



UN-NGO -IRENE UPDATE

Issue no 6 – February-March 2004

WHAT'S NEW

UN-NGO-IRENE / Asia and the Pacific Japan, 5-10 February 2004

Three meetings addressed the key issue of peace in the region

“Roles for NGOs in Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations and civil society in peace building in Northeast Asia”

Peace Boat in cooperation with the *Japan Federation of Bar Associations* and the *Korean Bar Association* with the support of the NGO Section, DESA, co-organized this meeting which attracted over 500 representatives of Japanese and Korean civil society. The NGO Section’s keynote presentation focused on the link between peace building and development and stressed the importance of civil society’s role in working with government to realize the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as a long-term strategy for peace. In addition, specific concerns of the participants were addressed by a description of the application process for obtaining ECOSOC consultative status and a briefing on the United Nations legal system. An encouraging outcome of the meeting is the promise of further contributions from the Japan Federation of Bar Associations – one of Japan’s largest NGOs – to the work of the United Nations and an increase in representation from organizations in the region, among them, the Korean Bar Association.

“Nagoya University’s Society for Peace-building Studies’ Conference on Learning from the Experiences of NGOs”

An audience of some 100 people attended a capacity-building presentation on opportunities for NGOs to work in partnership with the United Nations, which focused, in particular, on the need for NGOs to cooperate with the UN on achieving the Millennium Development Goals. This meeting, which was intended primarily to contribute to strengthening of Japanese civil society organizations outside Tokyo, was also particularly significant in alerting Japan’s academic community to the role of the MDGs in peace building.

“Northeast Asia Regional Consultation Meeting on the Role of Civil Society in the Prevention of Armed Conflicts”

Organized by *Peace Boat*, this meeting, recognizing the relatively weak position of civil society, concluded that immediate action should focus on outreach to Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), especially in North Korea, Mongolia and China. The resulting action agenda included concrete plans for advocacy and cooperative action, such as: 1)

an open letter to the Heads of State involved in the Six-Nation talks on the Korean Peninsula nuclear weapons crisis; 2) an international student programme on Northeast Asia aboard Peace Boat; 3) tours to neighboring countries in Northeast Asia by members of CSOs; 4) advocacy regarding Article 9 of the Constitution of Japan (renunciation of war clause) as an effective non-violent conflict prevention mechanism of regional significance. It was agreed that cooperative work and research would be an important component of outreach for the GPPAC process in the region. Participants stressed the need for this process to consider the issues of development and human security in relation to conflict prevention, and discussed ways in which the findings of the consultation could be relayed to ECOSOC's High Level Panel.

Peace Boat

Possibilities for further cooperation with UN-NGO Irene were explored, including the use of the organization's ship as a means of traveling to Jamaica and Colombia for regional meetings on the Caribbean and Latin American regions for UN-NGO IRENE

****UN-NGO-IRENE /North America launched on 20 February 2004****

Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada

19-20 February 2004

With the support of the Federal Parliament, the partnership of the City of Kelowna and the sponsorship of the local business community, *Hope for the Nations* hosted the High Level Consultation and Capacity Building Forum that launched UN-NGO-IRENE/North America. Representatives of 42 Canadian NGOs and other humanitarian organisations took part in the meeting which conducted jointly with the UNDESA NGO Section.

As a part of the forum to launch UN-NGO-IRENE/North America two meetings were held to prepare a consolidated statement to be presented at the 2004 High Level Segment of ECOSOC on behalf of Canadian NGOs.

Canadian Youth Forum, 19 February 2004

Over 100 youth representatives met to discuss the issues of resources mobilization and poverty eradication in the context of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010. The recommendations were later presented for inclusion in the overall Canadian NGO statement to the ECOSOC HLS in June

Canadian NGO Preparatory Workshop for the ECOSOC High Level Segment (HLS) 2004:

Eleven Canadian NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC were invited to participate in the workshop, focusing on the role of NGOs from developed countries and more specifically Canada, towards poverty reduction in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and drawing on their own experience in order to formulate concrete recommendations to be considered in drafting the Ministerial Declaration at the ECOSOC HLS in June 2004. The Canadian NGO statement to the ECOSOC HLS of 2004 was finalized based on the recommendations and proposals of the Preparatory Workshop and the Youth Forum.

▪ **UN-NGO-IRENE / Arab States: (24-27 February)**

The *Zayed International Prize for the Environment* (consultative status 2003), has already begun to demonstrate its willingness to embrace and further the wider economic and social goals of the Council and the United Nations as a whole.

Notably, the organization has signaled its openness to implementing the following proposals:

1. Expanding the scope of the *Zayed Prize* and the selection criteria for organizational candidates to include the broader range of development concerns addressed by ECOSOC, particularly the MDGs. This will, undoubtedly, significantly promote awareness of and engagement in the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals while at the same time making access to the award available to the wider development community.
2. Establishing a permanent seat the International Jury for the incumbent president of the Economic and Social Council.
3. Undertaking the responsibilities of a Regional Coordinator for the UN NGO Informal Regional Network/Arab Region.

March 2004 * Events to follow up on*

18 March 2003, United Nations New York

The NGO Section of UNDESA in cooperation of CONGO, WFUNA and LDC Watch held:

- An NGO/Civil Society Forum on the theme of the ECOSOC High Level Segment for 2004 “Resources Mobilization and Enabling Environment for Poverty Eradication in the context of the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010. ”
- An NGO Panel on “Developing and Enhancing the General Voluntary Trust Fund in support of the United Nations NGO informal regional network (UN-NGO-IRENE).
- For more information on these meetings and their outcome, please visit www.unpan.org/NGO-ECOSOCSession.asp
- *2-26 March:* Commission on Population and Development - 37th session – New York
Info: desangosection@un.org
- *30 March:* Commission on Human Rights - Femmes Africa Solidarité - 60th session - Geneva. The theme was Women and peace in the Mano River Union.
Info: info@fasngo.org

▪ **SOURCE OF INSPIRATION / EXAMPLE *To Follow***

These two following NGOs’ Success Stories concern the global partnership for development, the number 8 of the Millennium Development Goals.

- **The World Family Organization (WFO)**, based in France and covering the whole world, with regional offices in Brazil, Germany, Canada, UAE, China and Morocco, is preparing - in partnership with its Governmental members, NGOs, Academia, Parliamentary groups and the support of UNDESA, NGO Section - a World Family Summit in the context of celebrating the Tenth Anniversary of the UN International Year of the Family (IYF+10). The main purpose of this Summit is to

promote the Family contribution to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. In collaboration between WFO and the African Union a plan of action is being prepared, involving the participation of 53 African countries (including all African LDCs). This plan will contribute to the Summit and guide African governments, NGOs, civil society and families in designing, implementing, mobilizing resources, monitoring and evaluating appropriate national policies and programmes for the Family based on their specific requirements and needs.

- **Friends' Society in Social Service (FSSS)** from India has targeted to reach out to the Least Developed Areas (LDAs) in the State of West Bengal and its adjoining Eastern Indian States as well as to South Asian Least Developed Countries of Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan. With grassroots' NGOs, local authorities, corporate sector and target groups, FSSS created multi-stakeholder clusters to develop a strong and effective partnership network for poverty eradication in the selected LDAs and LDCs. A regional workshop with all clusters took place in Calcutta, in March 2004 to discuss the priority issues to be addressed. With a full participatory approach, the outcome of the workshop was the design and formulation of a pilot project in form of a comprehensive programme on "Integrated Rural Development for Poverty Eradication in LDAs and LDCs of South Asia". FSSS and its partners are also willing to implement the project in partnership with the United Nations.

USEFUL LINKS

- For information about problem of the trafficking in children in Southeast Asian countries and combating in trafficking in children for sexual purposes in the area please visit <http://www.childconference.org/index.htm>

NGOs' CONTRIBUTION ***Submit your contribution***

- The trafficking of children and women is recognized as a major issue in some Southeast Asian countries. To support the Kenya Alliance for Advancement of Children, the Japan Foundation in Collaboration with the Government of Medan City & the PKPA (Center for Study and Child Protection) organized a conference on the Trafficking in Children for Sexual Purposes. This conference was held in Medan, North Sumatera Province, Indonesia on 28-30 March.

Question about the conference should be addressed to: traff_conf@nusa.net.id

To maintain a dynamic and useful UN-NGO-IRENE Update, we encourage and welcome your contributions.

Please submit your comments, remarks and success-stories to share to Karaborni@un.org

Should your organization produce an update with information that you would like to share with the IRENE community, kindly add us to your mailing list. Thank you.

We thank very much all those who submitted kind words and contribution to this update.

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