

UN & NGOs: From Consultation to Partnership

1945

“The Economic and Social Council may make suitable arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations which are concerned with matters within its competence.”

Charter of the United Nations – Article 71

1996

The Economic and Social Council confirmed the “need to take into account the full diversity of non-governmental organizations at the national and international levels” in order to ensure “a just, balanced, effective and genuine involvement of non-governmental organizations from all regions and areas of the world”, and extended the consultative relationship to include national, sub-regional and regional organizations.

Economic and Social Council Resolution 1996/31

1999

“The Section will work to improve the exchange of information through informal networks of country or regionally-based NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, which will serve as links between the NGO Section and NGOs in each region.”

General Assembly Report of the Secretary General - A/54/520

1999

“...if the global agenda is to be addressed, a partnership with civil society is not an option; it is a necessity...”

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan

Consultative status is being granted to a steadily increasing number of NGOs from countries and regions that provide geographical diversity, but are often economically distressed. A significant number of organizations, therefore, find themselves financially and logistically disadvantaged and thus unable to make full use of their consultative status by participating in economic and social development at the international level.

What will the UN NGO Informal Regional Network do

In light of the growing impact and influence of non-governmental organizations in the global arena, it is increasingly important that the concerns raised, the positions taken and the voices heard should be truly representative of NGOs worldwide.

◆ End isolation and enhance the global debate

Draw even the smallest most isolated national NGOs into a system that provides information, communication and support for meaningful participation in economic and social sector development at every level. Organizations deprived of up-to-date information will have the possibility to establish regular contact between the United Nations and the large network of NGOs worldwide.

◆ Promote collaboration

Establish coordinating mechanisms to enable NGOs to interact and join forces in furthering common causes.

◆ Empower through collective action

Promote group action to reinforce the message of like-minded organizations in their dealings with government, donors and the general public at both the national regional and international levels.

◆ Strengthen the NGO Sector from within

Establish support systems within and between regions whereby training, information and expert advice can be exchanged to strengthen national and regional capacity to participate fully in both policy planning and implementation of economic and social development activities. The Regional Network System offers unique capacity building options for both traditional and state-of-the-art technological training and development programmes in areas such as: in organizational management; implementation of technical programmes and projects for development; and policy-planning and evaluation skills.

◆ Establish the global context for NGO activities

Provide action-oriented guidance and support within the framework of the Millennium Declaration Goals (MDGs) to enable network participants to ensure that their contribution and that of the NGO sector as a whole will be truly significant in furthering achievement of the goals set by the global community for the 21st century.

Millennium Declaration Goals

- I. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- II. Achieve universal primary education
- III. Promote gender equality and empower women
- IV. Reduce child mortality
- V. Improve maternal health
- VI. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- VII. Ensure environmental sustainability
- VIII. Develop a global partnership for development

Road map towards the implementation of the
United Nations Millennium Declaration - A/56/326

The Purpose of Informal NGO Regional Network

Spearheaded by the NGO Section, DESA, the overarching goal of the UN NGO Informal Network is to enhance the NGO contribution to United Nations Economic and Social agenda and strengthen the sector from within by building parity among its organizations. Achievement of this overarching goal is based on providing access to up-to-date information and the benefits of ongoing communications through a technology-based system designed to promote interactive exchange among NGOs and between NGOs and the United Nations. In addition, under the Network's training component, capacity building programmes will strengthen national and regional organizations as effective participants in economic and social development, both operationally and at the policy level.

The regional networks will be implemented by the NGO Section, DESA, with the support of its Network Partners, the intermediary activities of designated regional coordinator organizations, and the active participation of the NGO community worldwide.