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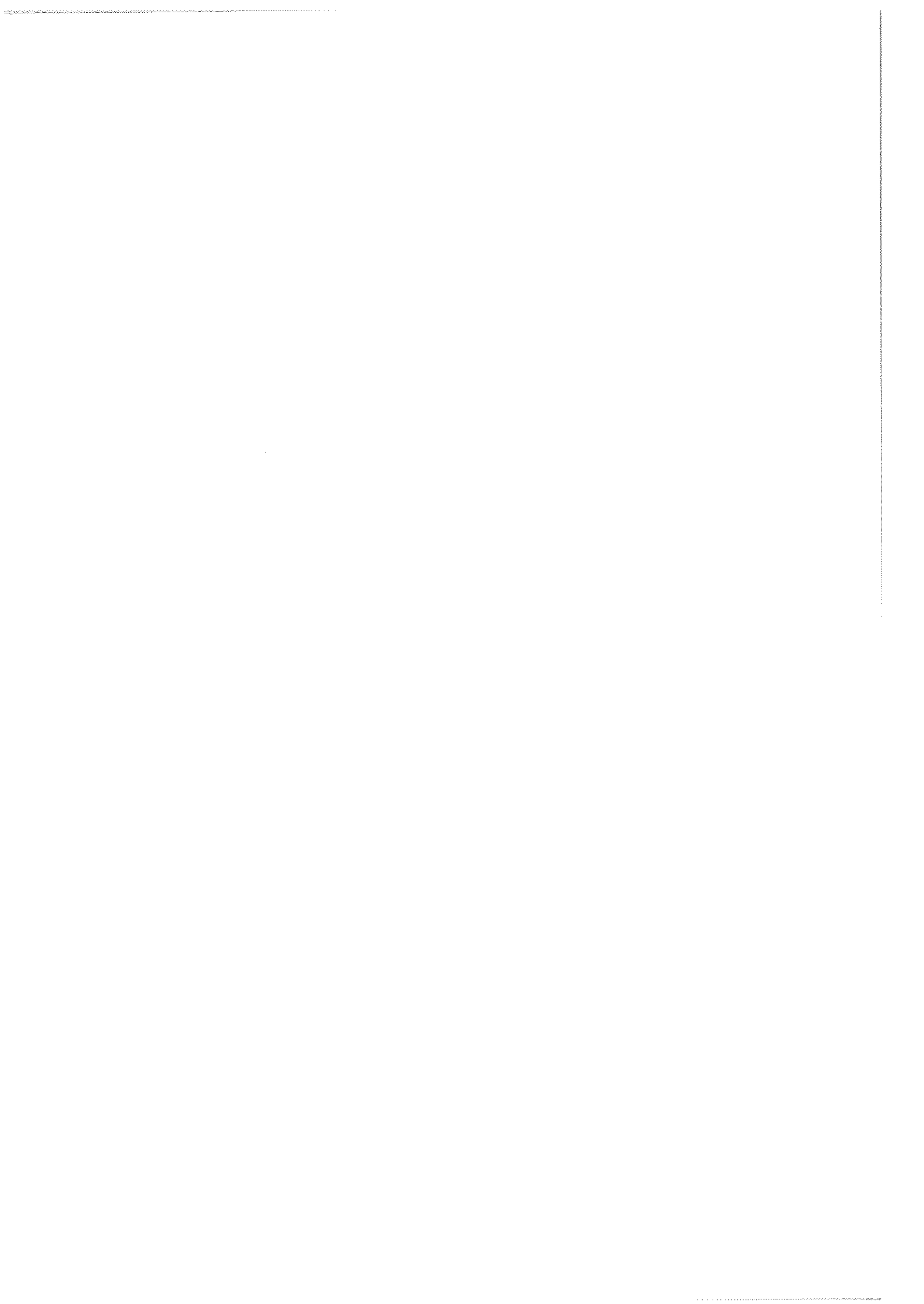
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*Multilateral Agencies and
NGOs: A Position Paper*

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MULTILATERAL AGENCIES AND NGOS

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Introduction.

This paper sets out some of the aspects of the relationships between NGOs and multilateral agencies (MLAs).¹ In particular it seeks to establish the main elements of such relationships. These are primarily related to either funding of NGOs by the multilaterals, or to the involvement of NGOs as implementing agents of programmes sponsored by the MLAs.² The paper looks first at the history of NGO/MLA relations, then proceeds to consider some of the reasons for the increased exchange between the two communities. It then discusses some of the programming issues which can foster or frustrate an NGO's attempt to work with an MLA, and then it examines the issue of funding via a review of UNDP, The World Bank and UNIFEM. Next we look briefly at certain key sectoral areas of collaboration. This paper concludes by reviewing some of the key areas of difficulty and concern identified.

There are other areas worth consideration which could be considered in a longer report, for example the crucial role now being played by NGOs in the monitoring of Human rights through the Commissions on Human Rights and the rights of the Child; through advocacy reflecting current concerns over the environment, gender and children's issues in addition to a host of local concerns. NGOs are also increasingly invited to UN consultations on development policies and practices, whether global in scale such as UNCED, or related to specific agency concerns and mandates. This paper does not look at NGO cooperation with MLAs in humanitarian assistance, nor have we included discussion of the relations between the European Union and NGOs.

Historical background:

During the past decade there has been a marked growth in the collaboration by multilateral agencies with both Northern and Southern NGOs. In the 1970s there was very little direct contact between multilaterals and mainstream development NGOs. Multilateral agencies were still dominated by the concept of working with governments with an emphasis on large-scale projects. The decade of the 1980s was characterised by the collapse of confidence in traditional, development approaches. Large capital intensive projects had not led to sustainable growth; indeed the economies of many developing countries suffered massive setbacks exacerbated by mounting debts.

To a beleaguered official aid fraternity, the NGOs offered an alternative approach to development based on small scale community-based programmes. NGOs, initially regarded as being on the margins of development, were promoted to centre stage. Several

major multilateral (and bilateral) agencies sought to adapt, integrate and incorporate ideas and approaches from the NGOs into their programmes.³

The advantages of NGOs in development actions were seen as being relatively low cost, in direct contact with communities, lacking bureaucracy, honest, better at targeting the poor, and with a proven track record, etc. Together these advantages amounted to being cost effective, efficient and having a high level of impact.

Changing UN/NGO relations:

There are five major areas contributing to the change by UN agencies towards support for and collaboration with NGOs.

A) Policy framework:

There has been a strong shift by many of the UN agencies towards stressing the importance of popular participation, poverty alleviation and sustainability, a change summarised by the UNDP reorientation of its development framework towards "Sustainable human development". There were earlier moves to place such approaches at the front of UN thinking, such as WCAARD 1979 (The FAO sponsored World conference on Agrarian reform and rural development), but the implementation of agrarian and other reforms was rare.

There is evidence that there are real attempts now to re-orientate many UN agencies towards the new paradigm. However it has to be recognised that changes in policy take some years to work through an agency as old "non-participatory, top down governmental, rather than people-centred projects run their life cycle".

Nevertheless the International Development strategy for the 4th UN Development decade (1991-2000) encourages countries to "improve the human condition and the participation of all men and women in political life, and to promote development which reduces poverty, promotes the enhancement and use of human resources and is environmentally sound and sustainable".⁴ Similar statements have been ratified by the Economic Commission for Africa, UNCTAD, UNCED and ECOSOC.

B) Ideological change:

The end of the Cold War and the great ideological split which characterised aid, as much as diplomacy, led to a resurgence in official interest in NGOs as the concepts of "civil society", pluralism and governance were re-discovered⁵. No longer were NGOs valued purely for what they did, but also for their very existence. NGOs have been supported because they are seen to encourage local level democracy; a level of social organisation between the State, the "for-profit" commercial sector and the household. In countries where previously NGOs had been considered subversive, or "communist agents", it was increasingly recognised that criticism of the State is not synonymous with subversion, but with the pluralism required by democracy. The importance of this shift is that it enabled many UN country programmes to include NGOs whereas previously governments objected to official funds being channelled to NGOs.

C) The Growth of NGOs:

The massive growth of the NGO sector led to an increasing recognition of the impact of NGO interventions and activity. The previous tendency to regard NGOs as

being marginal to official developmental activity progressively gave way to a realisation that, to the contrary, NGOs and other forms of organisation (CBOs, etc....) were involved in most sectors of social and economic activity to a degree consistently underestimated. For example, development workers became aware of the far greater importance of the informal economy in national economic life and of informal shelter and service provision as compared to official sectors.

The importance of NGOs was reinforced by the dramatic growth in many countries in response to the "demonstration effect" of their cost-effectiveness, as well as due to economic recession and political liberalisation.

D) The Encouragement of NGO activity in the South by Northern NGOs:

Northern NGOs have channelled increasingly significant levels of funding to their Southern "partners", reinforcing their impact. They have also sought to lobby the multilateral agencies to recognise the importance of community participation in development. They have stressed the need to work with local NGOs and community groups and not merely to listen to the opinions and priorities of governments and their officials.

E) The Economic Recession:

The worldwide economic recession and international debt crisis, with accompanying adjustment packages, have also led multilateral agencies to seek other means of supporting development actions. The ineffectiveness of many official programmes and the heavy cost of others, in terms of the resulting debt burden, have further pushed the multilateral agencies towards non-governmental and less expensive solutions.

Programming issues:

The great majority of multilateral agency collaboration with NGOs takes place within country programmes. There are some specific "international programmes", supporting international human rights groups and regional networks for example, but these are relatively modest given the UN emphasis on country level development. The large agencies such as UNDP, UNICEF, and FAO place most of their resources through their country programme offices. The disadvantage of this is that international policies can take time to filter down to the country level, and that a country programme can be greatly dependent on the personal approach of the Resident representative. The advantages are that where there is a will and a positive approach to NGOs, country offices can work directly with local NGOs, and ensure that issues raised by local communities are fed into the system. There is also a tendency for local country offices of the UN agencies to work more closely with local NGOs, than is true of the bilateral agencies which tend to fund through the NGOs of their own country. (One great exception to this general rule regarding UN country offices is in the case of emergency and humanitarian work, where agencies such as the UNHCR often work closely with the large Northern-based NGOs, because of their international scope, and lack of political involvement in local emergencies, wars etc).

The obligation on most UN agencies to produce detailed five and one year development plans, which have to be negotiated with and approved by government, has

not made it easy for NGOs to become involved in a consultative process of planning. There are signs that the UN would like to involve NGOs in the planning of country programmes, but the practical obstacles still remain. In the past the planning processes of the UN agencies mitigated against being responsive in an "NGO friendly" manner. Very often the overly bureaucratic nature of planning and authorization procedures entailed long delays in approving plans and have made it difficult to support process or community-led programmes. Although this problem has been recognised by some agencies and special funds (see UNDP below) are now often available in-country, the main planning processes can still often inhibit participative development. The cases which illustrate imagination, flexibility and rapid decision-making can often be traced to a good Res. Rep. bending the rules of their own agency! There is a need to encourage more UN agencies, country programme officers and governments to write into their country programmes more flexible funding approaches more suitable to NGO and community participation in development.

Funding.

UNDP

Most UNDP Resident representatives have a modest sum available for the direct funding of NGOs under the PDP (Participatory Development Programme fund) which has risen from \$25,000 p.a. to approximately \$60,000 per country per year, since its inception in 1988. The PDP programme now operates in 77 countries, and operates through a locally constituted project committee made up of representatives of the UNDP, government officials, and NGOs (although those on the committee are meant to rule themselves out of the eligibility for grants from the fund). Other funds also include the General Environmental Facility, a small grants fund for environmental protection and biodiversity which is working in 10-15 countries with an annual budget of \$200,000 per country. In Africa there is also a fund called Africa 2000 which provides funds per country in the region of \$200,000 p.a. with the environment and rural development as a focus. By contrast the Asia-Pacific 2000 Fund appears to be directed at the problems of urban areas, supporting initiatives in Delhi, Bangkok, Manila and other cities. A new fund called LIFE also has urban development as its focus.

The UNDP is aware that the proliferation of such funds requires improvements in their local coordination and management, to ensure that they are as effective as possible. Ideally they should be the responsibility of people in the UN who understand the nature and dynamics of NGO style development. Unfortunately such expertise is not always available.⁶

Additional funds can also be made available to NGOs, under the IPF (Indicative Programme Fund) which has to be agreed with the host government. In certain countries (eg. The Gambia, Sri Lanka and Senegal) significant funds have been channelled from UNDP to local NGOs under the normal country programme funds, but this is very dependent upon the local government attitude to external official funds going to NGOs.

The UNDP has focused its attention on grants/loans for general capacity building programmes. Thus the PDP funds are meant to be used for strengthening the NGO sector

(although in practice small loans and grants are often made for individual projects).

The UNV has been involved in Micro Capital Assistance through small funds tied to volunteers usually administered in country. UNV has also pioneered village trust funds in Senegal, and the Gambia.

The World Bank

The World Bank on the whole does not make grant funds available to NGOs. However, it now encourages NGOs to become involved in its normal projects. Since the 1970s it was possible for an NGO to become involved in a World Bank funded programme where the local government was in agreement. Given that the Bank funds are in the form of loans to the government, clearly the government retains control over their use and the modes through which they are implemented.

Initially a small number of programmes involved international NGOs as implementing agencies (eg. Care, World Vision, IPPF, SCF) in areas such as reproductive health. Since 1988, World Bank policy has been to encourage more NGO participation in programmes it funds. They now claim that up to 25% of World Bank projects have some degree of NGO involvement. Geographically it is clear that the highest rates of participation are in Africa with some 40% NGO involvement in Bank programmes. NGOs are more likely to participate in the softer loans made under IDA, rather than the more commercially based loans under the IBRD. Because IDA loans go to the poorer countries and to social sectors such as education, health, water and sanitation, it is perhaps understandable why this should be the case. The largest single sector attracting NGOs remains rural/agricultural development.

Although early Bank collaboration was with the larger international NGOs, it is now more directed towards local intermediate NGOs and grassroots groups. Thus of the projects associated with NGOs in 1992, some 54% involved grassroots groups, 76% local intermediary NGOs and 49% international NGOs (some obviously incorporated more than one type). The type of involvement is still dominated by NGOs acting as implementing agencies, although the Bank is keen to demonstrate that NGOs are increasingly being used to provide advice, or in the design, monitoring and evaluation of programmes.

There is a small central fund (approx \$250,000 p.a.) which does award grants to NGOs, primarily for networking, training and so forth. Finally, in a few new programmes, loans have been made to governments, which have then been disbursed as grants to local NGOs for primarily social sector work. The longest running of these programmes is in Togo, and more recently similar facilities were set up as "Social funds" to mitigate the negative effects of structural adjustment packages on the poor (eg. in Bolivia and in Ghana).

UNIFEM

UNIFEM launched a global fund for women in 1979. Initially this provided small grants to women's groups administered by a small secretariat in New York. A major review in 1984 led to a more professional approach being taken, with technical support staff being employed to appraise applications, which were channelled through UNDP country offices. Later regional UNIFEM offices were opened in 10 or more countries which now advise on most applications. UNIFEM's core budget is about US\$ 12 million, although special programmes funded by bilateral agencies often lead to considerably larger resources being managed through UNIFEM. Approximately 60% of all projects are with NGOs, amounting to about 30% of the disbursed funds.

Initially a considerable proportion of grants were channelled to different forms of income generating programmes with women. The present tendency has been to move away from small grants (US\$ 500) towards fewer, larger grants being channelled through intermediary or umbrella organisations. The core budget, once administrative costs have been met, is primarily disbursed to Southern NGOs, although some of the special funds approved by bilateral donors can be spent through (or may even be tied to) Northern NGOs. Strictly speaking UNIFEM should only work with NGOs which have been approved by the local UNDP country office as well as their own government. The other regulations governing UNIFEM funding are the same for NGOs as for official agencies. This presumably creates some problems for the small NGO.

UNIFEM believes it has a special role in helping women's groups to network, so it provides funds for seminars and conferences. It also believes that working through NGOs is one of the best ways to work directly with poor women, although they have encountered problems due to the lack of management skills of many groups, heightened by the rejection by women of many of the traditional management practices which are regarded as reflecting a male-dominated society. The rejection of hierarchical structures and the failure to resolve internal conflicts, has led to some attempts to introduce specialised management-for-women's groups, including a current project with the UNDP, the Management Development Programme for women's groups in Latin America.

Sectoral reviews

Health (aids)

NGO-Multilateral collaboration in the health sector was one of the first areas in which NGOs and Multilaterals developed relationships. The nature of primary health care (PHC) lends itself to community participation and small NGO and community-based programmes can be integrated with official programmes with relative ease (eg. via community health workers, /posts). UNICEF and WHO both developed programmes with NGOs. This collaboration was increased as they emphasised PHC, and was later reinforced by contemporary concerns over AIDS. The structural adjustment packages which started in the 1980's led to a new challenge, with public sector spending on health being cut back at a time of increasing need. NGOs were encouraged to fill gaps left by state services and to promote cost recovery and community contributions to basic services.

Labour and employment

The ILO is one of the oldest multilateral agencies and is characterised by its tripartite structure which seeks to incorporate Governments, employers and trade unions. Despite leading programmes on participation led by Anisur Rahman and other similar programmes, the modern NGO does not fit neatly into this tripartite structure. There are however several sectors which have worked closely with NGOs, and these are likely to become models for future ILO work.

The ILO has sought to improve its own functioning through "interdepartmental programmes". The ILO ITEC programme for the elimination of child labour has concentrated a great deal of its funding on NGOs, both for research and advocacy work as well as other related programmes. At the time of writing the Interdepartmental programme on Child Labour is coming to an end, to be replaced by one on the environment.

Other programmes from the ILO include:

- EDUC: aimed at educational programmes for workers, which prepares educational materials and supports NGO programmes.
- IYB (Improve Your Business): a long standing programme to support small enterprise development, through training, materials and related programme support.
- Tribal peoples: the ILO has a programme of advocacy and other support related to tribal peoples.

In some senses the ILO challenges our common understanding of what constitutes an NGO because of its support for membership groups such as unions, associations of small businesses, and so forth. However, it has a past history of focus on labour legislation for the formally employed and in setting labour standards which relate to the formal sector. Much of its early emphasis on vocational and other forms of training were also more appropriate to the formal sector in industrialised countries than to the informal sector in most parts of the South. There are signs that the ILO is moving towards different approaches, slowly working against its own weighty inheritance.

Agriculture

Agricultural development programmes typically take place within the context of agricultural extension services. Most Third World countries have extension services that are centrally controlled, bureaucratically oriented and directed by professional staff. They are based on the theory that the stimulus for change in farming communities must come from outside and that this change takes the form of externally generated knowledge and technologies that will modernise traditional ways of cultivation. The whole approach is essentially anti-participatory and, apart from some consultation with farmers or efforts to develop farmers' organisations, the farmers are regarded as merely the mechanism by which objectives and targets can be achieved.

Many of the agricultural development programmes supported by the World Bank have been criticised for imposing changes on rural communities without identifying the needs and views of the poor. NGOs have been used to implement programmes and encourage their acceptance, but they have not been brought in at the earlier planning stages.

Some more positive approaches have been adopted by some multi-lateral agencies. The FAO recognised the importance of working with NGOs very early on, in its Freedom from Hunger Campaign during the 1960s. It has operated regional programmes of support to NGOs involved in rural development through the FFHC/AD programme and its Regional Offices since the 1970's. In response to needs expressed by NGO partners, these programmes have concentrated on exchange programmes, training, project support, networks, facilitating NGO-Government relations, helping to identify Northern NGO partners and the provision of information. In 1980, the FAO launched the People's Participation Programme (PPP) as its basic strategy of rural development. The PPP, operating in 15 countries, explicitly seeks to promote programmes aimed at self-reliance and income generating activities, emphasising participation.

The FAO's commitment to more participatory methods of rural development have led it to launch other programmes, including an extensive plan of action for People's Participation in Rural Development, highlighting the growing importance of NGOs. FAO has also recently developed a Forests, Trees and People Programme involving some US\$ 2.5 million annually. The goal is to improve the livelihood of the rural poor through self-help management of tree and forest resources.

IFAD (the International Fund for Agricultural Development) established an Extended Co-operation Programme (ECP) with NGOs in 1987. This seeks to enhance IFAD's work with NGOs by promoting pilot activities. These include testing new technologies for poor beneficiaries, new institutional approaches and training programmes. The total value of this fund is, however, not very great and is believed to be only in the region of US\$200,000 per annum.

Education

There has always been a marked difference in the approach to education taken by those official agencies concerned with the education sector, primarily the World Bank, ILO and UNESCO and the development NGOs. The MLAs have traditionally prioritised support for the formal sector for different age groups (from primary to vocational training). Recent MLA attempts, such as the inter-agency "Education for all" Conference in Thailand, has not really had a significant impact on the development NGOs. These NGOs have focused their attention far more on non-formal education, and if anything more on adults than children. There are of course NGOs who have also looked at non-formal education programmes for special groups of children (eg. street and working children), but the majority of developmental NGOs have not prioritised formal education for children due to the long term dominance of the State in this sector. The rolling back of the State and recognition of the failure of many educational systems to perform well is leading to some rethinking and renewed interest in non-formal and other approaches pioneered by NGOs, but these experiments still tend to be carried out on parallel and separate tracks from the mainstream MLA/state educational programmes and thinking.

UNESCO avows an interest in working with NGOs but mainly with international federations of one sort or another (teachers etc). UNESCO still seems to regard cooperation with NGOs as a means to secure maximum cooperation in the preparation and execution of its programme and so increase international co-operation in the fields of education, science and culture.

The ILO has over recent years started to question its earlier focus on formal vocational training and now has programmes related to small enterprise development which seek to move away from formal institutions to more flexible client and demand driven programmes. It is also reviewing educational programmes for working children and investigating ways of improving educational programmes for them. NGOs have already become involved in these programmes.

Overall assessment:

1. Comparative advantage:

Although many multilaterals have sought to work with NGOs it is not always clear that MLAs have any comparative advantage in this field. With a few exceptions, most have relatively little experience in working with NGOs. To work successfully with NGOs and community groups, multilaterals require: staff with relevant experience, appropriate procedures and local knowledge of agencies.

Few multilaterals have many staff who understand how NGOs operate, or have experience in working within NGOs, or making appraisals of small scale projects. The tendency in the past to work exclusively with large scale capital inputs or through governments, has not encouraged staff with CBO or NGO backgrounds. This is starting to change, although staff with NGO backgrounds may still be limited to specialised departments, or be acting as junior members of a country programme, often supplied

through Junior Project Officer or UN Volunteer arrangements⁷.

There are some multilateral agencies which do have a proven track record in liaising with NGOs and community groups. One example is the United Nations Volunteers, which through their main volunteer programme, as well as special programmes such as the DDS (Domestic Development Services), works closely with NGOs. The DDS programme organises exchange visits between local NGOs and community groups in Asia, the Pacific Region and Africa. Since the early 1980s some 1,000 DDS field workers have served in 35 countries. This probably constitutes the world's largest South-South exchange of staff between NGOs. Other exceptional cases are discussed elsewhere in this report.

2. Participation:

A key word in the recent policy papers from the lead agencies such as UNDP and The World Bank is "participation". It refers to two concurrent debates. The first relates to the emphasis on improved governance and the strengthening of civil society through increased participation of the poor in the institutions of society and the State. The second debate stems from the growing realisation that many if not all forms of development require the participation of the local populace if they are to have any impact and, even more importantly, if they are to be sustainable over time.

Enhanced participation, it is argued can be achieved through the activities of NGOs and community groups; hence the attempts to ensure their collaboration in developmental initiatives. From the NGO perspective, however, there are certain concerns. There is the concern that NGOs are being used as cheap mechanisms to assist multilateral, and other official agencies, in the implementation of their programmes. Genuine NGOs and community groups do not exist solely for the convenience of official agencies trying to ensure the success of traditional development programmes.⁸ Central to NGO concerns is not collaboration with official agencies as such, but the need to ensure that they are not merely converted into private contractors delivering communities to large development programmes. It is also argued strongly that participation is ephemeral unless it is adopted at the earliest stages of a development programme to ensure that design and planning are not merely from the top down with participation relegated to the implementation or delivery stages of the programme.

Future development collaboration will be closely monitored by NGOs to see to what extent recent commitments by agencies such as UNDP and the World bank - to increase participation at planning and design phases of projects - are realised in practice. This proof is needed to dispel the concern that many interventions by multilaterals are donor, rather than client, driven. It sometimes appears that the multilaterals need the NGOs for their own reasons more than the NGOs need the support of the multilaterals.

3. Growth, Scaling up and Capacity building:

The shifting of resources from official agencies and governments towards NGOs has led to problems associated with growth. Several MLAs have noted the management problems confronted by their NGO partners, without necessarily recognising their own collaboration as one of the sources of these problems. NGOs often start as voluntary organisations with few, if any, paid staff and often a modest geographical remit. The emphasis of official agencies on scaling up good development approaches has entailed many small agencies committing themselves to programmes beyond their management capacity.

There is a delicate line between a strong and positive collaboration between official and NGO agencies for a common purpose and a regime which undermines the very qualities of NGOs to which official sponsors have been attracted. Looking towards the future it is possible that we should regard the emphasis on intermediate NGOs (Northern or Southern) as a relatively temporary phenomenon. Many of the services now provided by NGOs might be eventually better supplied by membership-based organisations (eg. credit unions).

Meanwhile, multilateral agencies are in some cases trying to support programmes which strengthen the capacity of NGOs and CBOs. The PDP fund of the UNDP, for example has as a priority to support programmes designed to strengthen such capacities as training in NGO management, human resource development and funding for national umbrella organisations and other support groups.

The UNDP is also taking a lead in the former Soviet Union and other areas to support fledgling NGOs through training, assisting governments to provide an enabling environment and other means.

Nevertheless there is a real danger that official support for NGOs can undermine their comparative advantages of being flexible, closely associated with community groups and specifically the poor, and able to innovate on their behalf.

4. Coordination of activities and information:

From the NGO perspective the multilateral agencies often seem to be intimidating in their size, procedures and culture. Additionally the bewildering numbers of agencies, their names, over-lapping mandates and different approaches to NGOs can serve to confuse rather than enlighten the external observer.

The United Nations Non-governmental Liason service (NGLS), based in Geneva, was created by the UNDP and UN Department of Public Information in 1975 in consultation with NGOs to provide a central support and information service for and on NGOs. It is one of the central bodies in the UN system promoting cooperation between the UN and NGOs, and is funded by 16 different UN agencies. It is not a funding body although it does administer special funds to promote the participation of NGOs at UN

meetings (eg. UNCED).

The UN-NGLS supplies information to a large number of NGOs through its own publications, as well as advise other UN agencies on NGOs operating in its own areas. It tends to focus on: national NGOs, local and regional networks as well as those agencies with consultative status to the UN (primarily through ECOSOC). Given the rapid increase in the UN/NGO interaction NGLS expects its work to increase over the coming years.

Despite the work of NGLS, there is still a need for individual UN agencies to supply clear statements on their respective mandate and how and where they are able or feel it appropriate to work with NGOs. Although NGLS is trying to produce a "Handbook" dealing with 22 agencies covering the mandate of each, programme activities, policies and practices towards NGOs.

One of the problems faced by NGOs also has to do with understanding the overlapping mandates and different approaches of the various agencies. Thus, some appear to be able to fund NGOs directly, others not. Some argue that formal approval from the local government is required before any cooperation is agreed, whilst other agencies can waiver this. Some agencies still only communicate with those in consultative status with ECOSOC, whereas even internal reports of the UN note that these agencies often dare not be representative of the international NGO community and that the procedures for recognition are unduly complex and slow. To their credit other agencies such as UNICEF ignore the issue of consultative status in favour of more pragmatic responses to those agencies working in areas of common interest. At the moment the whole area of "UN arrangements for consultations with UN agencies" is under review and a report is expected in 1995.⁹

Conclusion:

Areas of tension:

1) Collaboration or cooptation

NGOs will continue to be concerned as to the advantages and disadvantages of collaboration with MLAs. There will be agencies who will see such arrangements as advantageous if it brings more funding and the opportunity for managing larger service programmes. However, many NGOs will remain concerned that MLAs are primarily repackaging old projects and trying to coopt the NGOs as salesmen for them. The threat of cooptation is regarded as a way of "de-politicising" development with the poor and undermining the independence of NGOs which by definition are, or should be, distinct from government. Sensitive management by MLAs and a greater awareness by NGOs of their own roles in society and development can avoid some of these problems.

2) Service delivery or independence

There are some NGOs who argue that their involvement in service delivery should only ever be short term and to be justified in terms of either emergency provision,

or innovation, or creating the capacity of communities to negotiate long term delivery through official channels. Certain current trends which envisage NGOs providing services over the longer term, especially where adjustment and other reforms have reduced public sector budgets, pose a challenge and concern to the NGO community. Many NGOs are being forced to recognise that their strategies of obtaining official support and recognition for community sponsored services are no longer viable in the current climate. Some NGOs still take the line that NGO should not get engaged in large scale service provision, but remain small and focus on "empowerment" and advocacy programmes leaving service provision to either official agencies or a new breed of NGO contractors .

3) Scale

The issues of collaboration and of service provision are crucial to the debate over "going to scale". On the one side are those who argue that going to scale is not just about doing more of the same or running bigger programmes providing national level coverage. These NGOs believe that going to scale has more to do with influencing official agencies in their programming and that their relationships to MLAs should be seen in this light. On the other hand there is a pressure on NGOs from some official agencies to scale up successful programmes, and a search to identify NGOs able to deliver large scale programmes. The literature from official agencies is therefore full of examples of NGOs of the Sarvodaya and Grammen Bank type.¹⁰

The attempt to go to scale, and the growth of funding of NGOs has led to an epidemic of growth related problems in NGOs (Southern and Northern). In the worse cases this has led to management problems even agency collapse, in others it has led to NGOs losing their initial mission or vision with consequent demoralisation of staff and the inability to meet the promised delivery of programmes.¹¹ There are now a few programmes designed to assist agencies resolve their growth related programmes but these must take into account the fundamental differences between NGOs and commercial organisations if they are to be of help.

4) Technical confusions

Many MLAs are still far from being "NGO friendly". Their procedures, machiavellian bureaucracy and complex mandates make it difficult for many NGOs to work easily with them. There are MLAs who have shown that productive collaboration is possible, but many of the others have a long way to go towards making themselves more open as organisations at all levels. They also need to produce clear statements of their policies towards NGOs, and clear procedures for applications for financial or other support. Additionally many MLAs need to have a better understanding of the debates and the dynamics within the NGO community, their distinctive approaches to development and some of the other areas of tension noted above. Virtually none of the MLAs produce financial statistics on their support for NGOs and most are not even able to estimate the degree to which they collaborate with NGOs financially. Many of the procedures are only vague at the best and there are few generalised rules governing administrative arrangements of financial collaboration (or if they exist they vary from programme to programme considerably).

The Future:

Our study has indicated that we can expect an increase in direct funding from MLAs, primarily to Southern NGOs through country programmes. There will also be an increase in the contact between MLAs and specialised advisory and advocacy NGOs. The policy moves of agencies such as UNDP will undoubtedly see a significant increase in UN/NGO collaboration and the MLAs becoming more important actors in NGO sponsored development. Looking at the present role of the MLAs in the CIS, for example, we can see that they are taking a lead in working with the newly emerging NGOs.

It would also appear that the pressure from MLAs to identify "implementing NGOs" will lead to more NGOs becoming sub-contractors to official agencies dependent upon contracts for their existence, and that these NGOs may well become further removed from those NGOs with their own programmes, and social base and constituency.

The effects of the end of the Cold War are still fully to be appreciated. It is clear that these effects are still working through MLAs and NGOs, as well as the bilateral donors who fund the MLAs. New roles for MLAs are emerging as a consequence, but the previous independence of the MLAs is under threat as they face greater scrutiny from their donors. This may in turn have an impact on MLS relations with NGOs. This is a trend which requires future monitoring.

Revised September 1994.

APPENDIX 1:

How the UNDP works with NGOs.

1. UNDP's reasons for working with NGOs:

"The UNDP seeks co-operation with NGOs as a means of enhancing the effectiveness of development work, making additional technical and financial resources available to developing countries, and achieving valuable co-ordination of assistance... especially with regard to grass-roots participatory development." (UNDP 1986:3)

2. The UNDP has had a long history of working with NGOs:

Back in 1975, the Administrator of UNDP issued guidelines on "Strengthening collaboration with NGOs" to all staff, including Resident Representatives heading offices in over 110 developing countries.

Since then numerous other initiatives have been launched.

In 1984, UNDP's Administrator designated a Senior Advisor and staff working group on grassroots and NGO matters to develop and promote participatory grassroots approaches in existing and new UNDP supported programmes, in order to further contacts and collaborative arrangements with NGOs. (See the main report for recent developments).

3. The UNDP is interested in exploring collaborative arrangements with all development NGOs, provided that they;

- * are seen by the government as useful and respected partners in the country's efforts.
- * encourage, not substitute for, the activities and growth of local groups with close ties to the populations concerned.
- * foster people's participation on a self-reliant rather than dependency creating basis.
- * avoid creating attitudes of clientelism, which constitute another form of dependency on external aid.

4. Opportunities for collaboration between the UNDP and NGOs, as well as the forms of collaboration possible in a particular country, depend on several factors:

- * the government's receptivity to UNDP involvement with NGOs in the country.
- * the presence of voluntary associations or NGO organisations in a community.
- * the experience and competence of particular NGOs to achieve a project's objectives, and
- * the NGO's performance and credibility with the population concerned.

Because all the funds administered by the UNDP were established to support the development efforts of developing countries, the UNDP can respond to requests for assistance only if they come or are endorsed by the governments of these countries. (UNDP 1986:8). That is to say that the UNDP does not fund NGOs unless they are

recognised and approved by their national governments.

5. The UNDP works with and supports NGOs in numerous ways:

a) In several developing countries government planning officials and UNDP Resident Reps have worked together to create closer links with national and international NGOs. Tripartite workshops organised, where NGOs, Governments and the UNDP meet to discuss policy issues. 'Donor round tables' have also been set up, at which NGOs are invited to consider and discuss the policy, technical and financial requirements of specific government development plans and programmes.

b) NGOs may further be involved in the project design and implementation of specific UNDP supported projects. Whether it is a UN agency or the government that executes the project, NGOs may be called in to advise and/or carry out part of the project as subcontracted agents.

c) Where projects that are being run by an NGO complement activities being funded by the UNDP, an NGO may be in a position to receive technical or capital support from UNDP sources within an NGO-assisted programme.

The UNDP provides some support for grassroots initiatives. National "grassroots" funds have been established to support grassroots initiatives in Benin, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Senegal and Togo. These funds are managed jointly by representatives of NGOs, the government and local UNDP and other donor offices and are used to respond speedily and effectively to development initiatives undertaken by the populations themselves.

The UNDP has also set up training centres in South Asia and elsewhere to build on the experience in participatory action research, a process of grass-roots mobilisation and social action evolved through innovative experiments.

d) Finally to support the important role that NGOs have in building public support for development (in both developed and developing countries), the UNDP also produces a variety of information materials, including brochures on its activities and those on the funds it administers, papers on major development issues etc.

Having said all this, UNDP Reports admit that the UNDP and NGOs active within the same country often have little knowledge of one another's existence. The UNDP line is that its Resident Reps are too busy to seek out the NGOs. It is therefore up to NGOs to take the initiative to (a) become better informed, (b) discover areas of parallel interest, (c) identify contact persons within Government ministries and the UNDP, through which it can (d) submit proposals for collaborative projects. (UNDP 1986:14-16).

6. Examples of UNDP-NGO Cooperation include:

* Drinking water supply and sanitation:

The UNDP is coordinating the activities of NGOs in various countries in S.Asia, providing training etc; also in Kenya and Zimbabwe, emphasising the need to involve women in project design and execution, training women volunteer health workers.

* Women's productive activities:

The UN Development Fund for Women and UNDP have supported women's training centres in Bangladesh, providing the poor with income-generating skills; in Benin similar work with women's cooperative; Mother's Clubs in Bolivia; the promotion of new wood-saving cooking stoves designed by ITDG in the Sahel.

* Domestic Development Services:

The UNV DDS programm, with core funding provided by the UNDP, operates in Africa, Asia and the Pacific. It sends out qualified volunteers to act as change agents, and also operates an exchange of grassroots development practitioners between countries within the same region, to promote sharing of know-how and experience. It also provides on the job training for these workers and provides back-up advisory services to help local grassroots groups organise themselves, find sources of funding etc.

* Health and Nutrition:

A multitude of initiatives supported by the UNDP exist, often working with UNICEF and/or the WHO, helping governments establish rural health care centres, training centres for primary health care workers etc. Working with both SCBOs and NNGOs.

* Agricultural Development:

UNDP/FAO projects in Africa aim to increase agricultural production, introduce new seeds and methods etc. Working with Oxfam, CARE, the Red Crosss, Misereor etc.

* Education:

UNDP/UNESCO are working with governments to develop rurally focused primary school curricula, to improve teacher training, and, in collaboration with NGOs, is working to provide non-formal education to people not reached by formal system.

8. In 1988 UNDP launched a major new initiative, the Partners in Development Programme (PDP) (see the text of the main report). Under this programme, monitored by the NGO Division at UNDP Headquarters and supported by a grant from Special Programme resources (SPR), UNDP Resident Reps are able to grant awards totalling \$60,000 per country p.a., in direct support of NGO activites. Projects eligible for support

include; innovative NGO projects that support self-help initiatives at the community level, activities that increase the effectiveness of indigenous NGOs or NGO associations, and activities involving co-operation between the host government, UNDP and the local NGO community.

Other recent UNDP initiatives include Africa 2000 and LIFE. UNDP Field Offices have also been given assistance with the establishment of national computerised databases on NGOs.

APPENDIX 2.

How the World Bank works with NGOs.

There are two main areas of cooperation between the World Bank and NGOs: (1) operational collaboration and (2) policy dialogue. This Appendix looks at the progress made by the World Bank in its efforts to work more closely with NGOs and lists some of the main criticisms levelled against the World Bank by the WB-NGO Working Group.

(1) Operational Collaboration between the WB and NGOs.

a. Patterns of Bank-NGO Collaboration:

Since FY88, the World Bank has made a systematic effort to increase NGO involvement in its operations. NGOs are expected to be, involved in 68, or 31%, of the 222 projects approved by the Bank's executive directors in FY92. This number is four times what it was in FY88.

Regionally, most of the projects involving NGOs have continued to be in Africa (47%), but the number of such projects in South and East Asia (25%) and Latin America and the Caribbean (18%) continue to be important.

The Sectoral pattern in FY92 is also similar to past trends with agriculture continuing to account for the highest proportion of projects involving NGOs (22 projects or 32% of the total). NGO involvement in Population, health and nutrition (PHN) projects increased steadily from FY 85 to FY90, but fell to just 7 projects (10%) in 1992. The numbers of adjustment-related and environment projects doubled from FY89 to FY92; NGOs being brought in to cushion the negative effects of 1980's World Bank Structural Adjustment Packages and Forestry and Dam building projects. In FY92, the World Bank collaborated with NGOs on 8 adjustment-related projects and 13 environment/forestry projects. Education, Energy, Urban Development and Emergency Relief account for the remaining 18 projects.

In earlier years, international NGOs predominated in Bank-supported projects involving NGOs. Beginning in FY 88, that trend started shifting so that by FY90, nearly 80% of the NGOs involved are either grassroots groups or indigenous intermediary NGOs. The Bank has made a special effort to seek out the involvement of local NGOs in its operations, primarily for the grassroots knowledge and expertise that they can bring to the design and implementation of projects. International NGOs have strongly supported this shift.

Implementation has remained the most common functional category. NGO involvement in project design is rising as a result of encouragement from senior management staff, but only gradually.

Funding for NGOs in the context of Bank-financed operations is almost always indirect,

funds being channeled through a borrowing government. Two kinds of financial arrangements are the most common: either the NGO is engaged by a government under a fee-for-services contract, as the executing agency of a government-sponsored project; or, the NGO submits a project proposal and receives grant funding from a government to set the project up.

In FY88 the Bank approved its first free-standing NGO Project, the Togo Grassroots Initiative Project. This provides grants of US\$ 3 million to community based development projects designed and carried out by NGOs and project beneficiaries.

b. Emerging Lessons from Experience.

The World Bank has begun to assess the effectiveness of NGO involvement in the projects it finances. From several reviews of experience, some preliminary lessons have emerged.

- * The importance of working with NGOs with proven track records.
- * The value of NGO contributions to subproject appraisal and selection.
- * The need to take into account beneficiary participation in appraising NGO subprojects.
- * And the need to inform NGOs about sources of funds and encourage them to submit proposals.

The Bank's experience in funding for NGOs has shown that it is crucial to take into account the inter-relationships between the government and NGOs in a given country. Obstacles in the realm of government-NGO relations include:

- * reluctance on the part of NGOs to enter into a relationship with the government or the World Bank.
- * potential rivalry between public agencies and NGOs for financial reasons.
- * difficulties in dealing with diverse and disparate NGO communities.
- * And inappropriate public policies towards NGOs. With respect to this last point, the World Bank has tried to help governments develop policies that would contribute to an effective voluntary sector. Governments can encourage the voluntary sector, for example through deregulation and tax advantages.

Relations among NGOs in a country have likewise been found to be a significant factor in project success. Rivalry between NGOs may be due to fierce competition for scarce funds or it may be the result of ideological differences. National associations have been involved in a number of Bank supported projects as a potentially efficient means of reaching a diversity of NGOs in a country. The Bank's experience seems to show that NGO associations are most effective when their role in a project is consistent with their overall mandate and area of expertise and when they have had ample opportunity to prepare in advance for participation in an officially sponsored project.

c. Institutionalising the Bank's work with NGOs:

The World Bank has in the past few years initiated a number of mechanisms to systematise and institutionalise its work with NGOs. The External International Economic Relations division (EXTIE) now regularly publishes a list of World Bank financed projects with potential for NGO involvement. EXTIE also has an NGO resource centre and runs training seminars to improve staff's understanding of and ability to work with NGOs. The Bank's Economic Development Institute began developing a 3-year seminar programme on the role of NGOs in development (financed by the government of Japan). In 1990 a reciprocal exchange of staff between the World Bank (the Africa region) and an NGO (SCF-UK) was tried for the first time.

The Bank's knowledge about NGO involvement in its projects has depended mainly on reports by the Bank Staff involved. The Bank is now getting feedback on some projects from NGOs and EXTIE has begun to commission independent monitoring and evaluation studies on projects.

(2) Policy Dialogue between the WB and NGOs.

The rapid expansion of NGO involvement in Bank financed operations has occurred against a backdrop of intensified policy dialogue between NGOs and the Bank - a dialogue conducted in many fora.

a. The NGO-World Bank Committee.

The most important forum - in terms of longevity as well as the breadth and depth of the consultation - is the NGO-World Bank Committee. Formed in 1982, the Committee provides a formal, international forum for policy discussions between senior Bank managers and 26 NGO leaders from around the World. In 1990 the Committee focussed on three main topics.

b. Other Bank-NGO Discussions:

The International Forum on World Bank and IMF Lending is another significant venue for Bank-NGO interaction. The Forum is a new NGO Network emerging from protests around the Joint Annual Meetings in Berlin in 1988. The Forum's organisers pay for developing country NGOs to attend the Bank/Fund Annual Meetings - mostly NGOs involved in environmental issues.

The Bank believes that it is important to engage NGOs in productive exchanges of views. Thus, the Bank supports an increasing number of seminars and conferences designed to improve Bank-NGO interaction. Recent conferences include the 1990 World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA) convened in Thailand by the WB, UNDP, UNESCO and UNICEF. The Bank's European Office in Paris organises and supports frequent seminars for European NGOs and other regional departments of the WB are taking steps to do the same.

c. Bank Influence on Government Policies Towards NGOs.

Increasingly the WB is studying NGOs in the course of its analysis of country and sector issues, with the aim of making the Bank's work with NGOs more knowledgeable and sensitive. This has also brought NGO issues into the Bank's policy dialogue with member governments.

In Indonesia, a WB study calling for more encouragement to be given to community initiative and NGOs may have influenced the recent shift in government policy, relaxing restrictions on indigenous NGOs. In Bangladesh, WB support for the deregulation of NGOs failed to influence the government, illustrating the limits of WB influence. While in another case, Zaire, Bank staff decided that a frontal effort to improve the government's overall relationship with NGOs would most likely end up tightening government control over NGOs. So instead the Bank decided to fund NGOs through its projects in the country.

(3) NGO Criticism of the WB.

The NGO community is far from homogeneous; NGOs are based on many different philosophical, religious and ideological foundations. This partly explains the diversity of opinions that exist in the NGO community regarding the issue of cooperation with the WB.

Put very simply, 4 different NGO attitudes can be identified:

a) Some NGOs refuse to participate in any form of collaboration with the Bank, because they hold contradictory opinions on development and/or have had adverse experiences with WB operations. b) Other NGOs accept WB money and fully cooperate with the Bank and with Southern governments as subcontractors on WB programmes. c) More and more NGOs are entering into a critical dialogue with the WB to challenge WB policies. d) And finally there are those NGOs that combine direct cooperation with a continuing critical dialogue.

Bank sources suggest great steps forward in World Bank-NGO relations, but NGO groups are far more cautious in their assessment of recent changes. According to the NGO Working Group on the World Bank (in its December 1989 report) recent moves on the part of the World Bank to listen to NGOs and work more closely with them have been superficial. "It is one thing to make speeches and institute new policies; it is quite another to secure institutional change" (p.i).

The Working Group argues that there remains major obstacles in the way of genuine cooperation between NGOs and the WB.

i. Different principles.

The strength of NGOs lies in their altruism and their commitment to search for an alternative, participatory, grassroots oriented and environmentally sustainable path to development. The development model of the World Bank is very different; oriented to macro-economic growth. The macro-economic indicators and financial and monetary

principles, (such as balance of payments, rates of return etc), that guide the work of the WB, normally do not take into account the needs of the poor. World Bank staff consult governments but rarely consult the 'beneficiaries' of the programmes they finance. By contrast, consultation with and the participation of local self-help organisations of the poor in the design, formulation, implementation and evaluation of development programmes are basic principles of NGO development work.

"Despite high-level policy statements from the Bank about the environment and poverty, it has yet to be demonstrated that these reflect a basic change in the direction of the institution. The genuine concern of many within the Bank about the social impact of adjustment measures unfortunately continues to be largely translated into compensatory or social action programmes - targetted at specific population groups and often designed to sustain government support for, and pacify popular opposition to, these measures - or reflected in some marginal shifts in borrowers' budgetary priorities. It has not lead to fundamental changes in the basic economy-reform package, which is at the core of the problem." (p.v)

ii. Difference in scale.

Many NGO sponsored activities are small and localised. This can make them very effective. But it also makes their replication on a larger regional or national scale more problematic. Many NGOs are under pressures from Northern government and multi-lateral donors, such as the WB, to expand their activites and fill the vacuum created by shrinking public services in countries , such as those in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, with chronic debts and severe adjustment policies imposed on them etc. But in attempting to scale-up their operations, fears are that NGOs may lose their innovative quality and become over-bureaucratic, top-down, non-participatory organisations, dependent on external support.

'Experience gained with regard to direct funding by WB of NGOs in developing countries, shows that too much official funding can destroy the NGOs' grassroots character and that they can be weakened or even destroyed by internal problems after receiving huge amounts of direct funding' (Working Group March 1990 report p9:para 26).

iii. Different Worlds.

Most NGOs are inexperienced in dealing with the World Bank. Few know how to write proposals or where they should be sent. Furthermore the WB remains secretive and information concerning the physical, institutional and economic details and environmental and socio-economic impact of proposed projects is treated as confidential. The long planning process required for bank operations adds further difficulties for most NGOs used to far shorter project horizons.

The NGO Working group argues that NGOs should;

- * set up genuine NGO networks and use these to discuss WB policies and ways of collaborating with the WB.
- * establish local and regional WB-NGO Committees as a means of achieving systematic and continuous NGO-Bank consultations.
- * learn how the WB operates in order to influence decision making within the WB.
- * formulate precise contracts for any NGO/WB collaboration.

The Working Group argues that NGOs and CBOs should only collaborate in implementing WB-financed projects, if they have been involved in or agree with the project design. 'NGOs should be willing to help in the redesigning of (adjustment) policies, but they should not allow themselves to be "used" to participate in mitigating solutions.' NGOs interested in participating in WB projects should also clarify from the outset both the level of independence of action they will be allowed and the context in which they will be operating. NGOs need to ensure that their special status is not compromised as a result of official funding.

The NGO working group also calls for the WB to act. It argues that the WB should:

- * make its information more widely available to NGOs and grassroots organisations. At present, the WB cannot provide information about the projects it helps to fund without the expressed permission of the borrowing government.
- * change the ground rules of adjustment.
- * involve NGOs at an early stage and allow them to have an input into key statements of Bank policy or operations, so that they may help to mitigate potential social and environmental damage.
- * involve local NGOs in the planning stages of those programmes that will directly affect them.
- * support initiatives for dialogue and consultation with NGOs at national and regional levels.
- * draft and put into practice a Standard Operational Procedure (SOP) for all its development actions, with a clearly stated commitment to collaborating with NGOs.
- * develop evaluation criteria that assess (both before and after implementation of the project) i) the degree of popular participation in the programme; ii) the proportion of the poor that benefits from the programme, both in economic and social terms; and iii) the programme's environmental impact.

The Working Group suggests that the WB contemplate on the possibility of 'direct funding', highlighting the problems faced by SNGOs who lack the resources to expand. When the WB makes funds available to SNGOs, the Working Group suggests that a mechanism should be set up to ensure the autonomy of NGOs. At the same time, concerns are also raised about the rise in the number of bogus NGOs, set up primarily for profit and created to cash in on the new availability of funds for SNGOs. Because of their lack of experience, WB staff may mistake these quasi NGOs for genuine development grassroots NGOs; resulting in the misdirection of funds and a loss in confidence in NGOs.

1. For the purposes of the present report we are treating NGOs as primarily: Northern based NGOs, which include donor agencies, and those operating their own programmes in developing countries; Southern agencies, by which we mainly mean "intermediate agencies" working with local community groups. Although some Southern NGOs will be membership based, the diversity of such organisations is relatively unrecognised by the UN and Northern NGOs alike, in part because of the past history whereby many membership organisations became either very bureaucratic, or served the middle classes. There has also been a move away from cooperative based organisation after the problems confronted by cooperatives in earlier years. Finally we have in parts mentioned Community based groups, because some agencies are now trying to work directly with them, for example some of the UNICEF sponsored health programmes, and the UNV based DDS programme.

2. We have reviewed the operations of the following MLAs in some detail: The UNDP, UNICEF, The World Bank, UNIFEM, ILO, UNGLS, UNV, and to a lesser extent: FAO, WHO etc for which we have relied on primarily secondary materials. A short bibliography is included in the appendices.

3. Peter Oakley, (1991) in "Projects for People" outlines a number of "participatory" and other such programmes founded by UN agencies such as FAO, WHO.

4. General assembly resolution 45/199 of 21 December 1991.

5. See A. Clayton ed. (INTRAC, 1993). "Governance, Democracy, Conditionality and NGOs". The proceedings of a conference on these issues encompassing Southern/Northern NGOs, bi and multi lateral agencies.

6. The report from the Joint Inspection Unit of the UN noted the lack of UN staff with an expertise in NGO development, although it noted a considerable improvement in recent years, but much of this was due to the use of UNVs and JPOs on short contracts (2 years). (1993) Whereas an earlier study had noted considerable confusion where national level capacity and coordination of NGO activities were missing (Pratt 1991).

7. Joint Inspection Unit, UN Geneva 1993.

8. See Peter Oakley, "Projects for people: The practice of participation in rural development". ILO 1991 for further discussion on the evolution of "participation" in several multilateral agencies including FAO, WHO, UNICEF, UNIFEM, ILO etc.

9. See Joint Inspection committee report Geneva 1993, and personal communication from NGLS December 1993.

10. For a more detailed discussion of Scaling up see: Edwards & Hulme, 1992.

11. A great deal of the INTRAC programme in Europe has been to assist agencies with internal management problems which frequently growth related.

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Multilateral Agencies and NGOs

During the past decade there has been a marked growth in the collaboration by multilateral agencies with both Northern and Southern NGOs. This paper sets out some of the main elements in the evolving relationships between NGOs and multilateral agencies (MLAs).

The paper considers the changing history of NGO/MLA relations, programming issues that affect the effectiveness of NGO/MLA collaborations, the impact of funding arrangements, the policy and actual practice of the key MLAs towards NGOs in certain sectors, and the opportunities and threats to NGOs in working with MLAs.

The paper concludes by giving an overall assessment of the relationship, outlining issues of concern to both Northern and Southern NGOs, and by pointing out possible future developments.

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