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REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Addendum

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Annex I

PRESENTATIONS MADE TO THE COMMITTEE ON NON-GOVERNMENTAL
ORGANIZATIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

Presentation by the Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly
Affairs

1. The Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs observed that paragraph 6 of the Secretary-General's interim report (E/C.2/766) had suggested that information be provided to delegations on the activities of non-governmental organizations. He felt that this would substantially help to increase awareness on the part of delegations and Member States of the critical activities undertaken by those organizations in the international community. He wondered whether it was generally known that in 1972 alone the contribution of commodities from one group of religious organizations in seven countries for relief and development programmes amounted to over \$10.7 million.
2. The Under-Secretary-General suggested that perhaps Permanent Missions, both here and in Geneva, could, to their advantage, play a greater role in relations with non-governmental organizations. Many voluntary agencies, he said, were ready to undertake specific relief and development programmes, but could not initiate programmes without having an agreement with the country involved. Government representatives in New York, Geneva and elsewhere could not only provide non-governmental organizations with relevant information about possible fields where voluntary agencies might assist in their countries; they could also facilitate project development, both by providing necessary data and by expediting contact with appropriate government officials.
3. The Under-Secretary-General referred to the central role that the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations could play in non-governmental organization affairs. This Committee, he said, was the main intergovernmental body, with sole responsibility for developing relations with non-governmental organizations, and was in a position to make recommendations for the rationalization of relations between non-governmental organizations and the United Nations. It could, for example, call on regional economic commissions to establish a framework in which the activities of non-governmental organizations in a given area could be co-ordinated with the activities of other voluntary agencies and the activities of individual Governments and United Nations agencies. It could make recommendations for increasing the input of relevant non-governmental organizations in the development and implementation of programmes adopted by the various organs of the United Nations. It could recommend means by which the entire United Nations system could co-ordinate its relations with non-governmental organizations in order that both the United Nations and the voluntary organization community could benefit to the utmost from the resources each had to contribute.
4. Within the Secretariat itself, the Under-Secretary-General went on, there was a definite need for improving liaison with non-governmental organizations. He said that there were many situations in which such organizations could provide data,

reports and similar substantive material on a subject of interest to the United Nations and its Member States. Such material should be brought to the attention of the relevant divisions of the United Nations in order to avoid duplication. Non-governmental organizations should also be involved in conferences sponsored by the United Nations, conferences such as the World Population Conference and the World Food Conference, since their experience in those areas could contribute substantially to any discussion of those problems.

5. In all those areas, he continued, the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations was in a unique position to consult with those organizations and to recommend actions which might be taken by the United Nations system, by the major organs of the United Nations and by Member States to ensure the constructive participation of non-governmental organizations. Governments alone could accomplish the ends for which the United Nations was established. The concern, the resources and the ability of non-governmental organizations must contribute their share. In concluding, the Under-Secretary-General stated that he was confident that together all concerned could improve and enhance the present system of working with non-governmental organizations in order that all might benefit from their co-operative efforts.

Presentation by the Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information

6. The Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information addressed himself to the activities developed by the Office of Public Information for the further improvement of its co-ordination and liaison with non-governmental organizations. He stated that those organizations, motivated by a deep concern for international affairs and by a commitment to the principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, acted as disseminators of the United Nations story in a world where the media often underrated and sometimes even ignored it.

7. The relationship between the Office of Public Information and the community of non-governmental organizations in 1973 had been particularly fruitful, he said. Besides the supply of written and visual information, an active programme of thematic weekly briefings for non-governmental organizations had been maintained and intensified, and the written summaries of those briefings had been extremely well received by the organizations. A weekly news briefing had been added to the thematic briefings, he continued, to keep the community of non-governmental organizations informed of up-to-date political developments within the United Nations family.

8. The Assistant Secretary-General emphasized the creative relationship that existed between the Non-Governmental Organizations Executive Committee of the Office of Public Information and that Office and praised some of that Committee's initiatives in connexion with its sub-committees on publications, audio-visual materials and public relations. He stated that the members of the Sub-Committee on Publications had been participating in the discussions of its publications programme held by the Office of Public Information, so as to make the needs of non-governmental organizations felt at an early stage in the production process.

Similarly, the Sub-Committee on Audio-Visual Materials had been viewing all new United Nations films to select and recommend those that it considered most adaptable for the programmes of non-governmental organizations; and the Sub-Committee on Public Relations had also started exploring ways and means of involving community leaders, artists, actors and media executives in issues connected with the United Nations.

9. In the field of decolonization, he continued, the Office of Public Information has requested non-governmental organizations to give the widest possible dissemination to all materials available, including the bulletin The United Nations and Southern Africa issued by the Office.

10. The highest priority had been given to the dissemination to non-governmental organizations of information on United Nations efforts in peace-keeping, disarmament, co-operation among nations and the promotion of international law, he said. United Nations participation in the Middle East peace efforts and the Security Council resolutions on the Middle East had been highlighted at every opportunity.

11. He said he was convinced that the non-governmental organizations could play an even greater role in helping to bridge the information gap between the United Nations and the public at large. However, much remained to be done if the United Nations was to use the extraordinary potential of those organizations, particularly as communicators and educators of world public opinion about international issues.

12. As to some of the problems encountered by the Office of Public Information in working with non-governmental organizations, he said it was difficult, for example, to ascertain the impact of the efforts made by the Office on the community of non-governmental organizations and the impact that the programmes of those organizations had on their own constituencies and communities. In that regard, he suggested that a study be made of the effectiveness of non-governmental organization activities at the "grass roots", national, regional and international levels. Such a study would provide the basis for a possible reorientation of information efforts and resources, and lay the groundwork for a global re-evaluation of United Nations relationships with non-governmental organizations. It might also encompass the activities of those organizations.

13. He also suggested the possibility of preparing a comprehensive questionnaire for non-governmental organizations. The responses could be processed by computer into a thorough statistical analysis of the organizations' activities, he said.

14. He went on to say that budgetary restrictions had made it impossible to appoint regional non-governmental organization liaison officers, as envisaged last year, to deal with national non-governmental organization groups in the areas served by the regional economic commissions. However, the directors of United Nations information centres had been asked to strengthen their co-operation with influential national non-governmental organizations.

15. He recalled that the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1806 (LV) of last August, had invited Member States and United Nations bodies to associate interested and competent non-governmental organizations more closely with their efforts. The Council had further expressed the hope that those organizations would make the fullest possible promotional use of the information made available to them. In the Council's debate on this question, attention had repeatedly been drawn to the idea of reaching organizations that might not necessarily be in sympathy with some of the aims of the International Development Strategy but that nevertheless had considerable influence in their fields.

16. He believed it was true that not enough had been done in this field. He had in mind, in the developed world, such organizations as chambers of commerce, chambers of shipping, trade unions and associations of manufacturers.

17. It should be possible to institute a dialogue between those non-governmental organizations that had traditionally supported United Nations action and other organizations that sometimes appeared to think that their vital interest would be affected by measures approved by the Council or by the Assembly. The Centre for Economic and Social Information (CESI) of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs was devising projects this year in which such a dialogue could take place.

Presentation by the Director of the Office of External Relations and Information, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

18. The Director of the Office of External Relations and Information of the United Nations Development Programme addressed himself to measures taken by UNDP to strengthen its liaison with non-governmental organizations at the field level.

19. He said UNDP had recently conducted a survey in several developing countries in order to determine what the actual status of collaboration was between non-governmental organizations and UNDP at the field level and to look for possibilities of strengthening such collaboration. The results of the survey had been greatly encouraging; it had proved that there was considerable scope for collaboration at the field level between non-governmental organizations and UNDP operations in the developing countries.

20. He said the survey itself was the first step in this important area and had initiated the kind of action that needed to be greatly expanded.

21. The Director stated that with UNDP's country programming activities now being conducted in some 82 countries, there was tremendous opportunity for non-governmental organizations to co-operate in the implementation of such programmes.

22. He went on to say that UNDP had recently drafted a memorandum to its resident representatives containing a series of suggestions on how they could facilitate co-operation between UNDP and non-governmental organizations at the field level.

Those guidelines, which were only in draft form at present, dealt with the practical question of how to evolve an integrated approach for all those concerned with the task of providing assistance to Governments. Further, UNDP would endeavour to draw the attention of Governments to the actual and potential contributions of non-governmental organizations in this area.

23. However, the Director emphasized, the participation of those organizations in that form was subject to the full agreement and support of the Governments concerned. He added that he did not consider any institutionalized machinery to be necessary for that purpose. The co-operation needed could be achieved on an informal basis through the resident representatives and the representatives of non-governmental organizations in the field.

Annex II

PRESENTATIONS MADE TO THE COMMITTEE ON NON-GOVERNMENTAL
ORGANIZATIONS BY OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Presentation by Rosalind Harris, President of the Conference of Non-Governmental
Organizations in Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council

1. Speaking on behalf of those non-governmental organizations in consultative status under the provisions of Council resolution 1296 (XLIV), Mrs. Harris told the Committee that the purpose of her group was to assist the organizations in regard to their consultative status and to facilitate collective activities on their part.
2. She remarked that a number of problems still persisted in the reciprocal relationship between the non-governmental organizations and United Nations. One such problem concerned the criteria for consultative status laid down by the Council: it was not always clear what the exact standards were. She suggested that an additional source of information about the applicants for such status should be found to assist members of the Committee in acting on the applications. She also stated that the functional classification of non-governmental organizations needed further study, in order to give it a more systematic basis.
3. Regarding the problem of adequate communications, Mrs. Harris said it was her hope that some means would be found to supply the proper documents to those organizations concerned with specific areas of interest.
4. She stressed the importance of providing a continuous flow of information to non-governmental organizations scattered all over the world, and added that there was also need for an adequate relationship between those bodies and regional United Nations offices. There had been some progress in this area, she commented, but more needed to be done.
5. Emphasizing the importance of early consultation between the United Nations and the organizations with regard to various programmes and activities, she remarked that UNDP had made a commendable start in the direction of understanding the mechanics of proper consultation.
6. Mrs. Harris also suggested that consideration might be given to the matter of the relationship of non-governmental organizations with bodies of the United Nations other than the Economic and Social Council.
7. She expressed appreciation for the assistance given over the years to the Conference of non-governmental organizations and its various committees by the United Nations. She expressed the hope that there would now be an even greater understanding on the part of the Secretariat of the need for making conference facilities available for the use of non-governmental organizations.

8. She further expressed the hope that the Committee would recommend that some of the suggestions in the Secretary-General's report would be implemented.

9. Regarding the proposal that the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations hold its meetings biennially, she said it was perhaps not necessary for the Committee to meet every year. Nevertheless, she suggested that the Committee should perhaps continue its practice of holding informal meetings between sessions. Mrs. Harris said that this was not the collective view of non-governmental organizations but only her personal opinion.

Presentation by Alice Paquier, Member of the Bureau of the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council, speaking on behalf of the Ad Hoc Committee of Non-Governmental Organizations in Geneva

10. Miss Alice Paquier, speaking on behalf of the Ad Hoc Committee of Non-Governmental Organizations in Geneva, outlined some of the recent activities of the three committees established by the Conference in Geneva on the Second United Nations Development Decade on disarmament and on human rights. She also mentioned that a sub-committee on racism was involved in preparation for a conference on apartheid, while a sub-committee on women's rights was particularly active with regard to International Women's Year, 1975.

11. On the question of apartheid, Miss Paquier said she wished to supply some additional information with regard to the activities of the Non-Governmental Organization Committee on Human Rights. That Committee was now actively engaged in preparing for the Non-Governmental Organization Conference on Apartheid. The non-governmental organizations saw this Conference their first event within the framework of the current United Nations Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination. It would be followed by other seminars and conferences.

12. She expressed hope that a genuine dialogue could take place between the United Nations and the non-governmental organizations, and added that there could not be a successful dialogue without continuity. Members of the Economic and Social Council did not always have the time to grasp the complex world of the non-governmental organizations or to engage in a common search for a solution to the problem of lack of communication. Noting that many organizations had their headquarters in Europe, she recommended that the Committee continue its practice of meeting from time to time at Geneva, in order to facilitate attendance by those organizations.

13. With regard to the proposal for biennial meetings of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, she said the really vital question was not the number of sessions held but the type of opportunity they provided for examining the various points raised at the meetings, and the degree to which they were conducive to a more propitious dialogue between non-governmental organizations and the United Nations.

Presentation by Homer A. Jack, Chairman of the Non-Governmental Organizations
Ad Hoc Committee on Disarmament (New York)

14. Speaking on behalf of the Non-Governmental Organizations Ad Hoc Committee on Disarmament (New York), Mr. Jack said that it was established only last June and now includes about 40 representatives from international and national non-governmental organizations, including a former co-chairman of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD) at Geneva and the former Director of the Disarmament Affairs Division of the United Nations Secretariat. The work of this Committee is parallel to that of the older Special Non-Governmental Organizations Committee on Disarmament meeting at Geneva.
15. The relationship between the Non-Governmental Organizations Ad Hoc Committee on Disarmament and the Economic and Social Council, indeed the relationship of the work of the Council to the question of disarmament, is an ambiguous one. The relationship of the work of the Council to the economic consequences of the arms race, and thus to disarmament, was clear, but the relationship of its work to the political implications of disarmament was less clear. Mr. Jack stated that this was a Pandora's box that he would prefer not to open, but that would not stay closed.
16. The Non-Governmental Organizations Ad Hoc Committee on Disarmament (New York) was trying to maintain a close liaison with its sister committee at Geneva. For example, it was co-operating with its Working Group on the Development of Humanitarian Law which recently issued a statement signed by almost 50 non-governmental organizations on the two draft additional protocols to the 1949 Geneva Conventions.
17. Mr. Jack stated that the Non-Governmental Organizations Ad Hoc Committee on Disarmament had reviewed the many disarmament items before the General Assembly at its twenty-eighth session and would be observing some of the work of some of the committees and bodies that had been formed as a result of those deliberations. During the twenty-eighth session, the Committee issued an Appeal on Disarmament Issues as they were being discussed by the First Committee and other bodies of the General Assembly. This was signed by a number of representatives of non-governmental organizations.
18. The Non-Governmental Organizations Ad Hoc Committee on Disarmament met monthly, especially during the period of the General Assembly and was trying to come to grips with public opinion and disarmament. It was discussing how non-governmental organizations could help to get disarmament off dead centre. The current détente must show up in lower arms budgets, in progress at the Geneva negotiations and elsewhere, not just in joint communiqués celebrating the détente. Thus the goals of the Committee were such that the non-governmental organizations that were members had to face two ways: towards the many disarmament forums in the United Nations system and also towards their widespread constituencies.

Presentation by Mr. Arthur Goldschmidt, Co-Chairman of the Non-Governmental Organization Ad Hoc Committee on Development (New York)

19. Mr. Goldschmidt speaking on behalf of the Non-Governmental Organization Ad Hoc Committee on Development reported that his Committee had set up four working groups to tackle certain tasks which coincided with the concerns of the Economic and Social Council. The groups dealt, respectively, with the United Nations Conference-Exposition on Human Settlements, scheduled to be held at Vancouver, Canada, in 1976; the World Food Conference, to be held at Rome in November 1974; field relationships between the work of the United Nations system and that of non-governmental organizations; and new initiatives in international economic co-operation and development, such as the Brazilian proposal on the concept of collective economic security and the Mexican proposal on a charter of economic rights and duties of states. The last-mentioned working group was also continuing review and appraisal.

20. His Committee, Mr. Goldschmidt added, constantly sought to identify those areas of the Council's activities in which non-governmental organizations could perform a useful input function. The Committee also served as a channel for disseminating information regarding the work of the Council. Mr. Goldschmidt stated that the Committee was prepared to set up additional working groups as required.
