

# How to Lobby at Intergovernmental Meetings

## Preface

*We must always tell them that they are not alone, their action is not futile, there always comes a day when the palaces of oppression crumble, when imprisonment comes to an end, when liberty catches fire. (Albert Camus)*

This book started life as a briefing document for stakeholders involved in the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), otherwise known as Earth Summit 2002. The briefing was very popular during the WSSD process and it seemed to many people that a book would help newcomers and organizations in their engagement at the inter-governmental level, no matter what their purpose for being involved.

The book has drawn both on suggestions by many individuals whom I have listed in the acknowledgements section, as well as Stakeholder Forum for Our Common Future's ten years of experience in lobbying at the UN level on sustainable development. Despite this background, a lot of the book is interchangeable. You could replace 'stakeholder' with 'governments' and the information would be relevant to government delegations. Just like stakeholders, governments are trying to get their positions accepted by as many decision-makers as possible. Much of the book can also be used for national campaigning.

Over the past 30 years since the Stockholm UN Conference on the Human Environment, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and stakeholders<sup>1</sup> generally, have played an increasingly influential and constructive role in framing the direction that the world might go in. Understanding how to lobby more effectively helps to deepen democracy and promote greater dialogue and richness of perspectives in the inter-governmental process. Although we have finished a sequence of UN conference and summits, this does not mean the end of inter-governmental decision-making. The monitoring of government commitments at the inter-governmental level is critical to the phase that we are now in. I would like to dedicate the book to Warren Lindner ('Chip' to his friends), who died of an AIDS-related illness during the preparatory process for the WSSD. He had been secretary of the Brundtland Commission and organizer of the Rio Global Forum in 1992. The Stakeholder Forum for Our Common Future took its name out of respect for his work and his previous organization, the Centre for Our Common Future. We do this to honour the work of a departed colleague who gave much of his life to try, at the inter-governmental level, to work for a more sustainable world. When times seem difficult, and they will be, it is good to have in mind something that John F Kennedy said in his inaugural speech: 'Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate.'

Suggestions for improving this resource will be welcomed at: [info@stakeholderforum.org](mailto:info@stakeholderforum.org).

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