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PREFACE

The Swiss Government/Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation has always attached great importance to the participation of NGOs and Civil Society in the deliberative and policy-setting dialogue convened by the United Nations and its member organizations. Since the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, now some fifteen years behind us, the scale and breadth of non-governmental participation in the work of the UN system has increased enormously. Non-governmental organizations are vital, independent participants in all substantive areas of the United Nations' work including development and humanitarian emergencies, disease control, labour standards, education, and food security, human rights and peacebuilding, arms control, international law, population issues and children. The presence of non-governmental actors in the global policy-setting dialogues of the United Nations brings crucial information and insights, enriches the debate and makes the work of the UN more transparent, accountable and better known.

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation was happy to support this UN-NGLS publication because it provides a useful and concise overview of the UN system's engagement with the non-governmental community in 2006, with entries and examples from over 35 UN organizations, including the series of General Assembly Hearings.

It is evident from the information provided in this publication that there has been a transformation of the interaction and constructive engagement between UN and non-governmental organizations, across the entire UN system. This is a sign of vitality and of the indispensable role played by the UN system in global affairs. The continuing and strengthened participation of non-governmental actors is vital for the UN's continuing efforts to achieve its goals.

Ambassador Walter Fust

**Director-General
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation**

INTRODUCTION

The year 2006 saw considerable interaction across the United Nations system with Secretariats, Agencies, Programmes and Funds engaging with civil society in a wide range of ways, whether it was in the form of the Informal Interactive Hearings of the General Assembly, or activities around special review conferences, such as the 2006 Small Arms Review Conference, or meetings of the Functional Commissions of ECOSOC, as well as ongoing engagement through the UN Agencies, Programmes and Funds, and Specialized Agencies.

This *Year in Review 2006* aims to capture and put in one place the various events—consultations, forums, policy dialogues, hearings, CSO advisory committees, etc—which represent the engagements between the organizations of the UN system and NGOs and Civil Society during 2006.

A series of Informal Interactive Hearings with Civil Society, NGOs and the Private Sector were convened by the General Assembly in 2006 on HIV/AIDS; International Migration and Development; and review of the Programme of Action (POA) for the Least Developed Countries. The three Hearings were held in the lead-up to the High-Level Meetings and Dialogues on those subjects, bringing together representatives from NGOs, civil society and the private sector to interact with Member States and exchange ideas and best practices.

The 2006 Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, held in June 2006, saw the active and mobilized participation of civil society activists engaged in advocacy and awareness raising with government delegates. They provided regular information and advice during the meeting and on 30 June a number of selected civil society representatives gave a series of presentations during the review conference. Their Million Faces Campaign Petition, which garnered one million signatures, was presented to the UN Secretary-General at the opening of the conference.

Also during the course of 2006, a number of the Functional Commissions of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) held their yearly meetings, focusing on a wide array of issues, ranging from the Review of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (Commission for Social Development), to International Migration and Development (Commission for Population and Development), to Energy for Sustainable Development (Commission for Sustainable Development), to the Enhanced Participation of Women in Development and Equal Participation of Women and Men in Decision-making Processes at all Levels (Commission on the Status of Women), to Strengthening Political Will for Sustainable Forests Management (United Nations Forum on Forests). Many of these Commissions saw the active participation of civil society in and around the meetings, with an abundance of parallel events.

A number of annual meetings were held as well, which focused on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), including the DPI/NGO Conference and the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Both meeting sought to look at the difficulties in implementing the MDGs, with the Permanent Forum seeking to redefine the Goals with special emphasis on the full participation of Indigenous Peoples.

Across the United Nations system, a vast array of activities were undertaken, ranging from Civil Society Forums; to interventions during more formal conferences and proceedings, such as the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board; to global consultations. These conferences and events provided civil society with an opportunity to interact, share their points of view and insight, and help shape policy across the UN.

PART I.



INFORMAL INTERACTIVE HEARINGS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

General Assembly Informal Interactive Civil Society Hearing at the 2006 UNGASS High-Level Meeting on AIDS , 31 May - 2 June 2006, New York

An Informal Interactive Civil Society Hearing at the General Assembly's 2006 High-Level Meeting on AIDS took place on 31 May 2006 as part of the meeting that sought to assess the international community's response to the epidemic since 2001. The UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) was held at UN Headquarters from 31 May-2 June 2006 bringing together more than a dozen Heads of State and Government, over 100 ministers, and more than 1,000 representatives of civil society and the private sector. It focused on both the constraints and opportunities in implementing the 2001 Declaration of Commitment (DoC), and considered recommendations on how those targets, including universal access to treatment by 2010, could be reached.

The 31 May three-hour Civil Society Hearing included remarks by General Assembly President Jan Eliasson (Sweden), who chaired the session, and UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. More than 800 civil society organizations received special accreditation and 13 civil society representatives delivered statements at the Hearing. One representative addressed the session before introducing a video presentation showing civil society perspectives from different regions of the world, followed by 12 four-minute-long interventions from civil society. The floor was then opened for interaction between civil society and government representatives.

Civil society involvement in the remainder of the High-Level Meeting included presentation slots in plenary, roundtable and panel sessions. Speaking at the closing plenary, the GA President noted the active involvement of civil society during the meeting. "What I did not know that we would see was the unprecedented level of constructive and substantive interaction between Member States and civil society. As [UNAIDS Executive Director] Peter Piot said this morning, we come from different backgrounds and have different tactics, but we need each other. The task confronting us is so great that we need passion, we need advocacy, we need mobilization of efforts. The impact of this interaction has been evident in the negotiations on the Political Declaration which we have just adopted," Mr. Eliasson said.

Prior to the Hearing, an UNGASS Review Civil Society Task Force was formed to help support UN organizations in key decisions relating to attendance and participation of civil society organizations during the High-Level Meeting. The Task Force helped shape the Hearing, including its format, topics and identification of key speakers and also provided input on the themes for the roundtables and the panel discussions. The Joint United Nations Programme on AIDS (UNAIDS) served as the substantive secretariat for the preparations.

Official website of the General Assembly's 2006 High-Level Meeting on AIDS:
(www.un.org/ga/aidsmeeting2006).

Information on civil society around the UNGASS is available online:
(www.un.org/ga/aidsmeeting2006/civilsociety.html).

More information is available on the UNAIDS website:
(www.unaids.org/en/GetStarted/CivilSociety.asp).

Contact: Andy Seale, Partnerships Unit, UNAIDS, 20 Avenue Appia, CH-1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland, telephone +41-22/791 4765, fax +41-22/791 4149, e-mail <sealea@unaid.org>, website (www.unaid.org).

General Assembly Informal Interactive Hearings with Civil Society, NGOs and the Private Sector for Least Developed Countries, 22 June 2006, New York

Informal Interactive Hearings with Civil Society, NGOs and the Private Sector for the Midterm Comprehensive Global Review of the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 were held at UN Headquarters in New York on 22 June 2006.

The objective of the one-day Hearings was to provide an opportunity for NGOs, civil society and the private sector to interact with Member States and offer input on the Midterm Comprehensive Global Review of the Implementation of the Brussels Programme. The Midterm Review, held from 18-19 September 2006, assessed progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action, shared best practices and lessons learned and identified obstacles and constraints to the further implementation.

The Hearings were held under the theme “Forging partnership with civil society and the private sector for poverty reduction in the least developed countries” and were opened by the General Assembly President, Jan Eliasson (Sweden).

Themes of the sessions included: “Harnessing partnerships for sustainable development in the LDCs” and “Unleashing entrepreneurship to end poverty in the LDCs.” Each session consisted of seven statements of five minutes by representatives of NGOs, civil society organizations and the private sector and an interactive exchange of views with participating Member States. A number of recurrent themes and concerns emerged across the two interactive sessions, which included partnerships; good governance; resources for development; trade; migration; and vulnerable groups.

In his closing statement, the President of the General Assembly recommended that dialogue between Member States and civil society, NGOs and the private sector should be pursued at various levels and in various forums throughout the implementation of the Brussels Programme.

In the lead-up to the Hearings, the President of the General Assembly established a Task Force of representatives of NGOs, civil society organizations and the private sector to assist him in preparations for the Hearings. The Task Force assisted in formulating the theme and sub-themes of the hearings, determining the format of the Hearings and identifying speakers and active participants. The United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS) served as the substantive secretariat for the preparations.

The GA President’s Summary of the Informal Interactive Hearings is available online: (www.un.org/special-rep/ohrlls/ldc/MTR/Civil-Society/LDC%20Hearings%20summary%20English.pdf).

Information on the Informal Interactive Hearings with Civil Society, NGOs and the Private Sector is available online: (www.un.org/special-rep/ohrlls/ldc/MTR/civilsociety.htm).

Information on the High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Midterm Review held from 18-19 September is available online: (www.un.org/special-rep/ohrlls/ldc/MTR/highlevel.htm).

Contact: Fred Kirungi, Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLS), United Nations, Room S-770, New York NY 10017, USA, fax +1-917/367 3415, e-mail <kirungi@un.org>, website (www.un.org/special-rep/ohrlls/ohrlls/default.htm).

General Assembly Informal Interactive Hearings with Non-Governmental Organizations, Civil Society Organizations and the Private Sector on International Migration and Development, 12 July 2006, New York

The General Assembly's Informal Interactive Hearings with Non-Governmental Organizations, Civil Society Organizations and the Private Sector on International Migration and Development were held on 12 July at UN Headquarters in New York. The Hearings sought to provide NGOs, civil society and the private sector with an opportunity to interact with Member States and exchange ideas and best practices, as part of the preparatory activities for the High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development that took place from 14-15 September 2006.

The Acting President of the General Assembly, Cheick Sidi Diarra (Mali), in his opening remarks, stated, "It is crucial to dialogue and engage with non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector as they are knowledgeable and are the real development partners." About 240 NGO, civil society and private sector representatives participated in the Hearings and 94 Member States also attended, with many of them intervening during the Hearings. The Hearings underscored that governments, NGOs, civil society organizations, including migrant organizations, and the private sector all had a role to play in protecting the rights of migrants and in ensuring that international migration had a positive impact on development.

The Hearings were split into four segments on three topics concerning international migration and development: Segment 1, Promoting a comprehensive rights-based approach; Segments 2 and 3, Challenges for social and economic policies for sending and receiving countries; and Segment 4, Policy responses – Promoting the building or partnerships, capacity building and the sharing of best practices. Speakers representing NGOs, CSOs and the private sector gave short speeches which were followed by interventions from Member States and other NGO, civil society and private sector spokespersons.

The speakers gave overarching statements defining the issues and setting the foundation for dialogue. "Migrants are not just economic entities or units of labour. We are human beings, with families, with social natures, roles, contributions to make and rights. We must beware purely economic or utilitarian approaches to human beings," the representative from International Catholic Migration Commission, said. "Labour migration is now regarded as a global issue," said a representative from the private sector, adding, "Recognition that globalization of the economy and particularly trade in services depends upon mobility of labour." A representative from the Jamaican Employers' Federation suggested that "Migration is just the culmination of a union that took place long before the physical passage of one person from one country to another" and that migration can be a force that benefits Member States.

A representative from Migrants Rights International (MRI) expressed support for the idea of a new "forum" or "consultation process" on migration, which was proposed in the Secretary-General's report (A/60/871), but said MRI was seriously concerned with the absence of NGO, civil society and private sector representation in the process, adding, "It is now time for governments and the international community to acknowledge the value of migrant civil society organizations in shaping migration policy

and take the necessary steps to institutionalize their genuine participation in these processes.”

Many Member States intervened during the hearings giving statements or interacting with speakers. The representative of Mexico welcomed civil society and was encouraged by its participation. “Mexico would agree with civil society that the High-Level Dialogue should be the beginning, not the end of this process.”

To ensure the participation of NGOs, civil society organizations and the private sector, a Task Force was set up by the Office of the President of the General Assembly. Recommendations emanating from the Hearings were forwarded to the High-Level Dialogue (available online: <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N06/447/86/PDF/N0644786.pdf?OpenElement>).

More information is available on the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) Population Division website: (www.un.org/esa/population/hldmigration/index.html).

Contact: Office of the President of the General Assembly, United Nations, New York NY 10017, USA, telephone +1-212/963 7555, fax +1-212/963 3301, website (www.un.org/ga/president/60/news/index.htm).

PART II.



SPECIAL REVIEW CONFERENCES

**2006 Review Conference for the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons,
26 June-7 July 2006, New York**

The 2006 Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects was held in New York from 26 June-7 July 2006. It sought to identify and put in place more precise guidelines and mechanisms to address the obstacles to implementing the 2001 Programme of Action (PoA).

The review meeting also sought to assess progress made by the international community on implementation of the Programme of Action, which was adopted by all Member States in 2001, with commitments to collect and destroy illegal weapons, curb their trafficking, regulate the activities of brokers and impose import and export controls. Since its adoption, the PoA has stimulated a wide range of initiatives at the national, regional and international levels, with more than 50 countries strengthening their laws to control the illegal trade in guns, including pistols, assault rifles, machine guns and other light weapons (estimated to cause 60%-90% of all deaths in conflicts every year). The review conference allowed members of civil society to contribute to the review process both formally and informally.

On the opening day of the conference, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan accepted the Million Faces Campaign Petition with signatures from one million people from 160 countries, an initiative jointly run by Amnesty International, the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) and Oxfam. Mr. Annan noted that the “vital role of civil society in helping to combat the illicit trade in small arms is now well recognized—it brings expertise, communication networks, and impassioned advocacy to a grave problem.”

During the negotiations, Member States, UN agencies and a number of civil society representatives presented their perspectives on what they thought the final outcome document should include. Speaking on 29 June, the Head of the Delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said the commitments made in the 2001 PoA were too general, making it difficult to assess progress and determine adequate implementation in a given area. The ICRC proposed that the outcome document acknowledge the commitments of States Parties to the Geneva Conventions to make international humanitarian law the fundamental criteria for assessing decisions on arms transfer. Ammunition controls to supplement weapons control, as well as common global norms to regulate such illegal weapons brokerage, were also necessary, as was a comprehensive strategy to reduce violence and other devastating effects of unregulated small arms availability and misuse, particularly in at-risk communities.

Speaking on 30 June, the Director of International Action Network on Small Arms, UK, said that since the adoption of the PoA in 2001, both governments and civil society had made strides to stem the illegal trade in light weapons, including through the drafting of regional arrangements on arms transfer controls, the implementation of weapons collection and destruction programmes, the collection of invaluable research and data documenting the human costs of the small arms trade, and the shaping of basic principles to guide international arms transfers. “We are accountable to our countries and organizations, but most of all we are accountable to the millions of people who are affected daily by gun violence, those who have died and those who will die, and the many

more who survive gun violence and have to learn to live with its legacy of trauma, pain, physical scarring and economic hardship,” the representative said. IANSA identified several areas it felt should be prioritized, including transfer controls, national firearms legislation, linkages to development, assistance to survivors of armed violence, and follow-up mechanisms.

A representative from Amnesty International said the PoA firmly established the need for strict controls over the international transfer of small arms and committed Member States to study export licenses for small arms in accordance with international law. However, such existing responsibilities under international law had not been incorporated into the PoA. States must establish a universal interpretation of their commitments concerning the transfer of small arms. The representative expressed concern over the lack of consistency of Member States in implementing the 2001 PoA. While many States transparently and responsibly applied transfer controls, not all abided by the same rules. There was always the risk that certain transfers would be cancelled out by other States that did not adhere to strict, rigorous rules. States must work together to ensure the highest level of responsibility.

Since 2001, several initiatives have been developed, in accordance with the PoA, such as the “Biting the Bullet” transfer control initiative, which brings together International Alert, Saferworld and University of Bradford. A report by Biting the Bullet, *Reviewing action on small arms: assessing the first five years of the UN Programme of Action (PoA)*, aims to provide a comprehensive and up-to-date review and analysis of progress towards implementation of the PoA, and analyses relevant local national, regional and international processes.

Contact: Conventional Arms Branch, Department for Disarmament Affairs, Room S-31701, United Nations, New York NY 10017, USA, telephone +1-212/863 3768, fax +1-212/963 1121, website (www.un.org/events/smallarms2006/index.html).

Official UN website for the 2006 Small Arms Review Conference:
(www.un.org/events/smallarms2006/press-releases.shtml).

Amnesty International: (www.amnestyusa.org/arms_trade/index.do).

Control Arms Initiative: Amnesty International, Oxfam and the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) jointly launched the global Control Arms campaign on 9 October 2003. The campaign focuses on promoting an international treaty covering arms transfers – the Arms Trade Treaty – which will stop arms being sold to those likely to misuse them: (www.controlarms.org).

IANSA: (www.iansa.org/un/review2006.htm).

Oxfam: (www.oxfam.org/en/programs/campaigns/controlarms).

Quaker United Nations Office: (www.quono.org/disarmament/salw/default.htm).

Saferworld: (www.saferworld.org.uk).

Small Arms Survey 2006: Unfinished Business:
(www.smallarmssurvey.org/files/sas/publications/yearb2006.html).

Biting the Bullet's report is available online:
(www.saferworld.org.uk/publications.php?id=191) and
(www.iansa.org/un/review2006/redbook2006/index.htm).

PART III.



**ECOSOC FUNCTIONAL COMMISSIONS / UN
SECRETARIAT**

**Forty-fourth Session of the Commission for Social Development,
8-17 February 2006, New York**

Taking Stock at the End of the First Decade for the Eradication of Poverty

The 44th session of the Commission for Social Development, held in New York at UN Headquarters from 8-17 February 2006, sought to examine progress made during the first UN Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006), and reviewed relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups, particularly older and disabled persons.

Speakers from all sectors pointed to the lingering reality that more than a billion people were immobilized by poor health, illiteracy and lack of adequate shelter and employment opportunities, and many more continued to bequeath to their children lives of social exclusion, powerlessness and discrimination.

Civil society addressed the Commission on a number of subjects. The representative from HelpAge International stressed that elderly persons were the most marginalized and poorest group in society, while noting that more than 10% of those living on less than US\$1 a day were over 60. The representative stressed that all citizens, irrespective of age, must have access to education, health and regular income in their later years. With young people between the ages of 15-24 comprising more than 1.2 billion of the total world population, a representative from the World Youth Alliance said it only followed that young people had the most to gain from the eradication of poverty and the implementation of social development policies. None of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) could be accomplished without the involvement of youth.

A Civil Society Forum was held on 7 February, organized and co-sponsored by the UN Department of Social and Economic Affairs (DESA), the NGO Committee for Social Development, and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation. The Forum sought to identify and examine issues addressed during the 44th session, prepare the NGO Declaration to the Commission that was delivered at the opening session on 8 February, strategize how NGOs would work together, and provide networking opportunities for NGOs with similar concerns.

Noting that poverty is multidimensional, NGOs of the Forum, through their declaration to the Commission, called for the implementation of practical sustainable poverty reduction strategies that benefit all and urged governments to act now to keep the promises they have already made. They also urged a systemic approach to poverty eradication that responds to the prevailing lack of access by addressing the underlying social, economic or political barriers.

They recommended that Member States implement economic development models informed by social justice that ensure the right to sustainable livelihood and decent work, right to education and health care, right to a safe and secure environment, and right to economic participation. NGOs also called for decisive strategies that place people at the centre of development, and requested that governments design and implement effective outreach programmes to ensure that those marginalized in their countries are actively involved in the design and carrying out of programmes that ameliorate their life situations. They also stressed the need for national, regional and international strategies

to create decent work and to transform the structures underlying the current system of trade, aid and debt.

The NGO Declaration is available online:

(www.un.org/esa/socdev/ngo/csocd44/documents/NGODeclaration44thcommision.pdf).

A large number of civil society side events were also held around the 44th session of the Commission, ranging from a workshop on poverty and disaster relief, to international efforts to address poverty among older persons, to panel discussions on a number of topics, and a dialogue in the social integration process, to name a few.

A full list of events is available online:

(www.un.org/esa/socdev/csd/csocd2006/sideevents'06.htm).

Contact: Yao N’Goran, NGO Liaison Officer, Division of Social Policy and Development, DESA, UN, New York NY 10017, USA, fax +1-212/963 3062, e-mail <ngoran@un.org>, website (www.un.org/esa/socdev).

**Fiftieth Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW),
27 February -10 March 2006, New York**

The 50th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, held at UN Headquarters in New York from 27 February -10 March 2006, addressed two specific themes: the enhanced participation of women in development and equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes at all levels.

The session saw the adoption of a resolution on future organization and methods of work of the Commission that aims to strengthen the connection between policy recommendations and implementation of the Beijing Programme for Action (PFA) adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 2000, and the Beijing+5 outcome document. During these negotiations, NGO participation was not explicitly or systematically integrated in all processes of the Commission. Although the resolution adopted recognizes the importance of NGOs in advancing the implementation of the Beijing PFA, NGO participation remains limited to those with ECOSOC status.

As part of discussions undertaken during the 50th session, women's organizations expressed their disappointment that the women's equality agenda and women's machineries are not being addressed as a central part of the UN reform programme. In their open letter to the UN Secretary-General and Member States, they repeated a call they made earlier at the 2005 World Summit held in September 2005 for UN systems and mechanisms to be significantly strengthened, upgraded and resourced in order to advance gender equality at the international and country level.

The Open Letter on Women and UN Reform, endorsed by more than 240 women from over 50 countries and by numerous international and regional organizations, is available online: (www.wedo.org/library.aspx?ResourceID=99).

A wide range of parallel events were organized by NGOs for the 50th session of the CSW, including caucuses, workshops, roundtables and panel debates on topics such as Creating an Enabling Environment for Women's Participation, Exclusion or Inclusion?; New Feminization of Global Migration and Labour; Beyond Conflict Prevention: Moving Forward on Resolution 1325; Violence Against Indigenous Women; and Partnering Communities to Prevent Violence against Women and the Spread of HIV/AIDS.

A list of parallel events at the 50th session of the CSW is available online: (www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/conf/seforms/dspUNcalendar.asp) and (www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw50/sideevents/ngo.htm).

Contact: Tsu-Wei Chang, Coordination and Outreach Unit, Commission on the Status of Women, Division for the Advancement of Women, Two UN Plaza, Room DC2-1274, New York NY 10017, USA, fax: +1-212/963 3463, e-mail <dawr@un.org>, website (www.un.org/womenwatch).

39th Session of the Commission on Population and Development: International Migration in Focus, 3-7 April 2006, New York

The Commission on Population and Development devoted its 39th session to international migration and development, meeting from 3-7 April in New York. The session sought to contribute to the High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, held at UN Headquarters from 14-15 September 2006.

On 5 April, the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP), an international professional association of population specialists, addressed the Commission, providing a number of examples of its recent scientific findings on migration patterns and analyses.

Population Action International (PAI), an NGO with ECOSOC consultative status, presented its statement noting that “in a world characterized by continuous movement, access to sexual and reproductive health services must be considered essential to sound public health practices. The United Nations and the entire international community must continue to address the root causes of gender inequality and the needs of women and girls. Access to sexual and reproductive health services is part and parcel of economic development efforts, and crucial to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

“The efforts of the United Nations to address these issues at the 39th session of the Commission on Population and Development are commendable as a strategic first-step toward divulging the interlinkages between international migration trends and development aims. It is clear that these issues warrant global attention, as both the scale and frequency of human movements continue to grow. Further progress along these lines will require a supportive policy environment and international commitment to increased regulation of migration. However, ultimately, protecting the rights of migrants demands the long-term commitment of adequate human and financial resources dedicated to meeting the goals of ICPD [International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo in 1994]. Fundamental development and poverty reduction goals, including the MDGs, will be futile without increased access to sexual and reproductive health services for all people,” the representative from PAI concluded.

Further information on the 39th session of the Commission on Population and Development is available online:
(www.un.org/esa/population/cpd/cpd2006/comm2006.htm).

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Fourteenth session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-14), 1-12 May 2006, New York

The 14th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-14), held at UN Headquarters from 1-12 May 2006, brought together Member States, UN funds and programmes, intergovernmental organizations and more than 700 representatives from 134 major groups* organizations to review progress made in implementing agreed commitments related to themes of energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution/atmosphere, and climate change. Major groups reported on and shared their results-oriented activities in the form of case studies, lessons learned, and best practices. They also identified obstacles, constraints, challenges and opportunities for the way forward, in preparation for the CSD-15 Policy Year.

A multi-stakeholder dialogue session held on 3 May provided major groups with the opportunity to introduce their discussion papers and focused discussion on the role of major groups in promoting implementation activities in relation to the thematic cluster, including in the areas of education, raising public awareness, disseminating information and knowledge, and fostering partnership initiatives. The session was organized in an issue-driven fashion, comprised of three blocks of 30 minutes each that included interventions from both major groups and governments. Local authorities, indigenous people and farmers addressed climate change, air pollution and atmosphere; business and industry, women, and scientific and technological communities spoke to energy for sustainable development; and NGOs, trade unions, and youth focused on industrial development.

The high-level segment was held from 10-12 May, and included ministerial dialogues with leaders of business and international financial institutions, UN agencies, and major groups. On 11 May, major groups, ministers and others participated in an interactive discussion entitled “Making a Difference.” This segment was organized into three blocks of 30 minutes each and included short presentations from three major groups, followed by discussion among major groups and ministers. All speakers affirmed the vital role of major groups in setting policies and ensuring successful implementation of the goals and targets related to the thematic cluster. Ministers encouraged and supported major groups’ engagement at all levels, and noted that major groups help to ensure that governments carry out their responsibilities in attending to the social and environmental aspects of sustainable development. Several governments also highlighted the importance of incorporating the various roles of major groups, especially women and youth, in CSD-15 policy decisions. Major groups expressed their willingness to work together in partnership with governments to implement sustainable development practices and policies.

Experts from major groups served as panellists in the thematic discussions that took place throughout CSD-14, and major groups’ representatives participated in all thematic, regional and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) day related discussions. The thematic discussions included 86 interventions by major groups (at least two interventions per segment), reflecting CSD-11 decisions on major groups’ integrated participation in the CSD implementation cycles. During the closing plenary on 12 May, major groups offered closing remarks on how they would initiate action in implementation in relation to the thematic cluster of issues. Additionally, major groups actively participated in the CSD-14 Partnerships Fair, Learning Centre, and Side Events, and interacted through numerous

issue-driven caucuses that served as organizational sessions where participants discussed pressing issues and prepared collective statements.

To complement the CSD-14 official programme of activities, a “Day of Business and Industry” was held on 9 May that focused on the role and contributions of the private sector and other stakeholders in addressing the thematic cluster, by bringing together and engaging business, governments, and other major groups sectors in a dynamic dialogue on topics related to energy for sustainable development. The Day of Business and Industry was co-organized by Business Action for Energy (BAE)—an ad hoc coalition of business associations spearheaded by the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), and the World Energy Council (WEC)—in collaboration with the CSD Secretariat.

Discussion papers and statements submitted by the major groups during CSD-14 are available online: (www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/docs_csd14.htm).

Information on major groups’ participation during CSD-14 is also available online: (www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd14/mg/guidelines.htm).

Additional information on major groups and CSD-14 can be found at:

Stakeholder Forum: (www.stakeholderforum.org/uned/conferences-EnergyAndClimateChange.php).

Taking Issues: (www.sdissues.net/SDIN).

Earth Negotiations Bulletin (IISD): (www.iisd.ca/csd/csd14).

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*Major groups include women; children and youth; indigenous people; NGOs; local authorities; workers and trade unions; business and industry; the scientific and technological community; and farmers.

**Fifth and Sixth Sessions of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF),
Sixth Session, 13-14 February 2006**

The United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), an intergovernmental negotiation process that reports to the Economic and Social Council, held its sixth session from 13-24 February 2006, which served as an extension of negotiations begun at the fifth session held from 16-27 May 2005 in New York. The combined sessions reviewed the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests and ended with a strengthening of the mandate of the UNFF. Member States also agreed to four Global Objectives on Forests and to negotiate and complete a non-legally binding instrument on all types of forests by the seventh session of the Forum, scheduled for 16-25 April 2007. The Forum also recommended to the General Assembly that an International Year of Forests be planned for 2012.

Civil society organizations were actively engaged in both the fifth and sixth sessions. Heads of organizations representing children and youth, women, indigenous peoples, farmers and small landowners, workers and trade unions, the scientific and technological community, business and industry and non-governmental organizations were invited to participate and give statements during the interactive Ministerial Dialogue. Each major group of organizations was also invited to submit a discussion paper to the Forum that was treated as an official document and translated into all six official UN languages. The discussion papers are available online: (www.un.org/esa/forests/documents-unff.html).

Two workshops were organized by civil society in preparation for the fifth session. The International Alliance of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the Tropics organized a congress of more than 150 Indigenous leaders in Costa Rica to discuss implementation of international agreements on Traditional Forest-Related Knowledge which resulted in the publication of two volumes of case studies. The proposals and recommendations made by Indigenous leaders during that meeting will form the base of Indigenous Peoples' advocacy efforts in the UNFF process. The report of that meeting was submitted as an official document by Costa Rica and translated into all six UN languages and is available online: (www.un.org/esa/forests/documents-unff.html#5).

The Forest Dialogue organized a meeting in Hong Kong on illegal logging as input to the UNFF process, bringing together over 120 leaders from governments, business and civil society to discuss ways to combat illegal logging in Asia and around the world and to agree on concrete actions. Governments and companies agreed that they each must take responsibility to ensure that the wood and paper products they purchase are legal. The report of the meeting was submitted as an official document by the United Kingdom and translated into all six UN languages. It is available online: (www.un.org/esa/forests/documents-unff.html#5).

More than 250 representatives of civil society and the private sector participated in each of the two sessions and hosted a wide range of side events, ranging in scope from the impact of decreased forest-related employment and HIV/AIDS on forest-dependent communities to the effectiveness of community based forest management in reducing forest fires. They also made a number of statements throughout the plenary meetings of both sessions, emphasizing the importance of a participatory approach to forest management and decision making. Obstacles to sustainable forest management identified

by civil society included lack of secure tenure, lack of recognition of Indigenous ancestral domain, lack of participation of local communities in decision making, the need for more public awareness and education, greater recognition of the social and cultural values of forests and related ecosystems, enhancing the role of women in decision making, and creating a transparent and consistent regulatory framework.

In order to show enhanced political will to advance sustainable forest management, curb deforestation and enhance the contribution of forests to the achievement of international development goals, the Forum agreed on four shared Global Objectives on Forests. These are:

- Reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management (SFM), including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation;
- Enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent people;
- Increase significantly the area of sustainably managed forests, including protected forests, and increase the proportion of forest products derived from sustainably managed forests; and
- Reverse the decline in official development assistance for sustainable forest management and mobilize significantly-increased new and additional financial resources from all sources for the implementation of SFM.

Taking into account new realities and challenges, the draft resolution added three new principal functions to the six already contained in ECOSOC resolution 2000/35. The new functions include: enhancement of the contribution of forests to the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); encouragement and assistance to countries to implement forest conservation strategies and increase the area of forests under SFM; and to strengthen interaction between UNFF and regional and sub-regional organizations and major groups.

Further information on the UN Forum on Forests and civil society participation is available online: (www.un.org/esa/forests).

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Financing for Development: High-Level Meeting of the Economic and Social Council with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 24 April 2006, New York

Civil society engaged actively during and in preparation of the 2006 Spring Meeting of ECOSOC, held at the ministerial level, under the theme “Coherence, coordination and cooperation in the context of the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus and the 2005 World Summit Outcome.” Wahu Kaara, Coordinator of the Ecumenical Millennium Development Goal Programme, delivered a statement to the plenary on behalf of three major facilitating civil society networks in the Financing for Development (FfD) process: the International Facilitating Group on FfD, NGO Committee on FfD and New Rules for Global Finance Coalition. In her remarks, she called on ECOSOC to take a more proactive stance to ensure trade and financial policies serve the poor and do not continue to constrain ECOSOC’s role in securing cooperation, coordination and coherence in the UN system.

Civil society representatives also participated in interactive ministerial-level roundtables on the following themes:

- (a) implementation of and support for national development strategies towards the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals;
- (b) fulfilling the development dimension of the Doha work programme: next steps, including in the area of “aid for trade”;
- (c) external debt: implementing and building on current initiatives to enhance debt sustainability; and
- (d) supporting the development efforts of middle-income developing countries.

The 2006 Spring Meeting of ECOSOC was held following an unprecedented number of preparatory events initiated by civil society both in New York and Washington, DC. A panel discussion organized by civil society on “Fiscal space and national development strategies” was held on 17 March 2006 at UN Headquarters and was chaired by the President of ECOSOC. In the run-up to the annual spring meetings of the International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC) and the Development Committee in Washington, DC, a large group of non-governmental organizations, including the New Rules for Global Finance Coalition, ActionAid International, African Forum and Network on Debt and Development, European Network on Debt Development, Coopération internationale pour le développement et la solidarité, Rede Brazil and many others sponsored a series of interactive seminars, workshops and panel discussions on financing for development, which took place from 20- 21 April 2006 at World Bank Headquarters.

Civil society engagement in multi-stakeholder consultations on FfD

In response to General Assembly resolution 60/188, the Financing for Development Office has organized ongoing multi-stakeholder consultations, including experts from civil society, to examine issues related to the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development. The themes of some of the consultations included: Rethinking the Role of National Development Banks; Financing Access to Basic Utilities for All; and Strengthening the Business Sector and Entrepreneurship in Developing Countries. More information on the multi-stakeholder consultations held

during 2006 is available online: (www.un.org/esa/ffd/indexMulti-StakeholderConsultations.htm).

Civil society engagement in other FFD-related events

A large number of panel discussions, seminars, workshops and side events on FfD were held in 2006, almost all of which involved civil society. A list of past events is available online: (www.un.org/esa/ffd/ffdspecialevents.htm).

More information on the 2006 Spring Meeting is available online: (www.un.org/esa/ffd/ffd-hilevelmtgs.htm).

More information on the preparatory events initiated by civil society is available online: (www.un.org/esa/ffd/ffdspecialevents.htm) and (www.bicusa.org/en/Article.1390.aspx).

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United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) NGO Section

Participation of NGOs in the work of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

With the theme for the 2006 High-Level Segment (HLS) of ECOSOC on employment and decent work, the DESA-NGO Section guided non-governmental organizations in preparing their contributions through capacity building and advisory missions which included dissemination of information on preparatory activities through the UN-NGO-IRENE coordinators. This year alone, more than 25 preparatory events were held in various regions.

NGO Forum in New York in preparation of the ECOSOC HLS

An NGO Forum was held on 6 April 2006 in New York with the participation of more than 100 NGOs. It was organized by the United Nations Non Governmental Organizations Informal Regional Network (UN-NGO-IRENE) of the NGO Section/DESA in cooperation with the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CONGO) and the World Federation of UN Associations (WFUNA), representatives of the UN System, NGOs, academia, and the private sector. In addition, several ECOSOC Member States participated at the Forum as observers including Ambassador Ismael A. Gaspar Martins, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Angola, and Ambassador Francis Lorenzo, Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations.

The participants at the NGO Forum reviewed the recommendations of the (inter-governmental) Informal Preparatory meeting on the theme of the 2006 High-Level Segment held on 4-5 April 2006. It was also noted that there had been a massive civil society campaign in 2005 to “make poverty history” and that it was very important to ensure the continuing close engagement of civil society as the focus of ECOSOC was now shifting to work and employment issues. Forum participants expressed hope that ECOSOC could develop the capacity to track the extent to which success in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) led to a direct increase in job opportunities, particularly for young people in developing countries.

The recommendations of the Forum were categorized in eight major groups. Contributions highlighted the eight MDGs, 18 targets, and 48 indicators for the measurement of progress in achieving the Goals, the blueprint for MDG-based poverty-reduction strategies at the national level as laid out in the *Millennium Project Report*, and the Decent Work Agenda with its four-tier definition (covering employment, rights at work, social protection and social dialogue).

Strengthening governance and looking into the future towards meeting the needs of productive employment were emphasized. Participants noted the importance of promoting an integrated vision of rural development and including NGOs, universities, government agencies and the private sector in addition to governments and multilateral agencies in these discussions.

The Forum was covered by UNTV and broadcast live by web-cast (www.un.org/webcast/2006.html) under the archive portion for 6 April 2006.

Geneva Civil Society Forum at ECOSOC

A Civil Society Forum was held in Geneva from 29-30 June just prior to the HLS, which was held from 3-5 July. Organized jointly by CONGO, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the DESA NGO Section, and the NGO Liaison Office of the UN Office in Geneva, the Forum brought together civil society organizations from across the world to reflect on the High-Level Segment's theme: "Creating an environment at the national and international levels conducive to generating full and productive employment and decent work for all, and its impact on sustainable development."

The two-day Forum, which brought together 306 representatives representing 80 NGOs, was organized around the six clusters of the HLS and included more than 20 workshops. It resulted in a set of recommendations.

Through their recommendations, which were forwarded to the HLS, the Civil Society Forum called on ministers to recognize that "despite existing mechanisms, such as ODA [official development assistance] and corporate philanthropy, effective sustainable solutions remain to be found for full decent employment." They recommended the establishment of a high-level expert working group to develop a plan for the implementation of a sustainable basic income for all people. "Such a plan could include, for example, the 'Sustainable Basic Income for All,' or the 'Universal Safety Net Plan' models and other relevant world plans, for a more humane economic world order."

Civil society also urged "all governments and sectors of society, such as employers, trade unions, transnationals and other civil society actors, to encourage ethical and sustainable investments. Good governance requires the recognition that all people, rich and poor, are stakeholders in our present and common future, through taxation, personal investment, social insurances, pension systems and other safety nets."

The Forum recommendations also emphasized that debt cancellation and debt swaps would benefit decent work and employment policies; ILO Convention 122 on Employment Policies should remain at the heart of the decent work agendas as an ILO priority convention; and labour ministries should be strengthened, in particular for labour inspection, labour justice, employment services, gender equality, etc.

Additionally, the Forum urged all governments and civil society to continue to develop and implement the values and codes of conduct already established by the International Labour Standards and UN bodies.

The Forum's recommendations were discussed during an interactive dialogue with the dignitaries of the ECOSOC High-Level Segment on 5 July 2006.

Events held during the High-Level Segment of ECOSOC

NGOs participated actively in the ministerial roundtables and the side events that were held from 29 June to 6 July 2006. Ten NGOs took the floor during the High-Level Segment's debates. Thirty-six NGO statements were presented to the HLS, including five that were submitted by coalitions, representing an increase of 10% over NGO contributions in 2005. Their statements covered a range of concerns. Nine NGOs addressed the situation of women and children and a similar number of statements emphasized poverty-related issues. Five organizations stressed the specific needs of

indigenous peoples, the concern of the rural poor and the inter-generational transmission of poverty. Technology and its role in development, governance, and health remained the focus of seven other statements. Thirty percent of the NGO contributions came from organizations based in developing countries.

Ministerial Lunch Meeting

A high-level ministerial lunch, held on 5 July 2006 at the United Nations, Geneva, was organized by UN-NGO-IRENE of the NGO Section/DESA, in coordination with Give them a Hand Foundation. The event presented the launch of the concept of the “World Sports Alliance (WSA)” —a multi-stakeholder initiative to further the mandate for Sports for Development and Peace.

Bringing together around 57 participants, including Member States, senior UN officials, NGOs, sports organizations and other members from civil society, representatives from the private sector and eminent sports personalities, the meeting discussed issues relating to “Sports as a Means to Support Local Economic Development and Job Creation.”

The meeting was moderated by Gordon Tapper, President of the Give Them a Hand Foundation, who underlined the important contribution of NGOs in partnership with governments and the United Nations toward the achievement of the MDGs. The Chief of the NGO Section, Hanifa Mezoui, spoke on the evolving role of ECOSOC and how this roundtable would provide an opportunity, engaging stakeholders from various sectors to identify effective approaches for economic development and job creation.

Ambassador Ali Hachani (Tunisia), President of ECOSOC, summed up the deliberations and discussions of the roundtables. He underlined that such a meeting provided a valuable opportunity for members of Council to engage with representatives of all the major stakeholders.

Information on the 2006 ECOSOC High-level Segment is available online: (www.un.org/docs/ecosoc/meetings/2006/hls2006/index.shtml).

Recommendations of the Civil Society Forum to the ECOSOC High-level Segment are available online: (www.ngocongo.org/files/ecosoc_forum_recommendations_final.doc).

Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations

At its 2006 regular session, held from 19-27 January 2006 in New York, the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations had before it 144 applications for consultative status. Of those applications, the Committee recommended 97 applications for consultative status, deferred 39 organizations for further consideration at a later date, recommended not to grant consultative status to three organizations and to close consideration of two organizations.

At its resumed 2006 session, held from 10-19 May 2006, the Committee had before it 96 applications for consultative status, including applications deferred from previous sessions. Of those applications, the Committee recommended 55 applications for consultative status, deferred 37 organizations for further consideration at a later date and closed its consideration of two organizations.

The Committee has 19 members and meets annually for three weeks. Its main tasks include: the consideration of applications for consultative status and requests for reclassification submitted by NGOs; the consideration of quadrennial reports submitted by NGOs in General and Special categories; the implementation of the provisions of Council resolution 1996/31 and the monitoring of the consultative relationship; any other issues which the ECOSOC may request the Committee to consider. Currently, over 2,700 NGOs have consultative status (including General, Special and Roster categories) with ECOSOC.

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PART IV.



ANNUAL MEETINGS OR FORUMS

Fifty-ninth DPI/NGO Conference, Unfinished Business: Effective Partnerships for Human Security and Sustainable Development, 6-8 September 2006, New York

The 59th DPI/NGO Conference, held at UN Headquarters in New York and organized by the Department of Public Information (DPI) in cooperation with associated NGOs, brought together over 2,000 representatives of NGOs and other civil society activists from over 50 countries to tackle the issue of implementing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to spotlight strategic partnership-building—with United Nations agencies and each other—to help ensure human security and sustainable development for all.

As an annual three-day meeting ahead of the opening of the General Assembly, the 59th DPI/NGO Conference aimed to build on what has already been accomplished by greater NGO, private sector and civil society participation in many of the debates taking place at the United Nations, including informal interactive hearings convened by the General Assembly President during the past two years.

The conference included five plenary sessions, six roundtables, and 30 midday NGO workshops featuring the participation of civil society, UN officials, government and private sector representatives.

Hans Blix, Chairman of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, during the panel discussion on “Moving development forward: Accountability, Transparency, Equitable Trade Policies,” stressed that many NGOs “spoke in a direct way” to promote and defend common global needs and values, and that they were doing great work in demanding facts and transparency and waking the world up to the reality that the process of arms control and disarmament had stagnated. They rendered invaluable service by critically examining information and government action—and inaction—in that regard.

During a panel on “Achieving Financial and Ecological Sustainability,” speakers highlighted effective partnerships for natural disaster management and financing natural disaster risk; providing affordable financing for small-scale, community-based environmental conservation and economic development, particularly for poor farmers and rural, women-owned businesses; corporate social responsibility; and water-quality monitoring to improve health and control disease.

The roundtable on “Science and Technology for Education” highlighted the importance of improving widespread access to and of education. “Emerging Approaches to Health Care, including Gender-based HIV and AIDS,” focused on the correlation between violence against women and girls, the feminization of poverty and higher HIV/AIDS infection rates among women and girls than men and boys in some countries. The roundtable on “Human Security: Responsibility to Protect and the Peacebuilding Commission” saw NGOs invited to be the partners of States, and sometimes their critics, in ensuring adherence to the concept of the responsibility to protect, especially in terms of genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Speaking at the close of the conference, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, envisioning “a world of opportunities” for stronger ties between the UN and NGOs, said that looking ahead, he saw a civil society with virtually no limits, “but one which gives you solemn obligations to your constituents.” He said that civil society had growing

influence, and that it must wield that influence responsibly. “You must work to strengthen alliances—with the United Nations, the private sector, the public sector and among yourselves—that minimizes duplication and maximizes impact.”

More information on the conference is available online: (www.unngodpiconference.org).

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The Fifth Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), 15-26 May 2006, New York

The Fifth Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), held in New York from 15-26 May 2006, brought together indigenous peoples' representatives, Member States, UN officials and NGOs to focus on key developmental concerns. It also launched the Programme of Action of the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, which seeks to further strengthen global cooperation for the achievement of indigenous peoples' goals in the areas of culture, education, health, human rights, the environment and social and economic development.

The Forum, made up of 16 independent experts, eight of whom are nominated by governments and eight directly by indigenous organizations in their regions, included a discussion of the main theme—Millennium Development Goals and Indigenous Peoples: Redefining the Goals. It also included a series of dialogues and the plenary session of the second week addressed ongoing priorities and themes; indigenous children; youth; women; data collection; and free, prior and informed consent, among other issues. A thematic discussion on Africa was also held.

Opening the session by noting that the work on the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples had finally wrapped up in February 2006 after 11 years of work, the Forum's Chairperson said that the creation of a set of legal standards at the international level would ensure respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples, estimated to number 370 million worldwide. The draft was considered by the General Assembly at its 61st session.

Addressing the special theme of the session devoted to the MDGs and indigenous people, several speakers focused on the need to redefine the Goals with special emphasis on full participation of indigenous people. The representative from the Indigenous Caucus said such a review would require taking a hard look at systematic racism, discrimination and non-recognition of indigenous peoples' human rights. Political, social and environmental injustices perpetuated poverty among the world's indigenous people. The "one-dollar-a-day" parameter did not begin to adequately measure poverty in the world's vast and varied indigenous communities, the representative stressed, and it did not show whether there was adequate education, health-care coverage or even food and clothing for indigenous people.

Speakers also expressed deep concern over the fact that the MDG process did not take into account the real situation of indigenous people, which included the lack of voice in political systems, the lack of recognition of their collective rights, their removal from ancestral lands, and their lack of access to basic infrastructure and social services. It was pointed out that making up less than 5% of the world's population, indigenous peoples comprised 15% of the world's poor.

Overall applicability of the MDGs to the development of indigenous peoples needed to be substantiated by statistical data, one speaker said, adding that it was difficult "to prove that you are among the most oppressed if the government does not keep records in that regard."

During the panel discussion that featured representatives from nearly 20 UN agencies, funds and programmes and other development partners, speakers stressed that indigenous peoples must be fully empowered to play their role in achieving the MDGs, as well as the broader goals of the UN in the areas of peace, human rights and sustainable development.

On 17 May, the Forum focused on the role of governments in the advancement of indigenous peoples' rights, with several speakers expressing hope that the anticipated adoption of the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous people this year—one of the objectives of the First Decade—would serve as a blueprint for establishing genuine partnerships for the promotion of their rights.

Opening the discussion on 22 May, the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous Peoples told the Permanent Forum that the “health of the world was being severely challenged,” from the Arctic Circle to the Amazon jungle, because of the unsustainable use of natural resources and the destruction of woodland and aquatic habitats. The “implementation gap” was one of the main obstacles standing in the way of human rights by indigenous groups, he said, noting that, on the one hand, some legislation was not always consistent with other laws, which tended to be enforced with a greater priority. On the other, there was a delay in the adoption of regulatory and secondary legislation, coupled with a lack of consultation with indigenous communities and deep-seated bias against indigenous rights among many politicians and legislatures.

A number of participants noted that cut off from resources and traditions vital to their welfare and survival, and with the disruption of their traditional ways of life by waste dumping, strip mining, overfishing, and rapid urbanization, the draft declaration reinforced the rights of indigenous peoples to the protection of their cultural property and identity, as well as the rights to education, employment, health, religion, language and more. It also protected the right of indigenous peoples to own land collectively.

On 23 May, the Forum took up the precarious situation of indigenous women and children, with speakers calling on governments to devote resources and target legislation, policies and services to support indigenous families, as well as provide culturally appropriate education and health care, to help end the routine discrimination, sexual exploitation and violence indigenous women and youth faced. Representatives of indigenous groups and tribal communities emphasized that improving the lives of indigenous children was crucial not only for their own health and wellbeing, but for the overall future of indigenous peoples. As for indigenous women, the participants made a strong call for the equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all individuals, both men and women.

The Forum heard then from more than 35 indigenous speakers. “No human being is illegal,” said a representative of the *Caucus de migración, refugio y desplazamiento de pueblos indígenas*. She affirmed the right of indigenous people to free mobility and to be able to live on their traditional lands and not be displaced because of political violence.

Delivering a collective statement on the future work of the Forum, a representative of the Caribbean Antilles Indigenous Peoples Caucus and the Diaspora called on the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues to establish an appropriate mechanism by which the Permanent Forum could be more accountable and transparent and include more interaction between its members, indigenous peoples and regional representatives.

In a text focusing on the session's theme (E/C.19/2006/L.2), the Forum urged developed countries to adopt national processes to implement the Goals, with “the full and effective” participation of their indigenous communities, and strongly encouraged all States to provide disaggregated data on health and social welfare indicators, to understand where indigenous societies stand in the process. The text also laments the absence of information on issues such as economic marginalization, migration, and the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Through another text (E/C.19/2006/L.3/Add.2) the Permanent Forum urged States to urgently collect disaggregated data and adopt culturally sensitive indicators to monitor the implementation of the Goals among indigenous peoples.

In anticipation of the first session of the Human Rights Council, the Permanent Forum recommended that indigenous issues be a standing agenda item of the Council, and due attention be paid to the human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples. Their active participation should be ensured when matters affecting their rights were discussed by the Council and any subsidiary bodies or processes it decides to establish (E/C.19/2006/L.3/Add.1).

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PART V.



ONGOING ENGAGEMENT WITH UN AGENCIES, PROGRAMMES AND FUNDS, AND SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

Committee on World Food Security

The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) held its 32nd session from 30 October - 4 November 2006 at the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Headquarters in Rome, bringing together delegates from 116 out of 132 Members of the Committee as well as observers from intergovernmental organizations, UN agencies and programmes, and 41 International NGOs.

As part of the CFS, a Special Forum was held as a multi-stakeholder dialogue that brought together representatives of intergovernmental organizations and over 100 civil society organizations and social movements including representatives of farmers, fishers, indigenous peoples, National Alliances against Hunger, NGOs, the private sector, youth and women. The Forum participants jointly reviewed progress in achieving the goals of the World Food Summit and joined three panels on Aid and Investment; Agrarian Reform and Rural Development; and Trade and Globalization.

Participants in the Panel on Aid and Investment expressed great concern about the reduction of global investment in agriculture. They stressed the need to boost both aid and investment in agriculture and to support a more holistic approach to the issue of hunger reduction. Also highlighted was the need to build new partnership arrangements and to strengthen existing ones between governments, the private sector, civil society organizations and local producer organizations.

The Panel on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development noted that agrarian reform and sound land policies for rural development are still essential conditions for social cohesion, conflict reduction, food security, poverty eradication, and environmental rehabilitation. Participants stressed the need to promote dialogue at all levels, with a greater awareness of the different and complementary roles of States, civil society and the private sector.

In the Panel on Trade and Globalization participants stressed that improving productivity levels in small scale agriculture is critical in achieving poverty reduction and enhancing food security through agriculture-led growth. They noted that the impact of further liberalization is unclear in the short to medium term and that there is no simple relationship between greater openness to trade and poverty or food security levels.

The Chairperson's Summary of the Forum is entitled "A World Free of Hunger: Progress and Prospects for Achieving the World Food Summit Plan of Action." Participants noted that ten years after the World Food Summit (WFS) no progress had been made towards the WFS target of reducing the number of hungry people even though progress has been made towards the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target of reducing the overall proportion of hungry and undernourished. One in six of the developing world's population remains chronically hungry. Stressing that political will, good governance and stability, targeted development assistance and safety net programmes are essential in hunger reduction, participants in the multi-stakeholder dialogue urged all parties to pay special attention to the following and act as appropriate:

- promote and support national alliances against hunger and facilitate international networking;
- strengthen the capacity building of small producers;
- promote food sovereignty;
- place farmers at the centre of national and international policies and strategies;
- implement the rights of the Indigenous Peoples;
- apply the Voluntary Guidelines on the Right to Food in the context of National Food Security;
- link relief to rehabilitation and development;
- enhance the role of women and their access to productive resources;
- take care of marginal and neglected areas;
- target vulnerable groups;
- involve NGOs/CSOs and the private sector in monitoring the WFS Plan of Action at the national levels;
- reflect the contribution of NGOs/CSOs and the private sector in the implementation of national food security plans; and
- involve youth in the formulation of the policies and interventions affecting their lives.

During the assessment of the world food security situation the Committee noted that 39 countries worldwide are in need of external food assistance, with the most urgent cases occurring in drought-affected southern and eastern Africa. The Committee called for urgent action to tackle the root causes of food insecurity in the most food insecure countries over the short and long term. The Committee also recognized the importance of agrarian reform and rural development for achieving the goal of eradicating hunger and poverty and acknowledged their continued support of the Joint ICARRD Working Group composed of FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty (IPC) (see section below).

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International Conference for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD)

The International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ICARRD), held in Porto Alegre from 7-10 March 2006, was jointly organized by FAO and the Government of Brazil to explore new development opportunities to revitalize rural communities worldwide.

The conference brought together 1,400 participants, representing government delegations from 92 countries, NGOs and civil society observers from more than 150 farmer and civil society organizations worldwide. It included an open debate between civil society and governments on agrarian reform and rural development; an expert panel on agrarian reform, social justice and sustainable development; thematic discussions; a parallel civil society forum; and a partnership fair that sought to highlight progress made in existing projects and partnership initiatives and to present innovative projects that have been successful in implementing reform and development.

To foster constructive dialogue, FAO facilitated national thematic dialogues and case study preparations between civil society representatives and governments in the lead-up to ICARRD. Almost 30 country case studies provided background for discussion during the national dialogues, which further fed into ICARRD preparations.

Five main themes were discussed during the conference: Policies and practices for securing and improving access to land; States and civil society: access to land and rural development and capacity building for new forms of governance; New opportunities for community driven rural development; Agrarian reform, social justice and sustainable development; and Agrarian reform in the context of food sovereignty, the right to food and cultural diversity: “land, territory and dignity.”

The expert panel discussion on “Agrarian Reform, Social Justice and Sustainable Development,” held on 9 March, saw participants stressing that policy approaches need to be broadened to include new social movements, as well as the need for support for alliance-building that can remedy structural power imbalances and promote broad-based approaches that are flexible and responsive to local and national conditions. Participants emphasized that multilateral institutions need to work directly with social movements from rural sectors, and the need for good governance.

The conference adopted a final declaration that stresses the need to find new and urgent solutions in addressing key rural development and agrarian reform challenges. Through the declaration, governments committed themselves to developing mechanisms for dialogue and cooperation to reinforce processes of agrarian reform and rural development at national, regional and international levels and to establish mechanisms for periodic evaluation of progress in these areas.

The parallel civil society forum on “Land, Territory and Dignity” organized by the IPC was held as a series of working groups, workshops and plenary sessions to exchange experiences and further elaborate on the principles, recommendations and plans of action for land reform based on food sovereignty (www.foodsovereignty.org/new/index.php). It brought together more than 300 civil society participants from 210 organizations and 66 countries representing organizations of farmers, landless, agricultural workers, indigenous peoples, pastoralists, artisanal fisherfolk, migrants, women, youth, and NGOs active on human rights and rural development. Many of them also attended the sessions open to the public at the official conference.

The civil society forum produced a final declaration which stresses that new agrarian reform must recognize the socio-environmental function of land, the sea, and natural resources, in the context of food sovereignty, which should be based on the human right to food, self-determination, indigenous rights to territory, and the rights of rural peoples to produce food for local and national markets.

Civil society organizations and UN organizations dealing with food sovereignty, food security agrarian reform and rural development will continue to participate in the implementation process of the ICARRD Principles, including enhanced participation in FAO’s technical committees, such as the Committee of World Food Security and the Committee on Agriculture, as well as in other mechanisms to institutionalize social dialogue, cooperation, and monitoring and evaluation of progress in agrarian reform and rural development.

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United Nations Global Compact

Civil society organizations (CSOs) are critical actors in the advancement of universal values around human rights, the environment, labour standards and anti-corruption that encompass the ten Global Compact Principles. As global market integration has advanced, their role has gained particular importance in aligning economic activities with social and environmental priorities. Civil society organizations have been an integral part of the Global Compact since its creation and their perspectives, expertise and partnership-building capabilities are indispensable in the evolution and impact of the Global Compact.

Civil society and other non-business organizations can participate through a number of Global Compact engagement mechanisms, including policy dialogues, learning, local networks and partnership projects. In these areas, civil society has a crucial role to play in helping to foster partnerships and produce substantive action. Non-business participants are also encouraged to commit their organization to the ten principles and to report on progress made within their organization.

Annual Global Compact Local Networks Forum

The 4th Annual Global Compact Local Networks Forum was held on 26-27 September 2006 in Barcelona (Spain), co-hosted by the Global Compact Office and the Barcelona Center for the Support of the Global Compact. The two-day event brought together more than 180 representatives of business, UN agencies, civil society and labour, who serve as focal points for existing and emerging Global Compact Local Networks in more than 60 countries. The 2006 Forum supported the growing role of Local Networks as “incubators” or catalysts of change on the ground. In several plenary sessions and 14 working group sessions, network representatives identified key challenges and opportunities for their operations and produced a variety of decisions and recommendations for collective action in key areas: Governance; Local Network Activities; Support of Local Networks by Key Partners; and Local Networks Internal Development.

Appointment of Civil Society Coordinator

The UN Global Compact Office appointed its first Civil Society Coordinator in the last quarter of 2006 in its continued effort to deepen and energize its collaboration with civil society. The tasks of the Coordinator, among others, are to strengthen relations and widen engagements of CSOs in the Global Compact. As a multi-stakeholder initiative, the Global Compact values and encourages close cooperation with civil society organizations in a spirit of constructive collaboration. The Global Compact invites civil society organizations worldwide to engage more actively in the initiative, to participate in multi-stakeholder dialogues, to provide expertise on issues areas, and to assist in knowledge development that will contribute to enhance the quality and integrity of the Global Compact initiative.

Global Compact Board

The Global Compact inaugurated its newly appointed Board in June 2006. Out of the 20 members of the Board, four represent civil society. Board members become advocates of

responsible business practices around the world. The Global Compact Board will provide strategic advice to the initiative as a whole and will also play a role with respect to the implementation of the Global Compact's integrity measures.

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International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

Briefing Meeting with IGOs, NGOs and Individual Observers at the 50th General Conference of the IAEA, 18 September 2006, Vienna

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has a tradition of substantive interaction with non-governmental stakeholders in a variety of specific fields.

The annual meeting of the Secretariat of the IAEA with the Inter-Governmental Organizations and the Non-Governmental Organizations took place on the first day of the General Conference (GC) on 18 September 2006 at the Austria Center in Vienna.

Given the diversity of mandates and interests of the IGOs and NGOs present at the 2006 GC, the following two broad topics were discussed:

- Nuclear and radiation safety—including the benefits of harmonized safety regulations (safety, economic, humanitarian, etc. benefits) and of the use of the International System of Units.
- Climate change—scientific, technological and engineering grounds for discussing climate change solutions.

IGOs and NGOs made short presentations, which were followed by general discussions with the other organizations and with IAEA staff. A number of proposals were made for new cooperation activities.

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International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) works with a variety of non-governmental organizations. At the field level, IFAD works with development NGOs that have expertise in the areas of IFAD interventions and direct outreach to rural poor populations. It also works with NGOs that may not work directly with the poor but support other grassroots organizations in a variety of ways, such as research, technical assistance, capacity building, information sharing, advocacy and networking. The Fund also works with advocacy NGOs that defend and promote the cause of rural poverty reduction and have influence in the policy-making processes of governments and/or development agencies.

Farmers' Forum

To pave the way for broader and closer collaboration with rural producers' organizations in policy processes and operations, a Farmers' Forum has been established as a permanent feature of the Governing Council of IFAD, IFAD's highest decision-making authority. The Farmers' Forum aims to provide a bottom-up process of consultation and dialogue between small farmers and rural producers' organizations, IFAD and governments. The Forum focuses on rural development and poverty reduction and is rooted in concrete partnership and collaboration at the country and regional level. Engagement with rural organizations at the field level and dialogue at the international level are articulated as mutually reinforcing processes.

In 2006, the first Farmers' Forum was held from 13-14 February in Rome. It brought together more than 50 leaders, representing millions of small farmers and rural producers, from Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Near East and Europe to interact with IFAD staff and other partners. It was preceded by consultations at the national and regional level, and will meet every two years from now on for a global consultation, in conjunction with the Governing Council.

The 2006 Forum included discussions on IFAD's engagement with farmers' organizations, with a focus on how to institutionalize and enhance the scope of such engagement. In addition, thematic working groups were set up to discuss: pro-poor access to land and land tenure security; building capacity of grassroots rural institutions; and regional market integration and family agriculture. A concluding statement by the Forum was delivered to IFAD's Governing Council by a farmers' leader.

The Forum made a number of recommendations addressed to IFAD. On pro-poor access to natural resources (land, water, forest and fisheries), the Forum requested that IFAD put access to natural resources on the agendas at all levels and called on IFAD to facilitate dialogue between governments and representatives of small farmers and pastoralists, rural women, indigenous peoples, coastal communities, and other marginalized groups. They also requested that the capacity of people organizations be strengthened in order for them to participate in land policy formulation, implementation, enforcement and evaluation.

On capacity building, direct financing was recommended for capacity building of farmers' organizations, with priorities being set by the farmers' organizations themselves. On regional markets integration and family farming, the Forum suggested that IFAD

should support the undertaking of an evaluation of the impact of regional market integration policies and market liberalization on family agriculture and the livelihoods of the rural poor. Further, IFAD should contribute to a broad information campaign of the findings of this evaluation and should continue and broaden its support to the set-up of regional platforms of dialogue and negotiations between farmers' organizations and governments within sub-regional and regional institutions involved in the integration processes.

Further information is available online: (www.ifad.org/events/gc/29/farmer/english.pdf) and (www.ifad.org/pub/policy/swaps/swaps_e.pdf).

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International Labour Organization (ILO)

94th (Maritime) Session of the International Labour Conference – 7-23 February 2006, Geneva

The 94th (Maritime) Session of the International Labour Conference was held in Geneva from 7-23 February 2006 to consider a draft convention on maritime labour standards regarding the world's ship-owners, seafarers and maritime nations. The shipping industry, the world's first global industry, requires global labour standards that can safeguard the rights, welfare and dignity of the 1.25 million seafarers around the world. Special sessions of the International Labour Conference devoted to maritime issues have been convened several times since the inception of the ILO. The Convention that was adopted upon during the 94th Session has proved to be an indispensable tool of decent work in the maritime sector, in particular as it brings a series of major improvements to the rights of the seafarers.

Fifteen non-governmental international organizations participated in the 94th (Maritime) Session of the International Labour Conference, including representatives of trade unions. Representatives of non-governmental international organizations also participated in many preparatory meetings and committees ahead of the Conference.

In their statements, the representatives of non-governmental international organizations stressed that various international and national organizations have long been working for the welfare of seafarers on land, and on merchant, fishing or passenger vessels. Among them, the work of non-profit Christian organizations, such as the International Christian Maritime Association (ICMA) representing 526 seafarers' centres and 927 chaplains in 126 countries, was highlighted.

Since sea transport is an essential part of international trade, non-governmental international organizations also expressed a wish to see the notion of fair trade—or a fair system of trade rules—extended to maritime transport, fishing and other categories alike.

In his address, the Director-General of the ILO, Juan Somavia, pointed out that there was clearly a role to be played by non-governmental organizations working with seafarers in promoting and implementing the new maritime labour Convention. Cooperation with them, such as within the International Committee on Seafarers' Welfare, will be pursued.

Further information on the 94th Maritime Session of the International Labour Conference is available online:
www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/ilc/ilc94/records.htm.

Information on the Consolidation of ILO Maritime Labour Standards is also available online:
www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/sector/sectors/mariti/consol.htm.

The text of the Convention adopted at the 94th (Maritime) Session of the International Labour Conference can be downloaded:
www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/norm/download/mlc2006.pdf.

95th Session of the International Labour Conference – 31 May-16 June 2006

The 95th Session of the International Labour Conference was held in Geneva from 31 May-16 June 2006. The standing items of the Conference included the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work—in 2006 on the effective abolition of child labour—and information and reports on the application of ILO Conventions and Recommendations. Other specific items placed on the agenda were occupational safety and health, the employment relationship, and the role of the ILO in technical cooperation.

Approximately 75 non-governmental international organizations participated in the 95th Session of the International Labour Conference, in accordance with article 2, paragraph 3(j), of the Standing Orders of the Conference. The Officers of the Governing Body of the ILO also invited certain non-governmental international organizations to attend the discussions of the committees dealing with items on the agenda in which they had expressed a particular interest. Consequently, 25-30 different non-governmental international organizations were present in each of the following committees: the Committee on the Application of Standards, the Committee on Safety and Health, the Committee on the Employment Relationship, and the Committee on Technical Cooperation.

Through their statements, non-governmental international organizations called on ILO constituents to extend social protection benefits to a maximum number of workers and their families, including temporary workers and in the informal economy, and to run national campaigns on the issue of health and safety at work. They also urged governments and employers to work towards a full respect of social rights, freedom of association and collective bargaining.

Regarding the abolition of child labour, non-governmental international organizations stressed the need to strengthen the existing mechanisms, and called for a better coherence of international and national policies, under the supervision of the ILO. They recommended a shift from a universal, “one-size-fits-all” solution to a regional, national, local, in-context focus on child labour. Non-governmental international organizations also pointed the need to make the agriculture sector and rural development a priority of the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), especially in Africa.

Information on the 95th Session of the International Labour Conference is available online: (www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/ilc/ilc95).

Records of the work of the Conference are also available online: (www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/ilc/ilc95/records.htm).

For further information on the participation of non-governmental international organizations in the committees, see: (www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/ilc/ilc95/pdf/pr-3-1.pdf) (pages 3-1/4 to 3-1/9).

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United Nations Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR)

Building a “Global Network of NGOs” for Community Resilience to Disasters

The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) aims at building disaster resilient communities by promoting increased awareness of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), with the goal of reducing human, social, economic and environmental losses caused by the combination of natural hazards and vulnerabilities.

The ISDR system, which includes a wide range of stakeholders such as governments, UN agencies, non-governmental and scientific institutions, works on the implementation of the *Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005-2015: Building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters*,¹ a global blueprint for DRR efforts endorsed by the UN Member States. The ISDR system aims at creating a “culture of prevention” in society by promoting the development of a global movement for disaster risk reduction.

The ISDR secretariat serves the ISDR system and co-ordinates the implementation of the HFA through advocacy, knowledge and information management, as well as partnerships and network development. The ISDR secretariat is based in Geneva and has regional outreach offices in Asia & Pacific, Africa, Latin America & the Caribbean, and the Middle East and North Africa.

Towards a Global Network of NGOs for Disaster Risk Reduction

In its effort to build the resilience of communities to disasters, the ISDR secretariat is facilitating the development of a “Global Network of NGOs” for disaster risk reduction. This initiative is based on the recognition of the NGOs’ key role in building the resilience of local communities to disasters. ISDR recognizes that a “DRR movement” cannot be built without the active participation of NGOs and civil society at large. The HFA also highlights the importance of involving NGOs, community organizations and voluntary groups in DRR processes. A comprehensive approach to DRR requires a combination of changes in practices and behaviours at the local level, with changes to national and international policies.

The Global Network provides an opportunity for NGOs to share information and knowledge, have easier access to global resources for DRR, and influence global policy in a more effective manner through concerted action. It will also facilitate the identification and understanding of critical issues related to DRR, and allow for the wider dissemination of good practices and lessons learned on community-based disaster risk reduction. Finally, the Global Network will also serve as a major source of information for monitoring progress in the implementation of the HFA at community and sub-national levels.

The first “Consultative Meeting” on the Global Network of NGOs² was organized by the ISDR secretariat on 25-26 October 2006 in Geneva, in collaboration with the Bangkok-based United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Special Unit for South-South Cooperation. The meeting was attended by 14 representatives of NGO networks from Asia, Africa, Europe, the US and Latin America. As a result of this

meeting, participants have endorsed the Global NGO Network concept, prepared a first draft of its Terms of Reference (ToR) and agreed upon the next steps to be taken.

The Way Forward

In 2007, the ISDR Secretariat will be undertaking the following activities to advance the development of the Global Network of NGOs, together with its core group members:

- Facilitate wider consultations on the draft ToR, through existing networks and other channels;
- Coordinate the publication of a compilation of good practices and lessons learned on community-based DRR;
- Organize a side event with NGOs and NGO Networks during the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GP/DRR)³ to officially launch the Global Network and agree on the way forward;
- Facilitate the preparation of a joint statement to be released by NGOs during the (GP/DRR) – 5-7 June, 2007;
- Develop a concept for granting awards to NGOs that have demonstrated consistent commitment to promoting DRR at community level, in order to encourage other organizations to play an active role in this area;
- Contribute to the monitoring and reporting of the HFA implementation;
- Sustain the development of the Global Network of NGOs with a view to ensuring that actual ownership and leadership progressively lie in the hands of the Network members.

Endnotes:

1. *Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005-2015*: (www.unisdr.org/eng/hfa/hfa.htm).
2. Information on the first Consultative Meeting of the Global Network is available online: (www.unisdr.org/eng/risk-reduction/ngos/rd-ngo-eng.htm).
3. For more information on the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GP/DRR), visit the ISDR website: (www.unisdr.org).

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Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

The Global Humanitarian Platform: Improve the dialogue with NGOs for a more effective humanitarian response

NGOs are major actors in the field of humanitarian response whose resources and expertise are often greater—and may differ from—those of UN agencies. Given that no agency can fulfill all humanitarian needs alone, the UN and other international agencies, the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, and NGOs have a responsibility to coordinate their work. While the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) is intended to be an inclusive and representative mechanism for humanitarian coordination, it remains largely UN-centric. For NGOs, IASC discussions may seem at times to be out of touch or even irrelevant when compared with the reality they see on the ground. In order for the IASC to better reflect operational capacities, the 2003 External Review of the IASC recommended the creation of an outreach mechanism for enhanced dialogue with NGO Consortia, in particular with representatives of their members.

On 12-13 July 2006, the first dialogue meeting to explore ways of enhancing the effectiveness of humanitarian response brought together 40 leaders of UN humanitarian organizations, NGOs, the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and World Bank in Geneva. The meeting constituted one of the most representative events of equal humanitarian partners, the United Nations, the NGO community, the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement and other international organizations including the IOM. The meeting was co-chaired by the Emergency Relief Coordinator, Jan Egeland, and Elizabeth Ferris, from the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response, representing the non-UN organizations.

The meeting was characterized by a spirit of openness and a common commitment to constructive practical action, mutual respect for each other's work and an increased understanding of respective roles and responsibilities. There was also frank discussion of the obstacles that make closer collaboration more difficult.

At the country level, the meeting agreed to establish Humanitarian Community Partnership Teams to seek ways of strengthening collaborative work at the field level as well as strengthening the NGO consortia. At the global level, participants agreed to convene a meeting of a new global humanitarian platform to be jointly planned by the UN, NGOs and the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement.

This platform will meet annually for three years to provide a forum for strategic dialogue on urgent humanitarian issues. To support and guide and this process, a Steering Committee has been established with representatives from the UN, NGOs and Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement to plan the next meeting of the Humanitarian Platform.

Following the Dialogue Meeting in July 2006, several donors have supported the idea of strengthening the capacities of national NGOs in a more concerted effort to bring these into the decision-making forum. It is therefore envisioned that workshops to this end will be held at both the Geneva and regional levels. The UN and non-UN partners will be working together on developing these initiatives to ensure that the workshops reach the most diverse audience possible, while also making a concrete contribution to enhancing inclusion and partnerships across the humanitarian community.

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Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' (OHCHR) work worldwide in promoting and protecting human rights is based on the conviction that civil society organizations play a crucial and fundamental role. The mandate of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, together with the High Commissioner's Plan of Action of 2005,¹ provides the framework for OHCHR's engagement with civil society.

Civil society, in particular non-governmental organizations, enhance the international human rights system through a multiplicity of roles and provide a valuable link from the grassroots to the national and international levels. OHCHR benefits from the support, information, analysis and expertise coming from civil society actors, and in turn provides solidarity, protection, education and advice.

NGOs are an important source of information for action by the human rights international community: NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC participate as observers in the sessions of the Human Rights Council, which held its inaugural session in June 2006; NGOs also contribute to the work of the UN Treaty Bodies and the Special Procedures by submitting information.

OHCHR's increased efforts towards closer partnerships with civil society stems from the recognition that OHCHR often works best when it works with and through others. All parts of OHCHR—Headquarters in Geneva, the New York Office and the Field Presences—engage daily with civil society organizations in a variety of ways according to their specific areas of work. Since 2004 the post of an NGO Liaison Officer was created to serve as a full-time accessible interface with non-governmental organizations. Building on the acquired experience, a Civil Society Unit will be established in the course of 2007 to further foster OHCHR's partnership with civil society.

Human Rights Council (HRC)

The Human Rights Council (HRC) was established by the General Assembly (GA) on 15 March 2006, and succeeded to the former Commission on Human Rights.

The Council's new features are:

- 47 members instead of 53 with a slightly revised geographic distribution of seats which gives more prominence to Asia and Eastern Europe to the detriment of GRULAC and the WEOG;
- The possibility to look into the human rights situation of all countries through a "Universal Periodic Review" Mechanism (UPR);
- An easier convening of special sessions outside regular sessions (by one-third of the membership instead of half of it);
- Ten weeks of meetings per year with three or four sessions instead of a yearly six week session;
- A higher status as a subsidiary organ of the GA;
- The Council is expected to set up the UPR mechanism and undertake a review of its special procedures, its expert advice and the complaints mechanisms within one year of its establishment.

Pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 60/251,² the participation of NGOs in the Human Rights Council will be based on the arrangements and practices observed by the Commission on Human Rights, including Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996. NGOs may therefore submit written statements to the HRC, give oral interventions in the plenary, and organize parallel events of relevance to the work of the Human Rights Council in the margin of the sessions.

Specific modalities on NGO participation remain to be developed by the Council, in particular taking into account the higher frequency of the sessions and the new UPR. Since the HRC's first session, NGOs have been given opportunities to contribute to the Council's institution-building.

Working with OHCHR: A Handbook for NGOs

Working with OHCHR: A Handbook for NGOs,³ launched by the OHCHR NGO Liaison Office as an online publication in June 2006, aims to provide NGOs with a comprehensive and user-friendly guide to the work of OHCHR, including key information on human rights mechanisms, entry points for NGOs and contact details with a view to assisting NGOs in identifying areas of possible cooperation and partnership with OHCHR. Efforts are underway to have it translated in all UN languages.

Endnotes:

1. High Commissioner's Plan of Action of 2005:
(www.ohchr.org/english/docs/A.59.2005.Add.3.pdf).

2. General Assembly Resolution 60/251:
(www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/A.RES.60.251_En.pdf).

3. *Working with OHCHR: A Handbook for NGOs*:
(www.ohchr.org/english/about/ngohandbook.htm).

Additional Resources:

A number of Geneva-based NGOs offer regular information on the Human Rights Council's sessions:

- International Service for Human Rights (ISHR): (www.ishr.ch/hrm/council).
- Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CONGO):
(www.ngocongo.org/index.php?what=resources&id=10136).

Contact: Laura Dolci-Kanaan, NGO Liaison Officer, OHCHR, Palais Wilson, Room 2-080, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland, telephone +41-22/917 9656, fax +41-22/917 9012, e-mail <ldolci-kanaan@ohchr.org>, website (www.ohchr.org).

Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) is guided by a Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) which serves as its governing body. The PCB has representatives of 22 governments from all regions of the world, the ten UNAIDS Cosponsors,¹ and five non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including associations of people living with HIV/AIDS. They have formal terms of reference, can serve for up to three years and have non-voting status. UNAIDS is the first United Nations programme to include NGOs in its governing body.

The PCB holds a regular session once a year in Geneva, and in alternate years holds thematic sessions outside Geneva, as requested by the members. The PCB has several functions, such as establishing broad policies and priorities for the Joint Programme; reviewing and deciding upon the planning and execution of UNAIDS; reviewing and approving the plan of action and budget for each financial period; and reviewing longer term plans of action and their financial implications, among many others.

18th Meeting of the PCB

The Programme Coordinating Board held its 18th meeting in Geneva from 27-28 June 2006. During the meeting, NGO representatives presented their report to the PCB, entitled *NGO Delegation | GLOBAL REPORT on HIV/AIDS*, which highlights their major concerns and recommendations regarding HIV and AIDS. Through a call for responses, civil society representatives from the five regions identified key issues around stigma and discrimination, policy towards HIV and needs around partnership and sustainability affecting their work progress.

Noting that the five-year review of the UNGASS Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS was held in early June 2006, NGO representatives stressed that 2006 was a key year in AIDS policy definition. “It represents a challenge but also a unique opportunity to reinvigorate the necessary commitment and support to fight the pandemic.

“We believe that a capable and sustainable global response to the AIDS epidemic is not possible without the incorporation of the voices, vision and full participation from those who are directly affected by the pandemic and their representatives from civil society,” the report stressed.

The NGO Global Report provides regional reports that examine the epidemiological situation in the different regions; identifies recent trends in prevention, care and treatment; highlights major issues in the regions; and provides recommendations ranging from national and global efforts to community-level initiatives. It is available online: (http://data.unaids.org/pub/Report/2006/PCB_18_06_4_en.pdf).

The report of the 18th meeting of the Programme Coordinating Board notes the decisions, recommendations and conclusions made during the meeting. Concerning the outcome of the High-Level Meeting 2006, paragraph 7.8. of the report requests UNAIDS to strengthen further its engagement with civil society—including networks of people living with HIV—to facilitate full, active and meaningful civil society participation in target-setting and monitoring and reporting on progress over the next five years, and to intensify social mobilization for the broadening of national AIDS responses to ensure

they reach the community level, as well as protect and promote all human rights and fundamental freedoms of people living with HIV, children and members of key affected groups and populations, including women and girls, youth, men who have sex with men, injecting and other drug users, sex workers, people living in poverty, prisoners, migrant labourers, people in conflict and post-conflict situations, and refugees and internally displaced persons.

Other recommendations about civil society are also made, such as providing resources to support civil society involvement in the implementation of the “Three Ones”² and to ensure strengthened national AIDS responses through more inclusive and coordinated stakeholder action.

The report of and information on the 18th meeting of the Programme Coordinating Board are available online: (http://data.unaids.org/pub/Report/2006/PCB_18_06-finaldecisions0628_en.pdf) and (www.unaids.org/en/AboutUNAIDS/Governance/20060518-pcb18.asp).

19th Meeting of the PCB

The 19th meeting, held from 6-8 December in Lusaka (Zambia), was a thematic meeting on the implementation of the response to the AIDS epidemic at the country level. It included two days of roundtables on multilateral support at country level, with topics such as implementation and accountability for results; effective country-level harmonization to achieve universal access; and empowering national leadership and ownership through the integration of AIDS into national development frameworks, among others.

The report of the 19th meeting welcomes the development of the Civil Society Guidelines to strengthen the meaningful involvement of civil society, in particular people living with HIV, in national AIDS responses with a view to developing an implementation strategy; calls for greater involvement and partnership of non-state actors in policy-setting and information-sharing processes in national AIDS responses; and calls upon UNAIDS to use its facilitating role to bring national authorities to fulfil their commitments to work with civil society, among others.

Information on the 19th meeting of the PCB is available online: (www.unaids.org/en/AboutUNAIDS/Governance/200609-19PCB.asp).

Review of NGO/Civil Society Participation in the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board

As UNAIDS marked its tenth anniversary in 2006, a Review was commenced to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the existing system of NGO/civil society participation in the PCB and to identify how it might be improved in the future. The Review was carried out by an independent consultant, under the guidance of a working group with membership from civil society and UNAIDS.

Input was sought in relation to the following questions:

1. What have been the key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and gaps of NGO/civil society participation in the UNAIDS PCB to date?

2. How could NGO/civil society participation in the UNAIDS PCB be improved in the future? For example, what improvements could be made to areas such as:

- * The official role and non-voting status of the NGO Delegation?
- * The composition of the NGO delegation (e.g. in terms of geography, HIV status, gender, constituencies, experience)?
- * The selection criteria and selection processes for the NGO Delegation?
- * The systems for communication, consultation and accountability between the NGO Delegation and broader civil society?
- * The capacity and resources that are available for NGO/civil society participation in the PCB?
- * The systems for ensuring that people living with HIV and other marginalized groups have a voice within the PCB?

The Review will involve four key methodologies

1. Literature review;
2. “Peer practice” review;
3. International call for input issued to civil society via global networks; and
4. Interviews with key informants, including representatives of NGO Delegations, broader civil society, UNAIDS, partner agencies, governments and donors.

The results of the Review will be available at the end of March 2007 and will be presented to the 20th meeting of the PCB in June 2007.

See also the UNAIDS civil society webpage:
(www.unaids.org/en/getstarted/civilsociety.asp).

See also the UNAIDS and non-governmental organizations publication
(http://data.unaids.org/Publications/IRC-pub01/JC204-NonGovOrg_en.pdf).

Endnotes:

1. The ten UNAIDS Cosponsors include: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF); World Food Programme (WFP); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC); International Labour Organization (ILO); United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); World Health Organization (WHO); and the World Bank.

2. The “Three Ones” include:

One agreed HIV/AIDS Action Framework that provides the basis for coordinating the work of all partners.

One National AIDS Coordinating Authority, with a broad-based multisectoral mandate.

One agreed country-level Monitoring and Evaluation System.

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United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

UNCTAD Trade and Development Board Hearing with Civil Society and the Private Sector, 22 September 2006, Geneva

Pursuant to paragraph 117 of the São Paulo Consensus emanating from UNCTAD XI, the third Trade and Development Board hearing with civil society and the private sector was held on 22 September 2006 on the eve of UNCTAD's Trade and Development Board (TDB) regular session.¹ It brought together over 100 participants representing Member States, civil society organizations and private entities.

Chaired by the President of the Trade and Development Board, the hearing was addressed by the representative of the UNCTAD Secretary-General. The meeting provided an opportunity for non-state actors to discuss with Member States issues related to the theme "UNCTAD, development and the way forward."

The discussions were guided by three sets of questions:

(i) *How can UNCTAD be more effective? How can UNCTAD enhance its political engagement in the context of global governance?*; (ii) *Has trade been the best means for development? How can countries best meet their employment objectives?*; and (iii) *What is the role of the development of productive capacities and its importance in poverty reduction? Why is the present aid system in Africa not working?*

Participants underlined the importance of UNCTAD as a free and independent institution within the UN system and expressed the wish to see its critical perspective and integrity maintained and its role and functions strengthened. A number of them emphasized that, in its research, UNCTAD should stay ahead of the curve and engage in innovative and high-quality thinking on trade and development issues. Furthermore, its work was intellectually inspiring for policy makers and for civil society, participants suggested. UNCTAD should not self-sensor its work on policy analysis of current issues such as ongoing trade negotiations or the reform of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, because developing countries needed to understand their repercussions. Developing countries continued to need assistance, and the mandates of UNCTAD remained as important as ever. For some participants, UNCTAD had become even more relevant, given the current international environment and global rules. UNCTAD could place more importance on analyzing the impact of multilateral disciplines, since developing countries lacked the capacity to do so themselves. The commodity problem was highlighted as a recurrent issue of concern to developing countries.

Several participants praised UNCTAD's challenge to conventional economic thinking in its more recent reports, particularly the *Trade and Development Report (TDR)*,² the *Least Developed Countries Report*³ and the *Economic Development in Africa Report*.⁴ The TDR had shown the unsatisfactory outcome of market-oriented reforms and how multilateral and regional commitments had imposed constraints on the development policies of developing countries. The report called for increasing flexibility and greater policy space for developing countries to enable them to achieve their development objectives. It also noted the importance of highlighting the interrelationship between trade, debt and finance and the need for developing countries to break the vicious circle of dependence on external finance.

With regard to the role of civil society, interaction with UNCTAD was considered of great value, and deeper involvement in its work was requested, particularly in substantive discussions. NGOs had the advantage of working closer to the ground, and they could produce fresh ideas and think out of the box. They could therefore not only identify problems but also complement UNCTAD's work and help provide development-oriented solutions. Some participants added that civil society should participate more in substantive discussions at intergovernmental meetings, including those related to the Mid-term Review and the preparatory process for UNCTAD XII. Stronger interaction with civil society would help UNCTAD identify ways to translate political solutions into concrete actions.

Concerns were expressed about the challenge that globalization and trade liberalization represented for employment and working conditions. Although Member States had made certain commitments, improvements were still needed in both quantitative and qualitative terms, particularly with reference to decent working conditions and employment for women and young people. A call was made for a mind-shift in policy approach: trade liberalization should not be seen as a goal in itself, but rather as a tool to achieve employment objectives.

The importance of looking at the gender and trade perspective was also highlighted, particularly in view of the greater participation of women in the informal sector and in micro-enterprises and self-employment. A call was made for work to be done in the future on migration and remittances.

Convincing data existed to show that trade had been an important route for achieving poverty reduction and development for developing countries. However, in order for trade to be effective, the multilateral trading system should be democratic and dynamic, responding to all circumstances and addressing existing imbalances; it should take care of the unrepresented silent majority (workers and farmers); and it should take the human dimension into account. Constraints on the consumer side should also be addressed in order to promote production for domestic markets, participants stressed.

The link between trade and poverty reduction was not conclusive and the benefits from trade in developing countries and LDCs accrued to only a few economic actors. Many small farmers and micro and small enterprises did not participate in international trade flows because of lack of economies of scale, poor managerial skills, obstacles raised by safety and quality standards in developed-country markets, and inability to market their products. In this context, more incisive intervention in building productive capacities was considered a key issue.

Both the *LDC Report* and the *Trade and Development Report* were cited as challenging current trade policies and the direction governments and institutions had taken with respect to their development policies. Some participants indicated that the *LDC Report* could be a very useful tool for outlining donor strategies on Aid for Trade. The *Trade and Development Report* had highlighted the need for proactive trade and industrial policies. Importance was attached to the role of the State in this process, as well as the need to focus on strengthening institutional capacities and relaxing the restrictions imposed by multilateral agreements on national policy space.

The importance of Aid for Trade was underlined, and questions were raised about when and how this issue would be further clarified and about the channels through which aid

would be conveyed. However, the basic issue was not considered to be aid for trade but fair trade and how far governments shaping globalization would be ready to go in terms of lifting trade barriers. Developing countries needed to identify, prioritize and address their supply-side constraints. The issue of aid was of particular importance for Africa, which remained marginalized in the international economy. In the past, resources had been wasted because of political issues and conditionality. Aid should lead to wealth creation, human resources development and reduction of poverty in order for the continent to move from being a source of raw materials to industrialization, participants stressed.

Developing countries should have solid democratic institutions to respond to the needs of people. In addition, it was important to address the problems of countries in conflict and to make sure that investment flowed to countries that had just emerged from conflict.

Participants also emphasized that UNCTAD could become a more effective vehicle for building productive capacities, enhancing political engagement in the context of global governance, and achieving poverty reduction for the developing countries if it reinforced its role in encouraging foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows and building a vibrant and competitive private sector, especially in Africa. In particular, UNCTAD could assist in evaluating of the aims of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and identifying ways to help the initiative achieve its stated goals.

For further details, please read the *summary report of the hearing*⁵ and the *civil society statement*⁶ presented to the closing plenary of the Trade and Development Board.

Endnotes:

1. Trade and Development Board:

(www.unctad.org/Templates/meeting.asp?intItemID=2068&lang=1&m=11826).

2. *Trade and Development Report*: (www.unctad.org/en/docs/tdr2006_en.pdf).

3. *Least Developed Countries Report 2006*: (www.unctad.org/en/docs/ldc2006_en.pdf).

4. *Economic Development in Africa 2006: Doubling Aid: Making the "Big Push" Work*: (www.unctad.org/en/docs/gdsafrika20061_en.pdf).

5. Summary report of the hearing: (www.unctad.org/en/docs/tdb53d7_en.pdf).

6. Civil society statement:

(www.unctad.org/sections/about/docs/iaos_cso3_statement_en.pdf).

Contact: Amel Haffouz, Civil Society Outreach, UNCTAD, Place des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland, telephone +41-22/917 5048, e-mail <amel.haffouz@unctad.org>, website (www.unctad.org).

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) recognizes that engagement with CSOs is critical to good governance, decentralization, democratization of development co-operation, and the quality and relevance of official development programmes. UNDP partners with local, regional and global CSOs in programme implementation and policy advocacy across its six thematic areas: Democratic Governance, Poverty Reduction, Crisis Prevention and Recovery, HIV/AIDS, Energy and Environment, and Women's Empowerment. UNDP also works to strengthen the legal, regulatory, and normative environment in which CSOs function.

The UNDP CSO Advisory Committee to the Administrator was set up in 2000 to provide advice to senior UNDP management on programme and policy directions, advocacy efforts, and strategic CSO/UNDP initiatives and activities. The Committee, which meets once a year in New York, is composed of civil society leaders from around the world.¹

UNDP also actively promotes and supports civil society advisory committees at the country level as mechanisms for policy advocacy and debate, as well as advice on UNDP policy direction.

A number of UNDP country offices and the UN Country Teams have appointed civil society focal points in the last couple of years. UNDP also has civil society advisors located in global and regional offices, including the regional centres. UNDP's engagement is mandated by various policy documents and tools, including *UNDP and Civil Society Organizations: A Policy of Engagement*.²

UNDP engages with civil society organizations in democratic governance by focusing on creating political space for civil society organizations, ensuring legitimate engagement in key policy processes, through:

- provision of e-support to strengthen the civil society sector;
- promotion of citizens' rights and people's involvement in democratic processes;
- enhancement of women's participation in politics; and
- fostering of political dialogue and development in transition States.

Areas in which UNDP collaborates with CSOs in poverty reduction include: Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP)—One of the key missions of UNDP in the PRSP process is fostering broad-based CSO participation to transform government ownership into national ownership. Some of these perspectives and recommendations can be found in the *CSO Perspectives on Poverty Reduction Strategies: A Resource Sheet (2005)*.³

Participatory Monitoring Mechanisms—UNDP works to improve State/citizen interaction, reinforcing participatory monitoring mechanisms such as pro-poor budget exercises and public expenditure reviews to influence national policy.

Multi-Stakeholder Policy Dialogue—UNDP also facilitates CSO involvement in pro-poor policy reform, trade, aid, and the debt debate.

In the area of energy and environment, CSOs are key actors in formulating policy and in the design and implementation of projects funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The publication *Partners for Change: Experiences from UNDP's Work with CSOs through the GEF*⁴ demonstrates how civil society—when given the opportunity—can make critical contributions to the achievement of project objectives.

The GEF Small Grants Programme,⁵ implemented by UNDP on behalf of the GEF partnership, channels grants of up to US\$50,000 directly to community-based organizations (CBOs) and NGOs in recognition of the key role they play as a resource and constituency for environment and development concerns.

Through the Equator Initiative,⁶ UNDP is working to raise the profile and learn from the experiences of grassroots efforts to reduce poverty through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. A partnership bringing together the United Nations, civil society, business, governments and communities, the Equator Initiative works to help bring national and international attention to outstanding local poverty reduction/conservation efforts.

UNDP's new Community Water Initiative⁷ (CWI) is working to expand access to safe water supply and sanitation for the poor (Millennium Development Goal Targets 10 and 11) by providing small grants directly to CSOs in remote rural areas. The CWI also contributes to disseminating best practices in community involvement in decision making and management of water resources.

In the area of HIV/AIDS, UNDP develops the capacity of civil society entities to participate in the design, implementation and evaluation of AIDS responses.

On the MDGs, UNDP engages with civil society through supporting CSOs in a) MDG advocacy and campaigning, b) implementing the goals and c) monitoring and reporting on progress.

Proposed United Nations Civil Society Trust Fund: Progress achieved in 2006

Paragraphs 45 and 47⁸ of the report by the Secretary-General in response to the report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations (the Cardoso Report) set out a number of actions to enhance the capacity of the UN resident coordinator system to engage with civil society at the country level. The United Nations Development Group established a Working Group on Civil Society⁹ to follow up on these actions.

The trust fund will “enhance the capacity of NGOs at country level and finance additional capacity in the office of the resident coordinator” (para 47). The fund will provide seed money for country teams that propose innovative initiatives, and develop strategies to promote further enhanced engagement with NGOs.

According to the Framework for Action developed by the UNDG Civil Society Working Group throughout 2006, the first phase of operations for the trust fund will be for the period 2007-2009. The framework provides guidelines for action and will be implemented by the UN System at country-level. The overall objective of this trust fund is to support the efforts of United Nations Country Teams (UNCT) to:

- Bring about and / or develop an enabling environment for civil society and other relevant local actors;
- Develop their organizational and institutional capacity;
- Strengthen their participation in policy development;
- Facilitate their involvement in the work of the United Nations.

The trust fund will invite proposals for funding from UNCTs. Funding will be provided for activities that aim at developing the capacity of civil society and deepening the United Nations' engagement with them in the pursuit of internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs, and contributing to poverty reduction. Funds will be catalytic in nature and in the form of seed support to strengthen existing programmes with CSOs.

The Working Group on Civil Society, chaired by UNDP as administrator of the trust fund, will guide the appropriate use of the fund.

Endnotes:

1. UNDP CSO Advisory Committee to the Administrator:
(www.undp.org/partners/cso).
 2. UNDP and Civil Society Organizations: *A Policy of Engagement*:
(www.undp.org/partners/cso/publications/UNDP%20CSO%20Policy.doc).
 3. *CSO Perspectives on Poverty Reduction Strategies: A Resource Sheet (2005)*:
(www.undp.org/partners/cso/publications/brochure.pdf).
 4. *Partners for Change: Experiences from UNDP's Work with CSOs through the GEF*:
(www.energyandenvironment.undp.org/undp/index.cfm?module=Library&page=Document&DocumentID=5501).
 5. GEF Small Grants Programme: (<http://sgp.undp.org>).
 6. Equator Initiative: (www.undp.org/equatorinitiative).
 7. Community Water Initiative: (www.undp.org/water/initiatives/initiative.html).
 8. [para 45]. *I have asked all resident coordinators to identify a qualified professional with relevant development experience to serve as a civil society focal point for the United Nations Development Group, who would coordinate civil society engagement by United Nations agencies in each country, with an additional dedicated staff member to be appointed to the office of the resident coordinator as soon as resources allow (proposals 11 and 25). Equally, resident coordinators will be asked to conduct orientation courses, where required, with a view to developing or enhancing partnerships with multiple constituencies (proposals 7 and 28).*
- [para 47] *I will establish a trust fund, inviting support from bilateral donors and foundations, to enhance the capacity of NGOs at the country level and to finance additional capacity in the office of the resident coordinator. A working group of the United Nations Development Group, chaired by UNDP as administrator of the fund, will guide the use of the fund (providing, for example, seed money for country teams that propose innovative initiatives) and develop strategies to promote further*

enhanced engagement with NGOs. The United Nations Development Group will work closely with the expanded Partnerships Office in the Secretariat, which should be a member of the aforementioned working group.

9. UNDG Civil Society Working Group: (www.undg.org/content.cfm?id=1268).

See also the UNDP webpage on civil society: (www.undp.org/partners/cso).

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United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

In 2006, as part of its efforts to engage Major Groups and Stakeholders in its work and in environmental policy formulation at large, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) organized a number of meetings and consultations to engage with civil society and major groups on policy issues in a number of different areas, ranging from the Trade Union Assembly on Labour and Environment, to discussions with the General Assembly President on UN reform and system-wide coherence, the 7th Global Civil Society Forum held in Dubai and the Civil Society Regional Consultation meetings held in preparation for the 8th Global Civil Society Forum.

Trade Union Assembly on Labour and Environment

UNEP's Labour & Environment Initiative aims at strengthening the role of international labour communities in areas related to environment in particular and sustainable development and poverty alleviation in general. The initiative also aims at promoting the active participation of workers and their trade unions in decisions on the design, implementation and evaluation of national and international policies and programmes on environment and development, including employment policies, industrial strategies, labour adjustment programmes and technology transfer.

UNEP held milestone consultations with the labour community during the Trade Union Assembly on Labour and the Environment: Workers Initiative for a Lasting Legacy (WILL 2006) held in Nairobi from 15-17 January 2006. The process of engagement was initiated in June 2005, in close consultation and collaboration with the workers and trade unions, in an attempt to build greater ownership of the engagement process into the trade union movement, whose extensive membership provides important channels through which the concepts and practices of environmental conservation and sustainable development can be supported.

UNEP hosted WILL 2006 with the support of the United Nations Global Compact and with the collaboration of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), the World Confederation of Labour (WCL), the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (TUAC), the International Labour Foundation for Sustainable Development (Sustainlabour) and the Varda Group.

Over 150 representatives of labour organizations, trade unions, governments, the private sector and UN bodies discussed the links between labour and the environment and ways to establish partnerships and framework agreements for joint environmental policy design and implementation. The Assembly adopted a resolution highlighting the commitment of workers towards integrating the environmental pillar of sustainable development into their work, and making the environment a focus of collective bargaining. Workers and trade unions called for further capacity building and training with a particular focus on (i) climate change mitigation and adaptation: adaptation measures and their impacts on employment and workers' health; and (ii) sound management of chemicals, including through evolving and newly adopted treaties or agreements, of industrial chemicals and of pesticides and enhancing the role of trade unions and workers in the implementation of the strategic approach for international chemicals management, the European Union REACH system and other programmes;

and revitalizing the UNEP-ILO-WHO memorandum of understanding on the safe use of chemicals.

WILL 2006 was followed by two regional conferences on labour and the environment in Latin America and the Caribbean and Africa, respectively held in April 2006 and July 2006.

Information on UNEP's Labour and the Environment Initiative is available online: (www.unep.org/labour).

Global Civil Society Forum (GCSF)

Since 2000, UNEP hosts an annual Global Civil Society Forum (GCSF), in conjunction with the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC/GMEF). This Forum is the main entry point for civil society participation at governance level. The Forum for the 7th session was held in Dubai from 5-6 February 2006, prior to the 9th Special Session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (Session/Forum). Over 110 participants from around 48 countries attended the 7th GCSF, with more than 30 organizations from the West Asian region.

Chemicals management, tourism and energy were key policy issues considered during ministerial consultations of the Session/Forum and were central subjects for the 7th GCSF and its associated regional consultation meetings. At its regional meetings held prior to the Session, the Forum prepared a joint statement on these policy issues (see section below).

Civil society representatives present in Dubai placed a strong emphasis on the importance of sound management of chemicals for women, youth and indigenous peoples, among other issues. The Forum agreed that sustainable tourism practices could and should be applied to all parts of the industry. Demand for sustainable tourism existed, but both industry players and consumers needed to be educated and supported in developing interest in what was currently a niche segment of the larger tourism industry. Streamlining sustainable tourism certification globally could aid consumers in making responsible travel choices and increase the effectiveness of the certification programmes. Governments could encourage sustainable tourism by establishing environmental standards and regulations; supporting certification programmes; providing incentives for sustainable tourism; and better integrating tourism into multilateral environmental agreements, including those concerned with climate change.

The Forum acknowledged that energy was key both to enhancing economic development and to facilitating social progress and environmental protection. Highlighting the fact that the demand for energy would grow by 60% by the year 2030, the Forum outlined future scenarios for the year 2030 and considered possible measures to deal with them, which included investment in new technologies; a multi-stakeholder approach to energy planning; and ways of meeting the needs of high-energy-consuming sectors, such as transport.

Further information on the 7th session of the Global Civil Society Forum is available online: (www.unep.org/civil_society/gcsf/indexGCSF7.asp).

Civil Society Regional Consultation meetings (RCM)

In 2006 UNEP organized six Civil Society Regional Consultation Meetings (RCM) in preparation for the 8th session of the Global Civil Society Forum (GCSF – 3-4 February 2007) and the 24th Session of its Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC/GMEF – 5-9 February 2007).

This year around 300 representatives met from October to November 2006 to discuss pressing environmental issues of relevance to their regions and to the global environmental agenda in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America and West Asia.

Each region drafted a policy statement that was compiled into one global civil society statement that puts forward a number of recommendations with respect to water, chemicals management, gender and the environment and globalization, ecosystem services and human wellbeing.

One of the main messages of civil society on globalization was that UNEP and the GMEF should strive to ensure that the key findings of the Millennium Assessment (MA) are effectively incorporated in all relevant development decision-making processes—particularly those of finance ministries and the business community as the Global Civil Society Committee stressed the importance of the MA conceptual framework to reach far beyond the environmental community and to engage all sectors of society to facilitate effective partnerships.

It was also stressed that UNEP should play a facilitating role in the development and ongoing improvement of ecosystem services assessment tools for quantifying ecosystem service dependence (and impacts) in business operations and public sector investments. They further recommended that UNEP should facilitate access to best practice and lessons learned such as in ecosystem valuation, the role of ecosystems in buffering natural disasters, or as a key foundation for development, in order to build awareness and promote integration of ecosystem service considerations into public and private sector decision making.

Information on the Regional Consultation Meetings held in 2006 is available online: (www.unep.org/civil_society/GCSF/regionalconsult.asp).

Joint meeting of civil society with the GA President and Members of the High Level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence

On 4 May 2006, UNEP organized a meeting in Nairobi that brought together the President of the 60th Session of the General Assembly, Jan Eliasson (Sweden), Ambassador Peter Maurer (Switzerland), Co-chair of the Institutional Framework for the United Nations System's Environmental Activities and Mohamed T. El-Ashry (Egypt), High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment with 22 representatives from civil society.

Ambassador Eliasson indicated that his work with the UN following the 2005 UN World Summit focused on three dimensions: security; development, including environmental issues; and human rights. He emphasized that none of the three elements could be achieved without the other and that initiatives taken at different levels (local, national,

regional and international) impact each other (e.g. environment, communicable diseases, etc).

Among the issues raised by civil society participants was the need for the international community to bring the human dimension back into the centre of its collective efforts. CSO representatives acknowledged that global civil society has an important role to play in reinforcing the UN and stressed the need to support the strengthening of UN bodies and programmes that are effectively engaging with CSOs (e.g. the GCSF of UNEP and the World Urban Forum of UN-HABITAT).

The issue of universal participation of non-governmental actors was also raised with participants noting that engagement with CSOs remains a key challenge. They called for the implementation of the recommendations of the Cardoso Report and suggested that these recommendations be taken into account in the context of UN reform.

Participants highlighted the two processes that have been initiated as a follow-up to the 2005 Millennium Summit: management reform and system-wide coherence. Key issues cited by civil society include:

1. How are the overlaps between the two processes being addressed?
2. What is there to ensure that there is effective implementation?
3. What would be the mechanism for engaging with CSOs on this current reform process and the system-wide coherence process?
4. How could the issue of environment be brought to the forefront in the current UN debate? How to elevate the environment in the international political agenda? What is the current definition of the environment within the UN?

Civil society hearings with the High-Level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the Areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and the Environment, Geneva

On 2 July 2006, a one-day consultation between NGOs and members of the High-Level Panel was held in Geneva. The consultation's main purpose was to provide an opportunity for NGOs with specific expertise on gender, human rights and sustainable development and Panel members to exchange views on opportunities and challenges of improving UN system-wide coherence in the context of UN reform. The consultation was held in two sessions over the course of one day and was attended by four Panel Members and from 60-70 NGO representatives. A report was published and submitted to all Panel Members.

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United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Participation of NGOs in the sessions of UNESCO's Governing Bodies

During 2006, non-governmental organizations participated in a number of UNESCO conferences, commissions and committees, ensuring coordination and collective cooperation with UNESCO, both at the policymaking and programme execution levels.

Committee on International NGOs of the Executive Board

The Executive Board, one of the three constitutional organs of UNESCO that examines the programme of work for the Organization and corresponding budget estimates, ensures the effective and rational execution of the programme by the Director-General. The Executive Board has several permanent subsidiary organs, among which the Committee on International NGOs.

Since April 2005 the Executive Board, and then the General Conference, decided to improve the methods of work of the Committee on International NGOs and extended to two full days the NGO Committee meeting to allow its members to deliberate on measures to help improve its methods of work with the ultimate aim of promoting the inputs of the NGO community to UNESCO's work.

From 40 to 60 NGOs participated in the debate of the two sessions of 2006.

During the Committee held from 30-31 March 2006, the Director-General acknowledged the significance of the partnership with NGOs for international organizations such as UNESCO to reach people at the grassroots level. He underlined the necessity to further strengthen UNESCO's cooperation with civil society.

Members of the Committee who took the floor emphasized support for the strategies to stimulate dialogue and enhance cooperation: namely to organize thematic roundtables on the involvement of NGOs in UNESCO's programme; to give further impetus to the involvement of youth in the work of NGOs; and to establish an Open Forum with members of the Committee, NGOs and guest speakers on "good practices." The majority of speakers expressed the need for better cooperation between the Secretariat and NGOs and the strengthening of the links between National Commissions and NGOs at the national level (see below).

During the Open Forum on Lessons Learned and Best Practices, participants, representing Member States, NGOs, secretariat staff and NGO focal points, actively exchanged views and experiences on the basis of their activities. Member States reiterated their support for the work of NGOs and were forthcoming in identifying ways and means of further strengthening cooperation. One member, while acknowledging the contribution of the NGOs to the implementation of programmes, advocated that civil society also contribute to the preparational stages of the Programme and Budget.

During the Committee of 28-29 September 2006, a Roundtable on Education for All (EFA) was organized. A panel of Member States' and NGO representatives presented

their perspectives on cooperation between UNESCO, governments and NGOs in the framework of the EFA partnership. The presentations highlighted the different roles NGOs play in this context, namely with regard to advocacy and lobbying, monitoring, policy dialogue, providing alternative services and developing innovative approaches. They also reflected critically on the participation of civil society in existing international EFA coordination mechanisms, as well as on the work of UNESCO's Collective consultation of NGOs on EFA (CCNGO/EFA). An open discussion followed. The outcome of the meeting was a broader understanding by members of the NGO Committee, participating NGOs and secretariat representatives, of existing mechanisms and modalities of cooperation, of their scope and efficiency as well as of their difficulties and limitations as they are experienced and expressed by the various partners. Many pertinent recommendations were made from NGO representatives, members of the secretariat and Member States.

An Open Forum on Youth was also organized during the two days. The Forum intended to give further impetus to the involvement of youth in the work of NGOs in official relations with UNESCO or participating in the organization's activities. This opportunity reaffirmed the importance of partnership in particular with youth NGOs and recalled the ever-increasing responsibility to consider young people as partners and protagonists of international cooperation in UNESCO's fields of competence. The Forum therefore strengthened the ties between UNESCO and young people. Recognizing the important role that youth NGOs play at the various levels (local, national, regional), Member States of the NGO Committee, Programme Sectors and youth NGOs themselves highlighted contributions of good practices and lessons learned in cooperation with young people thus encouraging their continued participation. Recommendations were also made from various partners.

Reports of those events can be found on UNESCO's website (www.unesco.org). The documents references are as follows: 174 EX/46, 175EX/51.

Strengthening cooperation with NGOs at the national level

The 192 UNESCO National Commissions are national cooperating bodies set up by the Member States for the purpose of associating with the work of the Organization their governmental and non-governmental bodies in the field of Education, Science, Culture, Communication and Information. National Commissions meet once every two years on a regional basis for a consultation on UNESCO's Programme and Budget and every four years in statutory meetings.

In terms of strengthening partnership with non-governmental organizations at the national level, special meetings on cooperation with NGOs were organized in the statutory regional Conference of National Commissions for UNESCO of the Africa Region (16-17 June 2006) in Angola and during the Consultation for the Latin American and the Caribbean region in Jamaica (3-6 July 2006).

The aim was to highlight the importance of tripartite cooperation between national commissions, field offices and civil society organizations and to present the existing statutory arrangements and mechanisms covering cooperation with international NGOs.

Participants were also briefed on examples of good practice and cooperation with NGOs at the field level.

Representatives of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee improved the National Commissions' knowledge of the NGO Community and highlighted the contribution of NGOs to major United Nations events and conferences. They underlined the involvement of NGOs in the Organization's programmes and explained the mechanisms for collective cooperation between UNESCO and NGOs. The importance of NGO-National Commission collaboration was stressed. Areas, modalities of cooperation and concrete proposals were suggested underlining the motivation of NGOs for such cooperation. Suggestions included reinforcement of the collaboration between National Commissions, national NGOs and national branches of international NGOs; and establishment of a mapping of national NGOs in all countries to facilitate the cooperation. The nature and capacity of national organizations should be taken into account in order to have successful collaboration.

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United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

Global Consultation between NGOs and UNFPA, 3 June 2006, New York

A global consultation between UNFPA and close to sixty NGOs, from developed and programme countries, was held on 3 June 2006 in New York.

The objective was to strengthen partnerships with NGOs in order to better promote implementation of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) related commitments contained in the World Summit Outcome and other international agreements, as well as to strategize for joint advocacy for forthcoming key events and relevant issues.

The morning session was dedicated to presentations and discussions on the implementation of the World Summit Outcome, centering on the vital role that NGOs can play in ensuring that nationally-led development processes adhere to international commitments. The issue of UN Reform was also addressed as a mechanism to improve the effectiveness of the UN at the country level.

In the afternoon, migration and HIV and AIDS were discussed with participants highlighting their multidimensional aspects and their impact on development. Again, the essential role of NGOs, both at national and international levels, to adequately advocate for and advance progress on these issues, was highlighted.

The meeting was interactive and constructive and identified many challenges and opportunities for NGOs and UNFPA. The consultation resulted in recommendations on how to strengthen partnerships, through capacity building and the sharing of information, tools and resources, among others. Participants urged UNFPA to continue in their efforts to ensure that NGO voices are heard at the UN by supporting their participation in hearings with the General Assembly and other relevant initiatives.

Youth Summit

From 29-30 May 2006, UNFPA supported a Youth Summit, organized by Advocates for Youth (AFY) and the Global Youth Coalition on HIV/AIDS (GYCA). For two days before the General Assembly's 2006 High-Level Meeting on AIDS, 68 young people met at UNFPA and prepared their participation and inputs to the meeting. The Summit, facilitated by youth organizations and UNFPA, provided training on communication skills and discussed strategies of how to highlight young people's issues throughout the High-Level Meeting. Furthermore, UNFPA supported AFY and GYCA in their advocacy efforts to ensure that young people's issues remained high on the agenda of the High-Level Meeting and were highlighted in the resulting Political Declaration.

Two youth caucuses took place during the High-Level Meeting, with the first offering youth leaders the possibility to come together and exchange ideas with Mrs. Nane Annan, the wife of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. The second caucus took place at UNFPA offices to review the High-Level Meeting and to discuss how the output could be taken back to the country level. It also sought to coordinate the preparation of youth participants at the XVI International AIDS Conference (IAC 2006), held in Toronto in August 2006.

2006 International Parliamentarians' Conference on the Implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action

The Third International Parliamentarians' Conference on the Implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action (IPCI/ICPD) was held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 21-22 November 2006. The event was organized by the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD) and UNFPA.

The conference took stock of the progress made by parliamentarians since the 1994 Cairo International Conference on Population and Development. It also agreed on a common strategy towards meeting the 2015 deadline set for achieving the ICPD goals and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The conference also produced a forward-looking declaration, the Bangkok Statement of Commitment, which builds on the Ottawa and Strasbourg Statements of Commitment (adopted in 2002 and 2004 respectively) and provides a clear sense of direction for the next ten years.

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United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)

Almost all programmes of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) have mainstreamed their partnerships with civil society organizations and have substantive cooperation with major civil society networks at the global level as well as with national NGOs and community-based organizations at the local level.

Third Session of the World Urban Forum

The Third Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF III), jointly organized by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) and the Government of Canada, was held in Vancouver from 19-23 June. It brought together almost 10,000 participants from over 100 countries representing governments, UN agencies, civil society, urban professionals, local authorities, the private sector and others to examine rapid urbanization and its impact on communities, cities, economies and policies.

Working under the theme “Sustainable Cities—Turning Ideas into Action,” the Forum included dialogues and special sessions, 13 roundtables and over 160 networking events that explored issues surrounding sustainable urban development. WUF III also marked the 30th anniversary of the first UN Conference on Human Settlements.

A dialogue on “Public Engagement: The Inclusive Approach,” held on 20 June, allowed participants to further reflect and exchange knowledge and experience on the policy and operational implications of public engagement through an inclusive approach, and to look at emerging initiatives, such as decentralization and the strengthening of local authorities, legal instruments and social pacts; pro-poor policy interventions, as well as innovative tools for participatory practices.

The NGO roundtable, “Assets and Struggles: 30 Years After Vancouver Habitat Forum—Realizing the Right to Adequate Housing, Sustainable Habitat and Inclusive Cities,” was organized in collaboration with the Habitat International Coalition (HIC). The roundtable focused on producing recommendations to UN-HABITAT around several themes. On forced eviction, participants noted the importance of NGO work in supporting community-based initiatives to strengthen monitoring and increase security of land tenure, solidarity and local action. On privatization, participants pointed out that market forces were currently part of the problem and not the solution. Some participants suggested that WUF discussions had yet to adequately address the protection of the rights of displaced people, and that civil society should demand good governance with respect to this. On involving local people in all aspects of post-disaster reconstruction, participants urged government accountability in the financing of disaster relief.

The Third World Urban Forum concluded with a call for strengthening partnerships for urban development, as well as with a growing recognition of the need to address the underlying causes of urbanization in order to achieve the vision of sustainable human settlements for all.

World Youth Forum

UN-HABITAT collaborated with the Environmental Youth Alliance to organize a World Youth Forum that took place two days prior to WUF III from 16-18 June 2006. The Youth Forum brought together hundreds of youth and their leaders from around

the world to share best practices around youth-led projects and programmes. It provided a chance for young people to meet, share perspectives, showcase their projects, build networks and prepare for their participation in WUF III. The Youth Forum was attended by about 400 youth from over 40 countries.

Legal Empowerment of the Poor in Kenya

In October 2006, a workshop of stakeholders on the legal empowerment of the poor in Kenya was held. The meeting was in preparation for the Kenya Meeting of the Commission for the Legal Empowerment of the Poor that was held later in November 2006 and organized by UNDP, UNEP and UN-HABITAT.

A number of Agreements of Cooperation were signed with youth organizations during the reporting period in order to identify and strengthen areas of cooperation. This was in the context of the Global Partnership Initiative for Urban Youth Development in Africa (GPI). Youth organizations include: Youth Build, Environmental Youth Alliance, Glocal Forum, BURO in Oslo and Computer Aid International.

The GPI, an initiative of UN-HABITAT in cooperation with selected cities in Africa and others around the world, was initiated with the aim of learning from best practices regarding how to address the diversity of challenges facing youth in urban communities. This partnership acknowledges the need to meaningfully involve and engage young people at the city level in creating solutions to the issues they face, and creating enabling environments for them to take action.

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United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

UNHCR Annual Consultations with Non-Governmental Organizations, 27-29 September 2006, Geneva

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) held its Annual Consultations with Non-Governmental Organizations from 27-29 September in Geneva, marking the 30th anniversary of the establishment of UNHCR's NGO Liaison Unit. The 2006 Consultations brought together 329 participants to focus on four main themes: Durable Solutions; the Asylum/Migration Nexus; the UN Reform (including the role of UNHCR for Internally Displaced People (IDPs)¹; and Executive Committee (ExCom) Conclusions² on statelessness and women and girls at risk. The Annual Consultations provide a forum for NGOs to raise issues, network, and exchange views with UNHCR.

The Consultations were broken down into opening and closing plenary sessions, regional sessions, and roundtable sessions on topics such as the new cluster approach in situations of internal displacement, the challenges of returns, collaboration in addressing gender issues, and children's protection in humanitarian reform, among several others. All sessions were based on a moderated, roundtable format to avoid formality and encourage greater exchange of ideas among participants. During the opening session, Nicholas Van Praag, Division of External Affairs, UNHCR, pointed to the need to strengthen NGO partnerships in the field, for increasing joint advocacy efforts, and two-way communication and dialogue. UNHCR's Assistant High Commissioner for Operations, Judy Cheng-Hopkins, welcomed the rich and varied experience that NGOs bring to the Consultations, which is necessary to strategize to better delivering protection and finding solutions for refugees and others forcibly displaced.

During asylum/migration nexus discussions, the issue of irregular migration was seen as an increasing global phenomenon. It was pointed out that migration flows are mixed with refugees and migrants and the situation is becoming more complicated because of increasing government restrictions on borders as States are implementing border control responses rather than safeguarding refugee protection. A number of NGOs spoke on the negative branding of migrants, in many cases as "terrorists," and how the public is not exposed to the migration debate in political arenas. Often a "migration scare" is used to polarize the electorate and nourish misconceptions about asylum seekers and migrants. Poverty, debt, conflict and unfair sharing of resources were listed as some of the key causes of migration. In the NGO submission to ExCom's general debate, NGOs expressed their concern over the erosion of protection and adequate access to asylum and noted a disturbing trend among a wide range of States to block UNHCR and NGOs access to sites where refugees and asylum seekers might be located to prevent them from identifying people of concern and coming to their aid.

In discussions on UN reform and the new cluster approach in IDP situations, several participants noted that relations between UN and NGO partners were a key element of the approach and that better leadership, collaboration and coordination mechanisms were needed. As the cluster approach is so recent, participants said it was too early to judge the validity of the process. A number of NGOs cited the lack of consultation between NGOs and the agencies on the ground and a lack of coordination between the cluster themes, as well as the lack of common understanding on the cluster concept and the role of cluster leaders. It was also stressed that national NGOs needed to be on

board as equal partners, particularly in decision making and planning. NGO capacity building and accountability were also highlighted as important issues, particularly in light of humanitarian reform efforts, and cultural awareness was seen as critical.

On durable solutions, the thematic session on return focused on a number of challenges in the repatriation of refugees and return of IDPs, including protracted situations that require concerted political action; preserving access to resettlement; and UNHCR's obligation to retain a physical and operational presence in areas of return. On the issue of repatriation, participants stressed the need for more of a focus on peacebuilding, early recovery, and reconstruction of infrastructure and on assisting the returning populations to rebuild livelihood opportunities.

During the discussions on ExCom Conclusions, NGOs explored how they could take a pro-active role in ensuring that the Conclusions are implemented and that they are operational. One Conclusion focused on the issue of statelessness, with an estimated 11 million stateless people spread throughout the world, many of them in protracted situations. During the discussions, NGOs stressed the need to identify stateless populations and to assist States to better identify and profile stateless persons, which would require precise data recording. Some NGOs called for the need for systematic birth recording—noting that combined efforts of UNHCR and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) were necessary—as well as the need to review and amend as necessary national legislation on citizenship at birth. They called for collaboration between governments, international and national NGOs, UNHCR and other UN agencies. Other issues raised in connection with statelessness were the linkages between globalization, insecurity, ethnic consciousness and human trafficking.

The session on women and girls at risk emphasized the continuing rape, sexual abuse and exploitation of displaced women and girls. Participants stressed the need to dispel a number of myths surrounding gender based violence through staff training and by programmes which encourage better communication between service-providers and refugee women. Participants also said that it was essential to end impunity for perpetrators and women and girls should be involved in the design and provision of services for women and girls at risk. The importance of community involvement was stressed and the need for closer and more effective partnerships between UNHCR, NGOs and refugee communities.

More information on the Annual Consultations is available online: (www.unhcr.org/ngo-consultations) and (www.unhcr.org/ngo-consultations/ngo_report_to_excom_oct06.pdf).

Endnotes:

1. In December 2005 the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) endorsed a “cluster”-based mechanism to address gaps in the humanitarian response to internally displaced people (IDP) and refugee situations. In September 2005 the IASC Principals assigned global sectoral responsibilities to UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies. UNHCR is the designated “cluster” lead in three areas of conflict-induced displacement: emergency shelter, camp coordination and management, and protection. Each cluster lead has accepted to be the agency of ‘first port of call’ and ‘provider of last resort’ within this sector/cluster. The cluster leads are to support UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators in ensuring a coordinated response. The new arrangements, which came into force on 1 January 2006, are designed to provide predictability and accountability for

the collaborative response to IDPs. The new arrangements are being piloted as of mid-2006 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Uganda, Liberia and Somalia. It is estimated that nearly 4 million IDPs, out of an estimated global total of 24 million, are to be found in the four “pilot” countries. The cluster approach is also being used in Lebanon and Côte d’Ivoire

The IASC, the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination of humanitarian assistance, is a unique forum involving the key UN and non-UN humanitarian partners. It was established in June 1992 in response to United Nations General Assembly Resolution 46/182 on the strengthening of humanitarian assistance.

2. Following an Executive Committee (ExCom) decision in 2004, NGOs have been able to contribute to UNHCR’s ExCom Conclusions’ process through written comments via the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) and through a preliminary meeting held prior to the first drafting meeting of each Conclusion. Conclusions focus on areas that require further guidance in the refugee protection framework and can be used as the basis for improving the work of UNHCR, States, and NGOs. By bringing in field-based NGO experiences into the process, it is hoped that the Conclusions can be made more coherent and relevant to the realities on the ground. For the 2006 Annual Consultations, a number of “Informal Consultative Meetings” (ICMs) were held, allowing for discussions on the topics of the Conclusions before the actual drafting began.

Additional Resources:

State of the World’s Refugees: Human Displacement in the New Millennium: (www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/template?page=publ&src=static/sowr2006/toceng.htm).

Nationality and Statelessness: A Handbook for Parliamentarians: (www.unhcr.org/protect/PROTECTION/436774c62.pdf).

NGO Partnerships in Refugee Protection: (www.unhcr.org/partners/PARTNERS/41c162d04.pdf).

Operational Protection in Camps and Settlements: A Reference Guide of Good Practices in the Protection of Refugees and Other Persons of Concern: (www.unhcr.org/publ/PUBL/448d6c122.pdf).

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The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

UNICEF Civil Society Partnership Review (CSPR)

The United Nations Children's Fund's strategic commitment to partnerships with civil society organizations (CSOs), expressed most recently in its Medium Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) 2006-2009, is set against a complex backdrop of evolving alliances between donors, UN agencies, CSOs, governments and the private sector. As a first step to understanding and improving its CSO partnerships in this changing environment, UNICEF commissioned external consultants in April 2006 to review its performance in partnerships with CSOs, as seen by partners themselves.

The Civil Society Partnership Review (CSPR) asked, "How well is UNICEF performing as a partner organization against principles and standards of good practice in partnership, as perceived by its civil society partners?" Conducted by two external consultants, and coordinated by Office of Public Partnership and Evaluation Office, the following methods were used to answer this question:

- Country-based analyses of UNICEF-CSO partnerships in Egypt, Liberia, the Philippines and Zimbabwe, providing a range of geopolitical and MTSP focus area perspectives.
- A global survey of CSO experiences and attitudes related to working with UNICEF, available online and in Word format in Arabic, English, French and Spanish.
- Reviews of previous UNICEF-CSO partnership analyses, those of other international agencies and foundations, and literature on civil society and partnership best-practice.
- Key informant interviews on partnership policy and practice, including the "state of play" of UNICEF-CSO partnerships in the MTSP focus areas.

Quality assurance steps were taken to assure validity, acceptability and generalizability of the review data and analysis, including measures for respondent confidentiality.

The review revealed general agreement among CSOs with the definition of partnership proposed by the UN Secretary-General: "Partnerships are voluntary and collaborative relationships in which all parties agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task and to share risks, responsibilities, resources, competencies and benefits."¹

CSOs saw the goal of UNICEF-CSO partnerships as the realization of children's rights, with the Convention on the Rights of the Child providing the most important framework for partnerships.

Participants in the review felt that partnerships must have legitimacy with the communities they are intended to benefit; build on ongoing civil society activity; promote community capacity and social capital; and be assessed against outcomes defined by users.

CSOs endorsed three mutually contingent sets of “partnership principles” proposed by UNICEF: **Core principles:** shared values, trust, transparency and risk-taking; **Operational principles:** mutual accountability and attribution of credit, and joint monitoring; and **Management principles:** consistency, commitment to standards and constancy of involvement. The Review suggested that more needs to be done to ensure these partnership principles are applied in practice, and not just assented to.

The Review highlighted areas of CSO capacity development that UNICEF should improve, proposed new dynamics in partnership building, and documented a range of CSO perceptions of UNICEF as a partner. The review also provided a series of recommendations that UNICEF is currently reviewing. The summary report will be available early 2007.

Social Protection for Children, Women and Families: An Analysis of Recent Experiences

On 30-31 October 2006, UNICEF and the Graduate Program in International Affairs (GPIA) at The New School (New York) jointly hosted an international conference on “Social Protection for Children, Women and Families: An Analysis of Recent Experiences.” The conference was the third in a series jointly organized by UNICEF and the GPIA, and is part of UNICEF’s commitment to policy, advocacy and partnerships that convene international experts in pursuit of results for children.

Following an international call for papers, 20 papers by leading scholars and practitioners were selected for presentation at the conference, including six from UNICEF. At the conference, authors presented their analytical and policy papers on issues and trends related to social protection and/or assistance programmes according to three broad themes: programmes, policies and evidence.

See also: (www.unicef.org/policyanalysis/index_36230.html).

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United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

UNIFEM Civil Society Engagement

The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), which commemorated its 30th anniversary in 2006, focuses its activities on four strategic areas: (i) reducing feminized poverty, (ii) ending violence against women, (iii) reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS among women and girls, and (iv) achieving gender equality in democratic governance in times of peace as well as war.

In pursuit of these goals, UNIFEM supports and works with civil society organizations that are making the linkages between gender equality, women's rights and sustainable development. UNIFEM works alongside women on the ground, partnering with civil society and women's organizations at multiple levels—national, regional and international levels, and supporting them to confront development challenges in innovative and effective ways. UNIFEM also helps make the voices of women heard at the United Nations—to highlight critical issues and advocate for the implementation of existing commitments made to women. In this context, UNIFEM constantly partners with governments and national institutions to formulate and implement laws and policies to eliminate gender discrimination and promote gender equality in such areas as national budgets, land and inheritance rights, decent work for women and ending violence against women.

By working at different levels as a facilitator, a catalyst and an advocate, UNIFEM aims to transform institutions to make them more accountable to gender equality and women's rights, to strengthen the capacity of women's rights advocates, to expand policy spaces to amplify the voices of women's rights advocates and promote women's participation in development processes, and to change harmful and discriminatory practices in society.

Governance, Peace and Security- UN Security Council Resolution 1325

UNIFEM works closely with women's organizations and civil society groups promoting the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325, adopted in October 2000. UNIFEM programming on peace and security supports women's groups at the national, regional and global levels. At the national level UNIFEM works with a number of women's organizations working on peacebuilding and conflict prevention. For example, recently UNIFEM helped to convene women's groups in Burundi to ensure that they can effectively contribute to the work of the Peacebuilding Commission on Burundi. UNIFEM's comparative advantage is the trust in which it is held by women's organizations the world over, its convening power, and therefore its capacity to be a "good offices" broker in mediating between different women's groups to enable them to coalesce around common interests in the immediate post-conflict period. Beyond this, UNIFEM's financial and technical support has been effective over the years in building the capacity of women's organizations to recover from conflict and advocate effectively for participation in conflict mitigation, peace negotiations, and post-conflict public decision making. For example, in October 2006, UNIFEM supported the participation of four civil society representatives from conflict affected countries (Burundi, Timor-Leste, and Liberia) in the Security Council open debate on the role of women in peace consolidation. UNIFEM also supports the work of the NGO Working Group on

Women Peace and Security, which is a coalition of ten non-governmental organizations dedicated to resolution 1325 implementation.

Regional Conference on Aid Effectiveness and Gender Equality in Africa

UNIFEM, in collaboration with the Government of Burundi, hosted a Regional Conference on Aid Effectiveness and Gender Equality in Africa, on 12-14 July 2006, in Bujumbura, Burundi. The conference was an opportunity to strengthen the dialogue between civil society organizations, especially women's organizations, governments and donor institutions. The conference aimed to facilitate and strengthen advocacy on gender equality and women's empowerment in new aid modalities and development cooperation; identify strategies to support African governments' efforts to formulate gender-sensitive poverty eradication and development processes; support mechanisms for developing gender responsive indicators and tracking aid flows towards gender equality; and strengthen gender advocates' capacities to effectively participate in the high-level 2008 Ghana meeting on Financing for Development. Close to 100 representatives from the governments of Burundi, Ghana, Senegal, Central African Republic, Cameroon, Republic of Congo, Mozambique, and Kenya participated. Other participants included and representatives from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the Diplomatic corps, regional and inter-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, UN agencies, and staff from each UNIFEM regional office in Africa.

16 Days Campaign of Activism on Violence Against Women

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence is an international campaign originating from the first Women's Global Leadership Institute in 1991. Participants chose the dates, 25 November, International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and 10 December, International Human Rights Day, in order to symbolically link violence against women and human rights and to emphasize that such violence is a violation of human rights. The 16 Days Campaign has been adopted as an organizing strategy by individuals and groups around the world to call for the elimination of all forms of violence against women.

The theme of the 2006 16 Days Campaign was "Advance Human Rights—End Violence Against Women." UNIFEM worked closely with a number of NGOs and UN agencies (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the Inter-American Commission of Women of the Organization of American States (IACW/OAS), and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW)) to develop materials for the campaign. The NGOs included: Calandria, Perú; Centro de Estudios de la Mujer (CEM), Argentina; Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL); Comunicación e Información de la Mujer (CIMAC); Fondo para Prevenir la Violencia Familiar (FVPF); INTERCAMBIOS; Isis International; Population Communications International (PCI) and Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA). NGOs were also involved in the production of a radio spot and a public service announcement for television, in disseminating information to other NGOs, universities, the media and local governments, and in organizing events during the duration of the campaign. The information kit, which was produced in collaboration with UN agencies and NGOs includes information on progress to date, international and regional instruments, feminicides and what can be

done to end this violence, is available on the Isis International website: (www.isis.cl). Copies of the information kit are available in English and Spanish from UNIFEM: (+1-212/906 6891).

UN Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence Against Women

Under the guidance of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 50/166, the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence Against Women, VAW was established in 1996, with UNIFEM as the Fund's Administrator. The Fund became operational in 1997. The resolution positioned the Trust Fund as a key mechanism to advance actions to address violence against women as set out in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Since 1998, UNIFEM as the Trust Fund Manager has raised US\$14.5 million to support 198 innovative and catalytic initiatives in 100 developing countries that are chosen through a competitive process. This includes (approximately) US\$2.6 million to the Africa region; US\$2.8 million to Latin America and the Caribbean; US\$2.6 million to Asia-Pacific and Arab States; and US\$1.7 million to Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS).

Since it began operations in 1997, the Trust Fund has provided more than US\$10 million to 198 innovative programmes to address violence against women in 100 countries. Raising awareness of women's human rights, these UNIFEM-supported efforts have:

- Linked activists and advocates from all parts of the world;
- Shown how small, innovative projects impact laws, policies and attitudes; and
- Helped break the wall of silence, moving the issue onto public agendas everywhere.

With grants ranging from US\$25,000-US\$125,000, trust fund projects conduct public education and awareness campaigns, build coalitions, involve law-enforcement, judicial and government agencies, train educators, healthcare personnel and police officials to respond to and prevent violence. Many projects strive to alter community attitudes and involve men as allies.

Trust Fund grantees support innovative initiatives that aim to break new ground, create new models and mobilize new constituencies in the growing movement to eliminate violence against women in all of its manifestations. The Trust Fund generates lessons and good practices that inform larger programmes of the United Nations and its civil society and governmental partners at the national, regional and global levels.

Campaign to Ratify the CEDAW Optional Protocol in the Arab States, without Reservations

Representatives of women's rights and human rights organizations from all over North Africa and the Middle East, including the Gulf States and Turkey, gathered in Rabat (Morocco) from 8-10 June 2006 to strategize for the launch of a regional campaign entitled "Equality without Reservations." The campaign calls for the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) Optional Protocol and for the harmonization of national legislation with the CEDAW Convention through the removal of reservations.

Organized by the Democratic Association of Moroccan Women (ADFM) in collaboration with the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and with the support of the Embassy of the Netherlands and UNIFEM's Morocco Country Programme, the conference marked an important step towards broadening regional cooperation and building strategic alliances, not only among women's organizations, but also human rights organizations.

An oversight committee, consisting of representatives from North Africa, the Middle East and Turkey, has been set up to ensure coordination of national activities. UNIFEM's Morocco Country Programme will provide support to the North Africa component of the campaign in the context of its existing governance and human rights programmes.

Additional Resources:

Security Council Resolution 1325: (www.un.org/Docs/scres/2000/sc2000.htm). See also the UNIFEM Portal on Women, Peace & Security: (www.womenwarpeace.org) and the UNIFEM webpage on Governance, Peace & Security (www.unifem.org/gender_issues/governance_peace_security).

NGO Working Group on Women Peace and Security:
(www.peacewomen.org/un/ngo/wg.html).

Promoting Gender Equality in New Aid Modalities and Partnerships: Experiences from Africa:
(www.unifem.org/resources/item_detail.php?ProductID=80).

16 Days Campaign of Activism on Violence Against Women:
(www.unifem.org/campaigns/november25/index.php).

UNIFEM Announces Grants for 28 Initiatives in 20 Countries to End Violence against Women: (www.unifem.org/news_events/story_detail.php?StoryID=544).

United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence Against Women: (www.unifem.org/gender_issues/violence_against_women/trust_fund.php).

Campaign to Ratify the CEDAW Optional Protocol in the Arab States, without Reservations:
(www.unifem.org/news_events/story_detail.php?StoryID=531).

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United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)

The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) was established by the United Nations General Assembly with the purpose of “enhancing the effectiveness of the United Nations in achieving the major objectives of the Organization,... in particular the maintenance of peace and security and the promotion of economic and social development,” through training and research. To meet this aim, UNITAR provides training and capacity-building programmes to assist countries in meeting the challenges of the 21st century; conducts research to explore innovative training and capacity-building approaches; and forms partnerships with other UN agencies, governments, non-governmental organizations, enterprises and the academia, for the development and implementation of training and capacity-building programmes that meet countries’ needs.

A number of UNITAR’s meetings and workshops go beyond the purpose of simple training activities due to the level of competence and responsibility of the participants. These workshops and conferences bring together key actors from governments, the UN System, academia, and the NGO community to discuss particular topics or themes which merit a systematic exchange of experiences and lessons learned.

Interactions with the NGO Community

In 2006, UNITAR hosted more than 30 training events. For the vast majority of these, NGOs were invited and participated. At eight such events, NGOs also presented their findings, discussed their area of expertise and/or commented on other speakers’ presentations. Below is a summary of these eight events in which NGOs collaborated:

On 15 March 2006, UNITAR, in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) hosted a workshop on “Labour migration.” During this workshop, William Gois, Regional Coordinator of the Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA) spoke on “The protection of migrant rights” and Genevieve Gencianos, representing Public Services International (PSI), a global federation of public sector trade unions, gave a presentation on “GATS Mode 4.”

On 11 May 2006, during a workshop on “Contributions of diasporas” organized by UNITAR together with UNFPA and IOM, several NGO representatives made presentations. Vincent Adams, Chairman of the Linden Fund USA, Carlo Dade from the Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL) and Charles Nkuah, Vice-President of the Diaspora Initiative Ghanacoop elucidated participants on “Engaging diasporas: policies and best practices.” James Ross, Senior Legal Adviser at Human Rights Watch (HRW) provided insights on “Diaspora contributions in conflict and post-conflict situations” and Ainalem Tebeje, vice-president of the Association for Higher Education and Development (AHEAD), an Ethiopian diaspora organization in Canada, participated in the panel discussion: “A measurable impact on development.”

On 27 June 2006, UNITAR, UNFPA and IOM hosted a workshop on “Migration and human rights” during which Mary Robinson, President of Realizing Rights: The Ethical Globalization Initiative, made a presentation on “From State control to shared

responsibility: international migration and human rights.”

On 30 August 2006, several NGO representatives contributed as speakers to the workshop on “Irregular migration” organized by UNITAR jointly with UNFPA, IOM and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Donald Kerwin, Executive Director of the Catholic Legal Immigration Network Inc., Don Flynn, Chair of the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants and Carolyn de Leon-Hermogenes, Director of the Women Workers Project of the Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence (CAAHV), provided their perspectives on “Living undocumented: the status of irregular migrants.”

On 25-26 April 2006, UNITAR and the United Nations University (UNU) in cooperation with the Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR) held a seminar entitled “Disaster management: building resilience” during which Michael Schulz, Deputy Permanent Observer, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and Tammie Willcuts, Deputy Director for Emergency Operations, Save the Children provided insights on “Disaster response: humanitarian coordination.”

On 2 November 2006, Tim Murithi, Senior Researcher at the Centre for Conflict Resolution of the University of Cape Town, elaborated on “The Peacebuilding Commission: A civil society perspective” during a lunchtime briefing on “Operationalizing the UN Peacebuilding Commission.”

On 18 and 19 December 2006, UNITAR in collaboration with UNU held a seminar on “The role and functions of the United Nations Secretary-General.” James Paul, Executive Director, the Global Policy Forum, gave a presentation on the relationship between the United Nations Secretary-General and civil society.

From 29 to 31 August 2006, UNITAR hosted a Symposium on “Formulating ICT strategies” in collaboration with the Intel Corporation. In the course of the event, “Open Source Diva,” Danese Cooper, OSI (Open Source Initiative)/Intel and Richard Stallman, President, FSF (Free Software Foundation) provided participants with an “Introduction to FOSS” and Dapo Ladimeji, Treasurer, Free Open Source Software for Africa (FOSSFA) participated in the roundtable “FOSS—An information society paradigm?”

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United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) acknowledges that the active involvement of civil society in countering the global drug abuse and crime problem is essential, and encourages the participation of NGOs in its full range of activities at the international, regional and national levels. Specialized NGOs assist UNODC in executing projects in all parts of the world and are especially involved in drug and crime prevention, drug treatment, alternative development programmes in countries where illicit drug crops are cultivated, criminal justice reform and victim protection.

NGOs have assisted UNODC in a number of ways, ranging from the formulation, planning, coordination and execution of technical assistance projects and proposals; the organization of expert group meetings, conferences and training seminars; and their involvement in preparing, translating and producing manuals, training material and other publications. Advocacy activities and projects for the annual celebration of the International Day against Drug Abuse (26 June) and the International Anti-Corruption Day (9 December) also require close collaboration between NGOs and UNODC.

NGO Forum at the Commission on Narcotic Drugs

During the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, held from 13-17 March 2006 in Vienna, an NGO Forum was held on 15 March. The Forum brought together almost 100 participants, including representatives from governments, international organizations, civil society and the media. The purpose of the annual Forum, organized by the Vienna NGO Committee on Narcotic Drugs (VNGOC), is to contribute to the thematic debate of the Commission and to provide an NGO platform to make comments and recommendations. This year's thematic debate was held on "Alternative development as an important drug control strategy and establishing alternative development as a cross cutting issue." Among the key speakers, Dionisio Nuniez, a representative of the coca farmers, presented a Bolivian coca farmer's perspective, advocating a larger production of coca leaf, a natural product consumed by the indigenous population of the country.

More information on the Vienna Non-Governmental Organization Committee is available online: (www.vngoc.org).

NGO Exhibition of Prisoners' Paintings

To mark the 15th session of the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (24-28 April 2006), over 120 paintings from prisoners around the world were exhibited in the rotunda of the Vienna International Centre.

The paintings were selected from submissions to an international competition entitled "Discover the face of life" organized by the International Commission for Catholic Prison Pastoral Care (ICPPC), a non-governmental organization which works closely with UNODC. The first prize went to a grandmother from Ecuador, and support from a number of private and public organizations, including the Austrian Ministry of Justice, enabled each winning artist to receive a grant. NGOs such as ICCPPC (www.iccppc.org), which is active in 105 countries, are key partners for UNODC.

NGO Panel Discussion during the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

NGO participation¹ in the third session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (9-18 October 2006) increased by 50% compared to previous sessions. During the conference, Member States considered the implementation of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons.

UNODC, acting also as Secretariat to this conference, facilitated an NGO panel discussion entitled “Protection of Trafficked Persons: a Human Rights Approach,” which took place on 11 October 2006 and was attended by over 200 participants.

Bandana Pattanaik from the Global Alliance against Traffic in Women chaired a panel discussion on protection of trafficked persons. Other panellists included Helga Konrad, an international consultant on anti-trafficking, Klara Skrivankova of Anti-Slavery International, an international organization based in London, and Marieke van Doorninck, from La Strada International, a European anti-trafficking network based in the Netherlands.

Participants said that although governments have taken many steps to combat trafficking, in practice trafficked persons are still not receiving adequate protection in most countries. Some of the reasons presented were:

- Services are designed only for victims of trafficking into sexual exploitation and are not available to those trafficked into other industries such as agriculture, domestic work or manufacturing.
- Identification of trafficked persons needs to be taken much more seriously – current methods are only scratching the surface of the problem.
- More integrated service delivery needs to be offered. In particular, States should work more cooperatively with NGOs, which can often provide services more cheaply and effectively than governments.
- States are using the anti-trafficking framework for other purposes, for example an anti-immigration agenda or a national security agenda. Exploitation, not illegal migration, is at the core of trafficking.
- Services should not be provided on a discriminatory basis but to all peoples who suffer a human rights violation.
- Finally, States must take the issue of internal trafficking seriously.

The panel emphasized that a human rights approach must be based on the protection of the rights of all people and the following recommendations were put forward at the meeting:

- The establishment of a shadow reporting process.
- Victims should be considered like the victims of any serious crime and should be provided with comprehensive services and access to compensation.
- All trafficked persons should be provided with a temporary visa in destination countries for a specified period.

- All States, and especially countries of destination, must, as a matter of priority, sign and ratify the Convention on the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families as labour migration is at the core of the trafficking process.

Further information on the meeting is available online:

(www.unodc.org/unodc/en/ngos_and_civil_society/trafficking_panel_Oct06.html).

United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC)

Over 100 representatives from non-governmental organizations and the private sector participated as active observers in the first Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) that took place from 10-14 December 2006 at the Dead Sea (Jordan). On 11 December 2006, UNODC co-organized with the Coalition of the Civil Society Friends of UNCAC (a group of over 45 organizations representing NGOs and other civil society organization from all over the world), the International Chamber of Commerce, the World Economic Forum and the Global Compact, a Civil Society and Private Sector Forum that was also attended by other delegates from international organizations and government representatives participating in the Conference. The side event consisted of two main sessions which looked at priority issues from civil society and private sector perspectives and anti-corruption initiatives of both civil society and the private sector. Then the two groups met separately to draft the statements that were delivered at the Conference on the same day.

The civil society statement noted the crucial role civil society plays in tackling the root causes and consequences of global corruption and in promoting transparency and accountability. It covered a number of issues, including access to information, protection of whistleblowers, monitoring, asset recovery, and technical assistance.

The civil society statement is available online:

(www.unodc.org/pdf/CAC_CivSocStatement_Final.pdf).

See also the new UNODC magazine, *Perspectives*, that covers the broad issues of drugs, crime and terrorism from a number of angles and ensures that voices from all over the world are heard. Available online: (www.unodc.org/newsletter/index.html).

Endnotes:

1. NGOs, including those without ECOSOC status, can participate as observers in Conferences of the Parties to the UN Conventions against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols and the UN Convention against Corruption, if their interest is expressed at least 30 days in advance, as required by Rule 17 of the Procedures.

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World Food Programme (WFP)

The World Food Programme's (WFP) Eleventh Annual Consultation with NGO Partners

WFP held its eleventh annual consultation with non-governmental organization (NGO) partners on 11-13 October 2006 at WFP Headquarters in Rome. The meeting gathered 35 participants and five observers from 22 of WFP's major NGO partners, three NGO networks and four observing institutions. The theme of the consultation was "Partnerships in food aid interventions in the 21st century." Presentations and discussions covered cost sharing, operational highlights, work in Sudan, WFP targeting, humanitarian reform, local/regional procurement, future levels of food assistance, cash interventions and sexual exploitation and abuse in the context of protection issues. The event was co-chaired by WFP and NGO representatives.

Consultations on the Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative (ECHUI)

WFP held two consultations with non-governmental organizations on the Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative, one in Washington on 30 August 2006 and another one in Rome on 9 October 2006. The objective of the meeting was to share and discuss the "Global Framework for Actions" that has been developed for the Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative (ECHUI), as a first step towards strengthening the partnerships necessary to impact dramatically on child hunger and undernutrition within the next generation. The Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative is a global partnership for mobilising attention and action on the immediate causes of child hunger and undernutrition.

The Initiative's focus is on supporting national and community efforts to address the critical needs of some 100 million households, home to approximately 350 million hungry children, nearly 150 million of which are under five years of age, including their access to an "essential package" of interventions, including health, hygiene and nutrition education and promotion. The package also contains key commodity-linked interventions including micronutrient supplementation, household water treatment, hand washing with soap, parasite control measures and situation-specific household food security.

The partnership of ECHUI aims to forge strong alliances among governments, international agencies, the private sector and other sectors of civil society, including technical, educational, charitable and community-oriented, including faith-based, organizations. The initiative seeks to strengthen linkages across disciplines, institutions, sectors and countries, exchanging experience and mobilizing resources.

The Rome event was hosted by Caritas Internationalis. The Global Framework for Action: Summary Note emanating from the meeting is available online: (<http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/resources/wfp111813.pdf>).

See also *How to work with WFP: A Handbook for Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)*, December 2005. The *Handbook* is intended as a quick reference for all NGO partners engaged with WFP and its activities and draws on existing WFP policies and guidelines

and specific samples from WFP country offices. It is available online: (www.wfp.org/aboutwfp/partners/documents/NGO_handbook_complete.pdf).

For more information on WFP engagement with NGOs, visit the WFP webpage on NGOs: (www.wfp.org/aboutwfp/partners/ngo.asp?section=1&sub_section=4).

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World Health Organization (WHO)

The objectives of the World Health Organization's relations with NGOs are to promote the policies, strategies and activities of WHO and, where appropriate, to collaborate with NGOs in jointly agreed activities to implement them. WHO may also seek to harmonize intersectoral interests among various sectoral bodies concerned in a country, regional or global setting. Non-governmental organizations and other civil society actors have engaged with WHO to implement health programmes at country level, made outreach to remote areas and populations possible and advocated public health issues to a broad audience.

The year 2006 also bustled with over 100 major events, many including or undertaken jointly with NGOs. Detailed information about the events is available on the WHO media webpage: (www.who.int/mediacentre/en). Below is a sampling of a number of activities involving NGOs.

Fifty-ninth World Health Assembly (WHA)

It is at the sessions of the WHO governing bodies that global health policy is considered. Representatives from 74 NGOs participated and contributed to the debate on such issues as WHO's contribution to universal access to HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care; emergency preparedness and response; international migration of health personnel; infant and young child nutrition, and international chemicals management. The work of WHO and NGOs was also given attention. WHO honoured a founding personality in the global effort to eradicate polio, William T. Sergeant, who for 12 years has led the programme overseeing polio eradication within Rotary International. The WHA also resolved to intensify action in order to achieve the aim of preventing avoidable blindness. The goal is to eliminate avoidable blindness by the year 2020 and to halt and reverse the projected doubling of avoidable visual impairment in the world. WHO will continue to work towards this goal in partnership with the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness, as part of "VISION 2020—the Right to Sight." Achievements of the World Alliance for Patient Safety, which brings together, NGOs, WHO and other actors, were welcomed by Member States and non-governmental organizations.

Further information on the 2006 World Health Assembly is available online: (www.who.int/gb/e/e_wha59.html).

Framework Convention on Tobacco Control

The first session of the Conference of the Parties (COP-1) to the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) was held in Geneva from 6-17 February 2006. NGOs in official relations with WHO were invited to participate in the conference as observers. During the two-week meeting the COP made a number of key decisions about the future governance of the Convention. Delegates agreed to establish the permanent secretariat of the Treaty within WHO headquarters in Geneva and settled on a two-year US\$8 million budget, which would be funded through voluntary assessed contributions. A significant amount of the budget is earmarked for substantive tobacco control work such as developing FCTC protocols and implementation guidelines.

Another decision was on civil society participation and their role in treaty follow up work as NGOs have played an important role in the negotiations and promotion of the treaty. Rule 31 of the Rules of Procedure for the COP and subsidiary bodies deals with participation of NGOs, noting that accredited NGOs have the right to participate without the right to vote and may speak after the other observers.

During COP-1, NGOs were called on often by the Chair to make extemporaneous interventions on the agenda item being debated. NGOs were also allowed access to most regional meetings and also to a number of informal working groups. Over 110 members of the Framework Convention Alliance (FCA), an alliance of over 200 non-governmental organizations from more than 90 countries that support the tobacco treaty, were present, helping to keep the discussion and debate at the COP focused on the public health objectives of the treaty.

Further information is available online: (www.who.int/gb/fctc).

International Medical Products Anti-Counterfeiting Taskforce (IMPACT)

The first official meeting of the International Medical Products Anti-Counterfeiting Taskforce (IMPACT) took place, which is a partnership comprised of all the major anti-counterfeiting players, including non-governmental organizations. The Taskforce aims to launch a comprehensive package of measures to help national authorities safeguard their populations from the dangers of counterfeit medicines.

Further information is available online:
(www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2006/pr09/en/index.html).

WHO European Ministerial Conference on Counteracting Obesity

From 21-22 February 2006, the WHO's Regional Office for Europe, together with the International Association for the Study of Obesity, hosted a consultation for European NGOs and professional networks that play a major role and have an interest in counteracting obesity. The aim of the consultation was to strengthen dialogue and collaboration between civil society and the Regional Office in the run-up to the WHO European Ministerial Conference on Counteracting Obesity, held in November 2006.

The WHO European Ministerial Conference on Counteracting Obesity, hosted by the Turkish Government, was held in Istanbul from 15-17 November 2006. Nearly 600 participants participated, including delegates from the 53 Member States in the European Region, experts, observers and representatives of international and non-governmental organizations and the media. Member States adopted a European charter on counteracting obesity at the Conference, which will provide political guidance to strengthen action in the Region. The charter recognizes that civil society can support the policy response, and the active involvement of civil society "is important, to foster the public's awareness and demand for action and as a source of innovative approaches."

More information is available online: (www.euro.who.int/obesity/conference2006).

World Health Day and other observances

Activities at the national level to celebrate the major WHO observances such as World Health Day (observed on 7 April) would not be possible without the continuing support of the many members at the national level of the NGOs that work with WHO. In 2006 the focus was on “working together for health.” Likewise WHO supported the observances of such days as the World Federation for Mental Health’s World Mental Health Day, this year on the theme “Building Awareness—Reducing Risk: Mental Illness and Suicide.”

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World Bank

In 2006, the World Bank produced a report that provides an overview of the activities undertaken by the World Bank Group¹ to reach out and engage with civil society during fiscal years 2005 and 2006. The report covers the wide spectrum of civil society engagement—ranging from information exchange and policy consultation to operational collaboration—across the Bank and from the country to global levels. *World Bank-Civil Society Engagement* confirms that a growing trend in Bank-civil society relations is occurring: more substantive policy dialogue at the global level, as well as greater country-level operational collaboration.

During the period 2005-2006, the Bank held substantive dialogues and consultations with CSOs at the global level on a range of critical policy issues such as extractive industries, debt reduction, environmental and social safeguards, and social development strategy, as well as on a number of sensitive Bank-financed projects such as the Chad-Cameroon pipeline or the Marlin Mine in Guatemala. These discussions were carried out during a series of policy sessions, bringing together a wide range of civil society actors.

At the regional level, the Bank continued to engage civil society through a variety of mechanisms and programmes. In Africa, the Bank promoted widespread consultation with CSOs on the country assistance strategies (CASs) in six countries and continued to expand its community-driven development (CDD) projects. In every region, engagement of civil society on Bank-related policy reforms and in national dialogue processes such as the poverty reduction strategies (PRS) and the CAS has helped inform and refine national policies and Bank strategies.

Consultations also took place at the country level around country assistance strategies and poverty reduction strategies. The Bank continued to expand its work in promoting citizen involvement in holding governments accountable for delivering results.

Based on civil society feedback, as well as the Bank's *Issues and Options for Improving Engagement Between the World Bank and CSOs* paper, the report points out that the Bank must improve its own mechanisms for civil society engagement and accountability; ensure that best practices are applied more consistently across the institution; and encourage member governments to improve the enabling environment for civil society to flourish in their countries. The *Issues and Options* paper outlines a 10-point action plan that currently provides an institutional roadmap to guide Bank-civil society relations.

Actions for improving Bank-civil society relations include:

- Establish new global mechanisms for Bank-civil society engagement to help promote mutual understanding and cooperation.
- Establish a Bank-wide advisory service or focal point for consultations and an institutional framework for consultation management and feedback.
- Pilot a new Bank-wide monitoring and evaluation system for civic engagement.
- Conduct a review of Bank funds available for civil society engagement in operations and policy dialogue, and explore possible realignment or restructuring.
- Review the Bank's procurement framework with a view toward facilitating collaboration with CSOs.

- Institute an integrated learning programme for Bank staff and member governments on how to engage CSOs more effectively, as well as capacity building for CSOs on how to work effectively with the Bank and its member governments.
- Hold meetings of senior management regularly, and periodically with the Board, to review Bank-civil society relations.
- Develop and issue new guidelines for Bank staff on the institution's approach, best practices, and a framework for engagement with CSOs.
- Emphasize the importance of civil society engagement in the guidance to Bank staff on the preparation of the country assistance strategy as well as in CAS monitoring and evaluation.
- Develop tools for analytical mapping of civil society to assist country and task teams in determining the relevant CSOs to engage on a given issue, project, or strategy.

In January and June 2006, World Bank-InterAction Workshop Series on Civil Society Engagement were held on development topics geared to promoting horizontal dialogue and mutual learning around key policy and operational issues.

During 2005-2006, the Bank continued to actively engage with constituency-based groups, including gender groups, children and youth, disabled persons, faith-based groups, indigenous peoples, labour unions and parliamentarians through policy dialogue, participation in project design, capacity building and a number of advocacy initiatives.

During the course of 2006, the Bank's revised Indigenous Peoples Policy (OP 4.10) was finalized and became effective on 1 July 2006. The revised policy was the result of a multiyear consultation process involving hundreds of indigenous leaders, government officials, CSO leaders, and academics from around the globe. It mandates free, prior, and informed consultation with indigenous peoples and broad community support at each stage of Bank project preparation and implementation. The revised policy requires that social assessments be carried out to analyze the potential social, cultural, demographic, and political impacts of proposed projects on affected indigenous peoples communities, and to ensure that they receive culturally appropriate social and economic benefits. The policy also requires that agreement be reached between the borrower government and indigenous communities regarding commercial use of their cultural resources as well as benefit-sharing arrangements for the commercial use of natural resources such as minerals, hydrocarbon resources, forests, water, and hunting or fishing grounds.

Consultations on the World Bank's new governance and anti-corruption strategy were carried out in 2006. The objective of the consultations with civil society, government, donor agencies, private sector, parliamentarians and others was to seek stakeholders' views and lessons learned to help the Bank refine the strategy and guide its implementation. Consultations were expected to take place in a total of approximately 40 countries before the end of January 2007. Information on these consultations is available online: (www.worldbank.org/html/extdr/comments/governancefeedback).

The reports, policy papers and other documents mentioned above are available on the civil society section of the World Bank website.

Endnotes:

1. The term World Bank Group refers to the five agencies that comprise the group: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), International Development Association (IDA), International Finance Corporation (IFC), Multilateral

Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), and International Center for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID).

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United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS)

For over thirty years now, UN-NGLS has played a major role as part of the UN system's machinery for engaging with NGOs and civil society by providing a UN system-civil society interface, facilitating a number of innovations to UN system policies and practices towards its non-governmental constituents, and providing support in the form of advice, guidance and strategic information. Core activities of UN-NGLS include: information and communication outreach to the international community and to global civil society; supporting the UN system in developing productive relationships and partnerships with NGOs and civil society; and supporting the work of NGOs/civil society that seek to constructively engage with the UN system.

Since 2000, UN-NGLS has accelerated its pace in providing services for both the UN system and its civil society constituents by providing substantial input to all of the major UN events involving NGOs and civil society organizations. During these processes UN-NGLS has organized and conducted briefing and orientation sessions and workshops, such as the NGO orientation session for the 14th Commission on Sustainable Development (May 2006). On numerous occasions, UN-NGLS has co-hosted NGO consultations with a number of UN agencies, programme and funds to raise awareness around substantive themes under discussion, and to provide an exchange of views. For NGO newcomers, specific events are held, including regular briefings on intergovernmental preparations at the global level and where NGOs fit in such a process. UN-NGLS continues to support the work of the conference secretariats in a number of planning and logistical tasks, and facilitates accreditation and problems related to visas. UN-NGLS often liaises with NGO networks in preparation for parallel NGO forums.

The year 2006 was a productive and active year for UN-NGLS, with the Service providing considerable support to both the UN system and civil society in many different areas of its expertise, ranging from support to office of the President of the General Assembly in the series of the GA Interactive Informal Hearings, to organizing consultations around the Panel of Eminent Persons on UN System-wide Coherence, to an NGO conference entitled "Reform of the International Institutions." Also noteworthy for 2006 was UN-NGLS's four-week online consultation calling for NGO views and responses to the Secretary-General's Report "International Migration and Development" and the production of a synopsis of those results. Other new features in 2006 included a two-month readership survey that solicited feedback on how to hone UN-NGLS's outreach capacity and the production of a UN-NGLS brochure, to be produced in three languages.

Throughout the year, UN-NGLS had regular meetings and communication with NGO Focal Points throughout the UN system and meetings with sponsors and other partners in New York and Geneva and elsewhere to discuss on-going activities and potential areas of collaboration on a wide range of issues linked to civil society engagement.

UN-NGLS has continued to provide the ad hoc secretariat and principal organising force for the annual meeting of NGO and Civil Society liaison staff from the UN system, the international financial institutions (IFIs), and other international and regional organizations such as the EU, OECD, EIB, Council of Europe, OAS, etc. In 2006 the meeting was hosted by UN-HABITAT, UNEP and UNDP and was held at UN Headquarters in Nairobi (Kenya). This is the fourth such meeting organized by UN-NGLS since it first took the initiative in 2003 to bring this professional constituency

together (in Geneva). In 2004 UN-NGLS worked in partnership with IFAD which hosted the event in Rome. In 2005 UN-NGLS worked in partnership with the World Bank which hosted the event at its Paris offices in June. In 2006 the meeting was hosted by UNEP, UN-HABITAT and UNDP in Nairobi from 5-7 June. The meeting brought together some 30 participants from over 25 international organizations and a large number of African NGO, civil society and political representatives.

Informal Interactive Hearings of the General Assembly

In 2006 UN-NGLS was called upon by the highest levels of the UN system to support and facilitate the NGO/Civil Society dimension of preparations for the series of High-Level Meetings and Dialogues and the three Informal Interactive Hearings convened by the General Assembly in 2006 on HIV/AIDS; International Migration and Development; and review of the Programme of Action (POA) for the Least Developed Countries adopted at the Brussels Conference in 2001. This involved working closely with the Office of the President of the General Assembly, the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and the respective substantive UN secretariats for each of the issues considered (UNAIDS, UN-OHRLS and the DESA Population Division); undertaking a major consultative process on the Secretary-General's Report "International Migration and Development;" playing a key role in organising the 31 May, 22 June and 12 July General Assembly Hearings with Civil Society, NGOs and the Private Sector (and reporting widely on these events); and supporting the Civil Society dimension of the subsequent High-level Meetings (and, again, reporting widely on their proceedings and outcomes). UN-NGLS assisted the GA President's office in setting up Task Forces and designing Terms of Reference for the Task Force members and arranged travel for developing-country NGOs attending the Hearings on migration and on the Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

Support to the UN System and NGO Partners

In addition to UN-NGLS's key role in the High-Level Meetings process, UN-NGLS provided active support to the Panel of Eminent Persons on UN System-wide Coherence in the field of humanitarian assistance, development and environment (in the form of online consultations, briefings and other events). Throughout the year UN-NGLS organized, co-organized or participated in a number of important meetings in cooperation with UN and NGO partners, including on such themes as "Reform of International Institutions" and the report of the Alliance of Civilizations. UN-NGLS cooperated with various UN and NGO entities in training sessions on a number of topics, with several more planned in 2007; participated in several orientation sessions; and met with delegates from various missions to brief them on a number of issues. UN-NGLS also provided direct support to a significant number of UN sponsors in their own activities and initiatives.

UN-NGLS was an "ex-officio" member of the NGO planning group that organized a major conference, hosted by ILO on 20-21 November 2006, on "Reform of the International Institutions," organized by UBUNTU and the World Campaign for In-depth Reform of the System of International Institutions, and others. Around 200 NGO and UN related participants attended. During the meeting UN-NGLS made a presentation on UN reform issues and moderated a workshop/dialogue on the Alliance of Civilizations.

An interactive forum on General Assembly and non-governmental organization relations was held on 21 November 2006, under the auspices of the Office of the President of the General Assembly and the United Nations Foundation. The aim of the forum was to stimulate greater understanding between Member States and NGOs regarding the challenges and opportunities for further partnership. The forum brought together representatives of 50 Member States, 150 NGOs and seven United Nations offices who shared their views, concerns and recommendations.

Publications and Outreach

During the course of 2006, UN-NGLS produced and disseminated five issues of its bi-monthly electronic news bulletin, the *Civil Society Observer*, sent to a listserv that has grown to over 9,000 subscribers. Besides producing three issues of its flagship newsletter, the *Go Between* and three in-depth *Roundups*, work was completed on a *Development Dossier* entitled *Debating NGO Accountability*, which came off press in late November 2006. Work was also finalized in the fourth quarter of 2006 on *The Unfinished Story of Women and the United Nations*, also in the *Development Dossier* series, which will be printed in early 2007. In 2006 UN-NGLS provided useful coverage of the Millennium Development Goals through its website and the *Go Between*.

The information produced by UN-NGLS both in published form and electronically combines public information on UN and NGO events and issues, practical “how to” guides to the UN system for NGOs, and substantive analysis of issues on the international agenda. UN-NGLS’s publications (electronic and print) are distributed to almost 10,000 NGOs worldwide, around 50% based in developing countries, and to over 1,000 development professionals in the UN system, governments and bilateral agencies. All UN-NGLS publications are available on the website (www.un-ngls.org). As part of its outreach activities, UN-NGLS also disseminates information on a range of activities on the UN agenda to NGO electronic mail networks and listservs.

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ACRONYMS

ADFM	Democratic Association of Moroccan Women
AFPPD	Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development
AFY	Advocates for Youth
AHEAD	Association for Higher Education and Development
BAE	Business Action for Energy
CAAAV	Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence
CASs	Country Assistance Strategies
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CDD	Community-driven Development
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CEE/CIS	Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States
CEM	Centro de Estudios de la Mujer
CFS	Committee on World Food Security
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIMAC	Comunicación e Información de la Mujer
CONGO	Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations
COP	Conference of the Parties
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CSPR	Civil Society Partnership Review
CWGL	Center for Women's Global Leadership
CWI	Community Water Initiative
DESA	Department of Social and Economic Affairs
DFID	UK Department for International Development
DoC	Declaration of Commitment
DPI	Department of Public Information
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ECHUI	Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
EFA	Education For All
ExCom	Executive Committee
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FCA	Framework Convention Alliance
FCTC	Framework Convention on Tobacco Control
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FfD	Financing for Development
FIDH	International Federation for Human Rights
FVPF	Fondo para Prevenir la Violencia Familiar
FOSSFA	Free Open Source Software for Africa
GA	General Assembly
GC/GMEF	Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GPIA	Graduate Program in International Affairs
GPI	Global Partnership Initiative for Urban Youth Development in Africa
GCSF	Global Civil Society Forum
GYCA	Global Youth Coalition on HIV/AIDS

HFA	Hyogo Framework for Action
HIC	Habitat International Coalition
HLS	High-Level Segment
HRC	Human Rights Council
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IACW/OAS	Inter-American Commission of Women of the Organization of American States
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IANSA	International Action Network on Small Arms
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICARRD	International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development
ICC	International Chamber of Commerce
ICCPPC	International Commission for Catholic Prison Pastoral Care
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
ICMA	International Christian Maritime Association
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICSID	International Center for the Settlement of Investment Disputes
IDA	International Development Association
IDPs	Internally Displaced People
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMFC	International Monetary and Financial Committee
IMPACT	International Medical Products Anti-Counterfeiting Taskforce
INSTRAW	International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPC	International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty
IPCI/ICPD	International Parliamentarians' Conference on the Implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action
IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
ISDR	International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
IUSSP	International Union for the Scientific Study of Population
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
MA	Millennium Assessment
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MIGA	Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency
MRI	Migrants Rights International
MTSP	Medium Term Strategic Plan
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OHRLLS	Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PAI	Population Action International
PCB	Programme Coordinating Board
PCI	Population Communications International

PoA	Programme of Action
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
RCM	Regional Consultation Meetings
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
Sustainlabour	International Labour Foundation for Sustainable Development
TDB	Trade and Development Board
TUAC	Trade Union Advisory Committee to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCAC	United Nations Convention against Corruption
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNCT	United Nations Country Teams
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFF	United Nations Forum on Forests
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNGASS	UN General Assembly Special Session
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
UN-NGLS	United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service
UN-NGO-IRENE	United Nations Non Governmental Organizations Informal Regional Network
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNPFII	United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
UPR	Universal Periodic Review Mechanism
VNGOC	Vienna NGO Committee on Narcotic Drugs
WBCSD	World Business Council for Sustainable Development
WCL	World Confederation of Labour
WEC	World Energy Council
WFP	World Food Programme
WFS	World Food Summit
WFUNA	World Federation of UN Associations
WHA	World Health Assembly
WHO	World Health Organization
WILL 2006	Workers Initiative for a Lasting Legacy
WOLA	Washington Office on Latin America
WUF	World Urban Forum

United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS)

The United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS) is an interagency programme of the UN system that facilitates dialogue, cooperation and constructive engagement between the UN system and the NGO community worldwide on global development issues. NGLS has offices in Geneva and New York.

The work of UN-NGLS is currently supported by:

- United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UN/DESA)
- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
- International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
- International Labour Office (ILO)
- Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- United Nations Department of Public Information (UN/DPI)
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- World Food Programme (WFP)
- World Health Organization (WHO)

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