of a dialogue. However, there is not much time for dialogues in these kinds of conferences*" (Seurujärvi-Kari 2003, own translation). The Women's representative Sirpa Hertell thought "*the fact that major groups' speeches were prepared beforehand challenged the idea of interactive dialogue, but even still the multi-stakeholder dialogues were interactive dialogues. How else could you organise dialogue in such a big setting? One has to accept that in international Summit readymade speeches are used*" (Hertell 2003, own translation). The NGO representative Aleksi Neuvonen said "*when you have 300 people in one room and a limited time it is difficult to create dialogue. The dialogues I followed had tracks of spontaneity and interactivity in them. One cannot expect to get thorough dialogue going unless it is in smaller groupings or there is a lot of time. In a wider picture the issues that were said came across clearly*" (Neuvonen 2003, own translation). According to Local authorities representative Kaarin Taipale, "*the multi-stakeholder dialogues got better throughout the process. Whilst in New York and Bali the major groups and states read the readymade position papers in Johannesburg the facilitator Jan Pronk made sure that the major groups engaged in dialogue rather than read from papers*" (Taipale 2003, own translation).

The interviewees considered that the preparations in Finland and also the Finnish national delegation gave the Finnish major groups better possibilities for interactive participation than the international setting. However, due to the size differences, these are not comparable.

The interviewees thought that interactivity increased the meaningfulness of participation, especially in the Finnish delegation. Yet, the lack of interactivity in the international preparatory meetings as well as at the WSSD did not make participation meaningless. Most of the interviewees thought that being able

to express their opinions was the most important factor for the major groups. Considering how difficult interactive participation is at the international level, major groups did not think lack of interaction to be a problem.

4.7 INCLUSIVITY

As was seen in chapter 3, major groups were included in the preparations for and at the WSSD on many occasions, in different ways. Although, the major groups were provided with formal participatory opportunities, many of the interviewees felt that there were times when major groups inclusion was more symbolic than real at the international setting. In reference to the multi-stakeholder dialogues, the NGO representative Aleksi Neuvonen commented that “*although the dialogues brought out relevant issues, they did not effect the negotiations and as a result major groups participation in the dialogues was more symbolic than real*” (Neuvonen 2003, own translation). Equally, the NGO representative Oras Tynkkynen described the formal participatory processes, such as multi-stakeholder dialogues, as “*pseudo-participation, because the processes were supposed to be open and allow for discussion, but in practice very few states took part in them*” (Tynkkynen 2003, own translation).

In addition, the interviewees considered that, at the international level, organisational matters challenged the extent of major groups’ inclusion. For example, the interviewees who participated in the second and fourth PrepComs mentioned that the major groups felt somewhat excluded as the multi-stakeholder dialogues in which they were able to raise their opinions and concerns were organised at the beginning of the PrepComs. Due to the timing of the dialogues the major groups were formally included in the process only in the beginning and not throughout the preparatory meetings. Also the dialogues were marginalized in the sense that all the high level decision-makers were present at the meetings in later stage and thus were not able to participate in dialogues or aware that dialogues were taking place. The NGO representative Aleksi Neuvonen commented that “*the dialogues were a sideshow*” (Neuvonen 2003, own translation). Equally, Local Authorities representative Kaarin Taipale thought that “*the timing of the multi-stakeholder dialogues in the PrepComs marginalized them*” (Taipale 2003, own translation).

The interviewees felt that at the WSSD, in Johannesburg, the organisational hindrances to major groups’ inclusion were most apparent. Extensive geographical distances between different events restricted the possibility to participate in many happenings and reduced the possibilities to bridge the gap between different actors. Despite the best efforts with regards to transportation, access of major groups and government delegates to different events was limited. The Women’s representative Eeva-Maria Vuorenmaa commented “*because of the distances Women’s group ended up talking to each other about questions such as women’s right to own land, whereas it should have been spoken where there were other parties as well*”(Vuorenmaa 2003, own translation). The NGO representative, Hanna Matinpuro, pointed out, “*the representatives of the major groups who were not accredited were not able to enter the Sandton Conference Centre where most of the major group caucuses met. As a result, those who were not accredited met in the civil society meeting place and those who were accredited met in the Sandton Conference Centre, which made communication between the two difficult and excluded the non-accredited representatives from the process. Although it would be impossible to have everyone under one roof, the civil society meeting place and Sandton could have been closer to each other*” (Matinpuro 2003, own translation). The Youth and Children representative, Sami Kontola, commented on the same problem within the Youth and Children group as Matinpuro. “*Once the Summit started about half of the Youth present in Johannesburg for the WSSD could not enter Sandton. This meant that those who were not accredited had to meet somewhere else, which created a lot of misunderstandings and unnecessary power struggles*” (Kontola 2003, own translation).

In addition to geographical distances between meeting places in Johannesburg, the accredited major

group representatives' inclusion was restricted on the first day of the WSSD. Only a limited number of people could enter Sandton Convention Centre, where intergovernmental negotiations took place, because of fire regulations. Participants were told that a maximum of 6,000 people could enter the building and once there were 6000 people, major groups entrances would be subsequently reduced to allow for the official negotiators. The major group representatives were very disappointed about the limited entrances. Especially, since the limited number of entrances was only made public on the first day of the Summit and that the UN had accredited more people than the place could take. The NGOs, for example, raised their voices saying that: "*The UN and the host country are making democracy into a travesty. While we are queuing for hours to get secondary passes, or trying to understand how to enter the building, decisions about our lives, our livelihoods, and our waters are being made without our participation. We came here to be able to participate in a living democracy and not sit here debating how to get into the convention centre. This is not the WTO, the IMF or the World Bank. This is the UN, and we want to engage*" (Strandenaes, 2002:1). On the first days of the Summit, the Women's representative, Eeva-Maria Vuorenmaa, had been to a Women's caucus meeting in which the entrance policy was criticised. Vuorenmaa mentioned that "*one woman who had been elected to present women's speech could not even enter the Convention Centre, because of the entrance limitation*" (Vuorenmaa 2003, own translation).

Fortunately, after looking into the matter, the maximum occupancy figure was upped to 8,000 allowing space for extra 2,000 people. The convention centre accommodated 8000 people easily and usually there were still many empty seats. However, the fact that those who were accredited could not enter the Sandton Convention Centre was a real drawback of the Summit.

The interviewees did not criticise major groups inclusion at the national preparations or in the Finnish delegation. On the contrary, most of the interviewees thought that the extent to which the major groups were included in the national delegation was unique. Hence, their inclusion was seen as real rather than symbolic. The Women's representative Sirpa Hertell commented, "*the whole Finnish delegation worked together and thus, the major groups were incorporated all the time*" (Hertell 2003, own translation). The Youth and Children representative Sami Kontola pointed out that "*the Finnish major groups were included really well in the delegation's work. Major groups' representatives were all given different tasks. I took notes in the multi-stakeholder dialogues and official meetings, which I presented in the morning meetings. Some of my notes were used also in the Finnish official report of the Summit*" (Kontola 2003, own translation).

The interviewees thought major groups' inclusion in the preparations and at the Summit was very important for meaningful participation. Limitations to inclusion, such as entrance restrictions and timing of the multi-stakeholder dialogues, were considered negative as they affected major groups ability to influence the decision-making in an effective way, and equally in Johannesburg major groups continuous participation was challenged. Despite the obvious limitations to major groups' inclusion, it was still considered as one of the most important factors increasing meaningfulness of participation.

4.8 LEGITIMACY

According to the interviewees major groups participation did not increase legitimacy, i.e. the acceptance and support, of the WSSD outcomes to a great extent. The interviewees considered that the question of legitimacy depends on the role of the participant. In other words, many of the interviewees felt that the major groups' role was not extensive enough to affect the outcomes and because of that major groups did not necessarily accept or support them. The Youth and Children representative Karoliina Öystilä commented, "*the youth were there to be heard only and not making any decisions. Thus, their level of participation was not strong enough to legitimise the outcomes*" (Öystilä 2003, own translation). In a similar manner, the NGO representative Hanna Matinpuro pointed out, "*the fact that participation does*

not imply legitimisation of the outcomes" (Matinpuro, 2003, own translation). The Women's representative Sirpa Hertell said, "if you are part of a process you should commit yourself into it and thus you have to accept the end result of it. If you are outside the process then you can say that you would have done things differently. In terms of democracy major groups were not part of the WSSD process, thus they do not legitimise the outcome. But major groups' representatives who could be part of the whole process like the Finnish major groups should feel that the decision and outcome is also theirs" (Hertell 2003, own translation). As Hertell, (2003) mentioned, in the Finnish delegation the role of the Finnish major groups' representatives was relatively extensive in decision-making and thus the Finnish major groups that participated in the national delegation would be more likely to consider the outcomes as legitimate to the other major groups representatives.

Seurujärvi-Kari, (2003), thinks that if the Major Groups are in the meetings then they do provide legitimacy, since there are rules for the game then you play along those rules. Turunen, (2003), feels that he is able to sign all the decisions that came out from the meetings and in that sense he feel they are legitimate outcomes. But still the general opinion of the interviewees was similar to that of the NGO representative, Aleksi Neuvonen, who said, "*legitimacy depends on how much responsibility you want to take of the outcome. No matter in which delegation you have been you probably have been part of the decision-making and feel strongly about it, but as a major group you cannot take the responsibility of the decision. The states are the ones that decide on the matters at the end and thus they are the ones who carry the responsibility of the outcomes*" (Neuvonen 2003, own translation).

The interviewees did not consider the fact that the major groups possibly increased the legitimacy of the outcome as one of the most important attributes for meaningfulness of their participation.

4.9 OUTCOME

Most of the interviewees considered that the outcome documents of the WSSD were not overly remarkable. The major groups were dissatisfied with the Plan of Action as the hoped tangible commitments were not that significant. In addition, many of the interviewees were disappointed with some countries attempts to alter matters already agreed in previous conferences, as an example, Para 47 on women's reproductive health. Albeit there were no remarkable breakthroughs, the interviewees considered the overall outcome of the WSSD was satisfactory especially when considering the circumstances of decision-making. As in any UN meeting, decisions are taken by consensus and therefore, the interviewees did not have great expectations from the outset. Reflecting on the required consensus in decision-making, the Women's representative Sirpa Hertell commented, "*the outcome was not that good, and the main reason for it was the fact that it was a compromise done in the lowest common denominator*"(Hertell 2003, own translation).

Although the general outcome was not perceived as good, there were parts that the interviewees felt went well. The NGO representative Olli-Pekka Turunen commented, "*the outcome documents could have been even more watered down if the major groups had not been able to participate. Anyway I think that the Plan of Action is rather strong and the goals are high. For example, the biodiversity target, in which countries agreed to reduce the decrease of the biodiversity by the year 2010 is a powerful commitment*" (Turunen 2003, own translation).

Although the outcome documents were not satisfactory, the interviewees' perception of participation's meaningfulness was still relatively high. Some of the interviewees said that there were times when the major groups' representatives felt frustrated, but all in all they considered their participation worthwhile. In general, the interviewees considered their ability to participate in the process as the main factor that made participation meaningful rather than the outcome. For sure, only a satisfactory outcome had an impact on the extent to which major groups considered their participation as meaningful, but most of the

interviewees regarded the WSSD outcomes only part of a larger process towards sustainable development and as such, satisfactory outcomes did not make major groups participation meaningless.

4.10 SUMMARY

On the whole, the interviewees' perceptions on the fulfilment of the eight attributes of meaningful participation varied according to different levels of participation i.e. national, regional, international and within the national delegation. Most of the interviewees considered the national preparations and JS2002 committee; fulfilled the attributes. Equally, the interviewees' perceptions with regards to Finnish major groups' participation at the national delegation were good. The national delegation gave the major groups the chance to influence the Finnish official negotiators in an interactive manner. Participation was inclusive and transparent. However, some interviewees considered that the members in the national delegation were not completely equal. In addition to equality, continuous participation was perceived as somewhat problematic at the international level, because although the same major groups were present, the representatives changed.

The international preparation processes and the WSSD did not fulfil the eight attributes of meaningful participation from the interviewees' perspective to the same extent as the national preparations and participation in the national delegation. Firstly, the major groups were not equal with the states. Neither were they equal among each other, yet these inequalities were reduced through organisational matters, such as providing the groups with equal time to express their opinions. In regards to inclusion, the interviewees felt that, although the major groups were included in the process and were able to participate in a continuous manner, if they had the resources, there were times when their inclusion was seen as more symbolic than real. Also organisational matters ranging from not having enough photocopiers to not being able to enter the building where negotiations were taking place hindered major groups inclusion. Limited entrances to the negotiations among other things, according to the interviewees, challenged the extent of transparency of the process. However, most of the interviewees mentioned that a lot of effort had been put to increase transparency. In terms of interaction between the participants, the process provided time for deliberation, but due to the number of people and time constraints interaction was very limited. Most of the interviewees felt that the participatory practices such as multi-stakeholder dialogues were not that influential. The traditional forms of lobbying were still considered as the most influential in terms of getting major groups opinions through to the country delegates.

Out of the eight attributes of meaningful participation mentioned in this chapter, the most important for the interviewees seemed to be continuous participation, transparency, influence, interactivity and inclusion. The least important factors were legitimacy, outcome and equality. However, all factors were considered to increase the meaningfulness of major groups' participation. Even if the eight factors were not fulfilled, participation was not necessarily meaningless. In fact, one of the main attributes that made major groups participation meaningful from the interviewees' perception was major groups ability to participate in the process and to be heard, which is contrary to Arnstein's ideas of what constitutes meaningful participation. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

5 DISCUSSION - MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION

Since the UN Conference on the Human Environment in 1972, in Stockholm, there has been a growth in number, scope and activity of a range of non-state actors in the international environmental politics. In Stockholm non-state actors' participation was not much more than pressure group activity on the fringes of a diplomatic conference (Elliot, 1998:138). Twenty years and numerous conventions, agreements, protocols and declarations later, the non-state actors or major groups' role and importance was identified and recorded at the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, in 1992. Ten years from Rio, it was decided that one of the main objectives during the preparations for and at the

World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, in Johannesburg was major groups inclusion. In addition to the traditional forms of non-state actors' inclusion i.e. observation and lobbying, major groups were able to take part in various multi-stakeholder dialogues, panels and roundtable discussions throughout the WSSD process. Despite these inclusive efforts, the extent to which the major groups were able to participate during the preparations and at the WSSD, according to the interviewees, was more passive than active. In other words, major groups were not able to participate actively in the negotiations and decision-making, instead their role was more observational and extended to lobbying the governments rather than engaging in negotiations with them. The notable exceptions were those major groups' representatives who were part of a national delegation and able to participate actively within their delegation, like the Finnish major groups' representatives.

Although the major groups' role in decision-making throughout the WSSD process was more passive than active and did not fulfil all the attributes of meaningful participation identified in chapter 1 and analysed in chapter 4, the results of the interviews indicate that major groups perceived their participation to be meaningful. As the results are based on the Finnish major groups' perspectives, they do not represent the whole situation, but they provide a good case situation. The main reasons, which made major groups participation meaningful during the preparations for and at the WSSD from the interviewees' perspective was their ability to deliberate rather than decide. In contrast to the ideas put forward by Arnstein (1969), in her ladder of participation or the ideals of direct democracy, the interviewees' reflections on participation's meaningfulness did not include equality of powers with decision-makers. Although the interviewees perceived their participation as meaningful they did not think that it was perfect and as a result, they considered that with some changes the meaningfulness of major groups participation could be increased.

5.1 PERCEPTIONS ON MEANINGFULNESS

As was discussed in chapter 1, participation can take a variety of forms. Participation in decision-making does not necessarily mean that influence is exerted, thus participants cannot always directly affect the decisions being made. According to Arnstein, (1969:216), participation without real power is an empty and frustrating process. In other words participation that does not provide participants with decision-making powers, to Arnstein, is meaningless.

In international politics, as was discussed in chapter 2; states are the only entities with decision-making powers or a vote. Non-state actors have a voice, which they have been able to use more extensively in the past ten years. Yet, having a voice is not the same as having a vote. Voice enables major groups to advise and be heard, but retains for power holders the right to decide. However, in contrast to Arnstein's ideas, the results of the interviews suggest that major groups participation was perceived meaningful during the preparatory processes for and at the WSSD even though major groups did not possess equal powers with states and their possibilities to influence the decisions were limited.

The interviewees emphasised that the fact that the preparations for and the WSSD included major groups and provided them with various opportunities to use their voices, as was identified in chapter 3, made major groups participation meaningful. Major groups' visibility, possibility to express their opinions and provide expert knowledge, as well as be listened to, was regarded positively. For example, the NGO representative Oras Tynkkynen mentioned, "*participation was meaningful when the major groups were listened to with an open mind. Even though it might not have led to changing the decisions it was still meaningful*"(Tynkkynen 2003, own translation). In a similar manner, the NGO representative Hanna Matinpuro pointed out that "*it was important to keep the issues alive and discussed even if they did not have any direct tangible result. Even if the major groups' opinions were not obvious in the final outcome documents of the Summit the fact that they were allowed to speak already made it possible that important issues were brought up and discussed*"(Matinpuro, 2003, own

translation). In addition, to keeping the issues alive and discussed major groups provided a critical voice to the negotiations. The NGO representative Aleksi Neuvonen said, "it is important to have the critical voice that states would not feel that they have achieved something good with their negotiations. There is always room to lift up the aims and goals" (Neuvonen 2003, own translation).

Contrary to the normative calls for equality of powers, the interviewees considered that states and major groups should not be equal in the international decision-making for various reasons. Interestingly for this study, major groups equality with states was not perceived to increase the meaningfulness of participation. As a matter of fact, the interviewees pointed out that states and major groups have and should continue to have different roles. The Local Authorities representative Kaarin Taipale remarked, "*participation was meaningful precisely because the major groups have a different role than states. As major groups are not bound by the ceremonial liturgy they have freer hands to develop and formulate new ideas. It is this certain freedom and the fact that major groups can broaden governments' often narrow views and challenge them that makes participation meaningful*" (Taipale 2003, own translation). The NGO representative Oras Tynkkynen said, "*the role of major groups is to create and lift up new ideas rather than drafting texts that would work in international negotiations, that is for the civil servants to write. Participation does not have to provide any concrete powers to be meaningful*" (Tynkkynen 2003, own translation). In a similar manner, the Local Authorities representative Maija Hakanen showed that "*new issues can emerge through participation. The atmosphere can create them or new ideas can just emerge. The emergence of new ideas is not dependent on whether or not the participant has official right to make decisions or not. These new ideas come through dialogues. Like in Rio many new ideas emerged through extensive non-state actors participation and not because they had or lacked real decision making power*" (Hakanen 2003, own translation).

Likewise Dryzek, (2000:121-132), argues that the politics of non-state actors is largely about questioning, criticising, and publicising. Explicit binding decision-making is for the states. Yet the discursive force of non-state actors can influence the decisions and policies of states. According to Dryzek, (2000:121-132), it is the contest between different discourses¹¹ and the communicative power of non-state actors that gives non-state actors their real power. He continues, that compared to states and their interactions, non-state actors' communication is relatively unconstrained and uncoerced. The non-state actors are not bound by reasons of state, conventions of diplomatic niceties, or fear of upsetting allied or rival states. For these reasons, non-state actors' communicative power can be an influential and meaningful method.

In accordance with Dryzek's argumentation, major groups participation throughout the WSSD process was influential, as was pointed out in chapter 4, even though the participatory practices did not allow major groups to override or influence governments' decisions directly. Major groups' presence already coloured the process with their lobbying efforts and dialogues leaving marks.

In addition, to major groups' impact on the process and outcomes, the interviewees highlighted that participation was meaningful because it has long-term effects. In other words, even if the issues raised during the WSSD process by the major groups were not recognised in the outcome documents, the fact that they were voiced gave them significance and in the long run they might affect people's attitudes. The NGO representative Hanna Matinpuro highlighted the importance and long-term influence of major groups in the following manner "*even if the opinions of the major groups were not part of the final outcomes these issues will be discussed in the future since they have been raised now they cannot be overshadowed*" (Matinpuro 2003, own translation).

¹¹ According to Dryzek discourse is by definition "*a shared set of assumptions and capabilities embedded in language that enables its adherent to assemble bits of sensory information that come their way into coherent wholes*" (Dryzek, 2000:121).

Besides the more direct influence and long-term impact, the results of the interviews indicate that participation was perceived meaningful as it was directly linked to the broader framework of the major groups' activities and work. The Women's representative Eeva-Maria Vuorenmaa commented, "*the whole process is longer than just the Summit. The meaningfulness comes from the whole i.e. from the activities that you have been part of within the WSSD process as well as outside it*"(Vuorenmaa 2003, own translation). Equally, the NGO representative Olli-Pekka Turunen mentioned that "*the Johannesburg Summit was not an end or a beginning of something, it is a continuous process*"(Turunen 2003, own translation).

Furthermore, participating throughout the WSSD process provided the major groups' representatives with the possibility of creating networks and partnerships with people working in the same field from all over the world. For some of the interviewees, like the NGO representative Oras Tynkkynen and the Indigenous People representative Irja Seurujärvi-Kari, the aspect of getting to know the people and networking was the main benefit from the WSSD process. Interviewees also stressed that they learned a lot from participating in the WSSD process. The Women's representative Elina Hatakka commented that "*one big part of the participation was to increase one's own knowledge and create contacts to other people and organisations*"(Hatakka 2003, own translation).

Thus, in contrast to Arnstein's ideas or the advocates of political equality in which the participants have an equal chance of affecting the outcomes, the findings of the interviews indicate that political power or equality does not equate to meaningful participation. In any case, the capacity to deliberate can never be fully equalised across individuals. Furthermore, trying to achieve consensus between different actors at the international level in a pluralistic world would be unattainable, unnecessary, and undesirable (Dryzek, 2000:170-172). Therefore, as Benhabib, (1994:35) argues, the fiction of a general deliberative assembly in which the united people express their will should be disregarded and the focus should be placed on a medium of loosely associated, multiple foci of opinion-formation and dissemination which impact each other in free and spontaneous processes of communication. Through deliberation, non-state actors can exercise influence and as such they do not need to have political decision-making power. In addition to influencing decision-making participation was perceived meaningful as it increased major groups knowledge base and broadened their networks.

5.2 NATIONAL DELEGATION

The interviewees considered that major groups participation throughout the WSSD process was meaningful in general and being part of a national delegation increased the meaningfulness in many ways, or at least it provided the major groups representatives with different possibilities than when part of major groups' delegation. One of the main reasons why the interviewees regarded participation in the national delegation highly was the fact that the attributes of meaningful participation identified in chapter 1, were better realised in the Finnish national delegation than at the international setting. Due to the size difference including the major groups representatives in all the activities and discussing in an interactive manner was relatively easier in a smaller setting i.e. the national delegation, than trying to achieve the same at the UN meeting. Many of the interviewees also considered that participating in the national delegation made participation more meaningful as the national delegation was more organised than the major groups' delegations. In addition, to fulfilling the attributes of meaningful participation and organisational factors, being a national delegate provided the major groups' representatives with access to all the negotiations that only state representatives were allowed. However, despite the benefits from being part of the national delegation, the interviewees did not consider that participating as part of national delegation would be the best alternative for all the major groups' representatives.

The interviewees' considered that being accredited as a major group's representative had its benefits and made participation meaningful in a different way than being part of national delegation. The Indigenous People's representative Irja Seurujärvi-Kari argued that "*major group delegation is the place where the spirit is and where new ideas are created. In a country delegation there are some many issues that come up making it difficult to comprehend it all. Of course it is important that you hear about technology and issues like that but if you want to forward your issues it is difficult. In a country delegation there might not even be anything that would deal with the Indigenous Peoples issues*" (Seurujärvi-Kari 2003, own translation). Equally, the Local authorities representative Maija Hakanen felt that "*being in the national delegation is good in that you can lobby the delegation to support your major group's aims, but all the new ideas come from the within the major groups' delegations. When in national delegation as a representative of a major group you try to get your group's ideas through to the national delegation rather than dynamically creating new ideas*"(Hakanen 2003, own translation). Also in the major groups' delegation nationality does not play a role. As the NGO representative Olli-Pekka Turunen said "*one good thing about being part of the major group delegation is that you are allowed to talk freely and you are not tied down to certain way of looking at things like you might be in the country delegation. In a country delegation you are a representative of that country to a certain extent*" (Turunen 2003, own translation). Likewise the Youth and Children representative Sami Kontola pointed out that "*it is also important that the major groups are independent and not dependent on the country delegation. If they are dependent on a country or the UN they lose their role*"(Kontola 2003, own translation).

The Women's representative Sirpa Hertell said, "*ideally there would be major groups' representatives both in national and major groups' delegations*"(Hertell 2003, own translation). All the interviewees agreed with Hertell's idea. The other Women's representative Eeva-Maria Vuorenmaa considered that it is important to have major groups' representatives both in national and in the major groups delegations as it makes "*major groups participation more effective*" (Vuorenmaa 2003, own translation). Having major groups' representatives in the national delegations seems like a good idea based on the Finnish major groups' representatives' experiences. Yet countries are different. Although major groups representatives found participation in the Finnish national delegation meaningful, other major groups might not have the same possibilities to influence and discuss the matters with their country delegates, even if part of the delegation. The meaningfulness of participating in a national delegation is also dependent on the aims of the national delegation.

5.3 MEANINGFULNESS CHALLENGED

Although the results of the interviews indicate that overall participation was perceived meaningful there were times when major groups considered that participation was a frustrating and meaningless process. For example, the multi-stakeholder dialogues held during the global PrepComs were considered disappointing. Major groups had put a lot of time and effort into preparing for the dialogues, only to realise later that about half of the countries were absent from the dialogues. In addition, major groups felt that the outcomes of the PrepComs did not reflect what they had said in the dialogues. According to the NGO representative Hanna Matinpuro, during the fourth PrepCom in Bali "*the NGO group felt that the dialogues did not influence governments decisions in any way. The NGO delegation felt so frustrated that they even discussed if they should not participate in the dialogues, since they were not listened to*" (Matinpuro 2003, own translation). In addition, to not being listened to and not being reflected in the outcomes, major groups were frustrated, as there was no link between the dialogues and policy discussion. Therefore, as the NGO representative Aleksi Neuvonen, (2003), mentioned dialogues were more of side-shows. However, throughout the WSSD process dialogues were improved. In Johannesburg, they were already more integrated to the negotiations, interactive and took place throughout the Summit unlike in the PrepComs where they were organised in the beginning. Still real or direct influence of the dialogues remained small.

In addition, to the lack of influence and governments not listening, major groups were disappointed with the organisational matters of the WSSD, as it restricted major groups' inclusion and transparency of the process. Reducing the number of entrances and locating major groups' meeting places far away from the main conference area did not increase the meaningfulness of major groups' participation. The following comment from a major groups' representative, in Johannesburg, describes major groups' feelings and frustration over inclusion: "*We would of course, like a chair or a seat somewhere on the bus, but let us start with a door swinging open and a floorboard to stand upon. Free up civil society energy to deal with major tasks at hand, instead of fighting for access and space*" (Gemmill, 2002:2). The number of entrances was increased, but the locations of different events and meeting places remained far apart.

Meaningfulness of the whole WSSD process as well as major groups participation in it was also challenged when countries started to re-negotiate issues that had already been agreed on. As an example of re-negotiations was the question on reproductive health as discussed in chapter 4. The Indigenous People's representative Irja Seurujärvi-Kari commented that "the fact that *all the good things that have already been achieved can be overruled in this kind of mega events decreases their meaningfulness*" (Seurujärvi-Kari 2003, own translation). Major groups representatives as well as many countries were disappointed that the negotiations aim, which was to move forward, could not be realised. Furthermore, Seurujärvi-Kari (2003) said, "*these big conferences are not that important, because the issues are not brought forward anymore. The whole situation is rather abstract. For the Sami people the more important place to affect is the EU since there they do not have a role, whereas they already have it in the UN. It would be more meaningful to get closer to the people*"(Irja Seurujärvi-Kari 2003, own translation).

Many major groups and some countries found negotiations equally frustrating, as there were some countries that were not willing to compromise or modify their opinions. In the interview the Youth and Children representative Sami Kontola raised the question "*how meaningful can major groups participation be when there are states like the USA and Vatican?*"(Kontola 2003, own translation). He did not answer his question, but indirectly implied, as did some of the other interviewees that the meaningfulness of major groups' participation is questionable when these states are present, since these states have strong opinions and they are not willing to compromise. The opinions of these states usually go against the mainstream and against any major changes towards more sustainable development. As a result it can be frustrating having to come into an agreement or try to influence them when they are not willing to change, modify or compromise their opinions. Therefore, as the NGO representative Oras Tynkkynen commented in terms of the influence and the outcome "*the meaningfulness of major groups participation is greatly dependent on the decisions of states such as Saudi-Arabia, Vatican and the USA. They are a problem for meaningful participation rather than the process itself*" (Tynkkynen 2003, own translation).

5.4 AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Although the interviewees perceived major groups' participation meaningful, they did not consider it perfect. As was noted earlier there were also moments when participation was frustrating and felt meaningless. Interviewees thought that with some modifications their participation could be improved to a certain extent. Their recommendations are listed below.

All the interviewees thought that the multi-stakeholder dialogues would have been more meaningful if they had been better integrated with the negotiations. Thus, the connection between the dialogues and negotiations should be closer. For example the NGO representative Hanna Matinpuro said that "*if the dialogues would have been more integrated to the whole process it would have been more meaningful. It would also have been useful if the borders of the dialogues would have been explained better, meaning that the effects and possibilities of the dialogues would be clearer. Unless clearly explained,*

this kind of participation will raise hopes of influence in the participants' minds. In a sense there it can create an illusion about participation" (Matinpuro 2003, own translation). Also the timing of the dialogues should be changed. In the global PrepComs dialogue segments were at the beginning of the meetings which meant that the high level decision-makers were not even present. If the dialogues are organised before the high-level decision-makers arrive, they cannot participate in them. Even if the hihg-level decision-makers would not participate in the dialogues at least they would be aware of them if they take place while they are there. The NGO representative Aleksi Neuvonen commented that "*there should be a better suited time for major groups involvement and the focus of the dialogues needs to follow the focus of the formal negotiations. In addition, dialogues should be connected to a longer process. The issues raised at the Summit could be brought forward again in a later stage*" (Neuvonen 2003, own translation).

Meeting places of the major groups and the state representatives should also be more integrated geographically. Most interviewees thought, that in Johannesburg, the geographical distances between different events were too great. Although public transportation had been organised it was not efficient. It would be better to have all participants physically close to the meeting place.

Most of the interviewees, and especially those who participated in the UN meetings for the first time, were puzzled with how the whole system worked and what the major groups' role was. The NGO representative Olli-Pekka Turunen said that "*because the whole UN system was new for me it was difficult to know in what one could participate*" (Turunen 2003, own translation). The Women's representative Elina Hatakka found it "*difficult in the beginning to understand how the meetings worked and to become familiar with the UN jargon*"(Hatakka 2003,own translation). As a result, some of the interviewees considered that major groups' participation would have been more meaningful if they had been better informed about the process. Thus, the interviewees recommended that major groups should be provided with some guidelines or books before the meetings. As the NGO representative Olli-Pekka Turunen said, "*the meaningfulness of the participation is dependent also on the knowledge of the process*" (Turunen 2003, own translation). In addition to information on the process and its functions, the Local Authorities representative Maija Hakanen thought that "*the UN could also produce guidelines on how major groups can take part in their national delegations and what their role could be*"(Hakanen 2003, own translation).

The interviewees also pointed out that major groups participation could be improved and made more meaningful if they were provided with better facilities. In the PrepComs and at the WSSD there were only a limited number of computers and photocopiers for the major groups, which hindered their effectiveness. The Women's representative Sirpa Hertell commented that "*in Johannesburg, there were always huge queues by the photocopiers and computers. Standing in queues wasted a lot of time*" (Hertell 2003, own translation). In addition to computers and photocopiers, the major groups did not have a place where they could be reached all times. With little changes, major groups' abilities to pass on information could be improved. Furthermore, some of the major groups need to be better supported financially in order for them to participate. The Youth and Children representative Sami Kontola said that "*the Youth and Children group have very limited resources to participate actively in all the meetings. They work on voluntary basis. Thus, if the Youth and Children's representation is considered important there is a need to create the needed resources in order for them to carry out their work. Without those resources their representation is limited*" (Kontola 2003, own translation).

In addition to facilities and financial resources, interviewees considered that all countries should include major groups' representatives in their national delegations. The NGO representative Olli-Pekka Turunen pointed out that "*including major groups in the country delegations would increase conversation between the two*" (Turunen 2003, own translation). The NGO representative Hanna Matinpuro, (2003),

was part of the group that wrote a paper with other major groups' representatives urging the EU countries to include major groups in their country delegations. Being part of the national delegation provides major groups with better access to the negotiations, which the Finnish major groups' representatives considered important. The Women's representative Eeva-Maria Vuorenmaa thought that "*those major groups' representatives who are not part of a national delegation should also have access to the meetings. Major groups' representatives are area experts and only if they are allowed into the meetings can they tell the country delegates what the main implications in the issues discussed are*" (Vuorenmaa 2003, own translation).

To improve any process it needs to be evaluated. The Youth and Children representative Sami Kontola emphasised that "*there should be a thorough evaluation of the WSSD process to see what was good and what was bad. I hope that this was not an experiment only*" (Kontola 2003, own translation). The NGO representative Olli-Pekka Turunen also thought that "*there should be worldwide evaluation on the participatory mechanisms at the WSSD. Many countries are afraid to include major groups in their delegation as they are considered to cause conflicts, disagreements and political disturbance. If there would be some international study on whether the inclusion of major groups in country delegations, or as their own delegations in international negotiations, caused anarchy or improved the process it might change the opinions of those countries who are against major groups inclusion*" (Turunen 2003, own translation).

All in all, the results of the interviews indicate that although major groups were not able to override governments' decisions, they perceived their participation as meaningful. There were times when participation felt frustrating and meaningless. But overall the experience was perceived in positive terms. The main reason for the meaningfulness of major groups' participation was their ability to voice their concerns and to be listened to. They thought that when the attributes of meaningful participation identified in chapter 1 and analysed in chapter 4 were fulfilled, it increased the means for major groups to participate in a meaningful manner. Continuous participation, transparency, inclusiveness and interaction were especially perceived as important attributes. Strengthening the legitimacy of the decisions and a good outcome were also seen as factors that affected participation in a positive way. Although the interviewees did not perceive having equal political power to influence the outcomes with states as necessary or even desirable, influence in general and decreasing the gap between states and major groups was considered an important attribute for meaningful participation. All in all, the attributes of meaningful participation used in this study were seen to complement and increase communicative powers of the major groups. In other words, the attributes of meaningful participation were the means for meaningful and good participation, which was major groups' ability to communicate and contest the discourses. The means for major groups deliberation or voicing their concerns and being listened to throughout the WSSD process were considered to be better than in most other international decision-making processes.

CONCLUSION

This study reviewed the scope of major groups' participation possibilities throughout the WSSD process and analysed the meaningfulness of major groups participation from the Finnish major groups representatives perspective using eight attributes of meaningful participation as a framework. From the review, it can be concluded that although major groups participation in international environmental politics is a relatively new phenomenon, the participatory possibilities provided for major groups demonstrate that both Finland and the UN have been quick to respond to the broad-based participatory aims created at the Rio Conference in 1992. The methods used to involve major groups were diverse, revealing a commitment to innovation. As an example of diversity, the participatory possibilities included multi-stakeholder dialogues, panels, round-table discussions, consultations and observation at

different levels and with different degree of formality and power, thus enabling major groups to participate more extensively than in most of the international negotiations.

However, the results of the analysis indicate that despite the commitment to innovation and diversity, the participatory possibilities provided for major groups by the UN were not able to fulfil the eight attributes of meaningful participation. For instance, major groups representatives were not able to participate in a continuous and interactive manner. Neither was the process truly transparent, inclusive or equal to all the participants. Major groups lacked direct influence and because of that they did not consider that their participation increased the legitimacy of the outcomes. Furthermore, most of the major groups were disappointed with the outcomes. In contrast to major groups' overall participatory possibilities, those representatives of the Finnish major groups who took part in the WSSD process as members of the Finnish national delegation considered their participation within the Finnish national delegation to be interactive, inclusive, influential, transparent, continuous and more equal between participants than at the UN level. In addition, participation in the Finnish national preparations was seen to fulfil the attributes of meaningful participation.

Although, the attributes of meaningful participation were not completely fulfilled at the UN level, major groups' participation was not perceived as meaningless. The main reason, which made major groups' participation meaningful, was the opportunity to express their opinions and to be heard, create networks and partnerships, learn and to be visible. The attributes of meaningful participation used in this study were seen to compliment and to increase major groups' opportunity to express their opinions and criticise states' actions. In other words, the attributes of meaningful participation were the means for meaningful and good participation, which was major groups' ability to communicate and contest the discourses. Out of the eight attributes, continuous participation, transparency, influence, interactivity and inclusion were perceived as the most important for meaningful participation. Though legitimacy, outcome and equality were not ranked as highly as the fore mentioned attributes they were still considered significant.

Even though the results of the study indicate that major groups participation in the preparations before and during the WSSD were meaningful, it does not mean that they were perfect. As a matter of fact major groups' representatives believed that the meaningfulness of their participation could be enhanced. In order to improve major groups participation in the future at the international level, the interviewees recommended that

- major groups need to be provided with better facilities, resources and information;
- the objectives of major groups participation have to be clearly explained;
- each country should include major groups' representatives in their delegations;
- the multi-stakeholder dialogues need to be better integrated with the official decision-making procedures; and
- major groups participation needs to be evaluated thoroughly world-wide.

Lessons learned through such evaluations could help modify and expand participatory practices in order to promote meaningful participation.

APPENDIX 1: JOHANNESBURG 2002 - PREPARATORY COMMITTEE

Chairpersons

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Substitute Member</u>
Markku Wilenius,	TUKKK	
Vappu Taipale, (substitute)	STAKES	
Aarnio Kirsti	UM/KYO	Inger Wiren
Aikio Pekka	Samediggi	Anne Nuorgam, Irja Seurujärvi-Kari
Hakanen Maija	Kuntaliitto	
Hasenson Benny	Teollisuus ja Työnant.	
Hertell Sirpa	NYTKIS (Naisjärj.)	Niemistö Charlotta
Huimasalo Taisto	UM/POL	
Hämäläinen Olli	Maan ystävät	
Karanko Kari	UM/POL	Marit Huhta
Koivuniemi Päivi	Kuluttajaliitto ry	Martti Luukko
Koivusalos Salla	Teknilininen kork.koulu	
Kontola Sami	Allianssi	Karoliina Öystilä
Kosonen Mirja	KTM	Miika Tommila
Linna Tapio	SLL	
Loukola Marja-Leena	OPH	
Luukkanen Ville	KEPA	Miia Toikka
Luukkonen Jari	WWF	Timo Tanninen
Mannonen Paula	Terveyden edistämisen keskus	
Marttila Veikko	MMM	Marjaana Vainio-Mattila
Mustonen Pauli	UM/KYO	Anu Pärnanen-Landtman
Myläriemi Katariina	LVM	Saara Jääskeläinen
Neuvonen Aleksi	Dodo org.	Olli-Pekka Turunen, Hanna Matinpuro
Nissinen Jouni	Luontoliitto	
Nummeli Marjo	YM/KVY (sihteeri)	
Reijonen Satu	YM/KEKE (sihteeri)	Heikinheimo Pirkko
Ristikartano Pentti	KEPA	
Rauhamäki Anne	SYL	
Sourama Heikki	VM	
Syväriinen Katja	KESU	U.B. Lindström
Leena Rikkilä	(UM)	
Taipale Kaarin	Hgin kaup. (ICLEI)	
Pekka Tiainen	TVM	
Tikanvaara Hannele	UM/KPO	Outi Hakanen
Tornberg Markku	MTK	
Uosukainen Jukka	YM/KVY	
Vaihia Kari	Sonera/Finnish, Business & Society	
Vesa Petri	Pohjolan Voima Oy	
Viihalainen Matti	SAK	
Vuorenmaa Eeva-Maria	Suomen YK-liitto	Jussi Honkanen

(Source: Reijonen, 2002)

APPENDIX 2: GLOBAL PREPCOMS

Regional Preparatory meeting: Sirpa Hertell (Nytkis)

PrepCom I: -

PrepCom II: Eeva-Maria Vuorenmaa (YK-Liitto) and Hanna Matinpuro (SLL)

PrepCom III: Olli Turunen (Luonto-Liitto) and Aleksi Neuvonen (Dodo org)

PrepCom IV: Olli-Turunen (Luonto-Liitto), Hanna Matinpuro (SLL), Aleksi Neuvonen (Dodo org), Karoliina Öystilä (allianssi) , Oras Tynkkynen, (Maan Ystävät), Elina Hatakka (Vihreät naiset, nytkisen edustaja) and Salla Koivusalos (TKK)

(Source:Loukola, 2002)

APPENDIX 3: WSSD

WOMEN: Sirpa Hertell (Nytkis)

YOUTH AND CHILDREN: Sami Kontola (Allianssi)

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE: Irja Seurujärvi-Kari (Saamelaiskäräjät), Anne Nuorgam (Saamelaisneuvosto)

NGOs: Jouni Nissinen (Luonto-Liitto), Paula Mannonen (terveyden edistämisen keskus), Aleksi Neuvonen (Dodo org), Eero Yrjö-Koskinen (SLL), Jussi Honkanen (YK-Liitto), Jari Luukkonen (WWF), Heidi Hautala (KEPA), Julia Jänis (KEPA), U. B. Lindström (KESU)

LOCAL AUTHORITIES: Eva-Riitta Siitonens (HKI), Anja Vallittu (HKI), Maija Hakanen (kuntaliitto), Heli Liikkanen (kuntaliitto), Kaarin Taipale (ICLEI)

TRADE UNIONS: Ammattijärjestöt Matti Viialainen (SAK), Maija Venäläinen (Akava, YKL)

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY: Tellervo Kylä-Harakka-Ruonala (TT), Hannu Nilsen (UPM-Kymmene), Jukka Seppälä (Metso), Jouko Kuisma (Kesko), Pekka Kallio-Mannila (Metsäteollisuus ry), Timo Heikka (Stora Enso)

Esa Tommila (Ekokem), Kari Vaihia (Sonera)

FARMERS: Markku Tornberg (MTK)

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COMMUNITY: Markku Wilenius (Tulevaisuuden tutkimuskeskus), Salla Koivusaloo (TKK), Reijo Keurulainen (Jyväskylän yliopisto), Reijo E. Heinonen (Joensuun yliopisto), Shimelles Tenaw (Helsingin yliopisto), Timo Koivurova (Arktinen keskus, Lapin yliopisto), Outi Snellman (Arktinen keskus, Lapin yliopisto), Mika Flöjt (Arktinen keskus, Lapin yliopisto) (Source: Loukola, 2002)

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