

Mobilization of public opinion

- yesterday's response to today's problems

Introduction

Development Forum (published by the UN Centre for Economic and Social Information/OPI) in its latest issue (November-December 1978) reproduces a text by Jean Ripert, Under-Secretary-General in charge of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs. The editors introduce the text (reproduced in this issue on pages 123-456) with the paragraph :

« The drive toward world development and a better economic order has made little headway in the present decade. The mobilization of public opinion as an essential element in the effort has not been very successful either. Nevertheless, the approach was right, says UN Under-Secretary-General Jean Ripert, and a more massive mobilization is indispensable ». But was the approach right? How is it possible to be so sure? The current policy has been in force since the beginning of the First Development Decade and the world situation has deteriorated significantly since that time with many warnings of much worse to come in the very near future.

And in that same issue of Development Forum, there are a few small symptoms of the inconsistencies underlying Jean Ripert's text. The editors have titled it « Rally public opinion » in English whilst leaving it as « Mobiliser l'opinion » in French. Is « mobilization » now inappropriate to an English-speaking audience and, if so, why? The emphasis is on the media with a single passing reference to « nongovernmental organizations which relay new ideas to the public should also contribute ». For a body which is usually meticulous about translation, this phrase appears in French, without mentioning nongovernmental organizations (a UN-term), as « doivent également contribuer conjointement... les groupes qui servent de relais pour la diffusion d'idées nouvelles dans l'opinion publique (partis politiques, Eglises, associations laïques d'entraide et d'animation, universités et institutions de recherche, etc.) » Clearly international NGOs play no part in this scheme, and the national ones are seen as passive relays for the « new ideas » generated by the United Nations. (Why should the UN play on the ambiguities of terms which it itself has created?). And yet in the same issue in the NGO Forum section (which is omitted

from the French version) appears a text which stresses the importance of the nongovernmental organizations. It is reproduced as an insert on this page. And finally there appears a note (also absent from the much shorter French version) to the effect that « Development Forum regrets that due to financial difficulties the previously announced 11 editions of this year have been reduced to 10 ». Those responsible within the UN system for « mobilizing public opinion » have for too many years conveyed the impression that their approach was the correct one and completely justified the resources which have been channelled into their activities. And yet their results fail completely to match their rhetoric. Perhaps their financial difficulties will encourage a healthy re-examination of their whole philosophy. As it is one is forced into a sense of *déjà vu*. Some five years ago, this same sense of « déjà vu » was provoked by the UN Secretary General's own review and appraisal of the « Dissemination of information and mobilization of public opinion relative to problems of development ». It seems therefore appropriate, much as it is to be regretted, that our text analyzing that report and its context should be reproduced to counter-balance the unchanged emphasis reflected in Jean Ripert's article on the matter. At that time the article below appeared under the heading « Mobilization for alienation versus Catalysis for participation; the critical choice for the United Nations system ».

The Problem

The United Nations often appears to be rapidly destroying itself (1). Disillusionment concerning the capacity of international organization to solve world problems is now widespread. This is particularly true of the United Nations system of organizations (and extends corollarily to staff members of each secretariat).

chest defenders of its ideals - (2).

This disillusionment, and the realization that we may have to live with the problems and adapt to them, has led to severe cuts in United Nations and Agency programme budgets now viewed as in-

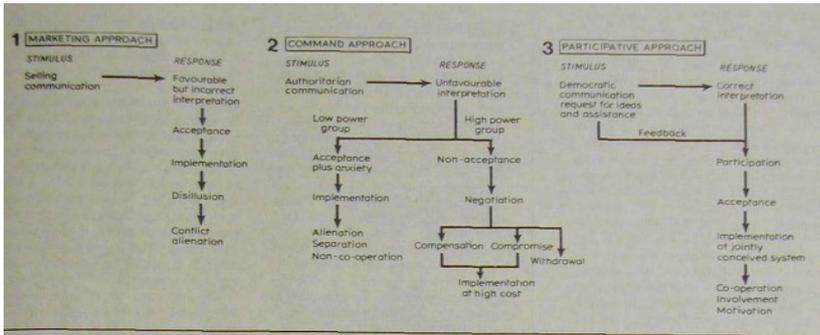
creasingly symbolic in value. The UN has even had difficulties in meeting its payroll and other day-to-day obligations. The situation has been considerably aggravated by the recent dollar devaluations (3). « All available facts and figure; indicate that a major crisis cannot be much longer postponed » says one UN General Assembly document. « Clearly, if a full, final and viable settlement of the Organization's urgent financial difficulties is to stand any chance of success, substantial voluntary contributions for their equivalent) additional to those already paid or pledged must be assured. Whether they will be forthcoming in sufficient amount will be very much dependent on the response made, in the first instance by the major Powers of the United Nations ». They have not been forthcoming. Politically the major Powers no longer have any great need for the United Nations (4).

Provocos ?

It has increasingly been recognized by the United Nations that voluntary organizations can contribute valuable resources and expertise to many UN programmes. The number of international voluntary agencies co-operation with UN specialized agencies confirms this. But in the past, it has often been a one-way process where NGOs participated in UN projects and were utilized for information and fund raising purposes, but were rarely involved in joint planning efforts. Dwain Epps of the World Council of Churches' Commission on International Affairs described this situation in 1976 : « The UN is very interested in being serviced on its terms, but is... hesitant to serve, to facilitate NGO contributions, or to permit effective NGO co-operation at policy-formulation levels ».

Bradford Morse, Administrator of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) supports expanding the co-operation of this agency with NGOs. or. as he has termed them. « professional, voluntary and citizens' organizations» (PROVOCOS), thus emphasizing what they are, rather than what they are not.

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« On the whole the United Nations system of inter-governmental organizations have become less and less effective as matrices for international

where substantial interests of the great powers and generally the developed countries are directly or indirectly involved » (6).

With the exception of some specialized technical agencies, it has become an arena in which developing countries are placated and contained by encouraging them to spend endless hours in formulating toothless resolutions with little hope of implementation (6).

The UN Response

Faced with this situation the United Nations has only two responses, one internal, the other external. The internal response is to devote « an entirely disproportionate part of the energy of delegates and secretariats » to the matter of « coordination » - a « large scale escape » into these issues has been used by great powers to curtail the organizations effectiveness, according to Gunnar Myrdal (7). (This matter will be considered in a later issue). The external response is to considerably accelerate the persuasion of public opinion and the creation of « political will ». This was stressed by the Secretary General of UNCTAD as being of the highest priority « in order to avoid a second Development Decade of even deeper frustration than the first one » (TD/96).

To meet this challenge ECOSOC's Centre for Economic and Social information (now incorporated into the Office of Public Information) prepared a report (A/AC.14/L.171) which was submitted to the fourth session (meeting from 29 September 1969) of the Preparatory Committee for the Second United Nations Development Decade. The report concerned mobilization of public opinion for the Decade. Extracts were published in *International Associations* (1970, No 3, p. 154-

156) and a critique appeared in the following issue (1970, No. 4, p. 221-224). The report was used as a guideline in terms of which CESI and, to some extent, OPI have been functioning since 1970. The UN Secretary General has just produced a Review and Appraisal of the « Dissemination of Information and Mobilization of Public Opinion Relative to Problems of Development » (E/5358, 21 May 1973). This is the follow-up to the CESI report of 1969 and records progress made on the mobilization front. The information for the Secretary General's review « is drawn from replies submitted by member States... But in view of the limited number of replies received to the three questions raised about public attitudes, it was necessary to draw on other sources of information as well. Of the 12 replies received. 10 were from industrial countries...» (paras 3-4). This is indicative of member States' interest in the matter. However, « While some of the submissions discussed the impact of such activities on the public mind, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that, in spite of governmental efforts and similar programmes by nongovernmental organizations (8), the state of public opinion on matters of development, particularly in the industrialized countries, is generally less favourable today than it has been in the past. This tends to be borne out by empiric observation » (paras 5-6). The review notes that « It would probably be unfair to conclude that a sudden callousness had overcome public opinion in the developed countries. It is more like a closing of the gates to a pattern of generalizations perceived as outworn by over-use » (para, 20).

An Analysis

Now the question is who within the UN system is responsible for the over-use of this pattern of generalizations? How

predictable was the « closing of the gates? Why has the « political will » been further eroded? (9). In our 1970 critique of the CESI approach we attempted to draw attention to its defects (see extract in insert). The out-of-date mentality which characterizes U.N. thinking on these matters can be illustrated by a modified version of the classic World War I « mobilization » poster (p. 410). It can be usefully, if ironically and regretfully, contrasted with the current U.S. Army conscription poster whose new mentality theme and style we illustrate on page 411 (10). Analysis and evidence is of course available in support of the need for this changed approach, and what else would convince U.S. Army generals to change their traditional - tough - stance to such an extent. And yet no equivalent analysis penetrates through to the UN Public Information sections. The most succinct version of an analysis that we have encountered may be given in diagrammatic form in Fig. 1 (11).

Approach 1

Under the heading « Avoiding disillusionment », the author notes that « Approach 1 », which is the standard UN/OPI approach, may lead to a favourable reaction by the « target » body (e.g. man-in-the-street, NGO, or a national government agency) receiving the « message » but often this reaction is incorrect due to the tendency, admitted by many producing the messages, to over-sell their product (in this case the UN development programme) to give the impression that it will solve every problem about which the target body is concerned. This approach often leads to disillusionment when recommendations become realities, and the target body realizes that the UN programmes do not cure problems but may even bring additional problems in their wake. This discovery tends to lead to conflict and alienation from the UN pro-

grammes and, by association, from the programme objectives.

Approach 2

A second option often taken when the previous approach does not work, may be described as the « command » approach. This involves arranging for a directive from a body (possibly a United Nations Association or a Unesco National Commission) on which the target body is dependent or which he or it respects, announcing that a positive response is required to the message (e.g. the UN programme). If the body has little independence then, as shown in Approach 2 (left-hand side), resentment of the approach will result in action but with alienation of those involved and a hostile attitude toward future messages. If the body is more powerful, it may be able to implement it in a counter-productive manner or ensure that it is ignored (Approach 2, right-hand side). Approach 2 probably occurs in all national government bureaucracies which have to respond to the frequent and seemingly frenetic calls for UN Days, Years, and other symbolic programmes and questionnaires.

Approach 3

The United Nations has still to learn how to implement « Approach 3 », which is a minimum response to its resource problem and the achievement of its objectives.

Approach 3 is much less authoritarian. The responsible body (in this case the appropriate unit of the U.N. system) approaches the external contact (the « target body » in OPI/CESI parlance) with an offer of help, pointing out what might be achieved by the external contact's information programme in a collaborative and participative enterprise and asking for ideas and assistance from that body. This approach helps the external contact (e.g. an NGO or a national government agency) to gain a correct impression of the proposed programme and to participate in its elaboration (see feedback loop). The programme finally implemented has much greater chance of motivating the external contact and of ensuring its involvement and cooperation. Of course UN officials regularly ask for « assistance and ideas » in such arenas as NGO briefing sessions. On closer inspection however, this is either a completely ritual gesture, or is interpreted to mean publicizing the UN programme to a wider audience. No participation or feedback is involved. Nor could it be « received » by the secretariat in many cases - there is no procedural provision for such feedback messages. Whilst Approach 3 would represent a major step forward if meaningfully implemented, it is nevertheless excessively directive (12), if maximum support is to be obtained for « programmes on world problems ». The rewording is deliberate here. The UN seeks maximum support for

The word « mobilization » has special associations and was clearly chosen for that reason. Just as in the past, people have been mobilized for war, the UN is now proposing to take the lead in mobilizing people for the war on want. From a governmental point of view, there is perhaps little difference. It is (as one dictionary puts it) a case of making the people mobile and readily available, and calling into active service in readiness for a course of action decided by government.

The question could however be raised as to whether there were not some attitudes deriving from war psychology which are not directly associated with the mobilization of the public - such as artificially generating a crisis mentality. Given that it is in the process of mobilization that the people's freedom of action is bent to that of the leaders associated with the government apparatus, once the process of mobilization is completed, a war machine is in being and individual will can no longer be taken into account. It is the psychology of the various stages in this process which form one topic of peace research. The question raised here is therefore whether in a free society, and under what conditions, public will can or should be mobilized by government. In addition there is the implied definition of man and human nature, and the rights of man, in the supposition that his will can be bent to suit the government strategy, however benign its intentions. Is the

action in terms of « UN programme objectives ». These programme objectives however presumably represent the desires of « we the peoples... ». They do not belong in some mysterious, exclusive and copyrighted manner to the United Nations system as a set of institutions, as the wording would seem to imply. The UN system therefore loses nothing, and gains much, by encouraging and facilitating external bodies in the pursuit of their own programme objectives. It is really a question of whether the UN system is interested solely in its own programmes as symbols of departmental and institutional glory, or rather in the accomplishment of their objectives, by whatever channels are available. Unfortunately it usually seems to be the former, even when (as is often the case) the « programme » has only sufficient resources for one staff member plus shared secretary.

Approach 4

An « Approach 4 » could therefore be conceived which goes beyond marketing.

will which can be so induced or manipulated to be considered no different in quality, desirability and durability from self-generated will ? These are old questions.

The space devoted to these issues in the Report does not correspond to the number of problems raised by some of their implications. There is a radical difference, as is intended, between informing those members of the public who desire information, and scientifically designing a campaign to influence individuals via the leaders whom they respect. This is very similar to the problem posed by corporations trading in their own shares to control artificially their value in the market. How democratic is the selection of the cause for which people should be mobilized ? There is a total lack of awareness that will should be formed by mature reflection on the part of the individual and not by artificially manipulating his environment. In a democratic society each organized group has the right to attempt to influence the individual. It is from his interaction with these groups - his total social environment - his own experiences, that his freely chosen course of action - his will - germinates. The UN, according to the Report, should intervene in these processes without, as might be considered its responsibility, revealing any understanding of the complexity of the processes involved. (Extract from a review of UN « mobilization » in *International Associations*, 1970, no. 4)

even of the subtlest « stimulus-response » type as ably analyzed above by Rigby. In Approach 4 the « stimulus » would not come from only one group of bodies, namely the UN Agencies, implying that only they have seen « the truth ».

And the stimulus would not only be received by external bodies, implying that they are all and always - retarded » in their thinking, compared to that of the U.N. system. In Approach 4 the « stimuli » would come from any active and concerned body and the « responses » would come from as many bodies as perceived the stimuli to be valid options for their own programmes. This network-oriented approach is the basis for a synergistic multiplication of resources directed toward world problems. The challenge to the U.N. system is to help give operational reality to such an approach. Studies are required to clarify it. They could well be combined in a sort of « mini-Jackson Report » to provide the missing component in the thinking of the original Jackson Report (13).



THE U.S. ARMY'S RESPONSE TO ITS CONSCRIPTION CRISIS : a 1970s approach

« The army wants to join you now ».

The NGO Role

Let us see how the U.N. is meeting this challenge and moving toward a more up-to-date approach to mobilizing public opinion by involving NGO's. In December 1972 in Geneva. ECOSOC convened a - Meeting of experts on the particular role of the nongovernmental organizations on the mobilizing of public opinion and political will ». Some versions of the title add « in support of the International Development Strategy ». The experts were mainly from key NGO's with some

participants from key national development information programmes. The meeting was chaired by Mrs Helvi Sipilä. UN Assistant Secretary-General for Social and Humanitarian Matters, in the presence of Curtis Roosevelt, Chief of the ECOSOC NGO Section and W. Gibson Parker, Director of CESI/UN. The experts came forth with exciting references to a « new style of relationship », for which a Canadian example was given, in which a much less directive approach was used. This involved going beyond existing NGO's, shifting emphasis to the

participation of people and communities rather than building up membership of particular organizational empires. « Mobilization » was even condemned in favour of involving people where they can participate and where they can learn in « learning centres » - a « people approach » rather than an « institutional approach ».

The counter-current however was to stress the fetter by letter interpretation of the UN's International Development Strategy and only to examine NGO's possible relevance to it. Opinions were

divided in a somewhat similar manner over whether « NGO » should only mean the select few which have passed all their political examinations by one means or another and achieved consultative status, or whether it should also mean non-recognized or non-international bodies. (It really is quite extraordinary that in this time of increasing social crisis there should still be this U.N. impulse to say « that body is not good enough to help »). Some experts stressed the consequent increasing isolation of the U.N. and its seeming irrelevance to international conditions and issues. The Chairman agreed that the U.N. had lost contact with the people to whom (not with whom ?) it should be talking. There were frequent references to the impression that NGO's were « used » by the U.N. rather than being in partnership with it. After an exciting start the meeting decayed considerably. A quite incredible procedure was adopted of asking participants to hastily note down on scraps of paper their recommendations which were then typed up in a report examined word by word in plenary. No working documents were prepared beforehand to improve the quality of the final result. The report resulting from this lengthy process was fortunately not circulated; instead, a completely different version was later produced (as an internal document only). This is excellent in many ways. It seems to have been based on an inspired interpretation of the sense of the meeting rather than on the abortive procedure mentioned here (on page 413). Now the report itself contains some very exciting paragraphs. A rough analysis groups them, according to the « approaches » above, as follows : Approach 1, no paragraphs; Approach 2, 5 paragraphs; Approach 3, 8 paragraphs; Approach 4, 6 paragraphs; unclassified, 5 paragraphs.

The Current Reality

The above report was produced on 24 January 1973. The Secretary-Generals

Review (cited above) appeared on 21 May 1973. It does not mention the meeting or the report. Its recommendations (none of which suggest any new departures at this critical time) contain only one reference to NGO's : « it would undoubtedly be helpful to the nongovernmental organizations in enlisting public support for United Nations development objectives » (para. 26). In practice this sort of statement works out to Approach 1 again. It would seem that the meeting was one more ritualistic session to contain criticism.

To be meaningful and credible, « partnership » talk on the part of the U.N. system should extend visibly into the documents of CESI and the Office of Public Information. In the vast mountain of U.N. system reports, documents and brochures, why has only ILO produced a brochure on the NGO role ? Why are there no imaginative reports and suggestions ? Why has the Unesco *Courier* never had an issue on NGO action ? Why is no mention made of NGO's in the basic literature on the U.N. system which is available to the thousands of visitors to secretariat buildings, information centres and regional offices, and which is the basic ammunition of the national and local United Nations Associations ? Why is the « partnership » role not stressed in the standard secretariat guided-tour speech ? Why not tell the people of the channels via which they can work in partnership with the U.N. system ? By stressing the « mighty institutional » image, people have no means of responding to the U.N. other than by purchasing pretty postcards and stamps, or selling the U.N. line in their home community. The latter is the traditional Approach 1 which has led to the alienation which is now all too evident, often because of the stultifying effect of the local U.N.A.'s UN-centred programmes (Approach 2).

The Critical Choice

The public information material of the U.N. must show how nongovernmen-

tal (14) action, voluntary action, people's movements, etc., are related to facilitated and reinforced by, U.N. action. It must show how both contribute in *partnership* to common objectives; objectives which are those of « We the peoples... » and not of an anxious system of institutions trying to monopolize every iota of credit in order to justify its own existence. This is not to say that the United Nations should stress the importance of the existing NGO's, which in quite a number of cases may be as institutionally distant from the people as is the United Nations (partly for similar reasons and partly in imitation of sterile, status-boosting UN procedures). Rather the stress should be placed on the ability of (and need for) people to act in the light of their own understanding through their own styles of organization, whether they exist as traditional NGO's or need to be created using new formulae in their own communities. It is the importance of this complementary creative mode of action which should be stressed, for at the moment NGO's constitute the underdeveloped « third world » of the organizational system (15).

It is only by achieving this form of « self-mobilization », catalyzed (not organized) in part by United Nations efforts, that the progressive alienation of people from all forms of organized action can be retarded. The United Nations must trust that a massive growth in this « people action » would result in a very worthwhile percentage of it being directly of value to the specific U.N. concerns (although

able, but unrecognized, component of social development). That this is likely to be the case is fairly evident from the amount of independent grass-roots concern with peace, environment, racial discrimination and other such issues. « Catalysis » is the key to the needed United Nations public information effort, not « mobilization ». Catalysis leads to participation, mobilization leads to alienation.

A.J.

FOOTNOTES

(1) An ideal; the self-destruction of the United Nations by Shirley Hazzard, London, Macmillan, 1973.

(2) Mahdi Elmadrja, The United Nations System; an analysis, London, Faber and Faber 1973.

(3) The pensions of retired United Nations civil servants have been effectively reduced by 30-40 % with no possibility of compensation under present circumstances.

(4) For example: the European Security Conference the Middle East, Vietnam, the hijacking issue, etc.

(5) Gunnar Myrdal. In: Mahdi Elmadrja. Op. cit. p. 13.

(6) Chadwick, Alger. International Associates, 1972, p. 461-464: « The analysis has shown that only 53 of some 2000 (less than 3%) decisions in the assemblies and executive bodies of the UN, ILO and WHO created new activities in the years 1955, 1960 and 1965 ».

(7) Gunnar Myrdal. In: Mahdi Elmadrja. Op. cit. p. 13

(8) It is rather ironical to note that « NGO's » are mentioned here for the first time (they were mentioned in the 1969 report) in a manner which effectively denies the title for the inadequacy of the CESI/OPI approach which has not attempted to involve

NGOs in a common participative approach but to « brief » them on its own approach.

(9) W. Gibson Parker, Director, CESI/UN at expert meeting on Mobilization of Public Opinion (Geneva December 1972).

(10) The first represents « Approach 1 » and the second, « Approach 3 » as defined in Fig. 1.

(11) Reproduced from an article on marketing in the computer business by J. Malcolm Rigby. Tempering the revolution, *New Scientist*, 4 June 1970, p. 4 (The commentary is an adaptation of that in the article).

(12) An analysis of the weakness of this directiveness is given in Donald Schon, *Beyond the Stable State* public and private learning in a changing society London, Temple Smith, 1971 (reviewed in: *Wanted; new types of social organization. International Association, 1971, 3).*

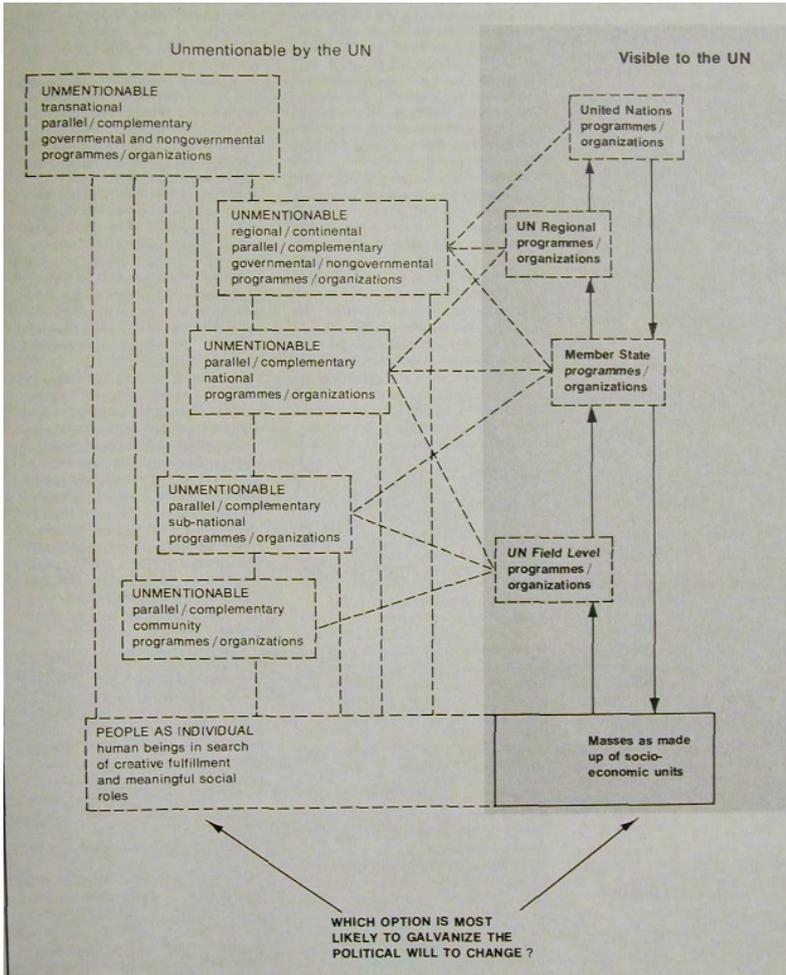
(13) United Nations Capacity Study of the United Nations Development System, New York, United Nations, 1969, 2 vols. (reviewed in *International Associations*, 1970, under the title « Planning for the 1960s in the 1970s »).

(14) « Nongovernmental » is an extremely unhelpful and negative term of U.N. origin. It is as conducive to positive effective partnership on the part of voluntary bodies, as calling the United Nations the « Non National Organization » would be facilitative of nation state collaboration.

(15) This « third world » parallel is very suggestive. NGO action potential is underdeveloped, it does have equivalent critical international problems (lack of needed facilities, skills, financial resources, infrastructures information), it does have a poor relationship to the other components, the expanding growth of its frustrated expectations does represent a critical problem for the future - but there are a lot of people and groups out there who could organize themselves further against world problems. And, as opposed to the socio-economic counterpart, the process could be self-generating if it could be appropriately catalyzed.

« INVISIBLE ». REALITIES

Attempt at a « detailed » model of the United Nations concept of the world social system



Extract from the report and recommendations of the U.N. experts meeting in Geneva 13-15 December 1972 on the particular role of the NGO's in mobilizing public opinion and political will

A theme that was repeated over and over again throughout this meeting was the need for a new set of relationships between the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the people of the world. The UN's present attitude towards NGOs reflects a situation where not only are people unaware and often uninterested in the work of the United Nations, but also where the United Nations is unaware and apparently uninterested in the views and concerns of people throughout the world. For « we the people » the United Nations is becoming increasingly irrelevant and it is essential that the United Nations generally, and the Economic and Social Council in particular, understand the implications of this situation and respond to it.

In this regard, there was a strong feeling that NGOs will no longer tolerate being used by the United Nations - told what the United Nations wants them to promote without being consulted during the formulation stages of the programme. A change in the present process is imperative if the United Nations is to regain the interest and support of the world population, and engage the constituencies of the NGOs in furthering the work of the United Nations.

This change must lead to a partnership between the United Nations and NGOs from which each can mutually benefit. NGOs with their different constituencies, particularly at the national level, can offer a great variety of resources to the United Nations if the United Nations is willing to listen and be influenced by these resources (constituencies). The United Nations must be willing to involve those NGOs with specific capacities in programme planning, formulation, and implementation. Other wise, the United Nations cannot expect NGOs to mobilize public opinion for a strategy which they had no hand in drafting. Having described this underlying theme of the meeting, the need for a new relationship, the participants emphasized that this relationship must involve all the bodies and channels of the United Nations system in a co-ordinated manner, international, regional and national. It must involve a broader range of voluntary agencies than those NGOs presently having consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. The emphasis is

not on numbers but on relevance and the quality of the potential contribution of the NGOs. The development and implementation of such a relationship must be a long term policy of the United Nations, rather than the present fragmented and occasional approach. It will involve acquainting Member States and United Nations Secretariat members with the considerable contributions which have and can be made by NGOs. Equally, it will involve educating NGOs about the possibilities of working with inter-governmental organizations, and about what can and has been done by Member States and the United Nations, while making each aware of the limitations of the other. Specifically, there was a strong feeling that the United Nations and governments must recognize that many NGOs are most effective at the national and local level. Technical co-operation and assistance materialize at the field level. Creating political will for the goals of the International Development Strategy must be approached differently in each country. The relationship between the UN and NGOs must be adjusted to take this into account. As an integral part of this the international NGO headquarters must be helped to facilitate liaison if the NGO contribution at all levels is to be maximized. Underlying the discussion of the group was an urgency to bridge a gap of ignorance and misunderstanding between the governmental and non-governmental sectors. Implicit here is the idea of engaging NGOs as a means of reaching the peoples of the world in order to involve them in the international community's effort to work, through an International Development Strategy, towards a universal society where social justice, with its political and economic consequences, appears as a realistic possibility. To accomplish this the group felt that the United Nations would have to take the lead in establishing a relationship with NGOs and their constituencies where a style leading to trust and confidence was clearly evident.

1. The United Nations should include the participation of NGOs, selected on the basis of their special expertise, in the planning and drafting of programmes and reports to be submitted to the United Nations governing bodies. This should be done 1) by direct representation of NGOs in preparatory meetings. 2) by use of information collected by NGOs concerning the issue under study. This means involving NGOs in all aspects of policy making - preplanning, planning and implementation. It will not only provide the United Nations with a valuable pool of expertise and information, but will also

increase its awareness of public opinion.

(Secretariat Note : This might be accomplished without violating paragraph 12 of resolution 1296 (XLIV)).

2. Co-ordination (non-duplication) within the UN system, maximizing on existing experience, programmes and relationships, is essential, as is the need to streamline and co-ordinate channels of communications with NGOs, and to coordinate NGO programmes with those of the total UN family. (Secretariat Note : The Secretary of the Council's Committee on NGOs has reported to the Committee that lack of coordination within the UN system - rivalries and duplication - is the main reason for inhibiting more engagement from NGOs).

5. UN should develop channels for a continuous, genuine UN-NGO dialogue with a cross-section of NGOs to insure a two-way communication with NGOs. In this regard, provision should be made for the collection of data on action taken by NGOs on issues of development. (Data on their technical assistance efforts as well as their educational, informational and political efforts).

7. Provisions should be made for developing relations with a broader range of organizations than those presently granted consultative status, including national NGOs, academic and research institutions and foundations. A review of policies and procedures for groups obtaining consultative status should be undertaken in consultation with voluntary associations and NGOs. A thorough study and analysis of NGOs and voluntary associations, their interests, activities and resource capabilities should be authorized, taking into account those studies already undertaken or planned.

10. ECOSOC should consider making appropriate arrangements to enable the public to express its view on development issues, such as holding a « public » session, and that more meetings between the ECOSOC NGO Committee and NGOs be held, with summary records. The summary records, or their equivalent, were stressed because of the need to communicate the details of such proceedings to interested parties not able to be present.

11. That CESI be encouraged to develop further, in other countries, the initiative it took in convening the public meetings in Boston and St. Louis.

13. The facilities available to NGOs directly affect their ability to fulfill their communication and other functions. The ECOSOC should look into the facilities available at Headquarters, Geneva, and other UN Offices for the purpose of improving these.