

**1) Relationships between INGO and IGO, particularly
the UN system**

To facilitate understanding, comments on these relationships between international nongovernmental and intergovernmental organizations are made for each intergovernmental agency, and in each case in terms of :

- a) the views of INGOs
- b) the views of the Agency Secretariat
- c) the views of the Member States

ECOSOC

a) Views of INGOs

With regard to the revision of the consultative status arrangement in 1968 :

— « *What we are in fact concerned to know is whether this revision, the result of some 20 meetings of the Council Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, constitutes a step forward for the United Nations and for NGOs... These discussions, in which NGOs took no part, were dominated by the delegates of a few Member States openly hostile to non-governmental organizations for a variety of particular reasons. The charge that many NGOs were dominated by the West overlooks the fact that these NGOs would be only too glad to receive members from other regions. It is these States themselves which have on occasions prevented their nationals from participating in the activities of NGOs,*

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS, 1972

The representatives of the other States seemed unwilling to use this forum to engage in debate. On reading the summary records of the discussions, one may wonder how many of the delegates present were really well-informed about the different forms of constructive collaboration existing between NGOs and the United Nations Secretariat.
Though some interesting and valid remarks were made, the overall impression is that of an indictment against NGOs rather than an attempt to find out the most effective way for the United Nations to consult NGOs.
(Editorial in International Associations, 1968. n°9, p. 611).

— « There is widespread sentiment among NGOs active in protecting human rights that NGOs will henceforth feel inhibited and restrained in criticizing governments for departing from principles of * natural justice * lest they be embroiled in proceedings to deprive them of their consultative status. » (C.S. Ascher, « Consultative Status with ECOSOC. » International Associations, 1969, no. 10, p. 472).

General comments, many extracted from the report of a meeting in Geneva under the auspices of the Conference of Nongovernmental Organizations in Consultative Status with ECOSOC (July 14, 1970):

— NGOs are often treated as defendants before a governmental tribunal when in fact it is not the NGOs which need the UN in order to survive, since they existed before the creation of the UN and will continue to survive with or without the UN
— all initiative comes from the NGOs whereas the ECOSOC NGO section should be an active partner in the dialogue
— governments should be made aware of the potential significance of inter-NGO groupings both at the international and the national level
— governments are not aware of the fact that the UN-oriented activities of NGOs represent only a part of each NGO's programme. (And would probably consider non-UN oriented programmes of little value, whereas it is just such programmes which may develop into UN programmes at a later point in time.)
— government delegates, particularly from the developing countries, are not adequately instructed on the role of NGOs or the nature of NGOs.
— when the UN does take the initiative in a domain requiring the cooperation of the NGOs, the NGOs should be consulted before the programme is initiated and not after (e.g. the World Youth Assembly at the United Nations)
— UN public information programmes and the « mobilization of public opinion » ignore the function of NGOs and their national branches
— the UN system should not adopt a paternalistic approach to NGOs, but should ensure the existence of conditions permitting NGOs to accomplish their respective tasks with respect to the UN system
— governments either do not know or cannot accept that an international NGO has constitutional limitations on its control of a national affiliate (just as is the case with respect to the UN and Member States)
— government delegates assume erroneously that all NGO Secretariats have full power to disclose any information requested of them by the UN without awaiting the next scheduled meeting of its plenary body
— the Conference of Nongovernmental Organizations in Consultative Status with ECOSOC is not formally recognized by ECOSOC
— government delegates are hostile to and suspicious of NGOs participation in UN affairs
— government delegates do not recognize the diversity of NGOs in organizational terms and the range of interests that are represented by the NGO community
— NGOs are treated as petitioners for favors
— government delegates in many cases receive no instructions from their governments on NGO questions and therefore act in the light of their personal views, voting with little consistency from meeting to meeting

On modifications to the NGO Conference machinery
— « Member organizations again and again expressed their determination to maintain and exercise their status in fullest independence and voiced their apprehension at being forced into NGO groupings and thereby risking to have their freedom of action impeded by majority decisions. »
(11th Conference of Nongovernmental Organizations in Consultative Status with ECOSOC. Review of the Aims and Objectives... by Dr. Reigner. 11/GC/19, p. 9)

Other views

— governments expect NGOs not to criticize the governments of countries in which they do not have members but expect NGOs to condemn the governments which they themselves condemn
— NGOs are frowned upon for criticizing the UN or its decisions
— governments tend to consider that consultative relationship means that every programme of the NGO should be wholly devoted thereafter to objectives related to those of the UN, without realizing that
— the NGO may have programmes on problems which it considers significant, but which the UN does not yet recognize
— whilst the NGO may be prepared to disclose its internal financial records with respect to its UN-related programmes, there is no reason why its non-UN related programmes should be subject to financial scrutiny
— the NGO may evaluate its own programmes as being effective on purely technical criteria, and therefore justifying more resources than a related UN-programme
— governments tend to believe that receipt of some subsidies from governments makes the NGO the tool of the governments in question, without distinguishing between a 10 % subsidy and a 90 % subsidy, or understanding the many forms of assistance a government may make available without acquiring influence on the policy of the NGO
— governments expect NGOs to be « universal » during a period when
— political factors prevent every country from having members in an NGO; and just as with the UN and the Peoples Republic of China, the country may not wish to be represented for some time.
— distance factors may preclude participation because the potential members in distant countries cannot attend meetings
— potential members in some countries may be prevented from participating by inability to pay dues in a convertible currency
— the degree of development of a country may be such that there are no people or organizations in that country with the specialized knowledge, activities, or interests which are the concern of the NGO
— of the 200 intergovernmental organizations in existence, 77 % are regional organizations, whereas of the 2000 international nongovernmental organizations, 50 % are regional
— on the basis of 1966 figures :
a) States other than Western Europe, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and Israel accounted for 2000 government memberships (of a total of 4676) in the 179 intergovernmental organisations for which information was available
(b) nongovernmental organisations and individuals in countries other than Western European, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and Israel accounted for 16.900 representations of countries (of a total of 36.341) in the 1416 international nongovernmental organizations on which information was available.
Furthermore, as an example based on the 1964 figures of a country which was not represented in the United Nations and yet had one quarter of the world's population, the Peoples Republic of China was represented in 3 intergovernmental organizations and in 65 international nongovernmental organizations. (Extracted from a study by Kjell Skjelsbaek. «Peace and the Systems of International Organizations; Oslo, International Peace Research Institute, 1970, based on the Yearbook of International Organizations, Brussels, Union of International Associations.)
— governments consider that NGOs are primarily * Western » institutions because the majority of their headquarters is in

Europe or the U.S.A., but ignore the possibility that the choice of geographical locations may be the result of the same forces that influence the choice of UN Agency headquarters — all of which are in Europe or the U.S.A.

— governments and the UN criticize the divisions, concern for independence, proliferation and overlapping of NGOs as a characteristic of NGO ineffectiveness, when it is also a symptom of the times as is evident in the divisions, suspicion and overlapping between the UN Agencies, OECD, the Council of Europe and other intergovernmental bodies.

b) Views of the ECOSOC NGO Section

— * *Those in the Secretariat responsible for working with NGOs believe that it is imperative for the Conference of NGOs to take a fresh look at itself to see if its present structure and mode of operation is the best for carrying out its purpose in light of the past two years of scrutiny given the NGOs by ECOSOC.*

(Informal statement by Curtis Roosevelt at the 11th Conference of Nongovernmental Organizations in Consultative Status with ECOSOC, 1969.11/GL/15).

— The Conference should facilitate consultations with NGO representatives

— when there are communications to be sent to all members

— when some UN body is discussing matters which have implications for NGO participation in UN affairs

— to develop jointly position papers on matters relating to the consultative process to gain greater understanding of the role of NGOs

— to consult on the use of ad hoc committees in substantive areas to facilitate liaison and create a more functional and effective relationship in a particular area of concern to a number of NGOs.

— to work together to improve the representation of NGOs at the UN, including better liaison with NGO headquarters (11/GC/15)

— The UN must continue to change rapidly if it is truly to represent the changing forces in the world. If nongovernmental organizations are to participate actively in this process, they must exert themselves to be in the midst of the change (Informal statement by a member of the Secretariat to a meeting of ECOSOC NGOs, 11/GC/15)

— Officials of the Secretariat and delegates of Member States are, with a few noteworthy exceptions, if not hostile, at least completely indifferent to NGOs

— NGOs should participate more actively in UN programmes at the regional level

— NGOs should be more critical in their observations submitted to ECOSOC if they wish to be noted. Written declarations submitted by NGOs have very little influence. More could be achieved with more imagination

— NGOs should recognize that ideas submitted to the Secretariat do not necessarily have to reflect the unanimous view of an NGO's members. It is the ideas which count.

(c) Views of Member States

These may be clearly noted in the debates of the ECOSOC Council Committee on NGOs (223rd to 224 sessions, January-April, 1968.) The questions put to NGOs in the notorious 1968 questionnaire to which NGOs were to reply by return of post illustrate the nature of government delegate beliefs concerning NGOs:

— NGOs tend to criticize the governments of countries in which they do not have any members

— NGOs do not fully support all the political decisions of the UN and may even criticize them

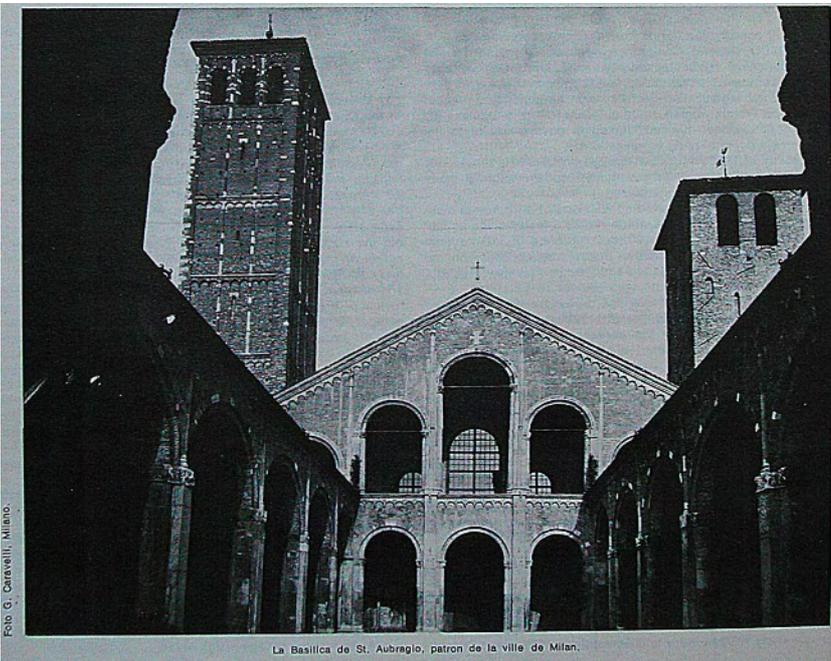


Foto G. Caravelli, Milano.

La Basilica de St. Ambrogio, patron de la ville de Milan.

- NGOs do not have a geographically « universal » membership and do not reflect the views of all the regions represented at the United Nations
 - NGOs are not broadly representative of major segments of population in a large number of countries
 - many NGOs are simply government front organizations maintained for political purposes by one or more governments. This view is supported by the number of NGOs receiving some form of government subsidy or assistance
- In addition :
- there are too many NGOs and they continue to proliferate too rapidly
 - NGOs are ineffectual

UNESCO

(a) Views of INGOs

These have been very clearly stated in an intervention made by the President of the Standing Committee of the Conference of International NGOs approved for Consultative Status with UNESCO during the 16th General Conference of UNESCO. Main points are :

- lack of possibility of dialogue with UNESCO
- lack of interest in both the collective and individual views of NGOs
- tendency to avoid a certain number of questions which in the NGO view are vital for peace, cooperation and international understanding
- NGOs are judged on their efficacy solely on the basis of their degree of acceptance of and conformity to UNESCO views
- collective consultation is restricted to polite reference to NGOs in appropriate documents
- NGOs cannot identify themselves with decisions taken by UNESCO without any prior discussion, and are therefore alienated -
- lack of consultation during formulation of programmes
- UNESCO General Conference resolutions calling for the collaboration of NGOs lacked any solid foundation because many governments were unable to accept the concept of non-governmental organization. Many tend in an increasing number of domains (youth, women, trade unions, etc.) to recognize only those organizations intimately linked to government or to the government political party organisations.
- inability of NGOs to follow through on UNESCO resolutions at the national level when government collaboration is made extremely difficult or simply refused

Related views are given in the conclusions of an informal meeting of London-based INGOs which met as a result of the debate in the Standing Committee of the Conference of International NGOs approved for Consultative Status with UNESCO on the failure of collective consultation and the need for new procedures :

- it has become apparent that this procedure has not worked very well and is now in danger of breaking down completely. This has been shown by the conspicuous absence at the UNESCO/NGO Conference of a significant number of NGOs whose views would have made a valuable addition to those expressed.

Other difficulties in the consultative process are :

- over-production, particularly of paper
- inadequate time schemes, and late receipt of important documents
- representative may not be closely in touch with the national or regional associations, whereas the headquarters office, which is, may not be responsible for the United Nations contacts
- some at least of the NGOs find it difficult to appoint permanent representatives at the main UN centres; all find it expensive
- increasing problem of space and facilities for NGOs
- consequent alienation, rather than engaging of interest, within the membership, vis à vis the United Nations work
- growth of techniques and jargon, which the representatives feel the need to talk about and explain, instead of discussing with the members a real subject for study and action
- too many NGO bureaux and Committees and Liaison Committees,

- all working separately and studying subjects, but not really producing cooperation, adequately exchanging information or dividing UN work amongst NGOs according to competence so as to avoid overlapping
- too much amateurism, and in this sense a failure in the consultative process
- the lines of the UN bodies cross, and subjects are dealt with by several, in turn or simultaneously
- the major interests of individual NGOs may be several, requiring a multiplicity of representatives or committees, and consequent financial burden
- lack of reflection of NGO thinking in papers produced by UNESCO

Other views

- the Conference of UNESCO NGOs attendance is « barely better than average ordinary meetings of the Working Parties and the Standing Committee. »
- the Conference's self-inflicted rules oblige it to go to embarrassing lengths to eliminate one candidate for the Standing Committee
- the inadequacy of the cumbersome resolutions system when in fact the decisions taken are not binding on the individual NGOs or on the Unesco Secretariat
- inadequacy of the treatment afforded Category C NGOs
- the NGOs might have less and less influence as they were finding it difficult to keep up with the rapid evolution of inter-governmental organizations. A number of non-governmental organizations were influential on an individual rather than on a collective basis.
- before NGOs can consider further with Unesco how the Unesco/NGO relationship can be improved, it seems imperative to study how what they do, individually, affects other areas in which they have no immediate concern but which are, in fact, affected by what they do. At the same time, Unesco should be asked to study the effect of its actions, not only on the traditional fields covered by Unesco, but on the dozens of inter-related spheres outside Unesco's own programme.

(b) Views of Secretariat

In the Director General's Long-term outline plan for 1971-1976 (16 C/4) presented to the 16th General Conference of UNESCO : « I have already said that the participation of (UNESCO) National Commissions and international non-governmental organizations in the implementation of UNESCO's programmes should be increased. This is necessary to lighten the burden borne by the Secretariat and so reduce the pressure that leads to the expansion of the Secretariat and to increases in general costs, but even more so to broaden the basis of the Organization's action in Member States and among the international intellectual community.

The moment has therefore come, I believe, to make a thorough review of the way in which Unesco collaborates with these two categories of organization. Practices have grown up which, with the passing of time, have become mere habit. They should be revised and, if need be, dispensed with, so that a new spirit

— a spirit of greater initiative and generosity — may come into relations on both sides. I said « on both sides » advisedly. The National Commissions and the non-governmental organizations — particularly the latter — should make a greater effort to find ways of intensifying aid to Unesco, and not simply aid from Unesco. Unesco, for its part, should modify both its working methods and its approach particularly at the Secretariat level; in order to give a fresh impetus to cooperation, which too often is simply a matter of procedure and red tape, whereas its fundamental property should be to give the widest possible scope to spontaneity of the mind...

For my part, I have never concealed my view — that Unesco's relation to the international non-governmental organizations should not be that of patron — and in view of the paucity of the resources available it could only be a second-rate patron — but should take the form of cooperation founded on the complementary nature of their contributions to a common task, the carrying out of the programme adopted by the General Conference. Such is the recognized principle...

The consultative status arrangement and the conference/bureau/secretariat/working party mechanism is being currently debated in different ways by the

- Conference of NGOs in Consultative Status with ECOSOC
- Conference of NGOs in Consultative Status with UNESCO
- Conference of NGOs with programs in the field of agriculture in Europe (consultative status with FAO).

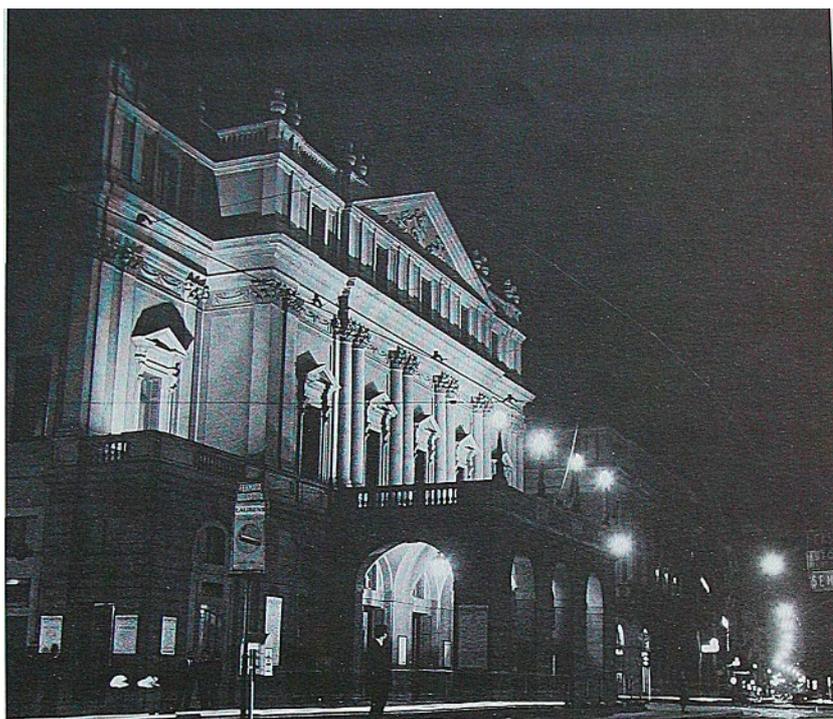
It is important to recall that the conference/bureau/secretariat/working party mechanism is entirely conceived and modifiable by NGOs, without in any way jeopardizing the consultative relationship. The following points represent different degrees of depth of inquiry from the superficial to the fundamental. None of these points affect the consultative status of individual NGOs but merely the manner in which NGOs desire to work together and organize their collective representation and joint collaboration with Agencies.

1. internal regulation of the Conferences and Bureaux
2. services provided by the individual agency
3. bilateral contact with Agency officials
4. collective representation to Agency officials
5. need for existing Bureaux, Committees
6. need for existing NGO Secretariats in Agencies
7. need for an investigation into new forms of NGO-UN system relationships, using information from
 - NGOs in contact with a single Agency only
 - NGOs in contact with several Agencies
 - outside consultants.
8. need for central NGO Secretariat(s) to act as clearing house(s) for all joint NGO-UN system interaction.
9. need for NGO sub-secretariats
 - by geographical region (e.g., Africa)
 - by Agency location to evolve mechanism of shared representation.
 - by programme area (e.g., youth, human rights)
 - by country to coordinate international NGO activity with respect to a particular country and to liaise with the UNDR representative.
10. need for NGO Sub-Commissions or working parties
 - by geographical area (e.g. on Africa)
 - by programme area (e.g. education, development)
 - by headquarters location (e.g. Paris NGOs, London NGOs)
 - by Agency (e.g. consultative status with Unesco)
11. need for NGO joint Conferences
 - by geographical area (e.g. Africa)
 - by programme area (e.g. youth, literacy)
 - by Agency (e.g. consultative status with ECOSOC)
 - by headquarters location (e.g. Geneva NGOs, New York NGOs)
 - by country of location (e.g. Belgian based NGOs)
 - by political inclination (e.g. « Eastern » NGOs, « Western » NGOs)
12. need for consideration of views of
 - those currently attending NGO Conferences
 - those who have a right to attend but do not (e.g. some Unesco Category A)
 - those who have consultative status but no right to attend Conferences
 - those NGOs represented at two or more Conferences
 - those NGOs represented at another NGO conference only (i.e., with consultative status with another Agency only)
 - those without consultative status but working with the UN system.

- those NGOs also having consultative status with non-UN IGOs (e.g. Council of Europe)
 - those NGOs without consultative status but working toward UN-programme objectives
 - other international NGOs
 - national NGOs with international activities
 - national conferences of NGOs
 - other national NGOs
13. need for national NGO joint activity at country level
 - use of national NGO Conferences
 - use of national NGO Secretariats
 - need to stimulate
 14. — bilateral contact with UN Agencies
 - NGO joint contact with UN Agencies individually
 - NGO joint activity with UN Agencies collectively
 - NGO joint activity in line with UN objectives but not linked to UN programmes
 - NGO joint activity not specifically mentioned in UN programmes)
 - national NGO joint activity in line with UN objectives
 15. need to consider
 - administrative problem of consultative status and recognition
 - means of improving NGO joint ability to undertake effective programmes
 16. need to consider
 - consultation with Agencies (exchange of information)
 - participation in Agency programmes
 - collaboration with Agencies (synchronization of respective programmes)
 - collaboration with Agencies (joint NGO-Agency programmes)
 - collaboration in programme conception
 17. need for mechanisms to facilitate initiation and submission of proposals to Agencies from NGOs which do not have intimate contact with the appropriate Agency.
 - requests for introduction of new Agency programmes (i.e., the problem of speeding up the consideration of such programmes by national governmental delegations)
 - programmes which cross several departmental boundaries (i.e., multidisciplinary programmes).
 - creation by UN Agencies of an inter-agency office to promote NGO programmes and suggestions within the whole UN system, and resolve programme submission (not consultative) problems — namely a form of inter-agency Ombudsman for NGOs.

NGOs are traditionally the pioneers in the introduction of new and better approaches to the solutions of the problems of man, whether concrete or idealistic. Traditionally it is NGOs which look to the possibility of a future better world. They, or their national branches, act as the necessary pressure group to stimulate government action and to provide government with a specialized source of information.

This pioneering spirit is not yet evident in the manner in which NGOs adapt the various inter-NGO mechanisms to the new problems and possibilities — there have been no changes in this mechanism comparable to those initiated in the inter-governmental mechanism over the last 25 years. How is it that NGOs are each so imaginative and forward-looking in their own spheres and yet are possibly more conservative and politically sensitive with regard to inter-NGO action than are States with regard to intergovernmental activity ? The above list is a reminder of some of the possibilities which could be considered in preparation for the next 25 years.



E. Piccagliana

Teatro alla Scala

I am convinced that the international non-governmental organizations... can play a much more active part in attaining the objectives of the programme. To do this they must take the initiative more and, above all, link their activities more closely with Unesco's. For this reason I think that more contracts should be concluded with these organizations for the carrying out of certain projects within their competence and capacities... Finally, the international non-governmental organizations, or at least some of them, should stop regarding Unesco as a source of financing to which they can turn to cover their running expenses or as a mere administrative machine, which, because of its governmental character, is not qualified for intellectual work as such.

Obviously, the whole conception of collaboration as regards both international non-governmental organizations and National Commissions needs to be radically changed. This change, as I have already said, is no less imperative for Unesco itself, particularly the Secretariat. The Organization's programme must be regarded and treated not as a set of hard and fast instructions, for which the staff of the institution, and it alone... is responsible for carrying out, but as an outline in which all the contributions and undertakings of national and international energies anxious to devote themselves to the great tasks des-

cribed in it will have their place. The Secretariat's role in relation to those tasks, with the exception of the operational activities financed chiefly from extra-budgetary resources, is essentially that of stimulation, assistance and coordination rather than that of actual execution... Above all, Unesco cannot hope to make an impact on the world unless it has a place for all the energies of a nature to associate themselves with its efforts. Its programme must be devised essentially as an appeal, a guide, a focus for the mobilization of these tremendous multi-form energies... It is the international community which is asked to act in concert and to organize its activities, impelled and aided — in such a comparatively small way — by the Director-General and the Secretariat, on Unesco's behalf, in undertakings which cannot succeed unless the community adopts them as its own » (paras. 85-91).

Other points which have been made by the Secretariat in the Sexennial Report by the Executive Board to the General Conference on the Contribution made to UNESCO activities by International Non-governmental Organizations (Categories A and B) (16 C/22)

— « It should also be pointed out that Unesco's consultations with the NGOs have so far been much more concerned with Unesco's program than those of the NGOs. In order that coope-

ration with those organizations should be fully effective, Unesco should make available to them selected information and documentation to enable them to programme those of their activities which contribute to its own programmes. »

— lack of interest of some NGOs in collective consultation with the Director-General on the Unesco programme on the occasion of the Conference of NGOs approved for Consultative Status with UNESCO

— the concentration of NGOs in the developed countries and the difficulties they experience in expanding into the developing countries.

— « The Board noted that Member States did not take full advantage of the experience built up by the non-governmental organizations. »



— « It is worth noting that there seems to be a correlation between a non-governmental organization's reputation for effective assistance to Unesco and the detailed information which it is willing to provide (to Unesco) relating to its (the NGO's) activities and programmes. »

— « During the period under review, many NGOs in Categories A and B made an extremely valuable contribution to Unesco, participating in the Organization's meetings, in the carrying out of certain projects of an operational character included in its programmes, carrying out activities on their own initiative with a view to facilitating execution of the Unesco programme, providing Unesco with consultative services in their field of competence. »

— « One of the conclusions that might be deduced from the information given in... this document is whether it would not be more appropriate if certain technical activities carried out by non-governmental organizations within their field of competence... were in future entrusted to them in their entirety by the Director-General... »

(c) Views of Member States

These are extracted from the Provisional Verbatim Records of the 16th General Conference of Unesco (October-November, 1970):

- « Unesco should take a good look at other intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations, at governments and at the world of learning and research and should decide whether it is not in effect, in many fields, duplicating what is being done elsewhere, whether it is not competing instead of coordinating, whether it is not following instead of leading. » (C/VR, p. 18).
- lack of universality of NGOs, particularly with reference to the developing countries (16 C/VFt 28, p. 24)
- « I suggest that... the assistance to nongovernmental organizations be severely reduced, Unesco equipping itself to do most of the things which it now passes on to nongovernmental organizations... » (16C/Vn21, p. 10-11)
- « We consider it inadmissible that a governmental organ should put pressure on the private nongovernmental organizations. We cannot approve that all nongovernmental organizations should be treated as guilty (of racism) and we consider it unacceptable that, contrary to all legal principles, it is expected that the accused should supply evidence of their own innocence. » (16 C/VFt 33, p. 33-34)

ILO

(b) Views of the Secretariat

As an indication of the attitude of ILO to one of the main categories of nongovernmental organizations with which it is in contact, extracts from a report of the Committee on Trade Union Rights of the 1970 International Labor Conference are given:

— * Considering that trade unions, provided they enjoy their full rights, are an essential factor for the attainment of the objective of economic, social and cultural progress stated in the Constitution of the ILO,

Considering that the rights of workers' and employers' organizations and of human beings in general flourish in a climate of social and economic progress,

Considering that the advancement of the rights of workers' and employers' organizations is linked both to national social and economic development and to national regional and international legislation. »

This report does not make specific reference to international nongovernmental organizations.

FAO/EUROPE

(a) Views of INGOs

These are extracted from the documents of the Conference of International Organizations for the Joint Study of Programs and Activities in the Field of Agriculture in Europe (every 2 years), which brings together INGOs and some IGOs outside the UN system.

— * The Conference was concerned to ensure that the exchange of information which takes place between the collaborating international organizations, under the auspices of the European Commission on Agriculture, should have the maximum effect. »

— « The re-examination of the terms of reference of the Conference, as according to the view of some delegates, the danger exists that the Conference, the original aim of which was to give the participating organizations an opportunity to exchange information and coordinate their work, may slip into the role of an advisory body, which is not the intention of the majority of the participating organizations. »

— « The question of recommendations should be reconsidered as some delegates felt that they were not in a position to agree with technical recommendations in the different fields in which they have no competence and, in any case, they must have the previous authorization of their governing bodies. »

— when several international organizations are prepared to study a specific problem in common, direct means of communication should be established between them to ensure continuity of work.

(b) Views of the Secretariat (from document 10-15-69(11))

The aim of the Conference as originally established in 1954 is:

- to exchange information by the means of bringing up-to-date the annual list of activities and the timetable of forthcoming meetings
- to promote cooperation by the means of meetings of discussion groups for organizations having specific interests in similar fields and in plenary sessions for problems of general interest
- to avoid duplication and over-lapping in the work of cooperating organizations
- to focus attention on some problems of great actuality
- to combine efforts in trying to solve problems of common interest
- to be a forum where representatives of the UN Agencies intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations can meet and discuss in conditions of absolute equality problems of European agriculture

UNHCR

(a) Views of INGOs

Extracted from a statement made by Gareth Ackerson at the 21st Session of the UNHCR Executive Committee (1970):

— « The High Commission states that delays and setbacks in initiating and carrying out some UNHCR projects in Africa have resulted from the fact that there is not in Africa the same effective network of Voluntary Agencies, capable of acting as the operational partners of UNHCR, as exists in Europe. »

— * I would suggest that this whole question of direct operations by the intergovernmental organizations versus an operational contractual partnership with and through the Voluntary Agencies, is one which the Committee might wish to review, in the light of experience which is taking place in Africa. The Voluntary Agencies, needless to say, would hope to be called upon to participate in such a study, which would have important implications for them. »

Council of Europe

(b) Views of the Secretariat

These are extracted from the report on the tri-ennial examination of the NGOs in consultative status with the Council of Europe (Doc. 2370 of the Assembly).

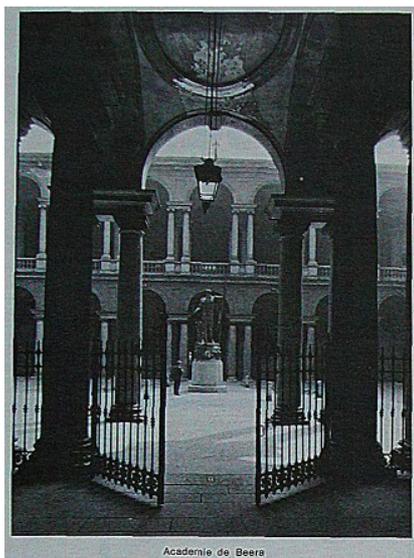
— « During the 15 years since consultative status was introduced its working has been examined on several occasions. It has proved that cooperation is generally satisfactory where it takes place. Relations with those international non-governmental organizations that represent an organized and dynamic part of public opinion are of undoubted value to the Council of Europe. »

— « The analysis reveals that in most cases organizations with consultative status meet their commitments to the Council of Europe satisfactorily... On the other hand, a number of organizations do no more, once they have gained consultative status, than occasionally send Observers to Assembly Sessions, or forward a publication. »

— « The number of new applications for consultative status led the Standing Committee of the Assembly... to consider what assistance was really given to the activities of the organs of the Council of Europe by those 100 or so organizations that have consultative status and to ask themselves whether a number of such organizations did not seek consultative status for mere reasons of prestige. »

— « The fear was expressed that consultative status would be cheapened if granted to too many ineffective organizations. »

— « Some (of the NGOs) may indeed feel that consultative status does not really fulfil the hopes it aroused at first. Its better implementation depends as much on the organs of the Council of Europe as on the non-governmental organizations themselves. It is for the Council organs concerned to show those organizations that are to some degree passive the way towards more active cooperation with the Council. »



Academie de Beers

2) Working Relationships between International Non-governmental Organizations (independent of their relationship to the intergovernmental system).

This question has never been examined in detail. Such relationships as exist are either:

- long-standing bilateral working relationships between « friends »
- ad hoc organizational relationships (e.g. joint committee) for the purposes of a short-term programme or meeting. In general the number of participating NGOs is inversely proportional to the binding power of the decisions taken by the joint body. There are few such ad hoc groupings with four or more NGOs unless participation involves only a token of moral support.
- standing conferences of NGOs for various purposes (including consultative status)
- NGOs grouping other international NGOs. These may be divided into:
 - NGOs grouping regional NGOs in the same subject area (27)
 - NGOs with international NGOs participating in addition to national NGOs (35)
 - NGOs with only international NGOs as "members" (22).

The NGO-NGO relationship within an NGO grouping is constantly threatened by the problem of guaranteeing the independence of each NGO and avoiding any possibility of majority decisions which appear to have the support of a particular NGO when the latter can only be given with the approval of its governing body or in some cases its plenary body.

This is exactly equivalent to the problem of the sovereignty of Member States with respect to decisions in the United Nations. Some NGOs even deplore this « ineffectiveness » on the part of the United Nations mechanism. Ironically it would seem that NGOs are in many cases as rigidly bound by the need for representatives to get a decision from their plenary bodies as is the United Nations, with the difference that the government decision-making system may be more accessible to the government delegate than the NGO governing body is to an NGO representative to a joint NGO meeting.

One conclusion that could be drawn is that the concept of an NGO grouping, or a « super-INGO » as it has been called, is basically inadequate to the problems and operational requirements of NGOs today. It is not that the NGOs are « obstructive » and « isolationist » but that the organizational mechanisms for collaboration with other NGOs which are open to them are too crude to be effectively used. New approaches are required.

A.J