THE NEXT STEP IN INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

- the use of information, rather than organization, as the foundation for the inter-organizational activity of the future

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(Notes on the problems associated with the current crisis in the relations between intergovernmental and nongovernmental bodies, with particular regard to the United Nations Specialized Agencies and the consultative status arrangement)
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INTRODUCTION

The Director-General of UNESCO clearly states in his "Long-term Outline Plan for 1971-1976," on the subject of international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and UNESCO National Commissions, that:

"The moment has therefore come, I believe, to make a thorough review of the way in which UNESCO collaborates with these two categories of organizations. Practices have grown up which, with the passage of time, have become more 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."

This series of notes attempts to show that the problems which gave rise to the above comments are also evident in the consultative arrangements with other Specialized Agencies of the United Nations system and are indeed symptomatic of a general crisis -- in the relations between governmental and nongovernmental bodies (see Section A). If this is the case, then it is important to decide whether the incidents in the relations between IGOs and NGOs are to be considered as the problems themselves or merely as symptoms of some deeper underlying problem -- as is to some extent implied by the Director-General's comment. If there is any possibility that the latter may prove to be the case, then remedies for the symptoms will merely enable the underlying problems to reassert themselves in new and unpredictable ways.

Restricting attention to the problems of NGO-IGO relations, obscures the fact that many such problems are in fact common to relations between NGO and NGO. No solution to the former can be satisfactory without a solution to the latter. A final aspect of the current difficulties of NGOs is that of lack of adequate resources and consequent ineffectiveness, whether in support of or independent of UN programmes. It is argued that this is an inter-organizational problem which can be solved by considering an inter-organizational solution (see Section A, part 3).

It is further argued that it is not sufficient to look at the problems which have emerged in the recent past. A serious attempt must be made to examine the problems which are likely to emerge in the foreseeable future (see Section B) so that any solution implemented now will not immediately prove inadequate to the demands placed upon it -- or alternatively will not cripple inter-organizational activity to a sub-optimum level unrelated to its potential. An attempt has therefore been made to envisage the direction in which NGO activity will develop to highlight the problems and opportunities of inter-organizational relationships which will arise and in terms of which decisions should be taken now.

In an attempt to broaden the debate in the interests of all nongovernmental organizations concerned with the effectiveness of their relations with United Nations programmes, a list of points has been developed (see Section C) to indicate some of the topics that could be discussed -- from those involving insignificant changes to major changes.

There is a marked tendency to restrict the debate to the relatively narrow circle of each individual NGO Conference based on the belief that each such Conference is totally unrelated to any other NGO Conference. This view is opposed (see Section E) by showing that in
fact there is a very high degree of overlap between the membership of the different NGO Conferences -- aside from the fact that each Agency recognizes the interdependent nature of its relationship to other Agencies within the UN System.

Discussion of inter-organizational problems, and consultative arrangements in particular, is generally based on the assumption that it is possible to consider the administrative and programme relations between organizations without taking into consideration the people involved, either in their personal capacity or their capacity as representatives. This ignores some important functions of inter-organizational activity which must be considered in selecting any new arrangement. (see Section F)

Another theme missing from the debate on the consultative arrangement is a recognition of the nature of the vast interlinking network of social structures which make up world society (see Section G). Some impression of this is conveyed in a later section of the Director-General's report quoted above:

"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 as an appeal, a guide, a focus for the mobilization of these tremendous multifaceted energies..."

It is this network which provides the "hidden" background or context for the debate on the relationship between NGOs and IGOs. The consultative relationship links are potentially most significant links, but their significance is derived from the extent to which the energies of the larger network are focused through them. If this network is ignored, however indirectly some parts are related to INGOs or the UN system, the international community is cut off from the sources of its strength at the national and grass-roots level. If the consultative relationship problems are solved without considering the inter-organizational problems which have their origin in other parts of the world network, then the continuing presence of the latter will quickly destroy any temporary benefits gained by superficial attention to the consultative relationship mechanism.

Just as UNESCO has to heed the warning given by the Austrian delegate to the 1970 General Conference:

"It is unfortunately true that an organization whose activities and successes are known to only a few specialists simply does not exist in the mind of the public at large. UNESCO in particular just cannot afford to be satisfied with recognition by an elite alone..."

so, IGOs in general cannot be satisfied with an inward-looking attitude -- either towards themselves or towards the consultative relationship -- when neither is widely known to international relations scholars, let alone to the "mind of the public at large." The consultative relationship can only fulfill its promise when it is deliberately related to other parts of the network and ceases to be "an old boy network club" (as one NGO representative recently expressed it) reducing "uninformed and irrelevant outsiders" to a condition of apathetic or frustrated onlookers (in those cases in which optimism persists).

One possibility is suggested for galvanizing inter-organizational activity and the consultative relationship. This is based on the
more dynamic use of information in the individual programme interests of NGOs and the possibility of facilitating much more frequent ad hoc inter-NGO activity (see Section H). This suggestion draws on descriptions of recent developments in inter-organizational techniques (described in two special Annexes), and hopefully by-passes most of the threats to autonomy detected in the rejected solution of NGO groupings. (An information system is described in Appendix II).

No solution is ideal. The final section has, therefore, been devoted to the identification of some of the problems and opportunities which arise if an emphasis is placed on the use of information as an integrating factor in inter-organizational relations (see Section I).

International NGOs should take a careful look at the threats with which they are currently faced: rejected by some developing countries, ignored in the conception and implementation of major UN programmes, criticized for their lack of effectiveness, ignored by the mass media, labelled as racist or government-front organizations by some governments, considered insignificant by the majority of international relations scholars, "outlaws" in terms of international law, considered outdated by youth, handicapped by lack of resources, etc.

International NGOs, to some extent through their imitation of inter-governmental procedures, have lost their pioneering role:

- in the eyes of the majority of governments and in the eyes of youth
- in the eyes of those concerned with the future, such as Elise Boulding, Professor of Sociology and President of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

"This means that one cannot accurately speak of "world" images of the future emerging from these organizations. The images of the future so far generated by NGOs are western images. Until the transition to a more reality-based internationalism has been effected, one cannot look for guiding images from this sector of world politics." ("Futurology and the imagery capacity of the West; the theory of the image of the future." World Future Society Bulletin, December, 1970);

- and even in the eyes of a contender, unexpected by either IGOs or NGOs, namely the "other" non-governmental organizations known as multinational corporations:
  "The executives of the world corporations are the natural new leaders of a peaceful, humane world. In 1500 the papacy lost its dominance over man's minds; in the 1600s the leaders of the nation-states have also suffered a dramatic decline in confidence and power. The new world leaders are the creative executives of world corporations." (Arthur Barber. "Global problem-solving; a new corporate mission." Innovation, October 1976).

And in support of this argument it is appropriate to recall that less than 1% of aid passes via intergovernmental structures.

This many-faceted crisis in NGO affairs should not be considered a disaster. In the evolution of social structures periods of crisis are inevitable and a sign of continuing growth. (The Chinese ideogram for "crisis" is a combination of the ideogram for "danger" and the ideogram for "opportunity"). The question is whether NGOs, in association with the UN system, can reject those habits which are no longer useful (and for which they are rightly criticized by youth) in order to seize the new opportunities available -- or whether NGOs will cling to the outworn modes of operation, to be bypassed by new social processes.
Careful study is required to determine the most appropriate new methods needed to contain all features of the more complex NGO-IGO relationships of the future. In the next section some Specific Proposals are made which serve as a conclusion to the arguments and views expressed in the body of the report.
SPECIFIC PROPOSALS

1. With regard to modifications in the inter-organizational machinery and particularly the consultative arrangement with United Nations Agencies, any changes proposed should not be considered as being a change of structure from one organizational mechanism which has been adequate for twenty years to a new organizational mechanism which will be adequate for the next twenty years.

The change required is rather a change of attitude from one depending upon and requiring a "permanent" and formal organizational structure as the foundation for collective action to one which focuses on a problem-oriented information system which acts as a permanent dynamic foundation for a series of formal or informal temporary organizational relationships between participating NGOs and with the Agency in question. Such formal patterns should be frequently modified or evolved into new patterns of formal relationship as problems evolve or new problems are detected.

Note that in fact each 2 yearly meeting of NGOs (and associated working groups) is such a temporary (5 day) formal relationship based upon and tied together by the information system constituted by each Conference Secretariat's card file of NGOs. But such information systems are embryonic in relation to their potential, particularly if linked together to give each NGO a complete picture of the network of potential NGO and IGO contacts with respect to each possible programme area.

The change of attitude is therefore from a focus on a particular organizational form to a focus on an information system which permits a series of organizational forms to be generated - progressively better adapted to the changing array of problems. The change from a focus on the actual to a focus on the potential places NGOs in a much more powerful and flexible position.

2. As a relatively simple change of procedure which does not imply any "massive structural reorganization" of NGO relations (such as is strongly opposed by many NGOs), each of the various "consultative status" NGO Conferences could be scheduled to take place at the same place during the same period, instead of being held in different places at different periods. In other words without in any way linking them together procedurally it would be quite possible to hold the plenary sessions in the same physical setting (e.g. in neighbouring conference rooms with a common reception/refreshment area) as mainly concurrent sessions with the possibility of joint sessions on substantive matters where these were felt to be useful (e.g. a briefing on development).

This technique of arranging what might be called "multi-meetings" is not new. Multi-meetings in the U.S.A. may involve many specialized, particularly academic, societies meeting during the course of a ten day period. A good example the thirty-odd specialized societies which schedule their own independent meetings within a common time framework on the occasion of the multi-sessional annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (for which some 10,000 people may register). A programme committee schedules sessions so that those on related topics (irrespective of which body is responsible for the session) are held consecut-
voly rather than concurrently, and allocates meeting rooms accordingly. There need be no special relationship between any of the bodies holding their meetings within the multi-meeting framework.

In the case of international NGOs a multi-meeting could be arranged every 1 or 2 years to bring together the NGO representatives which meet for the ECOSOC NGO Conference, the UNESCO NGO Conference, etc. But the programme committee, which could include representatives of any such bodies and of the relevant Specialized Agencies, need not limit the multi-meeting to sessions on the procedural aspects of consultative status. Substantive matter meetings of NGO representatives could also be scheduled so that the following range of possibilities is made available for use as required:

- separate consultative status procedure formal conferences (ECOSOC/NGO, UNESCO/NGO, UNICEF/NGO, etc.)
- separate standing committee and bureau meetings of any such plenary bodies.
- working or ad hoc groups of NGOs meeting separately around each consultative status conference on either substantive or procedural matters
- working or ad hoc groups of NGOs meeting jointly where the groups around each consultative status conference have a sufficiently common or overlapping interest (e.g. development, peace, youth, education, etc.)
- joint plenary conferences on substantive matters whenever a common interest topic requires discussion. This could either take the form of a plenary conference arranged jointly by several of the consultative status groupings, or it could be scheduled within the multi-meeting framework as a session totally independent of the formal groupings as a one-off meeting. There is, for example, no reason why mixed plenary conferences should not draft resolutions which, for the benefit of the Agency concerned, would only be actually voted by those NGOs present which had consultative status with that Agency.
- separate substantive matter formal or working groups (e.g. on disarmament, women, childhood and adolescence, crime and treatment of offenders) as appropriate
- contact meetings of executives of NGOs with similar problems (for example, such a multi-meeting would be an appropriate occasion for the potentially important, and little known, informal contact meetings between the executives of the major formal scientific NGO groupings which have been initiated by ICSU).

Nor is it necessary for the programme committee to limit participation to Agency-oriented NGO groups. If the multi-meeting setting is a useful occasion for an NGO group, not specifically associated with the UN or its programmes, to meet (perhaps because most of the members are present for other sessions within the multi-meeting framework), then such activity should be facilitated. (For that matter, what NGO activity is not in some way relevant to UN programmes?) The attitude should be to maximize inter-NGO activity, and the possibility for NGO-IGO activity, rather than to set up barriers to it based on procedural or other criteria which are suspect in functional terms.
On the same basis, participation of an individual NGO at multi-meetings should not be based on the consultative status criterion (except for admission to procedural or other closed sessions). Indeed, as with the AAAS meeting mentioned above, there is much to be said for making many sessions open to any individual or organization representative sufficiently interested to wish to pay the registration fee. This in no way affects the rules on the right to vote or speak developed for any particular session, open or closed.

This policy:
- exposes such individuals or organizations to substantive matters related to UN programmes,
- provides a context in which representatives of organizations without consultative status with a particular Agency can make informal contact with Agency officials, possibly as a prelude to an official application for consultative status, contracts, etc.

Furthermore, this policy permits individual NGOs to schedule meetings of their executive bodies on the occasion of such multi-meetings (whether within the multi-meeting framework or not), with the consequence that members of such executive bodies can both gain some understanding of inter-NGO activity and respond rapidly (if the executive meeting is appropriately scheduled) to questions referred upwards by the NGO's official representative at a particular NGO conference session.

The organization behind the multi-meeting need only be limited to the programme committee and arrangements for a reception desk, document distribution, interpretation and translation. (The latter tasks are usually undertaken by the Agency Secretariat concerned). An additional feature which could well be considered is charging a registration fee to those participants which are not registered as members of an NGO Conference. This could prove to be a very useful source of income, particularly if members of the general public are admitted.

The advantages of this proposal may be summarized as follows:
- all the people necessary to make any new NGO-NGO or NGO-IGO activity happen are brought to the same location. What happens and when it happens depends on individual initiative and "corridor activity" during the multi-meeting;
- the multi-meeting provides an occasion on which a variety of formal or informal inter-NGO activities can be catalyzed
- NGO consultative status conferences for those NGOs in consultative relations with a Specialized Agency for which such a conference does not exist (note that such conferences could be single session conferences within the multi-meeting framework. Such short sessions would not normally justify bringing NGO representatives together just for that purpose outside a multi-meeting framework);
- conferences of NGOs with a special concern with a particular continent or region (e.g. Africa, Latin America, etc.)
- conferences of NGOs with a special programme interest (youth, peace, human rights, development, environment, discrimination, crisis relief, etc.)
- conferences of NGOs with technical or scientific preoccupations.

- more meetings are scheduled covering a wider range of topics. It is therefore more useful for an NGO to be represented which should therefore build up attendance and therefore increase the significance of such events. The aim is to make of the multi-meeting an ideal environment from which inter-NGO and NGO/IGO projects can gel - possibly catalysed by the presence of foundation representatives.

- from a public relations point of view a yearly or two-yearly multi-meeting would be an ideal opportunity to make evident to the general public any NGO perspectives emerging from the individual conferences. The substantive matter resolutions of some sessions would not be swamped by the procedural context which is totally insignificant to the mass media. Such meetings would merit press participation because of the concentration of NGO representatives (as opposed to the current dispersion which never results in a significant international press reaction). Consequently more attention would be paid to resolutions, where voted, by governments and Specialized Agencies.

- the multi-meeting is an ideal occasion for the Specialized Agency representatives responsible for contact with NGOs to meet. Furthermore, the switch to greater possibility of discussion of substantive matters would encourage the participation of Agency officials responsible for programmes as opposed to the current limitation to those responsible for NGO relations.

- the multi-meeting provides an occasion on which an NGO's own representatives to each Agency can meet and coordinate their approaches. This helps to resolve the problem of the lack of communication between representatives of the same NGO to different Agencies.

- as in the U.S.A., a multi-meeting is an ideal environment to give NGO executives and "outsiders" interested in NGO activity an appreciation of NGOs as a career opportunity. It reinforces a spirit of internationalism.

- the looser framework should encourage the participation of NGOs currently avoiding the formal NGO Conferences because of their procedural/human rights emphasis. The framework would for example permit scientific, medical and professional NGOs both to arrange their own sessions and to participate in procedural conferences or UN programme-oriented sessions where this seemed warranted. The multi-meeting is seen primarily as a collection of meetings of NGOs and only secondarily as a forum for discussion of consultative status matters.

- controversial procedural points which tend to arise in consultative status conferences and block discussion of substantive matters or joint action by limited groups of NGOs are restricted to the appropriate meetings which were conceived for such questions. NGO representatives do not have attend such sessions in order to benefit from inter-NGO action-oriented debate, as at present.

- restriction of UN programme oriented discussion to certain sessions could have the advantage of freeing NGOs from their current consultative status role of "followers" commenting on minor details of UN defined programmes. Some of the informal multi-
meeting sessions should permit NGOs to recover their pioneering spirit and to discuss new initiatives which could later take the form of UN programmes.

- grouping the consultative status conferences physically should reduce the time and funds which NGOs have to spend on representation at meetings in different locations.

- the loose framework guarantees that, whilst substantive matter plenary conferences cutting across Specialized Agency interests may or may not form part of a multi-meeting in a given year, any such conference session is not a formal grouping of which NGOs are obliged to be members, but need only be an informal discussion session, in which a given NGO representative is not in any way obliged to participate.

- the multi-meeting can be held in several cities in successive years since there is less justification to relate it to the Secretariat of the Agency of the consultative status conference. (On this point, the last ECOSOC/NGO meeting in Geneva was held in the ILO building). NGOs should not ignore the possible financial and other advantages which they can derive from government and city administrations anxious to encourage individual NGO conferences in a given country or city by partially subsidizing multi-meetings in their own cities. This would also help to increase public understanding of NGOs in each such city.

- the multi-meeting environment should lead to a much improved exchange of information between all Secretariats of NGO Conferences and Committees whether specifically concerned with the consultative status machinery or not.

- the multi-meeting environment is an ideal setting for NGOs to work towards the elaboration of the long-term solution to their information system requirements, particularly with regard to the links between:

  - Secretariats of the formal "permanent" NGO groups and the secretary's of temporary or ad hoc groups.
  - Conference Secretariats and Agency Secretariats
  - Conference Secretariats and NGOs
  - NGOs and NGOs
  - NGOs and Agency Secretariats.

- A first step towards this might be an information service at the reception desk to permit NGOs to register topics in which they are interested with a view to contacting other NGOs, and possibly arranging a small meeting within the multi-meeting framework. New activities are in this way facilitated. (This constitutes the beginning of a potential association centre as described in the body of this report).

- Prolonged contact between the Secretariats of the NGO Conferences and the representatives to the plenary NGO Conferences should lead eventually to gradual modification to the formal structures.

- Conference Secretariats might enter into reciprocity agreements with regard to representation of NGO members at Specialized Agencies or meetings in the cities in which they are based. This could be particularly important with respect to regional activity (e.g. African or Asian Conference Secretariats)

- other more fundamental changes can be investigated whenever appropriate.
The disadvantages of the multi-meeting technique derive mainly from the practical problems of organizing adequate meeting space with simultaneous interpretation.

But such problems are surely minor compared to a recent congress in the U.S.A. which brought together 26,000 participants and, with the aid of a computer and a very limited staff, scheduled the presentation of 5,000 papers in 50 different meeting rooms. Participants scheduled their own movements between sessions guided by the programme committees timetable. The congress also performed the function, little discussed in NGO circles, of channelling 8000 people into new job opportunities. A dynamic environment of this kind, in which more new people from the national level can each year be involved in international activity, is surely a desirable NGO goal.

It should be remembered that the plenary sessions of the main NGO Conferences, together or separately, are by no means large meetings when compared to the average international congress. It may be that the usual five day meeting period would be insufficient even with some sessions run in parallel - but this must be offset against the number of small meeting sessions which could benefit from the multi-meeting framework. Finally, the problems are practical problems and therefore more manageable than the semi-political/procedural/autonomy problems which arise if significant formal changes to the consultative arrangement machinery are considered.

3. In conjunction with, or independent of, the previous proposal, the creation of a number of informal or formal contact bodies should be considered:

- a regular contact meeting of representatives of the NGO consultative status conferences, preferably extended to include representatives of other NGO joint bodies. This could be a means of reducing overlap in the substantive matter concerns of such such body. (Note that an informal meeting of this type has been organized annually on the UN's side between officials from each Agency concerned with contact with NGOs. The value of this initiative should be recognized in an NGO resolution addressed to UN/ECOSOC).

- a programme committee to be concerned with harmonizing the schedules of the various NGO conferences. This could be a development of the activities of the contact meeting proposed above and could be developed into the programme committee described in the proposal above where participation of Agency representatives is suggested.

- a special committee of representatives of the NGO conferences and the relevant Agencies to study the problems of the organization of Agency-NGO machinery on a continuing basis from the point of view of both the consultative arrangement and facilitating NGO-IGO contact for programme activity irrespective of "recognition". This body would pay particular attention to the information system required.

- in the event of neither Agencies nor NGOs being able to justify the creation of the committee mentioned in the previous point, equivalent bodies should be created to study the same problems with respect to each Agency individually.
4. The UN System and Member States should take active steps to facilitate and encourage the creation of international centres in major cities. Such centres would provide office accommodation and meeting facilities for:

- Agency representatives at the country level
- Agency information centres and libraries
- National Commissions relating to particular Agencies (e.g. UNESCO)
- National governments own services relating to international organizations
- NGOs with headquarters in the country in question
- Libraries on international relations.

The creation of such centres would build up the "critical mass" of internationally oriented competence in one physical location thus facilitating the initiation and implementation of new programmes. This approach may be contrasted with the current situation in which the bodies in question are dispersed in such a way that there is little creative interaction and no real centre of academic and operational excellence on international affairs in each city. (The lack of such centres must surely contribute to the scepticism of youth with regard to the commitment to international activity - such centres should act as channels for young people anxious to work in international organizations or as volunteers in developing countries, to participate in cultural or student exchange, etc.)

It might be of particular value to create such centres in developing countries to facilitate integration of country level activity.

5. UN Agencies and Member States should consider the creation of an IGO/NGO committee to study the future functions of international information systems, particularly to avoid the sort of incompatibility problems now plaguing the UN Agencies because their information systems were designed independently without considering the need for interaction. Some of the information problems which need to be considered are:

- organizational contact from IGO to INGO, INGO to IGO, INGO to national NGO, national NGO to INGO.
- public information contact from IGO to public, INGO to public, public to INGO.
- regional contact from INGO to developing country bodies, developing country bodies to INGO, developing country body to developing country body.
- cross-disciplinary contact from applied sciences to social sciences, from social sciences to applied sciences (particularly to ensure adequate disciplinary participation in multidisciplinary programmes).
- information types, including information on organizations, meetings, programmes.
- means of transferring data, including data links and telex, satellites, physical transfer of computer tapes (e.g. by mail as within the U.K.), physical transfer of computer print out through the mail (either directly from an Agency computer centre or from a regional computer centre which receives a computer tape from the Agency).
6. The consultative arrangement was developed at a time when this was considered to be sufficient recognition of international NGOs to permit them to work effectively as partners of the UN system. Since that time the world situation has evolved considerably, as is repeatedly stated within the UN system. Consultative status is no longer sufficient to give recognition to international NGOs, particularly since the technique of private participation in international activity is not widely practised or encouraged in the developing countries which now form the majority in Specialized Agency plenary bodies. The UN System and Member States should therefore reconsider the need for an international convention to give formal recognition to international NGOs as a means of clarifying their function in relation to intergovernmental bodies, as well as facilitating their programme activities. Steps in this direction have already been taken by the Council of Europe and ILO (with respect to the rights of national workers organizations). On their part, international NGOs should establish a committee to elaborate the basis for such a convention to avoid being crippled by a convention developed on governmental initiative as a means of controlling the operations of INGOs.

7. The current debate on social development, "quality of life" and the need for social indicators (as a counterpart to economic indicators) is based on concepts which do not attach significance to nongovernmental and participative social structures. And yet one very important aspect of social underdevelopment is the limited ability of the individual to participate in activities of formal or informal organizations (aside from those by which he is employed or via which he receives his food as a consumer). The degree of formal or informal participation: of an individual in community organizations, of local organizations in national organizations, of national NGOs in international NGOs, and of INGOs in international NGO groupings, is however a clear measure of social development at each level. But the inter-organizational problems which constitute the theme of this report are not recognized as being social development problems in their own right - as would be evident if the degree of inter-organizational linkage were made the subject of social indicators. Such inter-organizational problems are confined to a theoretical "limbo". If the debate on social indicators results in a selection by government and the UN of a set of social indicators which do not measure the degree of development of NGO and participative social structures then there will be no theoretical foundation for government recognition of such structures or their development. This lack will strengthen the arguments of governments interested in by-passing NGOs and diminishing the importance of their relationship to the UN system.

If an intricate network of organizational relationships is a mark of social development (just as a similar network of commercial and industrial relationships is a mark of economic development), then such a network should not be condemned as "a Western phenomenon" anymore than industrialization can be condemned as a Western phenomenon. Both merely happen to be more highly developed in the West for historical reasons (although it is possible that the interpersonal networks in "underdeveloped" countries are more developed, on average, than in urban areas of "developed" countries). Just as economic development focuses on the increase in agricultural and
industrial activity, social development should focus on the increase in group or organizational non-work activity - otherwise social development is merely development of the individual to function as a unit in the developing economy. An indicative world plan for the development of individual and collective participative opportunities through local, national, and international organizations (formal or informal) should be considered of equal importance to an Indicative World Plan for industrialization and agricultural development - particularly if, as studies of the human environment now show, industrialized man is increasingly socially isolated within highly developed economic structures such as major cities.

It is therefore highly relevant to the future of inter-organizational relations that
- the average number of organizations in whose activities an individual participates (locally, nationally or internationally)
- the average number of organizations with which an organization is connected (locally, nationally or internationally)

should be considered indicators of social development in a given region or country.

As the key reference source of international social statistics, UNESCO should therefore be encouraged by NGOs to investigate and include some such measures of social development for each country in its Statistical Yearbook, as a counterpart to "non-participative" social statistics on newspapers, radio, cinemas, etc. per consumer.

8. The UN and Member States should cease to equate "education for international understanding" in schools, universities and the training of diplomats with "education in support of the UN", such that the former is reduced to an understanding of the principles and activities of the UN Agencies and contains no reference to the function of non-UN bodies whether governmental or non-governmental (other than the contribution they make to understanding of the principles and operations of the UN system). This can only lead to bias in the minds of those receiving this form of education - a bias which has a cumulative effect on inter-organizational relations at the international level because neither government delegates nor Specialized Agency staff nor the staff of UN Information Centres and bookshops have been instructed in the function of non-governmental bodies. "Education for international understanding" should give some emphasis to the "international community" as a network of interdependent organizations and not focus on the role of the Specialized Agencies with the implication that any other bodies simply gravitate around the UN bodies. (For example, there is no report on "Teaching of the purposes and principles, the structure and activities of the world network of governmental and nongovernmental organizations in schools and other educational institutions of Member States" which might complement the six ECOSOC reports in the series "Teaching of the Purposes and Principles, the Structure and Activities of the UN and the Specialized Agencies in Schools and Other Educational Institutions of Member States", see E/4752).

The focus of a world institution, based on the principle of universality, should not be restricted to concern for recognition of the operation of itsown organs (this is the public information/public
relations/propaganda function). Just as, in the eyes of the Director-General of UNESCO, "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", the same argument may be applied to the UN as a whole. All such "energies" (whether governmental or nongovernmental) should have their place in a balanced "education for international understanding" (seen as distinct from public relations).

Education is the key to international understanding. If bias is built into that education (through a disproportionate emphasis on one type or group of organizations) it is only natural that inter-organizational problems, such as those between the UN system and NGOs, should arise. Furthermore, it is only natural that inter-organizational cooperation should be severely handicapped. The UN can contribute much to improve this situation and to show young people the many different ways in which they can participate in the activities of the international community - with the emphasis placed on the interdependence of these activities.

In considering the challenge of inter-organizational activity within the framework of a world network of organizations, both NGOs and UN Agencies could well bear in mind the following extract from u Thant's closing statement to the Commemorative Session of the 25th Anniversary of the United Nations: "It is intolerable that the peoples of the world should have to live indefinitely on the brink of disaster and that so many of them continue in a state of utter misery. This is the root-cause of our general frustration. Our basic problems are ancient ones: the difficulty of putting accepted ideals and principles into practice, and that paradox of human nature which gives men reason to discern the course which common sense and the common good prescribe and then impels them to proceed doggedly in the opposite direction of short-term self-interest even if it may lead to ultimate self-destruction".
A) Summary of the Crises in Inter-Organizational Relationships at the International Level

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 nongovernmental 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.

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, no. 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."


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 repre-
sented 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 organ-
izations in that country with the special-
ized 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 nongovern-
mental 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 intergovern-
mental 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 is not represented in the United Nations and yet has one quarter of the world's population, the People's Republic of China was represented in 3 intergovernmental organizations and in 65 international nongovernmental organizations. (Extracted from a study by Kjell Skjelsbæk. "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/ GC/ 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
-- 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 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 organizations. 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 organizations.
- 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 NGOs 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 already 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 is attended by "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.

-- 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....

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 described 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 multiform 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 Sextennial 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 cooperation with these 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/VR 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..." (16 C/VR 21, 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/VR 33, p. 33-34)
ILQ

(b) Views of the Secretariat

As an indication of the attitude of ILQ 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 bring 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 overlapping 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

(a) Views of INGOs

Extracted from a statement made by Garrett 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

(5) Views of the Secretariat

These are extracted from the report on the triennial 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 fulfill 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."
2) Working Relationships between International Non-governamental 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. Now approaches are required.

3) Relationships between International Non-governmental Organizations (for the purpose of sharing facilities and equipment)

It is frequently noted, either as an accusation or an excuse, that many NGOs have to operate with very inadequate resources. It has also been noted that where NGOs possess equipment it is either -- out of date producing low quality results and requiring much manual work or -- modern and expensive, producing high quality results quickly, but because of its excellence remains unused for most of the working week.

The logical solution to this problem is to seek some means of sharing facilities and equipment in order to benefit from the best equipment.

Such centres exist in Geneva and New York (and planned for London) where a number of organizations have offices in the same building, but there is no emphasis on shared office services. It is therefore interesting to note the following extract from "A Study into the Feasibility of Establishing an Administrative Centre for a Group of Voluntary Organisations" (November, 1970), produced under a contract to the Social Work Advisory Service in London:

-- "For a number of years a major private Foundation which has supported a wide range of voluntary charitable organisations with substantial sums of money has been becoming increasingly concerned with a failure to maximise the capital resources and income at their disposal through the use of unsatisfactory accommodation, the employment of unskilled staff in certain crucial spheres, and from ignorance or rejection of modern management concepts."

-- "The feasibility study confirms that considerable economies could be effected if a group of small to medium-sized voluntary organisations (in terms of office requirements) were to be housed centrally, sharing a number of common services. The figures based on a sample of 69 voluntary organisations (not necessarily representative of all voluntary organisations) demonstrate that sharing certain administrative staff, accommodation and equipment would all contribute to savings and increased efficiency."

-- "On the basis of a 40 hour week, between 5 and 8 organisations could share a book-keeper, and 8-16 a salaries/wages clerk. In the same way other professional staff could well be employed by several organisations."
"Another possibility for dramatic savings would be on pooled use of equipment. For example, 54 of the 69 organisations in the study owned 1 or more duplicators each, whereas it would be necessary to have only 3 machines for a combination of between 14 and 30 organisations -- a savings of at least 27 machines. 31 of these organisations (nearly 50%) own or hire photocopyers whereas 1 medium capacity machine, with an output of 8 copies per minute, would be sufficient for their combined uses. The same theory applies to postal franking and other machinery."

"Although the study was based on a group of national organisations, the principles could equally well be applied in any major centre of population, and at a time when the local authorities are establishing their own unified personal social service departments, it is especially important for the voluntary sector to re-appraise its own organisation and structure."

These conclusions apply equally well to the offices and facilities of international nongovernmental organizations. It may be expected that NGOs receiving subventions from IGOs and foundations will at some stage be placed under pressure to group themselves physically in order to reduce their overhead costs.
There are two possible NGO attitudes to change:

1) NGOs adopting the **passive attitude** wait until events in their environment force them to make a decision and modify their activities.

   In this situation all initiative is left to other bodies. It is not necessary to waste time planning for the future because the NGO can wait for the hypothetical future to become the present before acting.

2) NGOs adopting the **active attitude** examine the future -- whether 5, 10, 20 or 30 years ahead -- to see what problems and opportunities will present themselves. On the basis of this assessment they take decisions today to prepare to meet these problems in the manner most advantageous for the objectives of the NGO.

Those who ignore the problems of the future -- and the opportunities which will be available for their solution -- will be swamped by those problems, to which they will be largely irrelevant.

The active attitude demands that NGOs (a) find out what is possible and (b) decide what they want, in the way of

-- consultative status machinery
-- information systems
-- joint activity
-- etc.


Just as buildings are no longer built to last hundreds of years--because the owners realize that a new structure will be required in 10 or 15 years -- so organizational and consultative machinery should not be designed as though it were going to be adequate to the problems and opportunities 5 years hence.

Either of the above attitudes may be taken with respect to consultative status and NGO joint activity.

To date, the passive attitude has been taken. No consultative status conference has yet suggested that the probable situation of NGOs 20, or even 5, years from now should be examined and prepared for. The whole current debate arises because the UN system attitude and practice with respect to NGOs has changed. The change has come from the UN side and the NGOs are quite unprepared.

But the passive attitude extends even further. The NGO proposals made for change in the machinery are merely proposals to adapt /...
to the changes already made in the UN system. The NGOs are planning for the evanescent present -- which becomes the past overnight -- and ignoring:

-- probable changes in the UN system
-- probable changes in the NGO system
-- probable changes in the techniques and technology by which organizations of any type are related in society.

The emphasis should be placed on the ability to reorganize collectively, rapidly, and flexibly, in response to new problems, instead of creating cumbersome machinery, positions, and committees, which must, quite naturally, attempt to justify their own relevance to whatever problems may arise even though they may be incapable of undertaking an adequate response.

Is it the preservation of an organizational mechanism or the accomplishment of its objective that is most important? A savage reminder by Donald Schon (BBC Reith Lecturer, 1970) is that many organizations currently active constitute "a series of memorials to old problems."

It is most encouraging to note the theme of the 1971 Spring seminar in Torremolinos of the Catholic International Union for Social Service, namely, "Subir les changements ou les prevenir."

It is even more encouraging to note the following, from a speech by Henrik Bear, Secretary General of the League of Red Cross Societies, at the 15th International Conference on Social Welfare:

"The fantastic rate of change in society has forced us all -- governments, professional bodies, volunteer organizations -- to re-evaluate much more frequently than before our goals, objectives and techniques. This means we can wipe the slate clean to some extent. Problems which concerned voluntary agencies only a short time ago are no longer, if still existing, of primary importance."
C. A Collective NGO Long-term Objective

Joint action, however tentative, needs to be guided by some insight into the direction in which it is desirable to move. Where do NGOs want to be 10 or 15 years hence? What do NGOs expect to be achieving at that time? What mechanisms do they expect to be using?

These are questions worthy of very careful study. Similar studies have been made in other fields which have noted the possibilities of dramatic changes in organizational life generally. How can an NGO act now to ensure that it will be relevant to the problems of the near and more distant future?

As an indication of how such an objective is formulated, the following is cited from the preface to a study by the Committee on Bibliographical and Documentation Services. (Chairman L. Larry Leonard), of the needs of members of the International Studies Association (USA):

"Those in quest of a more effective information system in their field can now be guided by an image of the ideal drawn in bold strokes by the National Academy of Science's Committee on Information in the Behavioral Sciences under the Chairmanship of David Easton. The ideal is here portrayed as a "computer analogue of the available, intelligent, and informed colleague".

Such an ideal colleague would read widely, have total recall, evaluate what he read; he would be able to reorganize materials, recognize fruitful analogies, and synthesize new ideas. In addition, the ideal colleague would always be accessible and available to all, either in person or by phone. Finally, he would be aware of the general interests and current problems of each scientist, and he could adapt both the content and style of his communications to each researcher's knowledge, skills and habits.

To approximate this ideal, and perhaps one day achieve it, requires the fashioning of a complex of components incorporating computer and telecommunications technology".

This shows the scholar's ideal environment. Could NGO's define their own ideal working environment as a guide both to their own actions and to those of the governmental bodies with which they are in contact? It is curious that NGOs, who are so forward thinking with respect to the desirable changes that need to be made in the world, are so reticent and apparently lacking in courage on the question of the impact of these changes on their own methods of organization, operation and cooperation — whereas paradoxically it is the organizations which are least concerned with the future of the world as such (rather than for their own benefit) that are most creative and imaginative in the evolution of new and more adequate organizational forms. Advocators of change should be more than willing to prepare their organizations and mode of operations for the consequences of the changes they advocate — or else find their resolutions faced with the retorque "Physician heal thyself". It is precisely this remark which may emerge from the debate within the UN on the function of NGOs and the consultative relationship. In the following sections an attempt is made to summarize some of the features of an ideal NGO working environment to stimulate debate on these matters.
a - Legal Rights

The activities of international NGOs should be facilitated by international conventions covering such points as the following:

- Organization rights
  - international legal status (whether "recognized" by UN Agencies or not) and special status in the countries in which it has its offices.
  - right to be informed of programmes, problems and organizations affecting its area of subject, programme or problem competence.
  - right to exercise activities in other countries.
  - right to negotiate and be represented at governmental meetings on its special field of competence.
  - right of participation in the formulation of programmes to combat social problems which are its special field of competence.
  - right of its national member bodies to participate fully in international programmes.
  - right to inviolability of offices as well as correspondence and telephonic conversations.
  - right to protection of funds and assets against intervention by public authorities.
  - right of access to media of mass communications.
  - right to protection against any discrimination in matters of affiliation and activities.
  - right of access to voluntary conciliation and arbitration procedures.
  - right of members to further education and training.

These rights should be recognized as a natural extension of human rights, necessary for the adequate protection of the latter. (This list, with the exception of the first two points, is an adaptation of that established by the Committee on Trade Union Rights of the International Labour Conference, 54th Session (1970) in a resolution on trade union rights and their relation to civil liberties. The ILO Director-General is instructed by the Governing Body to "undertake further comprehensive studies and to prepare reports on law and practice" in relation to these rights with respect to trade unions). See also: "The Universal Declaration of the Rights of Human Organization; an experimental extension of the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man". International Associations, 1971, January, p. 7-26).

- Rights of NGO staff

- rights to certain privileges and immunities during the course of their service with the NGO, particularly with respect to travel documents, residential requirements, taxation, social security and pension rights.

The international conventions required should not function so as to favour the creation and continued existence of permanent organizations (tending to decay into "series of memorials to old problems") but should be structured so as to facilitate the formation and operation of ad hoc, transient, short-life bodies constituted and dissolved rapidly in response to specific problems. Hopefully legal recognition of both national and international bodies can be automated to the point at which (possibly provisional) registration of both the organization and its interests can be
made at one of many computer terminals (such as will be found in post offices) in a manner somewhat analogous to the current automated issue of flight insurance contracts at air terminals.

The transient nature of organizations linking a rapidly-changing network of bodies and individuals
- need for rapid legal recognition
- need for sophisticated weighted voting procedures to permit the existence of more complex organizational patterns

(on this point see International Associations, 1970 February, p. 67-79)

and the relationship of all three to the future world-wide computerized information system, require careful re-examination of the legal concept of "organization" in relation to the rapidly evolving operational definition -- particularly in so far as an outdated legal concept could severely retard, rather than facilitate, the evolution of organizational forms adequate to the problems and opportunities of the future.

b - Shared Services

Each NGO should be able to have access to a pool of shared services in the cities in which they have offices. These services might, as appropriate, take the form of any or all of the following:

- low cost rental in a modern office centre reserved for internationally active non-profit organizations. Such a centre could also house:
  - UN and UN Agency Information Offices, and in the developing countries, the UN Agency Representative responsible for coordinating country-level international activity. This would facilitate IGO-NGO interaction and would ensure optimum use of UN information, especially if an integrated library-information service could be developed with INGOs. This approach would counter the current tendency for information services to be underused and therefore ineffective.

- National Commissions of UNESCO and other Agencies
- National NGOs with international activities
- National inter-NGO organizations. This would facilitate interaction between the national and international levels.
- Foundations interested in international activities. This would improve understanding between fund sources and programme-implementers.
- National institutes of international relations (and the associated libraries) to facilitate interaction between academic and operational programmes
- International press agencies, both as a source of information and a means of increasing knowledge of NGOs and their programmes.

- special services, possibly in the above centre, for organizations not requiring full-time permanent office accommodation:
- temporary offices on an hourly or daily basis for small organizations requiring only a part-time secretariat and for visiting representatives of organizations based in other countries
- letter boxes for the mail of organizations without fixed permanent offices but requiring a permanent mailing address
- temporary offices for ad hoc, project or campaign organizations, particularly those constituted at short notice in re
- shared use of high-quality modern office equipment (duplicators, offset, photocopy, addressograph, accounting machines, franking machines, etc.) which are not economically justifiable for a single organization.

- services which can be associated with the presence of many NGOs in the same building (telephone exchange permitting "conference calls", receptionist, porter/messenger/handyman/concierge, cafeteria/restaurant, travel agent, bank, post office, telephone answering service, telex, reception area/reading room, library, film library, videotape library, photograph library, record, fire/theft security vaults, etc.)

- joint services which can be run under contract for groups of interested NGOs (mailing and despatch services, accounting/book-keeping, duplicating and printing, copy typing, typing of letters dictated onto tape, office cleaning, secretariat administration, use of computer time for mailing and research, publication sales and distribution services, bulk purchases of office stationery and supplies, etc.)

- professional services (accountant, lawyer/tax consultant, translators, interpreters, congress organizers, fund raisers, agents to obtain paid advertising for insertion in NGO periodicals, public relations officer, press and information service, librarian, abstractor, consultants on the formation, organization or programme implementation of NGOs, consultants on governmental relations, etc.)

- shared addresses for distribution of periodicals or sales literature (e.g. conference reports to UN Agencies, or publication lists to libraries) or for the galvanization of a network of agencies and fund sources in response to natural disaster.

- collective or shared representation services, particularly to resolve the problem of adequate NGO representation at meetings of UN Agencies with which they have consultative status. (This rather resembles the type of representation which a country's diplomatic service offers its many government departments, businesses, cultural organizations etc.). Also the need for effective lobbying. Such services could also be made available on a reciprocal basis to NGOs which do not have their offices in that city, in exchange for representation at Agency meetings in other cities.

- shared meeting rooms with simultaneous interpretation and audio-visual equipment.

Any or all of the above services could be run as a cooperative. This is a thoroughly explored formula for partially associating independent agents in a limited collective enterprise. (Undoubtedly the views of the International Cooperative Alliance would be most valuable on this point). It is very important to note that the more services that NGOs succeed in pooling the more their overhead expenses will be reduced whilst at the same time diverting funds from the commercial sector into the cooperative itself - such that the cooperative profits to the benefit of the grouped NGOs as a whole (e.g. the case where NGOs spend funds in their own cafeteria/restaurant). There is no reason why the existence of the cooperative should not be the basis for a number of other services:
- sharing of some staff over holiday periods
- group insurance and pension schemes for secretarial and other staff in the centre who might otherwise be tempted to seek employment where there is greater long-term security

Nor is there any reason why the centre, as a cooperative, should not come to an agreement with other centres in other countries to facilitate:

- mobility of secretariats and the establishment of regional or subsidiary offices
- staff mobility and professional advancement without loss of financial benefits
- operational contacts (e.g. telex links) to facilitate coordination of activities initiated at different centres (e.g. New York and Geneva) or between international centres and their national equivalents.

If it is desirable that NGOs should be strong and effective in their chosen domain, then any problem or weakness they may have through being forced to work:

- in inadequate office accommodation which may discourage important contacts as being a symptom of functional inadequacy
- with out of date equipment which produces poor quality results slowly.
- without the benefits of a multitude of ancillary services
- physically isolated from other NGOs with whom frequent contact could be of benefit to the NGO's operations and the initiation of joint activity.....such conditions should be eliminated.

With regard to the last point, research on creativity shows that a certain minimum number of people active in the same domain need to be subject to frequent face-to-face contact (e.g. coffee breaks) to provide the "critical mass" necessary for new and imaginative solutions to a problem to be envisaged. It seems to have been forgotten that NGOs, collectively, contain amongst themselves all the expertise, in the form of professional services, needed to make their combined operations highly successful. NGOs should perhaps consider these points in relation to the needed imaginative, multi-disciplinary, multi-agency programmes which must be developed and implemented in response to increasingly complex global problems. A network of international centres is a step in the right direction.

c - Funds

NGOs have four problems with regard to funds which should be overcome:

- Locating fund sources

NGOs should be able to use an information system to locate individuals, foundations and governmental programmes interested in making funds available to NGOs in specific programme areas rather than depend on chance contact as at present. Similarly the information system should permit the NGO to be located by such bodies.

The time taken for communication to be established should be reduced to a matter of days or, in the case of natural disaster, to hours.
- Locating channels for programme funds

Similarly, NGOs should be able to use an information system to locate the most appropriate international and national bodies through which to make available funds for a specific programme. As above, in the case of natural disaster, the time for communication to be established should be reduced to hours.

- Fund redistribution

NGOs should be able to overcome the difficulty whereby funds are voted every two or more years for programmes which may become irrelevant during that period in comparison with the need for new programmes adapted to newly detected problems in the NGO's domain. Flexible fund allocation and distribution techniques developed from the programme, planning and budgeting system (PPBS) should permit rapid and continuous modification and funding of programmes in response to new problems as they evolve.

- Fund transfers

NGOs should be able to reduce the current crude and expensive exchange of correspondence which occurs before a potential member or supporter transfers funds for dues or in support of a particular programme. Each action of the NGO reported through the information system should result in automatic fund transfers from supporters to the NGO's account (and from there to programme accounts). This would be done as an extension of the current use of credit cards to permit fund transfers to be registered via computer data links across a city.

d - External relations

NGOs should be able to eliminate all the current delays in their contacts with intergovernmental organizations, other nongovernmental organizations, multinational corporations and the mass media, whether these take the form of initiative from the NGO or from outside in response to the NGO's programme. In particular the relationship between organizations and potential members, supporters or users of the NGO's information should be considerably accelerated.

It is very important when an outside body desires to make contact to be able to respond before the interest "wears off" as it tends to do rapidly at the moment with the delays built into the postal system and the procedures before a letter can be appropriately answered. The goal for NGOs is to be able to respond to an inquirer before his "thinking momentum" in relation to the NGO's activities is dissipated.

Whilst such delays and hindrances are accepted, many potentially valuable contacts are lost - this loss represents a loss of resources and support for the whole international network of organizations.
e - Communication Requirements

NGOs should be able to work with communication equipment which can overcome the following barriers to communication:

- **Distance**

  The geographical separation of NGO main offices (e.g. New York, Geneva, Paris, London, Brussels, etc.) and NGO regional and national branch offices (e.g. to the developing countries) should be significantly reduced as a factor hindering NGO activity.

  This could take the form of: subsidized direct telephone lines between NGO centres permitting "conference calls", subsidized telex lines, data links, etc.

- **Locating appropriate contacts**

  The momentum of NGO activity should not be lost at any stage because it is impossible to obtain the contact address of a person or organization (known or unknown) responsible for a given topic or programme. This should apply not only with regard to single contacts but also to multiple contacts (e.g. locating people or bodies which might wish to participate in a given project; setting up a mailing list for the distribution of a fact sheet during the life-cycle of some crisis). A series of international referral centres may be an intermediate stop.

- **Locating key problem areas**

  The momentum of NGO activity should not be diverted temporarily into operational cul-de-sacs at any stage because of assumptions (known by some NGO in the organizational network to be incorrect) about the relationship or lack of relationship between, subject, programme or problem areas. The communication equipment should guide the NGO user across discipline boundaries in locating the key problem areas (and corresponding contacts) where use of minimum resources has a maximum chain-reaction or "multiplier effect" on the solution to a series of dependent problems.

- **Information overload**

  NGOs should be able to use the information system to register (on a daily or weekly basis) precisely

  - those fields in which they are interested
  - those fields which some consider relevant to their own but in which they are not interested

  with the assurance that this will ensure that other bodies will automatically send documents, etc., corresponding to these limits -- thus eliminating the need to receive and read piles of documents to locate a few items of relevant information.

  The interests registered by the NGO may be interpreted by other bodies as being related (in terms of their perspective) to other subject, programme or problem areas in which the NGO should be interested and about which it may not be aware. The receiving NGO should recognize that it is essential for it to remain "open" to information sent on the basis of any such new understanding of the relationship between problem areas.

/...
- **Inability to understand**

It should be possible to use the information system to guide the user, as a "learner," to greater understanding of a particular subject, programme, or problem area as it proves increasingly significant to his NGO. This feature will become increasingly important as specialization, jargonization and the pace of change oblige everyone to continually re-learn to be able to respond to advances in understanding in their own fields.

Each NGO, and eventually each individual, should be able to participate in a two-fold continuous process of intersection with a world-wide information system:

- supplying specialized data to the system within its field of special competence for the benefit of its members and other users
- retrieving information from the system on matters which it considers relevant to its field of competence or essential to the administration of its programme

- **Supply of information by NGO**

Each NGO should be able to supply to the system the details of:

- its future meetings and the substantive matter topics to be discussed
- topics of resolutions arising from meetings
- topics of new projects or programmes on which the NGO is engaged
- new problems which it believes it has detected
- topics of new reports which it has produced
- names and addresses of contacts of the NGO who should be alerted automatically if information on a given topic enters the system anywhere around the world

Each NGO should feel assured that every "event" which it supplies with reference to a given topic is automatically signalled to IGOs, NGOs, governments, universities, etc., around the world which have already indicated continuing interest in that topic to the system.

Due to increasingly rapid evaluation in understanding of the many fruitful alternative ways of categorizing, ordering, and interrelating disciplines and problems, each NGO should feel confident that each of its new insights into significant interrelationships across accepted subject boundaries can be made known to the system in order to draw the attention of other bodies automatically to new opportunities or dangers related to matters in which they are currently interested.

- **Retrieval of information by NGO**

Each NGO should feel entirely confident that it will automatically be alerted concerning any of the following events around the world on a given topic:

-- plans for or invitations to meetings
-- proposals for or action on a programme
-- proposals for the creation of an organization
-- reports or documents
-- resolutions formulated
-- names and addresses (where non-confidential) of persons or
organizations active on a given topic
-- contracts or funds availability for programmes

In addition each NGO should feel confident that if a new problem is detected in some other subject area which in any way affects its own field of concern, then this relationship will be automatically signalled so that the NGO can begin to receive information on events concerning the new topic as they affect its field of competence.

Furthermore, given the increasing complexity and jargonization of issues and relationships between issues and the need for continuous re-learning, each NGO should feel confident that if issues or relationships are signalled by the system which, though supposedly relevant (due to some one's new insight), cannot be comprehended, then the system can be used in such a way as to make the relevance clear, using audio-visual instructional techniques.

Each NGO should be able to make use of such a sophisticated information system in the full knowledge that the cost to the NGO of entering any event into the system will be shared equitably between the NGO (wishing to inform certain categories of persons or organizations) and persons or organizations (wishing to be informed on the topic in question). And in addition, when neither the budget of the NGO nor that of the bodies desiring to receive the information (i.e., low resource bodies or those of "bordersline relevance", from the sender's viewpoint) will ensure that the information is transferred, resources from agencies interested in subsidizing communications on the topic in question should automatically be drawn upon to maximize the number of bodies contacted.

The existence of such a world information system would be a disaster rather than a boon if provisions were not made for the following features:

-- means of insuring that the very existence of the system does not create an elite of users and a multitude of organizations and persons excluded from participation because of costs or other criteria (creating a further gap between developed and developing countries.)

-- means of administering the system to be as loose, open, and democratic as possible, such that no group can control its use or misuse the data it contains

-- means of using the system such as to permit NGOs to detect, make known and democratically counteract use made of it which they consider unbeneicial.

The stress had been placed upon the perspective of the non-governmental organizations. But clearly such a world information system would be of diminished value without the full participation of governmental and profit-oriented bodies, with programmes on problems of significance to society as a whole. Given the increasing importance of ad hoc bodies and the shorter life cycles of organizations, it is essential to extend participation to active individuals who as potential members, executives, consultants, representatives, initiators of new programmes, or detectors of new problems, are the key to society's response to crisis, as
well as being, in many cases, the sole continuing link between a series of ad hoc organizations on a given topic. (In this way the currently immutable organization is established within the information system as a temporary pattern of relationships between individuals or other organizations -- to be dissolved in favor of more useful or fulfilling patterns when the members so choose.)
D. Checklist of Possible Points for Discussion

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

14. need to stimulate
   -- 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 current 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 intergovernmental 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.- Interdependence and Isolationism

Most reports circulating at the international level, and most international conferences, stress repeatedly the importance of collective activity. A recent meeting of NGO's in consultative status with UNESCO, discussed the shortsightedness of governmental thinking on NGO activities with respect to NGOs and racism as typified by the UNESCO plenary resolution in 1970 requiring UNESCO to cut off contact with all NGOs with branches in South Africa by December of 1971.

And yet at this very same NGO meeting, one NGO representative stated, with reference to the possible collaboration with "non-UNESCO" NGOs in consultative status with other UN agencies, "We don't have anything in common with them". Other NGO representatives and the representative of the UNESCO Secretariat agreed.

This comment raises a very fundamental question. At a point in time when the United Nations system is starting to recognize that every problem, and particularly development problems, is related to every other problem, when is it valid for one organization to assert that it "has nothing to do" with another organization? Are NGOs now trailing behind the United Nations in the belief that each Specialized Agency deals with a neat group of problems unrelated to those handled by a second Agency. The Jackson Report showed very clearly how the subject areas of the Specialized Agencies overlapped? If this is so, then many NGOs in consultative status with one Agency should also have consultative relations with others in order to cover all aspects of the problem which interests them (e.g. education from the cultural (UNESCO), health (WHO, UNICEF), rural (FAO), and workers (ILO) points of view).

How can this overlapping of interests be illustrated to underline the dangerous nature of the comment cited above? After experimenting with a number of different approaches, the Table on the following page was produced. This can be used in the following way. NGOs in consultative status with a given Agency can look for that Agency in the left hand column of the Table. Each square across the Table in the row corresponding to that Agency indicates the number of NGOs which also have consultative relations with another Agency (namely in the row across the top of the Table). Thus in the case of the 175 NGOs with consultative status A or B with UNESCO: 61 (35 %) also have ECOSOC I or II, 111 (64 %) with ECOSOC Roster, 47 (27 %) with ILO, 36 (21 %) with FAO, 20 (11 %) with WHO, 4 (2 %) with ICAO, 7 (4 %), 7 (4 %) with WMO, 5 (3 %) with IMCO, 8 (5 %) with IAEA, 48 (27 %) with UNICEF, 9 (5 %) with UNCTAD, 5 (3 %) with UNIDO, 26 (15 %) with the Council of Europe, and 9 (5 %) with the DAS.

Similarly 42 % of the 132 ECOSOC I or II NGOs have consultative status with UNICEF. 34 % of the 197 FAO NGOs have consultative status A or B with UNESCO. 62 % of the 77 UNICEF NGOs have consultative status A or B with UNESCO. And so on.

This type of information raises a very interesting question with regard to the degree of justification required for cooperation between NGO groups. The comment cited above considered that UNESCO A/B NGOs had nothing in common with the other NGO groups -
Table showing degree of overlap in consultative relations

The top figure in each square is a percentage of the total in the same row, the bottom figure is the number of INGOs. Thus 46% of the INGOs in consultative relations with ECOSOC (I or II) also have consultative relations with UNESCO (A or B). Alternatively, 132 INGOs have ECOSOC I or II status and of them 61 have UNESCO A or B consultative status.

All percentages greater or equal to 30% have been underlined.
namely that a percentage of 100% in the above Table was essential before cooperation was conceivable. But the essence of international cooperation is contact between groups with different but related fields of concern. When, for example, does it become justifiable to organize an international meeting or some sort of federation of national bodies? Only when all potential participants agree or are concerned with exactly the same thing? Each of the national bodies of a world wide association does not have the same perspective or priorities, but when does this justify one group saying of the other "we have nothing in common with them"? Just how different do they have to be to be rejected - or how similar to be accepted? Is cooperation possible when the participating bodies are 80% similar - 60%? - 40%? - 30%? When should the possibility of cooperation be excluded?

It should be possible for one group of NGOs to conceive of some joint activity with another group if 50% of the NGOs belong to both groups. But again what if only 50% belong to both groups?

Each of the bodies represented at an international meeting is not equally concerned with every item on the agenda and may even consider many to be of no significance - but when does this justify setting up a separate meeting? And what arguments do the central committees use in the case of the organization and the meeting to show the extent of common interest and justify a single joint activity - how common does the interest have to be? This is a consideration that each NGO must face with respect to its own members and potential members in different countries.

This question may be approached from another angle. How many NGOs with a common interest are necessary before a viable working group is formed. In the case of the UNESCO A/B NGOs, a working group of:

- 10 NGOs represents 6% of the total in consultative status A or B
- 20 NGOs represents 12%

In the case of ECOSOC I/II NGOs, a working group of:

- 10 NGOs represents 8% of the total in consultative status I or II
- 20 NGOs represents 15%

Now the working groups of both the ECOSOC and UNESCO NGO Conferences do not often succeed 20 - 30 NGOs. It would therefore appear that a figure of 15-20% is an acceptable basis for cooperation, in the estimation of active NGOs.

Yet another approach to the study of the limits within which international cooperation is justifiable is to consider the number of NGOs actually attending the NGO Conferences as compared to the number which could attend. In the case of ECOSOC NGOs, for example:

- 91 NGOs were present at the 11th Conference (1969), representing 25% of those which were entitled to attend
- 127 NGOs are in fact members of the ECOSOC NGO Conference, namely 35% of those which are entitled to be members.

(Presumably 65% of the NGOs entitled to be members consider that they have "nothing in common" with the 35% which are members).

Is the current period of social crisis a time for NGOs to be more exclusive or less exclusive? How small must the percentage of common interest be before the possibility of international cooperation should be excluded?
F. Summary of Functions Performed by NGO Conferences

Nearly all debate on the function of NGO joint consultative status conferences has centered on the depersonalized concerns of the organizations which do or might participate. This emphasis ignores a number of social factors which would be considered highly significant in a business management study of the operations of these conferences and of conferences in general, including NGO meetings. Ironically, these factors are mainly associated with human relations. These are briefly summarized below.

An obvious remark to make is that each NGO representative is concerned with three things:

-- his organization
-- himself as a representative of his organization
-- himself as a private person (i.e., without his "hat" as a representative)

And in terms of each of these three perspectives, the representative participates in the conference and may act on the basis of any of them -- whichever is "his on cause".

In the case of each of them a number of areas of concern may be noted, any of which may or may not be evident in the case of a given representative at a given conference. The following points are given in no special order.

a) Furtherance of interests

The representative is concerned with furthering: (i) the interests of his organization (which may include inter-NGO coordination), (ii) his own as a representative of the organization, (with respect to other members of the organization), and (iii) his personal interests (which may, for example, be centered on the touristic possibilities of the area visited. N.B. This is even considered to be a problem in the case of government delegates to ICO conferences.)

b) Protection of interests, security

The representative is concerned to protect at all costs: (i) the interests of his organization, (ii) his own as a representative, as well as (iii) his personal interests, if they are threatened.

c) Status

It is the responsibility of the representative to maintain and improve (i) the status of his organization with respect to other organizations, (ii) his own status as a representative with respect to others -- as well as (iii) his own personal status.

d) Fulfillment

The representative is concerned not only to protect and further the interests of the organization but, in a special sense, also to insure that in doing so a more fulfilling environment for the operation of the organization is created.

/...
Similarly, as a representative, he is concerned that his actions should be fulfilling and should result in the creation of a more fulfilling environment for his representational responsibilities. And of course the private person is also concerned that any action should create more fulfilling conditions for himself.

e) Learning
Participation in a joint conference is not a one-way process in which the participants give only. There is also a process of learning: (i) learning which assists the organization to function more effectively, (ii) learning which leads the representative to function more effectively, and (iii) learning which is significant to the growth and orientation of the person. In each case, this learning may lead to a change of understanding of problems and priorities.

f) Identity
All action on the part of social entities modifies, but mainly reinforces, understanding of identities. Thus by participating in joint NGO conferences, the identity of an NGO as part of the NGO community is reinforced -- for the NGO is given an opportunity to assert its identity. For the representative it is the same. His identity as a representative is reinforced, given relevance and legitimated, and of course the interaction of the person with others -- as in all such situations -- reinforces or modifies the individual's conception of his own identity.

g) Information exchange
Underlying all the above is the process of information exchange which is of concern (i) to the organization in assessing, planning, and improving its programmes, (ii) to the representative in assessing his own strategy, and (iii) to the person in assessing the relevance of his own actions.

This schema of functions performed by a joint NGO conference may be summarized as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Depersonalized</th>
<th>Personalized</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ORGANIZATION</strong></td>
<td><strong>REPRESENTATIVE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interest</td>
<td>interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>furtherance</td>
<td>furtherance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>protection</td>
<td>protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>information exchange</td>
<td>information exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>status</strong></td>
<td><strong>status</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>fulfillment</strong></td>
<td><strong>fulfillment</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>learning</strong></td>
<td><strong>learning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>identity</strong></td>
<td><strong>identity</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion of joint NGO conferences usually concentrates on the three boxes of "depersonalized organization," namely information exchange, furtherance of interests, and protection of interests. The other eighteen boxes are not discussed. Any changes proposed for the NGO conference system which are only made in terms of the depersonalized organization requirements are doomed to frustration. The existence of the other functions which govern the manner in which many aspects of the conferences are organized must be considered. In many cases, it is the real or perceived threat to the "hidden functions" that causes opposition to any change.
G. The Significance of the World Network of Organizations

There is a widely prevalent tendency to think of organizations, particularly international organizations, as functioning within the social system like billiard balls on a table. In this view, they may "knock into" one another, but essentially they are completely unrelated to one another -- there is no permanent organic relationship between them.

This view resembles that which lies at the base of current environmental problems, namely that each factory can function in its environment as though its products had no significant effect on other parts of nature. In the past year, however, it has become widely recognized that man exists in a very delicate and complex equilibrium with his environment -- any industrial activity may have consequences for any other. Each factory functions in a web or network of dynamic relationships with other factories, via the processes of the natural environment.

To what extent is it recognized that every social activity of man -- the domain of most INGOs -- may have significant consequences for any other social activity? It is, in fact, impossible to predict which organizations will give rise to problems by their actions, which other bodies will be affected, and which bodies will then be in the best position to undertake compensatory action. All social entities -- INGOs, IGOs, groups, national or local bodies, movements, and individuals -- are bound together in a delicate web of interdependent social relationships, in which each is autonomous and at the same time, dependent on the actions of others. It is a truisim that "No man is an island unto himself" but it is not so widely recognized that none of man's organizations can function in isolation.

This is clearly recognized in one field as shown by the following extract from a speech by Henrik Beir, Secretary General of the League of Red Cross Societies, at the 15th International Conference on Social Welfare:

One of the most important trends in the field of international voluntary service in recent years has been the recognition that social development cannot be prided loose from economic and political development and that the work of volunteer organizations cannot be isolated from other aspects of social work. Prognostics for voluntary service must be seen as part of a whole. It is already outdated to look on community social services as an entity in itself: it is part of a socio-economic whole....

From now on U.N. programmes will not be considered individually. Priority will be given to a total approach by every country to their own development planning, with harmonised progress, and, hopefully, no competition between different agencies and ministries about priorities, people and money. /...
The same will apply to our planning -- we shall no
longer promote only the programmes we favour.

The excessive stress placed on the autonomy of organizations
mask the links between them. Excessive focus on one type of
link -- the consultative relationship with UN agencies --
de-emphasizes the many other links, formal and informal,
between organizations of many types, thus rendering impossible
any balanced understanding of the social system.

Can INGOs -- recognized or unrecognized by the UN system --
adopt any course of collective action which is so shortsighted
and procedure-oriented as to expressly favor only isolated
international organizations whilst ignoring the immensely
complex world network of organizations of all types which
stretches from the individual to local, national and inter-
national bodies to include the potentially highly-significant
inter-INGO groupings?

For that matter, can the UN agencies afford to encourage any
action which fragments INGOs into unrelated agency-oriented
groupings at a point in time when the global crisis is com-
pletely multi-disciplinary and demands the utilization of
every available resource? Can the agencies and the many
INGOs each treat the world network of organizations as an
administrative problem when it clearly represents an unstud-
ied social problem? Is it not an unexplored global network of
resources -- of which the governmental and business worlds are
an integral part -- which has not yet been effectively related
to the peace/population/food-development/education/environment
crisis precisely because the functional relationship of all the
parts to the social whole is repeatedly and systematically
ignored in organizational decisions?

It is no longer useful to concentrate on the problems of one "in-
dependent" organization or group of organizations (as though each
operated as an autonomous frontier outpost surrounded by uncharted
terrain). Nor is it useful to focus on a single geographical
region or subject area -- it is now essential to look at the problems
of the network of interdependent organizations and their inter-
related concerns. (The terrain is now charted and populated so that
the previously isolated frontier posts can now band together to
survive as a community.) The nature and complexity of interdependence
between plants and animals in nature has been the theme of the whole
environment/ecology issue and the 1970 European Conservation Year.
Perhaps this interdependence, still only recognized with great dif-
culty, between extremely different organisms can be used as a para-
rel to illustrate the nature of the interdependence between organ-
izations of different types and social function. This social inter-
dependence has yet to be recognized with precision despite frequent
use of such terms as the "international community." A century ago it
was precisely this theme of interdependence between natural organisms
which was forcefully stressed amid much controversy with texts such
as the following:

"..."
remote in the scale of nature, are bound together by a web of complex relations." (Charles Darwin. The Origin of Species, London, 1859)

The example showed how two species of flower were fertilized with the aid of humble-bees whose hosts were attacked by field-mice, which were in turn preyed upon by cats.

"Hence it is quite credible that the presence of a feline animal in large numbers in a district might determine, through the intervention first of mice and then of bees, the frequency of certain flowers in that district.... A corollary of the highest importance may be deduced from the foregoing remarks, namely that the structure of every organic being is related, in the most essential yet often hidden manner, to that of all other organic beings, with which it comes into competition for food or residence, or from which it has to escape, or on which it preys."

With this perspective, what can be said of the relationship between such social structures as governmental, and nongovernmental, profit and nonprofit, formal and informal organizations, movements, periodicals, mass media, etc? Is enough yet known of organizational ecology, namely the chains of interdependency between social organizations of totally different types, to be able to determine which actions of one type of organization will directly or indirectly affect the operations and even the survival of which other types of organizations responsible in society for other functions?

"The program of a large organization, whether intended or not... affects a wider sector of the organization's environment, one much wider than the organization may understand to be its surrounds... Organizations that wish to deal responsibly with their social surrounds must be capable of eliciting and evaluating responses from those who realize that they are affected but who are ordinarily silent, and from those who are affected but may not realize it..." (R.A. Rosenthal and N.J. Wise, Problems of Organizational Feedback Processes.)

In view of the importance of these inter-organizational processes and the ecological role of different categories of the social flora and fauna:

"We think that anybody who wished to sort out "necessary" and "superfluous" or "justified" and "unjustified" NGO's so as to prove the allegation that there is an inflation of international organizations (in the depreciatory sense) would find it rather hard to define his criteria and would have to claim for himself the foresight of a prophet before making his judgement in a great many cases. Furthermore, even the smallest, lowliest, and aduet NGO's may well be regarded as an expression of the genuine longing of their members for more international contact, understanding and cooperation. Such longings should be taken seriously because human motivation and psychological factors of this kind are of considerable importance for the whole present and future development of international organizations." (Alexander Szolai. The Future of international organizations. New York, UNITAR, 1970. Paper presented to a seminar on organizations of the future.)
H.- IGO-INGO and INGO-INGO Relations: A Possible Approach

1) Everyone resists changes to the existing methods of organization, particularly those proposed by outsiders. This is a classic situation. Those in favor of new approaches see the disadvantages of the old and turn a blind eye to its positive features. Those in favor of continuing the traditional approach consider its faults minor and remediable by gradual improvement, whilst remaining skeptical toward the need for any fundamentally new departures. Perhaps this awkward situation can be bypassed in the case of the needs of the NGOs.

2) Let all the existing NGO conferences, secretariats, and bureaus and working parties remain as they are, grouping those organizations which currently attend them. No changes at all are made, so that no one need fear that things are being reorganized with unpredictable results:

   -- each organization is involved as before, no more and no less, in NGO groupings and their committees
   -- each representative plays his usual role

   The existing mechanism is therefore safeguarded to the satisfaction of those who think the status quo is satisfactory.

3) The problem is therefore to satisfy those who are arguing for the new methods of operation.

   Suppose that all NGOs, whether in consultative status or not, with a particular concern, are now approached so that:

   a) those willing to collaborate would agree to the following only:
      -- that their organization's name should be placed on a mailing list
      -- that they would either
         i) send in to a central secretariat, periodically, the topics in which they were interested, or
         ii) answer a standard questionnaire, periodically, identifying the topics in which they were interested
      -- that the central secretariat would sort the replies and prepare a combined list of all NGOs interested in a particular topic, and periodically send updated copies of such lists to the NGOs in question

   b) those not willing to collaborate which do not object to the following only:
      -- that their organization's name should be placed on a mailing list
      -- that periodically the central secretariat would update the topics in which it was thought the NGO was interested

   /...
that the central secretariat would sort the replies, prepare combined lists of all NGOs interested in a particular topic and periodically send updated copies of such lists to the NGOs in question.

Note that no NGO receiving these lists or sending information to the central secretariat need "recognize" the secretariat or the "potential association", or any other NGO associated with the potential association.

(N.B.- For a description of the "potential association" technique, see Annex A)

4) On the basis of the combined resources of the NGOs currently interested in a given topic, the NGOs in question could arrange by their own independent initiative transient activities of the following type:

Either -- meet together on that topic
   -- create a working party on that topic
   -- create a joint conference on that topic

Or -- any other form of appropriate joint action (e.g., a letter, delegation, etc.)

Note that no NGO need recognize any NGO not involved in the given transient joint activity in which it is interested -- and of course is in no way obliged to respond to any particular initiative from any of the interested NGOs.

5) Now the existing NGO joint conferences, committees, secretariats, can be conceived as being structures which have already gelled or crystallized out of the potential association, around particular topics of interest with different degrees of formality and permanence.

Examples of the different types of existing, permanent and semi-permanent, joint NGO structures are based upon:

-- consultative status (international)
   -- UNESCO (the Conference of International NGOs approved for Consultative Status with UNESCO; the Standing Committee)
   -- ECOSOC (Conference of NGOs in Consultative Status with ECOSOC)
   -- UNICEF (Non-governmental Organizations Committee on UNICEF)

-- consultative status (regional or city-based)
   -- ECOSOC (Geneva Bureau, New York Bureau)

-- consultative status (regional or city based and specialized)
   -- FAO (Conference of International Organizations for Joint Study of Activities Planned in the Field of Agriculture in Europe; its Liaison Center; its working parties)
   -- ECOSOC (Conference's Geneva Working Party)
   -- UNESCO (Paris and London-based working parties)
-- UNICEF (Ad Hoc Committee)
-- South-East Asia Freedom from Hunger Campaign Conference
-- Non-UN consultative status
-- Seminar of Council of Europe NGOs
-- national NGO conferences:
  -- American Council of Learned Societies
  -- Standing Conference of British Organizations for Aid to Refugees
-- substantive matter independent of IGO-agency programmes (international)
  -- International Council of Voluntary Agencies
  -- International Conference of Women's NGOs
  -- Round Table of NGOs interested in Problems of Childhood and Adolescence
  -- International Council of Scientific Unions
  -- Union of International Engineering Organizations
  -- Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences
-- CIPHS
-- Meeting of Specialized Agencies and NGOs interested in the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders
-- Meeting of Representatives of International Organizations Interested in Peace
-- Conference of Latin American Voluntary Agencies
-- Conference of World Organizations Interested in the Handicapped
-- etc. (there are some 60 international NGO groupings of various types; there are many other periodical or irregular NGO joint meetings)

-- continental NGO conferences
-- Conference of "African NGOs"

-- country-oriented NGO conferences
-- Federation of International Associations Established in Belgium

-- city-oriented NGO conferences
-- Federation of Semi-Official and Private International Institutions Established in Geneva

6) But by using the flexibility inherent in the potential association concept, those NGOs involved in any of the existing structures could together, quite independently and where appropriate, and of their own initiative, decide to "dissolve" that particular structure into the potential association, and recrystallize a slightly different structure or simply to create new structures in parallel. The potential association concept facilitates this, and provides such actions with a conceptual and information framework for any such change.
7) With respect to the UN system and the consultative status mechanism, some new structures which might each be crystallized out at some future date, when appropriate, only for as long as is necessary (i.e., either once only, periodically, or as a permanent structure) are as follows:

-- Plenary conferences of all NGOs interested in the UN system program (i.e., not necessarily consultative status NGOs)
-- Agency-oriented conferences of NGOs interested in the programs of one agency only
-- Plenary conferences of all NGOs with consultative status with the UN system
-- Agency-oriented conferences for NGOs concerned with consultative status procedure with one particular agency
-- Agency-oriented conferences of consultative status NGOs concerned with a particular substantive question
-- Commissions, specialized conferences, or working parties on particular substantive matters
-- Committees for any of the above conferences or working parties
-- Secretariats for any of the above structures

Any of the above structures could be rapidly crystallized out if the potential association as the problem situation demanded.

8) The stress should, however, be placed not on the joint NGO-NGO or NGO-IGO organizations existing at any particular point in time, but rather on the ability to switch flexibly to other patterns of NGO-NGO or NGO-IGO organization as new problems, crises and opportunities arose. These new coordinating or joint bodies might take any of the following forms:

-- Plenary conferences of NGOs
-- Specialized conferences, missions or working parties
  -- By region
  -- By country
  -- By subject
  -- By procedure
  -- By agency
-- Combinations of the above structures
  -- Regional and specialized by subject
  -- Regional by agency program
  -- Procedural by agency (e.g., consultative status)
  -- International NGO conferences concerned with the coordination of their activities in a particular country
-- National plenary conferences of NGOs
-- Secretariat corresponding to conferences or committees

The ideal would be to reach a peak of flexibility at which:
-- organizations were only created as continuing bodies where there was a real, continuing problem
-- the joint bodies created were neither too universal or too narrow in geographical spread, nor too general or too specialized in substantive matter focus

The goal is to have two joint bodies where the division of interests within an existing body warrants this, or conversely to create one joint body where the overlap of interests between two existing bodies is sufficiently high. The intention should, however, be to facilitate rapid links to both greater subdivision and greater coordination as each problem requires new responses. Loyalty should not be to a fixed pattern of joint activity, but to the most effective new pattern for each new crisis -- namely to the pattern-forming potential.
-- Joint activities were neither too over-organized and formal; or too under-organized and insufficiently coordinated

Namely the goal is to have organizations and permanent committees where such are needed, regular meetings only where such are sufficient, and irregular meetings ad hoc committees when this is all that is necessary. The intention should, however, be to facilitate the rapid changes between one formula and another, to ensure the best possible response, with the least waste of effort in response to each new change in the problem's phases.

9) A very important feature of this technique is that the multitude of joint conferences organized according to subject, regional, or procedural interests, or geographical location of offices, is then recognized to be the most appropriate response to the need for contact at that particular point in time. Through the potential association mechanism, attention is constantly drawn to the possibility of other
-- more general conferences (whether in terms of geographical, subject, or multi-agency criteria)
-- more specialized joint activities of interest to a very limited group of NGOs

as soon as the common interest warrants their creation.

Any of these might prove to be a more appropriate response at a later point in time. In this way, cumbersome plenary conferences need only be used when essential.

The potential association mechanism is therefore one which keeps the NGO organizational resources in a state of pre-
paredness for any new form of combined activity -- for which the most appropriate combination of organizations cannot be predicted. In this connection, note the importance of this technique for response to crisis -- whether procedural or natural.

NGO interaction is therefore maintained at a maximum consistent with the desires and interests of the "potential associates" -- hopefully this will evolve with the flexible assistance of the potential association mechanism to more and more fruitful forms of NGO-NGO and NGO-IGO activity.

The potential association mechanism does not involve any form of "recognition" at the stage when information is exchanged by "potential associates" with the central Secretariat. There is, therefore, no reason why intergovernmental bodies, UN agencies, or any individual agency departments should not be held on the mailing lists as potential "associates" -- unilaterally recognized as such by the central Secretariat.

In this way, on a given program topic -- whether of governmental or non-governmental origin-- the exchange of information may lead to the crystallization of one of many forms of joint NGO-IGO activity in a particular case. The potential association mechanism, therefore, constantly draws attention to new forms of inter-organizational joint activity (irrespective of whether NGO-NGO or NGO-IGO, or even IGO-IGO). Hopefully, this will evolve over time into collaboration of greater and greater effectiveness.

10) There are two additional features of the potential association mechanism:

a) Just as individual NGOs and their objectives do not benefit in the long run from an isolationist strategy, so the effectiveness of the totality of the NGOs will be severely threatened unless the improvement of their own mechanism is meshed with that of the national NGO mechanisms which are the base and justification for international activity.

In this context, two types of national NGO mechanisms may be distinguished

i) Developed countries: in which the national NGO coordinative mechanism is more integrated, powerful, and effective than the international equivalent. In this case it is important to mesh national and international to increase the amount of international activity by encouraging extension of the local and national activity onto the international level (and into developing countries where applicable). In this way, the international mechanism is invigorated.

ii) Developing countries: in which the national NGO
coordinative mechanism may be weak to nonexistent -- and in which non-governmental organizations may be unrecognised or even suspect phenomena, or may even blur into governmental activity. In this case, it is important to make the international mechanism relevant to such countries by

-- facilitating the initiation and implementation of country-level programs in response to requests from the countries concerned

-- catalyzing the creation of national coordinating mechanisms and their interaction with international bodies and the equivalent activities in other countries.

In this way the international mechanism is constantly faced with the Third World's problems.

b) In a similar manner, it is insufficient for NGOs to be satisfied that NGO-NGO and NGO-IGO, and NGO-national interaction mechanisms are satisfactory. Any NGO-oriented mechanism must be structured to mesh with IGO-IGO-information systems, particularly in the UN system, as they are created. Such information systems, once launched, are liable to develop much more quickly -- if more inflexibly -- than NGO mechanisms. Nevertheless, it is vital that NGOs systems should be in a position to interact with IGO systems.
I. Opportunities and Dangers in the Development of NGO Information Systems

a - Rivalry

To what extent do the following comments on UN Specialized Agencies and the UN system in the Jackson Report also apply to international non-governmental agencies and the NGO system?

"... what exists today is inter-Agency rivalry for projects, each Agency insisting, almost as a matter of right, to get a slice of the country pie, regardless of the value and the propriety of the project from the country's point of view".

"Often the information required is known to one or other parts of the UN development system but is not readily available, either because communication facilities are inadequate, or because it is "hoarded" by the Agency concerned."

"The mere description of the present structure for development cooperation identifies its major shortcomings: it is far too fragmented, and has large areas of overlap which create major problems of coordination and an unnecessarily high degree of bureaucratic complexity, ... the structure is hampering accomplishment of the programme's objective of providing effective development cooperation".

"In short, there are now simply too many separate inconsistent, incomplete information systems relating to some facet of development cooperation activities ...".

A limitation of the Jackson Report, is the narrow focus on development at a time when this topic is now understood as intimately related to the problems of environmental pollution. The tendency to limit thinking in this way to a particular problem area in fact invites the rephrasing of one of the quotes above to give:

"Often the information required is known to one or other parts of the world system but is not readily available, either because communication facilities are inadequate, or because it is "hoarded" by the bodies concerned with one particular approach to, or aspect of, the complex of interacting world problems".

An NGO only exists because it has a special interest in a particular set of problems. At what point in the development of the NGO does this healthy special interest start to override the general interest to give a situation of "my NGO (or problem area) - right or wrong"? This is not a very important problem when NGO projects are few and far between. It does become important when NGOs start building up "comprehensive" information systems - particularly those which make use of computers. It is then that overlap leads to wastage of carefully acquired resources.

b - Problems

Here are some problems which NGOs must collectively face in working out the kind of information systems they need, particularly in the light of comments in the Jackson and SATCOM Reports:
- how to build up their data bases in such a way they can be fed into a computer;
- how to divide up the potential users of the information so the system is efficiently used;
- how to divide up the potential sources of funds to support such information systems so that each system is adequately funded.

At the same time, NGOs must be concerned with:

- conserving the resources of each system, to ensure its survival;
- resources of the network of information systems, to ensure that the service as a whole is adequate on a cost/effectiveness basis;
- total resources available, to avoid wastage of the limited funds available for this type of undertaking;
- avoiding unnecessary duplication and overlap;
- ensuring comprehensive rather than fragmented coverage;
- serving the maximum number of users with the maximum variety of purposes;
- avoiding confusion on the part of nongovernmental users and governmental users faced with a multiplicity of services;
- avoiding pasturing the same bodies two or more times for the same information;
- providing adequate security/privacy codes to prevent abuse of the data stored;
- providing a comprehensive picture of projects and programmes underway;
- preparing for the near future in which computer files of all such data banks will be linked, and data is transferred automatically from one to the other according to a programmed "arrangement" between the different parties.

These are very real problems. Many of them also arise in the case of commercial data banks, but there is an added twist in the case of nonprofit data banks. The nonprofit information systems are supposedly created to supplement one another and not to compete. And yet in order to survive each is forced to "hoard" information to increase the relative quality of the service it has to offer, just as with the (nonprofit) UN Agency information services. There is an extra turn to the twist in that usually one of the objectives of the responsible NGOs is to make available information at minimum cost, and yet it is clearly in its interest to raise the cost of such information to other NGOs which possess their own data banks.

It is these problems which will govern the rise and fall of NGO information services over the next 10-15 years. NGOs can either take the view that their own field of interest is too specialized to warrant collaboration with more general data banks, in which case their information functions will be
swept into the maw of commercial or government data networks and the NGO will fall by the wayside, or else they can actively investigate methods of organizing, financing and controlling nongovernmental, nonprofit collective information services.

c - Solution

The key to the provision of such a collective NGO information system is the development of a system which permits each NGO to view its part of the system as the most important (other parts merely being "subsets"), whilst at the same time ensuring that this necessary conceptual distortion does not either result in a permanent distortion of the relationship between the constituent parts, or in repeated inclusion of items of information in overlapping areas of interest. Thus while each NGO could think in terms of "its own" part of the data bank (and it would indeed have proprietorial rights and responsibilities), the computer would, whilst permitting such a distinction if necessary, meld the different items of data together into their most useful form for collective use of the information system by the participating NGOs.

There is clearly a saving for all in the systems design. NGOs would acquire the advantages of a sophisticated system, and the cost of using the system is greatly reduced due to the increase in the number of users. What is being suggested is really the need to dissociate conceptually the computer level from the organizations which own or use parts of the data bank - at this level there is unity and integration. At the organization level, the NGO owners and users can be as disunited as they feel to be necessary - linked only by procedural and data input standards.

A collective NGO information system of this kind would also facilitate contact between IGOs and NGOs at the data exchange level, since the political implications of such contact would be lessened. An approach of this kind could prove a real breakthrough. NGOs could use this form of common service, optimizing their overall contribution, but avoiding all the terrible problems - apparently insoluble except on a limited scale - of personalities, status and recognition, and differences of opinion on organization procedure and matters of substance. The scheme is quite practical technically and financially, and does not require a large initial pool of committed users. This sort of approach could place NGOs in a position of strength in the face of the impressive information systems now being planned and implemented by commercial interests and government agencies. (see also Appendix II)

d - Viable Collection Systems

Given the desirability of organizational information as argued above, how is such information to be collected, made available and updated?

The information systems on organizations which are currently planned or in operation at the international level possess one or more of the following objectives:
- System-centered (i.e. created in the interest of the "owner" of the information system)

to influence bodies on which information is collected for the collector's purposes (e.g. propaganda/publicity systems)
to keep informed about bodies on which information is collected for the collector's purposes (e.g. planning/market research systems)
to analyze bodies on which information is collected for the collector's purposes (e.g. academic research systems)

- Body-centered (i.e. created in the interest of the bodies registered in, and using, the information system)

to facilitate coordination between bodies on which information is collected for their mutual benefit (e.g. information services)
to publicize the activities of bodies on which information is collected (e.g. cooperative dissemination systems)
to provide bodies incorporated into the system with a means of furthering their objectives more effectively (e.g. cooperative information services)

Such systems are faced with the following major problems to a different degree depending upon the mix of their objectives:

- location and collection of data (namely the problems of producing reasons to justify the expenditure of time and effort by the bodies supplying the information);
- updating the information (namely the problem of guaranteeing a continuing supply of information from the same sources) in the presence of similar time-consuming demands from other sources;
- financing the collection of information and operation of the system;
- protection of the confidential information supplied (namely the problem of making available selected parts of the data to categories of users in a manner defined, ideally, by the body supplying the information);
- protection of the "data assets" and to some extent the identity of different collecting bodies which integrate their information systems to increase combined effectiveness.

System-centered information systems are typically easy to justify to fund sources (e.g. a corporation's public relations program) and in many cases may be tied into short-term programs (whether the "one-off" research program of a university or of some international program-oriented body such as Unesco). They suffer from the disadvantage that the arguments used to justify collection of the information may have considerably less significance in the working environment of the bodies supplying the information. This reduces willingness to supply the information, particularly on a continuing basis, and increases suspicion as to the ends to which it is to be put in the particular country where it is being collected.

Body-centered systems can be justified to the bodies in question which are prepared to supply the data but are typically difficult to justify to potential sources of funds, even the bodies themselves, since specialized program mandates cannot
be broadened to justify allocation of funds to the construction or operation of generalized information systems. Such systems are susceptible to inter-body disputes.

The principal problems of these two types of systems could however balance one another out if a hybrid multi-purpose system was developed to be of use both to the bodies incorporated in it and to others wishing to contact, influence or study those bodies. A system of this type would not only solve the practical problem of information collection but would in itself represent a significant step towards functional integration. A direct consequence of the creation of unrelated systems to handle research, planning, public information, education, program administration information needs is that insights or problems arising in one area are not evident to bodies concerned with other areas. Any new research insight concerning the world system should rapidly affect policymaking, education, public information, etc. Developments in each functional area must increasingly mesh smoothly together and reinforce one another instead of proceeding in leaps and starts. Information systems constitute the nervous system of planetary society. The fragmented approach to their design and use would seem to lead directly to social crises analogous to those found in the case of certain disorders of the nervous system, as though the world system was some organizational dinosaur suffering from spastic paralysis or aphasia. Integrated development can only be achieved if the information system is designed for multi-purpose use.

Realism suggests that no significant change will be made in the existing approach. It is also extremely doubtful whether a centralized information clearing house is desirable or practical in political or economic terms. It is however possible to envisage an information system which avoids the problems noted above.

The type of world-wide, low-cost information system which is now practical, and could be most beneficial for developing countries, is described in Appendix II. A similar system could be designed to fulfill the more limited requirements of:

- a consultative status NGO information system
- an NGO information system
- an NGO-UN Agency information system
- or any more broader grouping.

It is interesting to note that ECOSOC has recently proposed the establishment of an International Computing Centre in Geneva to help to resolve the incompatibilities in the UN Agency information systems. Initial users would be UN, UNDP and WHO. Perhaps the design of the programs could take into account the requirements of not only IGO to NGO information (e.g., UN public information systems) but also NGO to IGO, NGO to NGO, and NGO to public, information systems.
Wanted: A New Social Entity
(The Role of the "Potential Association")

The fragmentation, suspicion, duplication, unnecessary competition for limited resources and conscious or unconscious opposition to change and new patterns of activity which is increasingly characteristic of interorganizational relations, suggests the need for a new type of social entity.

Federations of organizations or even groupings of individuals - as the current solution to this malaise - are considered a potential threat to the autonomy and freedom of action of the proposed members, unless the grouping has a highly specific function (in which case its coordinative power is limited). Members do not want to have things said in their name except on very specific issues with their approval.

Is it not time that we examined the assumption that "organizations" as we have known them - and they do not differ fundamentally from the first associations and limited liability companies that were created several centuries ago - are the only possible form of organizing social activity. This is an incredible absence of development in a society characterized by change in all domains.

Perhaps we could bypass the impasse in interorganizational relations and the legal recognition of such entities by creating a new type of social entity (*).

As a first suggestion, why do we not "create" (or, really, "think in terms of") what might be called a "potential association" ("société potentielle" in French, as opposed to "société anonyme"). Such an association would, as such, not have "members" in the sense of people subscribing in common to a particular set of views or being represented in any way via an election procedure. The relationship would be loose - almost to vanishing point - to avoid any threat to autonomy.

The bodies brought into relationship via a potential association would be held, or, strictly speaking, would hold themselves, in this relationship simply by the fact that they received information, whether on a paying basis or as some form of subsidized service, from a central point on topics of interest to them.

Such centres, each functioning as the secretariat for a potential association, could take any existing organizational form - the fact that each made available information (on a subscription basis, for example) to a list of people or organizations implies no membership relationship whatsoever.

But, and here lies the difference from the multitude of information distribution operations, the secretariat would also ensure that that each "potential associate" or "subscriber" was regularly and rapidly informed of the identity and degree of "interest" or "desire to act" of other associates, with respect to each new subject or issue (falling within the domain of that particular potential association) on which he had also registered his interest (or desire: to act, to commit funds, etc.).

Each associate therefore has a comprehensive picture, updated weekly for example, of what new opportunities for joint action are open to him.

On such particular issues contact between a group of associates, self-selected from the total "pool" of associates, is facilitated by the secretariat. This could take the form of a list (of the names and addresses of all associates who had registered the same degree of interest in a given topic) sent to each person on the list - or this could be extended so that a willing contact person was appointed and indicated on the list. Such a restricted "transient" group (*) may then decide quite independently on the organizational form or joint action it has to take, if any. (i.e. whether formal or informal profit or nonprofit, one-off meeting, organization joint letter, delegation, etc.) for the period of duration of common interest in the subject. The potential association's central secretariat may, in some cases, then prove to be the most appropriate administrative structure to carry out the secretariat function of the specialized transient group. In other cases a separate secretariat may be created.

In this way the existence of the central secretariat is continually facilitating and catalyzing

(*) Equally urgent, if less obvious, is the need for equivalent new structures or processes to relate "potentially" the activity of autonomous disciplines and as a device for catalyzing individual integration.

the creation and crystallization of a multitude of transient groups - self-selected from the total pool of autonomous associates and dissolving back into the pool on completion of the activity for which they were created. Clearly at any one time a given associate may be, be becoming, or coming to be, a "member" of a number of such transient groups with different constitutions, degrees of formality, governmental character, continuity, degrees of permanence, binding power over members, types of programme, etc. Such specialized groups may result, in the normal way, in the creation of their own information systems or administrative apparatus - and associates may in fact have no further relationship with the potential association from which the transient group - gelled. Associates may even then constitute themselves into a more specialized potential association but a too time is the autonomy of the associate confined upon without his direct consent on the specific issue.

The potential association constitutes a development which is a "hair's breadth beyond current practice. This is encouraging in that it indicates that the novelty would not be so great as to jeopardize its use. Some organizational techniques which are related to it are: ad hoc committees and working parties, use of mission oriented task forces in complex organizations in order to get collaboration across jurisdictional boundaries (this is highly developed in the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation for example), invisible colleges - of scholars, natural disaster or crisis contact groups, situational groups advocated for people passing through the same life situation at the same time (1), and working groups of NGOs in consultative status with EGOCOC (2).

(1) - Due to the increasing desire on the part of a number of NGOs to combine for consultation on specific matters under the consideration of the Economic and Social Council or its subsidiary bodies, slowly a new approach has been gaining ground. Without changing the basic concept, the Conference agreed that if or its Bureau may act as a convener of meetings of consultative NGOs who wish to meet, consult and cooperate on specific matters. The conference or its Bureau should however not bear any responsibility for the actions of the groups thus formed. This method which is certainly capable of further and wider application is not objectionable, provided that there is always a clear distinction defining the competence, the action and the responsibility of the Conference and the Bureau on one hand, and the competence, action, and responsibility of the cooperating groups in ad hoc committees of NGOs on the other hand. (A review of the Aims and Objectives of the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Status with ECOSOC 11th General Conference of NGOs in Consultative Status with ECOSOC, Geneva. 1969, 11/GC/19, p. 9-10)

"We are, in fact, witnessing the evolution of a new organizational system that will increasingly challenge, and ultimately supplant bureaucracy. This is the organization of the future. I call it - Ad-hocray." Man will encounter plenty of difficulty in adapting to this new style of organization. But instead of being trapped in some unchanging, personality-smashing niche, man will find himself liberated, a stranger in a new free-form world of kinetic organizations - (p. 113)

- Organisations now change their internal shape with a frequency and sometimes a rashness that makes the head swim. rites change from week to week. Jobs are transformed. Responsibilities and vast organizational structures are taken apart, bolted together in new forms then rearranged again. (p. 113-4)

- Gardner relates to the risks of organizations in government and suggested that both the public and private sectors: Most organizations have a structure that was designed to solve problems that no longer exist. The self-renewing organization be defined as one that constantly changes its structure in response to changing needs - (p. 118 citing John Gardner, author of Self-Renewal Harper 1963) a similar view is expressed by Donald Schon who says that some organizational structures are very much - a series of memorials to old problems -

- Transient teams, whose members come together to solve a specific problem and then separate, are particularly a characteristic of science and help account for the kinetic quality of the scientific community - (p. 121)

- Clearly, there is nothing new about the idea of assembling a group to work toward the solution of a specific problem, then dismantling it when the task is completed. What is new is the frequency with which organizations must resort to such temporary arrangements. The seemingly permanent structures of many large organizations, often because they resist change, are now heavily infiltrated with these transient cells. - (p. 121)

- "We need to create - self-destroying organizations... lots of autonomous, semi-attached units which can be spun off, destroyed, sold when the need for them has disappeared. - (p. 122 citing Donald Schon, President of the Organization for Social Innovation"

- "What we need in our group is a kind of productive capability that is alive with intelligence, alive with information so that at its maximum it is completely flexible, and completely reorganizable - from hour to hour if one wishes to do so. A what is true of the plant is maximally true of the organization as a whole - (p. 122 citing a management consultant)."

- This typical bureaucratic arrangement is ideally suited to solving minor problems at a moderate pace. But when things speed up or the problems cease to be routine, chaos often breaks loose. It is easy to see why - it takes more information to cope with a novel problem than one we have solved a dozen or a hundred times before. It is this combined demand for more information at faster speeds that is now undermining the great vertical hierarchies so typical of bureaucracy - (p. 125)
differences from these techniques are ever highly significant. Firstly, the potential association is given social recognition, it becomes a social phenomenon which can be labelled, discussed and improved upon. At present the processes encompassed leading to the crystallization of such groups occur in a very haphazard change dependent, inefficient way (to the horror and despair of members when they finally make contact and realize the effort they have wasted). No information system has yet been designed to facilitate this type of contact - the closest approaches are the high-volume high-cost, highly specialized, profile-based journal abstract systems. Secondly, as a distinct organizational technique it can be actively between hitherto partially or totally isolated organizations - as such it increases the whole place potential and flexibility of organized activity. Thirdly by objectifying the tenuous concept of a group of bodies or persons which could link together in different transient patterns under different appropriate conditions the need to centre attention on existing organizations (with their tendency to self-perpetuate and constitute obstacles to social change) is diminished in favour of recognition of the range of potential patterns into which the component entities could - gel - in response to new conditions. A meaningful and dynamic social framework for ordinary organizations is thus supplied (1).

(1) Thus, whilst society may, with the use of a technique, of this type form a highly ordered (low entropy) complex at any given time - satisfying short time, stability requirements - the high probability of switching to completely different high order patterns at later points in time supplies the - randomness - (high entropy) condition essential to the facilitation of social change and development in response to new conditions. In this connection, note Professor Johan Galtung's view on the importance of high entropy for world peace:

"Thus the general formula is: increase the world entropy, i.e. increase the disorder, the messiness, the randomness, the unpredictability, avoid the clear-cut, the simplistic blueprint, the highly predictable, the excessive order. Expressed in one formula, this seems to capture much of what today is perceived as peace thinking, particularly of the associational variety.


In other words we have a means of ensuring high social stability at each point in time with low predictability over time, or alternatively and paradoxically, we can think of its as a potentially (i.e. unrealizable) highly ordered situation over time which - contains - a sequence of very disorder situations. An advantage of this is that people and power groups cannot take up feudalist roles in potential structures. In this connection see Johan Galtung: Feudal systems, structural violence and the structural theory of revolutions. Proceedings of the IPRA Third Conference Assen, Van Gorcum, 1971")

Fourthly, at a time when the need for greater participation is being felt, the - société anonyme - can be seen as crystallized out of a system of potential relationship between associates known (i.e. non-anonymous) to one another. Namely the transient bodies in which a given associate does not participate are not totally alien to him (provided they arise from the same potential association) - the alienating effect of an ordinary organization is thus reduced.

Note that there is no limit to the number of associates of a potential association - nor to the degree of sub-division or overlapping between such associations; limits worth a moment's reflection are perhaps constituted by the total world population or the total number of groups.)

Two other very problems are bypassed.

(a) legal status is irrelevant since the association as such, does not - exist - in the present in any tangible form - it only exists potentially (hence - potential association -) as a future possibility, and then only partially, through any of an infinite (or at least very large) combination of possible sub-patterns called into existence by particular conditions - it is these sub-patterns which may take on forms which could usefully acquire some form of legal status for their usually limited duration - there is however no need for them to - recognize - one another or be recognized by non-member associates.

(b) control of the central secretariat is not the critical problem it is in the creation of a normal organization. Its operation even be carried out under contract be carried out by an organization totally associated from the transient group - gel - out of the potential association. Control could be in the hands of a few or all of the associates by their constituting themselves for that administrative purpose only into a limited liability group or even some form of - Committee of the Whole - the technique used by the United Nations General Assembly! Alternatively the minimum administrative operation could be carried out as a normal subscriber service by periodicals - overlap between such services to common associates would merely confirm their effectiveness.

By implication both governmental and nongovernmental, and profit and nonprofit bodies at any level could be associates of the same potential association. The feasibility of a given pattern gelling into some effective ad hoc, formal or informal, joint operation would be determined by negotiation as part of the - life - of the potential association in terms of the political and other constraints valid for the proposed
(It could be instructive to speculate on the results of constituting the many thousands of bodies which make up the UN into a potential association. The same applies to the whole intergovernmental system, the nongovernmental system and could be equally interesting at the national and local levels.)

It should be clear that it is precisely this type of method of ensuring a constant, very high and flexible interaction rate which would ensure generation of the maximum amount of self-coordinated new activity commitment and involvement by associates of potential associates. It is this sort of approach which could be catalyzed by the UN to increase the amount of activity related to development, peace and other UN programme objectives. This could be done for the local and national levels, where the centres of interest lie, to strengthen grassroots interaction, with the recognition that this will build up and overflow naturally and of its own accord onto the international level and from the developed to the developing countries. This can be achieved without the need for the UN to be responsible for the organization, control or political implications of whatever joint activity gels out - except where Specialized Agency departmental participation, as an associate in a given activity, is appropriate. It is the increase in the absolute amount of such interaction which will ensure maximum collaboration with and support for, the sub-set constituted by UN programmes.

What social processes, pressures or bodies cause new UN programmes to be involved (i.e. voted) in recognition of new problems? Does the UN believe that non-UN joint activity can contribute to the achievement of UN long-term objectives without necessarily being tied to the UN definitions of methods and priorities - if so, what needs to be done to facilitate such activity (as a striking opportunity for accelerated development rather than as a politico-administrative problem of selective « recognition » of appropriate organizations?) (*)

(*) For specific proposals for the use of computers to facilitate high inter- and intra- organizational interaction, see A.J.N. Judge Information systems and inter-organizational space. In: Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science Association, Special Issue on Social Intelligence (for Development), Winter 1970-71. See also: International Organizations and the Generation of the Will to change, information systems required. Brussels, Union of International Associations, 1970 (INF/5).
Matrix Organization and Organizational Networks

The potential association technique is closely related to a technique used to handle complex multidisciplinary projects, such as the effort to get a man on the moon. Projects of equivalent complexity are the essence of development and the regeneration of urban areas, for example. This new technique, of proven worth, is known as the project or matrix organization.

The success of the program to get a man on the moon is not only a technological triumph. "Apollo 11 has been referred to as the most complicated piece of hardware ever conceived by man. The mind boggles when one tries to envision the total configuration of this undertaking from the millions of hardware parts through to the actual mission flight which encompasses a world-wide communications network. The managerial dimensions of the task are staggering....The administrative-management segment is perhaps less glamorous, and is prone to be overshadowed during the election of accomplishment, but it is one that plays a vital role in achievement."

Development, peace and environmental problems are coming to be perceived as enormously complex -- whether they are as complex as the task of getting a man to the moon is not yet clear. Many people would have wished that the resources devoted to the Apollo project could have been diverted into development type programs. But whatever one's views of the significance of the Apollo project and criteria of success, there is no reason why the technique used to manage this complex multi-disciplinary program should not be examined for relevance, as a technique, to the problem of relating the many organizations working to solve different aspects of the population-food-health-environment-peace crisis.

The management techniques developed by NASA are unorthodox because they must tie together: fundamental research on new approaches, development of research insights into realistic projects, contracting out aspects of the research, development or manufacturing program (to industry, universities, governmental agencies, professional associations, etc.) programme initiation, programme implementation, coordination of the programmes of a maze of semi-autonomous departments and institutions, human relations of a high order to blend together creative talent, highly individualistic and sensitive to restrictions to their autonomy in their area of expertise, and external relations (with the general public, the press, government, industry, the academic community, and special interest groups). At the same time priorities and organizational patterns are constantly changing. To succeed in this complex situation necessitates the abandonment of most of the standard rules of management practice.

Each of the features noted above is present in the elaboration of development-peace-environment-food programmes. It is therefore probable that the NASA techniques may contain important clues for the improvement of such programmes.

But programmes depend for their final success (in problem-solution rather than administrative performance terms) on the participation of many people from different backgrounds, organizations (e.g., government, industry, universities, professional associations, ...
youth groups, etc.), and disciplines (economics sociology, psychology, management, statistics, agriculture, communications, etc.) within programme frameworks which are as unrestricted on decentralized initiative as is feasible.

Consider some of the elements of the NASA philosophy. NASA decided that it would act as technical manager of a government-contractor-university team rather than be the designer and manufacturer of its various requirements -- namely a team effort between essentially different types of organization. This meant an emphasis on contracting out work to non-NASA controlled bodies (whether government, industry, university or professional association).

A very important decision was the switch to the concept of a "matrix organizational structure" in contrast to the traditional hierarchical, one-man-one-boss structure. Within this new structure, each participating body -- whether controlled by NASA or not -- is considered to be at the intersection of influences from other parts of the structure and itself in turn influences several others. It is a system which tends to diminish the visibility of authority and to emphasize consensus as an operative mode. Every participating organization or department is therefore at the point of intersection of competing forces with each part giving particular expression to the overall system's goal. Operating decisions are part of the give and take of specialized units struggling for a share of the system's total resources.

A key part of matrix management is the presence of elements with the power of precise decisionability to freeze the dialogue of decision-making at ad hoc points. In place of a rigid hierarchy and the pressure to conform to directives from the top, matrix management tries to substitute operating unit drive for expression within a climate of mutual respect united around fundamentals.

Why the expression "matrix" organization? Consider a simple example below.

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The project is divided into 5 Phases and requires the participation of 10 organizations of various types. Organizations participate to a different degree at different Phases. At each Phase there is a problem of coordination between the participating bodies. Between Phases there is the problem of ensuring continuity. Phases may of course overlap one another or run in parallel. In a real case
several departments from each organization might be involved at different Phases, and there would probably be many more Phases. The matrix would be very much larger.

In a matrix organization each Phase has its own coordinating body which exists only for the duration of the Phase. The manager of the coordinating body has no formal line of authority over the participating functional units -- but he does have deterministic authority over the units which do participate. Within the project as a whole, therefore, the activities of one participating body are coordinated by several such bodies -- the one-man, one-boss approach is dropped -- with the result that the span of control becomes very large.

"Issues like human relations: trust, people understanding one another -- which we used to think of as the frills of a business organization -- now become absolutely central. When TRW Systems was running the Minuteman project, the heads of each of the resource pools and of the project­

ing group met together for an hour at eight o'clock every morning, every day of the week. Not because they were nice fellows or thought that human relations were a good thing, but because the informational complexity of running a matrix was so great that without that sort of meeting they couldn't manage at all."

(Donald Schon. BBC Reith Lectures 1970. The Listener, 3 December 1970, p. 774)

Each organizational unit can therefore be seen as an area of tension between the forces of integration and fragmentation which cut through the system. Matrix management attempts to enhance both these tendencies.

Disintegration tendencies derive, in a development-environment-food problem example, from: the "economists" responsibilities to propose mechanisms to improve the availability of funds to developing countries. Similarly "human rights NGOs" must focus on the social aspects and consequences of development. The "peace researchers" must attempt to isolate factors which hinder economic growth in international tensions and an increase in world stability. The "medical organization" must attempt to stress the importance of health in relation to development, pollution and malnutrition. The "pure science bodies" must stress the importance of understanding of ecology, control of natural phenomena, etc. The "mass media bodies" must stress the importance of informing and educating the general public on their responsibilities. And so on.

Each such autarky -- and it is as such that NASA views many of its sub-systems -- is however related to the others. Certain unifying techniques are provided. These have been well illustrated by the contrast between the traditional formal organization (one-man-one-boss) structure as shown in Fig. 2 and the new diagrammatic representation as in Fig. 3. In the NASA case, the first is judged as no longer reflecting the reality of the matrix environment. The second is considered to be a closer approximation to the management dynamics. This is more than a "space age" portrayal of a structural-functional system. Just as the components of our own social system are held in juxtaposition by the forces of nature, so also does each "planet" in the matrix organization owe its position to more than just gravitational inter-
action with the "sun" or its "moon(s)". Each planet interacts with all components of the system to bring about a balance or stability which serves to maintain the system.

But is this solar system diagram relevant to the problems of interrelating IGOs, INGOs, Multinational corporations, Governments, National bodies, etc. There never has been any question that they could all be considered as linked within some overall structure with formal lines of authority such as in Fig. 2. Even in the case of limited groups of organizations the formal lines of authority are practically non-existent -- this is one of the greatest "weaknesses" of international organization.

But suppose that instead of focusing on the formal lines of authority we look at the flows of information, resolutions and law, namely the information which regulates -- directly or indirectly -- activities within the world system. We could perhaps draw out some sort of rigid hierarchy with the United Nations at the top. Each line would then represent some flow of regulative information.

But just as in the NASA case this could not be considered an adequate picture of the way such processes actually work. In particular, many organizations would not wish to think of themselves as beholden to others -- there is a much greater impression of autonomy and freedom of action. In addition, we can not clearly see how information flows from the UN down to the national level -- the lines in the "world organization chart" are not all known. In many cases the information flow lines can be only dotted in. We are dealing with a system of autarkies.

It is therefore much more useful to think of the organic relationship between all the organizational elements of the world system as based on the solar system model. Each area of interest functions quite independently within its own "planetary" orbit, together with its own sub-interests in their respective "lunar" orbits.

Each body influences every other body, just as the gravitational influence of each planet influences every other planet. Stability is maintained because all bodies revolve about a common central point.

But in the case of the world system there is no body which sits at the central position as a meeting point or origin for coordinative information. For some a "world government" would take this central position. For others a governmental structure organized in terms of the concepts current in national government would be a disaster. This position can therefore be considered a future or potential development -- an idea for which we do not yet have an adequate organizational form. This approach does not however prevent us from treating this common (or "virtual") point as the centre of a solar system model. (The "inhabitants"of a particular body do not have to think of it in these terms -- just as it is possible for someone on the surface of the Earth to say both "the Sun rises" and "the Earth revolves around the Sun".)

As a first attempt at organizing thinking in these terms, governmental, business-industry, and non-profit-academic organizational forms have been treated as three planetary systems in Fig. 4. This therefore stresses the importance of the equilibrium between the three basic types of organization present in the social system.

To include more details, we can now treat each of these planets as a solar system in its own right. The first treated in this way is
the governmental system shown in Fig. 5. This stresses the geographical territorial aspect of the coordination problem. Namely that the planets closer to the centre represent the most coordinative bodies (e.g. the United Nations). Further out, the smaller regional intergovernmental organizations are shown, then the national governments, then local governments.

The second system is that of the non-governmental, non-profit organizations. This is shown in Fig. 6. Again the non-existent "plenary conference" of all international nongovernmental bodies is shown at the centre -- this is a potential or future development for which the adequate organizational form and function had not yet been evolved. In the nearest orbits around this move the various coordinating conferences of INGOs. These have different degrees of substantiality, depending upon whether there is an organization: with a secretariat, a committee with no secretariat, or merely an infrequent meeting. Each of these bodies may of course have its own "moons" in the form of sub-committees or working parties. In this case, the larger the orbit, the more specialized and limited is the coordinative function in both geographical and subject area terms.

A similar attempt could be made to sketch out the business-industry complex in terms of a solar system model. Significant features would be the multinational corporations, world trade centres, etc.

In each case we now have a way of looking at a maze of independent and semi-autonomous bodies. In each case the important point is that this approach shows how justified each body is in considering itself independent -- but at the same time attention is drawn to the extent to which each body is related to others. It is a truism to say that every body is dependent upon everyone else in society, but we have enormous difficulty in balancing this integrative concept against our individually felt justification for a sense of independence and freedom. This is what a solar system model accomplished. It balances centrifugal and centripetal forces, justifying both.

In a rapidly changing society one must expect the features of the solar system model to evolve. Potential structures which have acted as focal points may take on an organizational form. Existing planets may cease to be considered useful and may disintegrate -- "releasing" any dependent bodies (which retain their usefulness) to gravitate into some new orbit. A solar system model can "contain" conceptually and portray such social dynamism in a very adequate manner.

Another important feature of the model is that it can suggest or draw attention to the possibility of new structures and thus speed up evolution of the social system to new forms.

The solar system model can be interpreted in another way. If two bodies are placed close together on the model, then communication between them -- the transfer of new concepts and information on new problems -- will be relatively easy compared to the case where the bodies are far apart on the model. Increased distance means increased difficulty in communication.

This is a very important point because there is a tendency to treat the centre of any such social system as the "controller" of all
NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION
MANNED SPACECRAFT CENTER
Houston, Texas

Figure 2
Figure 5.
SUGGESTIVE OUTLINE SKETCH
MAP OF GOVERNMENTAL SYSTEM
(BASED ON A SOLAR SYSTEM MODEL)
Figure 6.

SUGGESTIVE OUTLINE SKETCH
MAP OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL SYSTEM
(BASED ON A SOLAR SYSTEM MODEL)

- Permanent INGO grouping
- Ad hoc, possible or proposed grouping

(INGO: INternational Non-Governmental Organizations)
"dependent" bodies. From this it is just one step to suggesting that the centre should instruct all dependent bodies on the action they should take under any given set of circumstances.

This view completely loses sight of the fact that precisely because bodies on the periphery are not at the centre they have a better understanding of problems developing in their sector. And it is because such peripheral bodies feel that they should modify their own actions to respond to the problems they detect, before the centre has registered the importance of these problems (due to the communication lag) that the peripheral bodies feel justified in stressing the importance of a high degree of autonomy. The centre just does not respond to crises quickly enough, on top of which it is usually so over-burdened -- when attempting to control every-thing -- that it is not sensitive to information on "minor" (from its own perspective) crises. These are therefore allowed to grow, until the centre can recognize the crisis as worthy of its attention with disastrous consequences to the peripheral bodies in the sector in question. A more organic approach sees the peripheral bodies handling all the problems to which they can respond effectively, only referring to more central bodies when the problem overflows their sector.

The centre-periphery or solar system model has recently been criticized by Donald Schon (BBC Reith Lectures, 1970. Published in "The Listener", November-December, 1970.) in a very interesting way which throws much light on the direction in which forms of organization can expect to develop.

He is concerned with social changes and changes in institutions, as a consequence of the spreading of something, whether it be a new product, a new concept, a new technology, or a new type of institution. Social change becomes a by-product of the diffusion of information.

He argues that society's diffusion systems change over time and evolve and that this evolution is absolutely critical to how it is that society works and that management of the society depends on our ability to spread things in it, for novelty to arise at points and then to spread throughout the rest of society.

He takes as a classic model of the diffusion process the solar system with a centre and a periphery to it. In following his criticism it is important to note that he is only concerned with the analogy to the diffusion of "light" from the sun as centre point. He is not concerned with the analogy to the "gravitational" influence of each body (whether at the centre or not) on every other body, as is the case in the NASA solar system model.

In the case of international organizations, the centre in the following argument could represent either the international NGO (with its members or its public as the periphery), the United Nations system (with national organizations and the general public as the periphery). The "novelty" is peace or development-oriented thinking.

In the limited model, which he criticizes, the novelty to be spread is at the centre and the potential adapters or users of the novelty are at the periphery. This is the model of diffusion that is practised in the classroom. It rests on a series of assumptions:
- that which is to be diffused or spread exists before the spreading begins
- the growth or spreading of new things takes place by the movement of those things out from the centre to a periphery
- that which is spread is a product or a technique

The model has certain limits built into it:

- only a certain amount of energy or resources can be concentrated at the centre (i.e., the centre does not have the time and energy to do everything all the time)
- depending on the number of points on the periphery, the distance from the centre to the periphery, the effectiveness of the communication system between centre and periphery, the work that must be done by the centre to get the periphery to accept novelty may be considerably increased
- the ability of the system to function is dependent on how well the feedback mechanism works. Namely the centre must respond to information from the periphery, modify its own behaviour in consequence and transmit new information back to the periphery.

A modification of the simple centre-periphery model has been developed in response to these limitations. Schon calls this the proliferation-of-centres model. In this case the original primary centre is replicated so that a new kind of centre is now created in the middle and a series of miniature centre-periphery models now operate on the periphery. He cites as an example the Roman Army in which the primary centre in Rome trains and develops the capability of the colonies to function as secondary centres. In this way the scope of operation is enormously increased. Whereas previously activity was bounded by the distance to the periphery and the resources of the centre, now new centres can be replicated at convenient distances from the periphery, pushing the limiting boundary further away from the original centre.

The replication is not perfect, however, and such social structures tend to fail when the periphery and secondary centres get out of control -- the traditional conflict between the centre and the region or branch. But as Schon says:

"Perhaps the major source of failure in the proliferation-of-centres model has to do with the rigidity of central doctrine in relation to what's going on at the periphery. You have what looks, after the fact, like the stupidity of the Third International with respect to revolution according to the likes of each country, the stupidity of the Church, for example, in the delays they practised before allowing the liturgy to be Chinese in China, the stupidity of Coca-Cola which for a long time insisted on providing brown liquid for Africans when Africans didn't like brown liquid: they liked orange liquid. The need to modify the central message according to the requirements and the lights of the periphery poses great problems for the proliferation-of-centres system, because the whole structure of the system, its effectiveness, depends upon the simplicity and the uniformity of that message.

It is apparent that such systems were not organized to be sensitive to change. Schon notes however that they did adapt, and "learn", but only in spite of forces opposing such adaptation:

/...
"The great proliferation-of-centres models of the late 19th and early 20th centuries turn out to have been learning systems in spite of themselves. That is to say, when change occurred which was responsive to the special conditions which obtained at the periphery, the centre always found it necessary to disengage, to react against that change, no matter how adaptive the change may have been. The overall pattern runs roughly this way. A primary centre emerges, it develops a diffusion system, it replicates itself in many secondary centres. The primary centre specialises in the creation and management of secondary centres and in the management of the overall network, and then the diffusion system fragments, the centre loses control, the network disintegrates, the secondary centres gain independence, or they decline, or they themselves assume the role of primary centre. The reasons for that decline or for that disintegration may be several. They may have to do with the limits of the infrastructure, the limits of the technology for the flow of information if the centre can't reach the outposts adequately. They may have to do with a constraint on the centre's ability to manage that complexity. They may have to do with the motivations of the agents of diffusion."

Schon contrasts this model which is currently used in most large organizational systems, whether governmental, business or nonprofit, with a model which he describes as being pioneered by certain types of "business-system" corporations and the youth-peace-civil rights movement in the U.S.A. In the latter case, for example, there is no clear centre -- or rather a shifting centre, and no stable message. Theories arise spontaneously, modify themselves and bear only a family resemblance to one another. Nothing is radiating out from one centre to a periphery.

"It's a kind of amoeba, with very unclear boundaries, with no clear centre, with no clear structure, but with a very powerful, informal, interpersonal network that pulls the whole thing together. And not only does it survive, but it turns out to be darn near invulnerable, and its invulnerability in part depends on precisely those ways in which it is different from the centre-periphery model. There is no clear, stable centre, nothing to strike at."

Such social organization depends very heavily upon the existence of a highly effective communications system but also upon the "strange and wonderful networks of interpersonal connection stretching over the entire nation which enable the pieces of this system to connect together."

The movement and the business-systems firm are therefore highly able to transform themselves without disruption and to modify their behaviour in response to the requirements of changing situations -- despite the fact that they are apparently the most anti-thetical to one another, their methods of organization appear to be converging upon a common organizational structure:

"The classical models for the diffusion of innovation took a product or a technique as the unit to be diffused. The business-systems firm and the youth movement are biased toward a functional system of thought and action as the unit to be diffused. The classical model is a centre-periphery one; the business-systems firm and the social movements associated
with youth and Vietnam have a pattern of systems-transformation which is not centre-periphery. The classical model has a fixed centre and clearly defined leadership; the youth movement and the business-systems firm both tend to have shifting centres and ad-hoc leadership as the requirement arises. The earlier system had relatively stable messages and a pattern of application of a central message; the latter ones have evolving messages. The earlier systems were limited in their scope by resources and energy at the centre and by the capacity of the spokes; the latest systems are limited only by the qualities of the technological infrastructure of the time. The reason I dwell at such length upon this development is that I think it contains within it the seeds of what it means to be a learning system in our time."

Schon then uses these ideas about organizational structures as learning systems to look at governmental structures, namely the third basic type of organization. He first notes that one negative but not entirely inappropriate way of looking at government agencies is as a series of memorials to old problems. As a general rule agencies come into being around problems that are perceived as critical problems and then go on living long after those problems have been solved or become insignificant.

Public organizations have proved singularly inept at responding to new situations -- in functioning as a learning system. Any problem that can be named has a number of very interesting ideas for its solution. The difficulty has been that of carrying out any policy for social change to respond effectively in terms of such solutions. Schon scotches the idea that inability to respond has been due to the lack of commitment to the needed programmes in that one could equally well argue that the failure of these policies and our inability to implement them rests on a radically inadequate theory about the process of implementing any policy. The current theory of public learning is based on the following:

- that the issues and problems are given, that we know what they are, and although we may investigate them, the investigation does not usually take into account the process by which the issues came to be perceived as important in the first place
- that it is possible to make a radical distinction between the formation of a policy and its implementation
- that the process by which a policy comes to be implemented is a centre-periphery process with government disseminating policy from its centre point
- that policy, once developed, can remain steady over a long period of time which permits aspects of the policy to be handled by compartmentalized units which correspond to the departments and agencies of government, namely one-agency-one-policy

Against this theory he raises three questions:

- how do ideas come into good currency, how do issues come to be powerful for action, how do we decide what needs to be worked on?
- how can government change in response to a new problem?
- how can government go about developing and carrying out a policied solution to a new problem when it is clear that the
problem has to be worked on but it is not clear what the solution is, and when no solution is going to be adequate for more than a short time?

As an example he cites the problem of the cities and notes that no governmental agency in the U.S.A. is not involved in this problem. Namely the problem fragments the existing pattern of agencies with each agency tackling that aspect of the problem relevant to its own concerns. The same is true of development and intergovernmental agencies. Another example is the current problem of the environment. The current solutions to this difficulty are:

- to form inter-agency committees, which according to Schon have never been known to work and quickly fall victim to the baronial instincts of the various agencies so coordinated
- to reorganize and consolidate the system of agencies, which again falls victim to the temptation for each modified agency to continue to function in the old way but under new headings, each with the support of its traditional constituency
- to create a new agency, but if the number of new problems found to be serious each year is increasing this will lead to a proliferation of agencies, particularly if there is only an ineffective mechanism for dissolving them
- to create a series of pools of competence which are relevant to the implementation of policy in a broad sense. These would be drawn upon on a temporary basis by project organizations such that people and resources move effectively backwards and forwards between their pools of competence and project organizations as they are created and dissolved for the life-cycle of a problem. This is in effect a description of one variety of the matrix organization described earlier.

It has the advantage that it permits loyalty to and identity with government at a very high level of aggregation or generality, i.e., not to a department but possibly to the national government per se. The movement of people in and out of specific projects helps to avoid over-identification with a given organization with all its consequences for the creation of organizational memorials to dead problems. This is a problem for the UN to consider.

The information system which Schon points out would be necessary to help identify the new problems and draw together the appropriate team makes this type of social organization resemble the potential association described earlier. There is one important difference however. In this case the information system is still controlled from the centre. It is the centre which identifies which problems are critical and then decides which competence pools should be drawn upon. In the case of the potential association, no such centre exists.

Schon notes that the centre can disseminate policy in a number of ways:

- the policy may be promulgated
- the policy may take the form of a law that is enforced
- resources may be made available which encourage the actual implementation by agencies wishing to obtain funds
- government may formulate policy and invite participation --funding the regions or agencies which do and depriving those that do not.

Schon noted that this is the principal method used in the U.S.A.
The weakness of the centre-periphery model as used by government and the United Nations is illustrated by Schon's example of a U.S. Federal Government programme to ensure the dissemination of the latest medical expertise to practising physicians in 55 regions, are:

- the actual goals of the regional agencies are in fact different from those of the central agency and they therefore used the allocated funds in their own ways with some degree of conscious or unconscious subterfuge on the part of the regional agencies
- it was discovered that the effects of large-scale medical insurance might not be to assure care but to increase medical cost
- no region was found to be like any other region and it was difficult to modify the programme administration to handle each case on its own terms
- each region had to be regarded as open-ended, namely there was no model of medical care that could be imposed and could last for any region.

There could therefore be no central policy.

"All one could say was that there were certain themes of policy -- themes, for example, like the shortage of medical manpower. The generation of central policy had to be inductively derived from the regions, and regions became developers of variations upon policy themes. The centre couldn't therefore go out and evaluate what the regions were doing according to any central model. They could only press the regions to develop evaluation systems of their own which were appropriate to their own policies. The centre could pull the regions together in a kind of learning network so that they could learn from one another in their own efforts to carry out transformations of the system of medical care.

Now the regional medical programme -- not as it was conceived but as it developed -- has begun to be a learning system for government in the mode of implementing policy. It isn't in the centre-periphery model but looks more like the network model of the business-systems firm or the student movement. It stands in contra-distinction to the idea of government as an experimenter for the nation, of government as a trainer of the nation. It fits the notion of loss of the stable state. It fits the notion of change as the foreground condition against which governmental action must work. Where the public problem is now, there is no established policy solution or institution corresponding to it. The centre's role is to announce themes of policy to the periphery, to initiate facilitate and support learning efforts: the movement is then as much from periphery to periphery, from point to point on the periphery, as it is from centre to periphery. It is an inductive rather than a deductive process, and it is a process comparable, in its overall character, to the learning systems which we have seen in the evolution of business firms and of different systems for technological innovation."

From this we see the need for the additional requirement that the regions be able to adapt central policy themes. Schon does not go so far as to describe a system which would
- assist regions to detect problems to which they could respond
  by initiating policy which might later be generalized by the
  centre
- assist bodies not previously within the system to sign up problems
  to it and to facilitate any joint programme formulation and im-
  plementation

This is an even looser concept which would permit many more organ-
izations to be interrelated in society's response to problems
whilst making maximum use of the fact that unknown and unrecognized
bodies may in fact be more able to detect problems before they
develop to unnecessarily critical proportions. It is this concept
of an organization which is foreshadowed in the potential associ-
ation which permits the creation of transient organizations
(whether matrix organizations or not.)

It is this sort of approach which can be used by international non-
governmental organizations to relate themselves and their prog-
gramme within a loose network of "INGO policies." INGOs must be
able to collaborate effectively with UN and UNDR programmes when
they take on a matrix form as they are bound to do in order to
master the multidisciplinary and multi-agency problems. Hopefully
the United Nations will develop its own approach to permit its
agencies to relate through such an information system to the activ-
ies and problems of INGOs.

Whilst the United Nations should expect to be able to formulate
central policy themes, the INGOs (as secondary centres) should be
able to develop detailed policies and introduce variations for
their own sectors, just as the governments develop policy for their
own countries. Once the United Nations or any other such centre
(e.g., the OECD) can respond to peripherally developed policy
variations, it will have ceased to be a rigid promulgator of
necessarily out-of-date policy and will have adapted to the role
of catalyzing a "world learning system".

Schon summarizes his views as follows:

"The map of organizations or agencies that make up the society
is, as it were, a sort of clear overlay against a page under-
neath it, which represents the reality of society. And the
overlay is always out of phase in relation to what's under-
neath: at any given time there is always a mismatch between the
organizational map and the reality of problems that people
think are worth solving....

There's basically no social problem such that one can identify
and control within a single system all the elements required
in order to attack the problem. The result is that one is
thrown back on the knitting together of elements in networks
which are not controlled and where the network functions and
network roles become critical....

That means that the inside of the system is a temporary system
which is fluid and able to shift. Change becomes the foreground
condition rather than the background condition.... Functional
systems must be able to provide security for their members at
the level of functional systems and not at the level of specific
organizations within them....

We have young radicals who would like to create community or
organizations which are separate economic, political and social
units, and we have young people who would like to go off into

/.../
the woods and form communes. All these efforts towards decen-
tralization are reactions against the repressive and dehuman-
izing character of central government and of central institu-
tions. But this response is not an adequate one: the same
technological changes that produced the loss of the stable
gate connect every piece of society to every other and no
separate enclaves can survive. If decentralization is a re-
sponse, it must be connected decentralization."

NGOs in particular should not be deterred from looking at the current
ideas emerging from business management research for clues to new
methods of organizing their own activities. The fact that the
business systems, the youth-peace-civil rights movement, and possibly
even the Mafia, are all converging on the same flexible structure
in response to similar problems clearly illustrates that it is the
operating advantages of these new structures which should be con-
sidered and not the objectives for which they are used. Unfortu-
nately many NGOs tend to imitate the UN's organizational struc-
ture, with its built-in inter-Agency coordination problems,
rather than experiment with flexible evolving structures adapted
to the new understanding of problem complexity and the need for
organizational networks.

The solution to the problem of inter-organizational relationships
lies not in a monolithic centralized organization of coordination
but in an adequate world-wide information system in which all can
participate freely to determine with which groups and problems
they should temporarily concern themselves -- namely a network
of social activity coordinated by information and not by organiza-
tion.
This is a brief indication of the type of low-cost information system which fulfills many of the requirements not covered by the UN Capacity Study and similar specialized in-house systems. It acts at a higher action potential -- focused as close as possible to the present, restricted to information on active or potentially active bodies, and is more highly integrated. Its value to specialized systems is that it can be used as a comprehensive picture from which specialized details can be filtered off.

Criteria

The system is based on the assumption that in order to formulate a global or comprehensive strategy requiring or affecting a variety of organizations, it is necessary to:

a) maintain an updated picture of who is doing what, where, and when -- for the present and the future

Since neither problems nor the future are respecters of jurisdictional boundaries or imposed categories, the system must:

b) overcome resistance to communication and loss of coverage caused by:
   a. established administrative, jurisdictional, political boundaries;
   b. geographical separation;
   c. conceptual separation arising from divergent specialized disciplines;
   d. different evaluations of effectiveness (often arising from past limitations on information received);
   e. class and status separation;
   f. differences in available resources to collect and process information (which leads to different impressions of the necessity for a greater degree of transparency of the world system).

Since a great deal of funds and intellectual and emotional capital is invested in the current organizational and category structure, the system must:

c) avoid the necessity for organizational change or threat to traditional bonds.

This also applies to existing or planned information systems, such as that advocated in the UN Capacity Study which is constrained by the years of effort put into the UN, ILO, FAO, and UNESCO library systems. The system must therefore act as a linking process:

d) into which information may be fed from specialized systems with their own security constraints;

e) from which information may be drawn according to specialized filtering profiles.

Since the main problem today is to get public support for, and involvement in, projects falling outside an individual's normal sphere of interest, the system must:

f) be directly useful to the individual within his own sphere of interest, although providing him with the facility to increase his awareness of more distant or inclusive contexts -- to the limits of the world system.
Following from this is the need to ensure a minimum operational and set up cost for the system, namely that the system must:

g) be self-maintaining in that it generates resources which are used at a point at which they can be seen to be useful by the fund suppliers.

To ensure maximum realization of its potential, it must be possible for the system to:

h) juxtapose information concerning groups with related interests in such a way that each group is made aware of the potential value for activity of contacting the other. The decision to communicate directly being of course entirely dependent on each body. (The function of the system is to bypass the encrustation of social mechanisms which render society and the world system opaque to perception of useful contacts.)

Since world problems are of such a nature and complexity, and growing at such a rate, that it is impossible to depend upon the "resolving power" of one body or group of bodies to detect them at a point in time before they are close to becoming critical, the system could:

i) be conceived of, described, and used as a problem detection mechanism, such that in their very diversity and tremendous distribution through function and geographical space, each body is seen to have the potential ability to report back on the area of its concern. Problem information (or negative feedback) therefore enters the communication system much earlier in time than would be possible if, as now, it were necessary to depend upon particular organizations or programmes set up in the past to detect the problems considered significant in the past, and which cannot (by definition) be sufficiently flexible to detect new problems before they have achieved considerable magnitude.

Finally, such a system should not be described solely as a device or tool. It could also:

j) be conceived of, and described as a symbol (or physical working model) of what has always tended to be an abstract and relatively meaningless concept, namely "world society" or the "world community".

The elaboration of such a network linking all organizations within the world system in terms of their actual day-to-day pattern of contacts would decrease the current tendency to treat organizations as relatively isolated entities. The existence of such a model, open for "exploration", could have social, psychological and educational consequences of considerable value to the stability of the world system.

Description

The following system is one of many which could fulfill the above criteria.

1. Suppose that every organization (and even active individuals) was given the facility to register its address, interests, current and planned programmes, etc. into a computer file. The act of registration could be accomplished through the post by filling out a standard form.

/...
2. Clearly this project would prove impractical if the attempt was made to do this at an international central office. The amount of information would be too great, therefore making the processing costly, and the project would run foul of criteria (b).

3. Suppose however that the project was catalyzed (not organized) by the United Nations and other such bodies, and the attempt was made to encourage the creation of city, province or national level computer files around the world. Clearly in some cases only a national or even sub-continental file would be possible. In cities, even local files would be possible. This would reflect the amount of information and the resources available.

4. Now suppose that in addition to indicating regularly changes of address or interests, each body files queries concerning other bodies actually or potentially active in its field, and that the appropriate addresses were furnished in response.

5. By catalyzing the creation of collecting points in this way, grass-roots initiative will ensure that the coverage for collection/query response is adequate for a viable service.

6. But now suppose the computer files of the different collecting points are not kept isolated from one another, but that copies of the (magnetic tape) files are moved from one collecting point to another. Clearly contacts and queries collected at one point are now exposed to contacts and queries from other points. This process can take place between local points (within the same province), sub-national points, national points (within the same continent), or international points.

7. The circulation of information can be made very rapid. A courier file can be circulated between a group of local points in the same province (or city) during the course of a week, month, or longer. Information is copied onto and off each local file. At one point the file interacts with an inter-province courier file moving from province to province within a week, month, or longer. Information is transferred both ways. Similarly the inter-province file -- in effect a national file -- could interact with an international courier file on the same principle.

8. Clearly by this means organizations active in one geographical area can find out about, or be made aware of, bodies with related interests in other geographical areas. A refinement would be to encourage the creation of specialized files by subject or subject:groups.

9. If collecting points are created for specialized topics, these may also interact with either inter-speciality courier files or also the inter-geographical area files -- depending on the level at which the information was collected.

10. The system is very flexible. Clearly a politically sensitive group of organizations like the UN Agencies could circulate a file around the UN system and then have it interact with the international courier file. Security, subject matter and evaluative fileters could govern the interaction.

11. The key feature of the system however is that it does not require more than a bare minimum of overall organization -- and even this could prove unnecessary. Neither the courier file movement between collecting points,
nor the content of the file, implies any form of "recognition" (see criteria b).

12. Collecting points are created wherever (in terms of subject, jurisdiction, or geographical level) there is sufficient common interest -- i.e., motivation plus resources. If the problems of Criteria b arise, are recognized, and it is desired to overcome them, all the administrative work may be delegated entirely to some party judged to be impartial and uninvolved -- a commercial computer service bureau, a university, a government agency, a user cooperative, or nonprofit institute. The whole procedure at a given collecting point might be arranged under contract.

13. Hopefully the selection criteria, if any, of each collecting point could be clearly stated to facilitate the design of search strategies. But if information or queries are not accepted at one point, they could be inserted into the system via another.

14. The costs involved at each collecting point are (a) conversion of information and queries to machine readable form, (b) processing and output relevant to immediate user contacts, and (c) transport costs of the magnetic tape courier file to the next collecting point. The funds are expended locally in a manner which can be immediately justified and yet this results in making available current information from very distant points within the world system.

15. These costs can be met by (a) a charge imposed on the user bodies for filing their description and interests plus address, (b) a charge imposed on bodies filing queries and/or receiving output replies, (c) a charge imposed on bodies using the system for bulk mailing, (d) subsidies from directly interested bodies (e.g. local, state or national government agencies, foundations, etc.).

16. Charges (a), (b) and (c) under point 15 could also be met or reduced by use of subsidies. These could be made selective and dependent upon compatibility of the interest profile of the subsidizer and the user query profiles.

17. The financing of the system does not need to be comprehensively organized.

18. The system lends itself to some very interesting financing possibilities in the case of bulk mailing (15c). Clearly the risk here is that registration on the file will lead to floods of literature to particular addresses or profiles.

19. This nuisance can be minimized with a flexible charge procedure. The addressed body specifies the type of information it wishes to receive. It may be given the option of specifying the "barrier" it wishes to impose against information outside this range. The "height" of this barrier could be governed by the amount of the original filing charge paid to the collecting point.

20. Similarly the querying/mailing body could specify what "height" of barrier it wished to overcome and pay accordingly for this privilege. The extra revenue derived from this could then be treated as "free processing units" and transferred to the "accounts" of the bodies which have been "bothered" by this nuisance information -- this increases their ability to make use of the system.

/...
21. A problem would arise at the interface between different level courier files as to how much information should be transferred up or down. For some applications, it would clearly be an advantage to have the accumulation of all the material from all levels, in all parts of the world system. This could however be arranged very flexibly.

22. The processing cost would of course be limited if only modifications and queries were moved around by the courier files.

23. A system of this type can be studied in advance with the use of simulation techniques in order to eliminate design errors.

**Advantages**

1. The most important advantages are implicit in the criteria.

2. No existing bodies have information processing commitments which could not mesh with this type of system. In the next few years a multitude of uni-problem, specialized information systems will be created (see SATCOM Report). Some form of more general decentralized, rapid-response system is required to supply a context and link mechanism between such systems.

3. Similar "profile" systems operate through single processing centres for awareness listings of new published material. Such systems are costly to maintain and costly to use. They cannot cover more than a limited range of subjects. Because of the focus on published material and documents, they are always six months to years out of date.

4. For individual organizations the main advantage is that only needs to be concerned with getting its programme information into the central file and extracting whatever information is available on other bodies active in the field. It does not have to consider whether it recognizes the organization interested in that information or providing the information extracted.

5. This approach could avoid some inter-departmental jurisdictional problems in large organizations. Since the department filing the information (or registering interest in a particular category of information which may at some stage appear on the file) is not in contact with any particular outside organization for any purpose, no grounds for friction with other departments are involved. Once the information is obtained, normal channels can be used to actually contact the outside body. (The technique is in effect ideal for circulation of internal information across jurisdictional boundaries. Each department is sent via the computer any information filed by a department in another part of the organization, if it fulfills the profile criteria. The only link, which results in the transfer, is the common interest in a subject registered via the computer.) By ensuring that the computer automatically redirects or addresses information on a particular subject to the persons who have registered an interest in that subject within the agency, the effectiveness of retransmission is considerably increased. The fact that profiles can be updated very rapidly makes this type of system an ideal means for an organization to respond rapidly to cross-jurisdictional problems.

6. This approach avoids the communication blockages which arise because a particular organization is assumed to have programmes in a given area only. Some sub-sections of an organization may in fact have programmes /...
which touch on an entirely different sector (e.g. FAO programmes touching on health (WHO) or education (UNESCO), etc.) Rigid classification of FAO would bodies interested in health from becoming associated with FAO programmes in this area. This is particularly important in the case of interdisciplinary environmental problems or broad areas of interest such as development which may cover many specialized programmes.

7. Processing of files may be undertaken using very different types of equipment. If a file is transferred to disk or drum, direct access processing can be used. This would permit consultation via remote terminals in offices scattered through an agency -- a technique which will soon be widespread in the computer-sophisticated countries. A great variety of research can be envisaged.

8. Perhaps the most important advantage is that effective links are encouraged vertically between different levels of the world system, leading to geographical and subject area coordination, reinforced by horizontal links between "opposite numbers in other countries or disciplines.

9. Due to the increased sensitivity of each organization to other activities in related fields of interest -- whether obtained by active querying, or by being informed through the system -- the coordination problem will be reduced because of increased "self-coordination". It will be less necessary to impose coordination.

10. By getting down to the grass roots of the world system, an information system of this type produces a genuine response to the type of complaint cited by the Capacity Study, namely:

"For development assistance to have a real impact, it must start at the roots; development from the top down, although it may appear as the most expedient way to show progress in the short run, is not only deceiving but uneconomic as well as unrealistic" (I, p. 66)