

WORK WITH NGOS, OTHERS

[Introductory note: Increasingly, the UN cooperates (or competes) with other significant groups in the global community, who are active in the UN's traditional economic, social, peacekeeping, humanitarian, human rights, and even political functions (the latter including such functions as Norwegian or other peacemaking or negotiating efforts, and negotiations and treaty efforts such as the anti-land mines campaign.)

This section will include quotes about the actions of these groups, which in some cases have come to dwarf those of the UN. The groups include, first and foremost, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), but also some significant initiatives from foundations (especially the Gates Foundation), private sector initiatives, civil society, religious or religious-backed groups, and others]

Chronological quotes

"Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are the fastest growing -- and perhaps the most effective -- phalanx in the army of New Colonialism. Once relegated to the do-good fringes of traditional diplomacy, NGOs have moved front and center on the world stage.

Perhaps their most dramatic impact occurs behind the scenes. 'People are getting together in areas where the state is withdrawing or is failing to provide them services'

There's no way of counting up all the NGOs around the world, but they are certainly proliferating. About 10 percent of public development aid worldwide is now channeled through NGOs -- a total of \$8 billion. "We get a double bang that way Not only do they help us implement our programs, they strengthen civil society by working with indigenous groups.'

But success, as always, brings problems.

As NGOs grow organizations that saw themselves as radical and flexible risk becoming bureaucratic and rigid, the characteristics they once criticized in governments. But these are the growing pains of success, not the signs of failure.

And without many people having clearly noticed, NGOs are rushing in where soldiers and bureaucrats fear to tread."

Karen Breslau, "NGO's: A resorting of power," Newsweek, **August 1, 1994**, p. 14.

"This volume's point of departure was an overextended United Nations devolving responsibilities toward regional arrangements for security functions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for the delivery of many services. in a world with limited resources and more than enough challenges, a better international division of labour was essential. Rather than bleating, as a die-hard member of the UN fan club might, about the inability of the world organization to perform, it seemed more reasonable and practical to examine the dynamics of what could well be enhanced global governance. Within this context, it makes more sense to ask

who does what best, or at least better, than to lament the disappearance of a mythical UN system powerful and well-equipped enough to undertake every task."

Smith, Edwin W., and Weiss, Thomas G., "UN task-sharing: Toward or away from global governance", in Weiss, Thomas G., ed., Beyond UN subcontracting: Task-sharing with regional security arrangements and service-providing NGOs, St. Martins, New York, **1998**, pp. 227-255 [227, 246].

"Environmental deterioration and the concomitant fitful economic progress are eliciting loud protests from non-governmental organizations. These NGOs are accelerating demonstrations wherever businessmen and diplomats seem to gather these days. Ironically many of these NGO's receive generous funding from the very businesses and governments they're agitating against, funding that's often offered in the naïve hope that money can modulate militancy. In 1999 rich countries gave \$40 billion to poor countries in foreign aid; governments and businesses gave at least that much to civil society organizations for grass-roots work.

That sort of work used to imply wading through fields to plant crops, or digging water wells in villages. But the NGO doctrine has been expanded to include colorful road shows. These days protestors are emboldened by their success in Seattle not long ago, when they caused the ministerial meeting of the much-vilified World Trade Organization to crumble."

Pranay Gupte, "The Mahatma's message: 'Think about tomorrow, but act for today' Ghandi said. Not a bad millennial mantra", Newsweek, **January 31, 2000**, p. 4.

"Non-governmental organizations will become more numerous, prominent and powerful in 2001 than ever before. Now 30,000 international ones exist; 50 years ago, there were just a handful.

In poor countries they will multiply especially fast. An NGO is an efficient tool with which to harvest donor money. Rich governments have lost their appetite for handing over checks to poor, corrupt, and dictatorial regimes. So they hand them to NGOs instead. And not only money passes hands. In 2001 large numbers of expatriate (usually white) workers will be dispensing the aid and giving assistance.

.... aid groups will get more money for their work: between 1994 and 1997 the European Union's aid spending via NGOs rose from 47% to 67% of the relief budget.

Far harder to measure is their power. On some issues they will set the terms for public debate.

One sign of clout is how much annoyance they will cause.

Globally the bigger ones are already more influential than some smaller governments. They have large budgets and highly skilled staff.

They will also get a greater say in the UN"

Adam Roberts, "International: NGOs: New gods overseas", The world in 2001, The Economist, **2000**, pp. 73-74.

"Jaded observers of international relations will no doubt be shocked, yes shocked, to learn that some [NGOs] are "not inspired by the principles and values of voluntarism," ... [as noted in a list of] acronyms used] ... to describe these 'pretender NGOs' that are often wolves in nonprofits' clothing. Some of the highlights:

BRINGO (Briefcase NGO): an NGO that is no more than a briefcase carrying a well-written proposal

CONGO (Commercial NGO): NGOs set up by businesses in order to participate in bids, help win contracts, and reduce taxation

GRINGO (Government run and initiated NGO): variation of a QUANGO (see below), but with the function of countering the actions of real NGOs; common in Africa

MANGO (Mafia NGO): a criminal NGO providing services of the money laundering, enforcement, and protection variety; prevalent in Eastern Europe

MONGO (My own NGO): NGOs that are the personal property of an individual, often dominated by his or her ego

PANGO (Party NGO): an aspiring, defeated, or banned political party or politician dressed as an NGO; species of Central Asia and Indo-China

QUANGO (Quasi NGO): parastatal body created by government, often to enable better conditions of service or to create political distance"

"An NGO by any other name," Foreign Policy, **July-August 2001**, p. 18, extracted from a list prepared by Alan Fowler, of Great Britain's International NGO Training and Research Centre, in his book, Striking a balance: A guide to enhancing the effectiveness of non-governmental organizations in international development, Earthscan, London, 1997.

" ... [Bill] Gates and his wife, Melinda, have created ... the largest foundation in history. ... Its assets stand at more than \$24 billion. And ... its primary focus is health. ... applying his legendary business sense to the enterprise, he has helped create a whole new model of philanthropy - a spare, lean, entrepreneurial model that employs leverage instead of largesse to make things happen.

... The whole staff includes only 216 people

The health effort started modestly, in 1998, as a \$100 million program to speed delivery of new vaccines to poor countries. ...

The Gates Foundation has since grown vastly larger ... but it still employs the same principles. It treats grant recipients as business partners, auditing their performance and demanding that they contribute whatever they can to a project. Governments, however strapped, typically have to increase their own health spending to qualify for help. And before funding a new initiative, the Gates team demands evidence that it will become self-sustaining in the future. ... 'We're here to act as a catalyst.'

... the prospect of smaller victories keeps his spirits up. ... It's a lever ... and he's got \$24 billion pushing it."

Geoffrey Cowley, "Bill's biggest bet yet: The richest people on earth have created a fund of more than \$24 billion to save the poorest from disease. How much of a difference can Bill and Melinda Gates make?," Newsweek International, **February 4, 2002**, pp. 29-36. [emphasis added]

"The One World Trust's Global Accountability Report is the first of the kind to compare the accountability of inter-governmental organizations (IGOs), transnational corporations (TNCs) and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs). ...

300,000 IGOs, 60,000 TNC's and 40,000 international NGOs help shape the world we live in. [Their] decisions affect all of our lives in many different ways ... Individuals and

communities who are affected ... should be able to hold them to account. However, few mechanisms have been identified at the global level to enable those stakeholders to exert such a right. The result is a growing sense of disenfranchisement... These organizations need to become more transparent and accountable to their stakeholders... This will increase their legitimacy and lead to more effective decision-making.

... At the heart of this report is a unique framework which explains what accountability means and identifies eight core organizational dimensions crucial to fostering greater accountability. This pilot focuses on two of the dimensions in detail - member control and access to information ... and [provides] recommendations on how to increase accountability."

Hetty Kovach, Caroline Neligan, and Simon Burall, The Global Accountability Report 1 2003: Power without accountability?, The One World Trust, Houses of Parliament, London, 2002/2003, p. iv.

[Note: Among the 18 organizations included in the first report is one UN organization -- the UNHCR]

"As the death toll from AIDs continues to mount, more and more money is arriving [in Africa] from overseas to combat the disease.

[That money, however] ... is more than sufficient to attract the attention of the unscrupulous. Across Africa, fake AIDS charities, which often lack offices or phones, have sprung up. 'We've had all manner of people, some with no professional expertise, trying to elbow in on the pandemic', said Frances Angila, the head of Kenya's oversight organization for NGO's. 'The potential for fly-by-night organizations is very high. Sometimes it's a few cronies who had a beer in a pub and decided that having an AIDS organization would be a good thing.'

....

The health minister for Kenya, Charity Ngulu, who has led efforts to combat AIDS fraud, has accused the AIDS control council of squandering millions of dollars through shoddy accounting and questionable contracting procedures. No more contracts ought to go, she said, to what she calls 'briefcase NGOs,' that operate out of some shady character's attache case."

Marc Lacey, "In Kenya, a fierce fight against AIDS and fraud", International Herald Tribune, July 10, 2003, p. 8.

"Mining and energy projects in poor countries often end up doing as much harm as good by disrupting communities, polluting the environment, generating brutality and corruption.

Governments and corporations are starting to realize that this is bad for business. ...

One of the most important steps to combat such abuses has come from the International Finance Corporation [which] ... lends money for private sector projects in the developing world and facilitates loans from corporate banks. Since 1998, it has imposed wide-ranging rules on its lending ... In June, several banks the IFC works with ... agreed to use these standards for all their project lending -- a loan repaid with money made from the investment -- even those financed with no IFC involvement when the capital cost is \$50 million or more. The group now includes 18 banks, and covers more than 70 percent of project lending globally.

... the [IFC's] standards may be further strengthened ... [and]

... the IFC and partner banks must also strengthen their mechanisms to monitor and enforce compliance. A third front ... is also necessary -- to get pension funds and other big investors to adopt such standards as well."

"How banks can do good," International Herald Tribune, November 19, 2003.

"... The insurgents, terrorists, militias, jihadis, smugglers, rogue armies, transnational criminal networks, and computer hackers that seem to be sprouting everywhere [are] ... testing

the [US] superpower's mettle. ...

Of course, these termites had long been expected. ... In *Sovereignty at bay*, a popular 1971 book, ... Robert Vernon argued that rapidly growing multinational corporations would render the concept of national sovereignty obsolete. ...

... Experts who observed the rising influence of nonstate actors in the 1990s viewed ... it as a largely benign ... era of civil society [not recognizing] the fact that the changes in politics and technology that empowered NGOs did the same for terrorists. Admittedly, several expert commissions warned of the threat posed ... but the roaring, globalizing, democratizing, and economically booming 1990s ... blinded [leaders and experts] ... to the dangers of a world where networks of stateless civilians acquired unprecedented capabilities for inflicting mayhem.

The [US] 9/11 Commission recently ... [cited] a 'failure of imagination.' ... What is ... [needed] is to imagine more effective ways to deal with the termites that are chipping away at the foundations of the Western World. No problem has ever been solved before it was acknowledged."

Moisés Naím, "Devour and conquer: How the White House got a termite problem", *Foreign Policy*, **November/December 2004**, pp. 95-96.

Note: This subsection, and the other five "UN performance problems" subsections that precede "Anecdotes and Observations", are very much still in the "start-up" stage, due to the priority need to establish all the parts of this archive. Material from the sources cited in the "useful sources" for each of them, and other material, will be added as soon as possible.

Useful Sources

(Note: informally assembled by IO Watch, roughly ranked from "most useful" on down, and subject to change as new sources are added)

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