

**HIGH LEVEL CONSULTATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING MEETING  
TO LAUNCH THE UN-NGO INFORMAL REGIONAL NETWORK  
UN-NGO-IRENE IN HAITI**

**Port-au-Prince, Haiti, 5 September 2005**

**Background**

To increase civil society's involvement in economic and social life and the number of Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) being granted consultative status, the United Nations Economic and Social Council decided to promote inclusive relationships with a large number of NGOs from all regions of the world. This initiative also responds to the fact that **a great number of organizations face financial and logistical constraints that minimize considerably the effective use of their consultative status with ECOSOC and limit their participation in the international decision making process**, preventing them from taking advantage of the increasing role they might play in the new governance at all levels (global, regional, national and local).

In 1999, the General Assembly recommended that the United Nations Secretariat NGO Section (Department of Economic and Social Affairs) "improve the exchange of information through informal networks of country or regionally-based NGOs in consultative status with the ECOSOC, which will serve as links between the NGO Section and NGOs in each region". This recommendation intends to promote regular contacts between this Section and NGOs, to improve the spread of information on the United Nations' activities regionally and internationally towards NGOs and to strengthen their capacities and their partnership with the United Nations.

In order to respond to these objectives, the NGO Section/DESA promoted the establishment of an informal national network of NGOs.

The Network, supported through the intermediary activities of designated national coordinator organizations, aims at creating a system that provides information and support to all organizations, even the smallest and the most isolated, and gives them the opportunity for sharing expertise and resources, so as to reinforce their impact. It thus contributes to harmonizing and unifying the actions launched by the United Nations System in favor of an increased cooperation and partnership with civil society.

The UN-NGO-IRENE was established at national level in Azerbaijan, Canada, China, India, Pakistan and Mauritania. For Mauritania, it was created with the strong support of UNDP/Mauritania and the Government.

In the framework of the worldwide development of the UN-NGO-IRENE and of its implementation in the remaining regions and countries, the Foundation for Habitat and Homeless “FONDHABISA”, a leading NGO in consultative status with ECOSOC, hosted on 5 September 2005, in Haiti, Port-au-Prince the High Level Consultation and Capacity Building Meeting to launch the UN-NGO-IRENE in Haiti, with the support of the UN-NGO-IRENE / NGO Section / ECOSOC of UN DESA.

Additionally, the interest sparked by the concept of UN-NGO-IRENE itself has attracted a number of UN and other intergovernmental and large international bodies to seek synergy and mutually supportive action for the UN-NGO-IRENE/NGO Section/DESA, as informal partners in its implementation.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The High Level consultation and Capacity Building Meeting to launch the UN-NGO Informal Regional Network in Haiti (UN-NGO-IRENE/Haiti) took place in the Hotel Montana, Petion-ville, Haiti on 5 September 2005.

Hosted by FONDHABISA, a leading NGO in consultative status with ECOSOC, the Meeting was organized in partnership with the UN-NGO-IRENE/NGO Section, Office for Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Support and Coordination of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), and the support of the Government of Haiti. In welcoming the participants, the President of FONDHABISA, Mr. Frantz-Gerard S. Verret highlighted the importance of the Capacity Building Meeting to launch the UN-NGO Informal national Network in Haiti (UN-NGO-IRENE/ Haiti).

On behalf of the United Nations, The UNDESA Representative, Ms Najet Karaborni underlined the importance of result-oriented and efficient partnership between government, civil society and the United Nations in achieving the Millennium Declaration and all the MDGs. She reminded the background of the UN-NGO-IRENE focusing on the priority given by the NGO Section/ECOSOC of UNDESA to capacity building programmes for NGOs of developing countries and Small Islands States as recommended by the ECOSOC Resolution of 1996 and the General Assembly of 1999. As Haiti has a very reduced number of NGOs in consultative status, the High Level Consultation and Capacity Building Meeting to launch the UN-NGO-IRENE in Haiti is extremely important. It aims firstly at increasing the number of NGOs in Haiti with status, secondly at reinforcing the NGO capacity, and thirdly at promoting joint partnership initiatives and programmes between the civil society, the government, the private sector, the international community and the United Nations. Ms Karaborni also emphasized the role played by FONDHABISA, the hosting NGO and its outstanding efforts in organizing the Meeting so rapidly and efficiently. She finally thanked the Government of Haiti for its full support to the Meeting and the international and regional NGOs for their attendance.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs and External Cooperation, Mr. Herald Abraham expressed, on behalf of the Government of Haiti, his great appreciation and thanks for this important initiative and stressed the full support of the Government of Haiti to NGOs in order to play a significant role at national level in order to strengthen good governance.

Mr. Greard Bretoux , Secretary General of FONDHABISA explained the evolution of the NGO sector in Haiti focusing on NGOs' role in strengthening regional cooperation.

In presenting FONDHABISA objectives and relevant activities, he called upon all NGOs for a strengthened teamwork to enhance their contribution to the implementation of the MDGs in Haiti.

The Meeting was conducted by Ms Najet Karaborni who made a power point presentation on ECOSOC and its relationship with NGOs focusing on the role and objectives of the UN-NGO-IRENE in building NGO Capacity and strengthening networking among NGOs from the South and the North to promote partnership initiatives and projects to reach the MDGs within Participatory Governance at all levels and for all people in the world.

Several participant NGOs and experts generously shared their innovative experiences with the participants making concrete recommendations on how to duplicate and adapt such projects in Haiti.

A large debate followed the presentation on UN –NGO-IRENE and the NGO innovative experiences showing a strong NGO interest in the Network and in the implementation of the experiences presented in Haiti.

At the closing session of the Meeting, the President of FONDHABISA warmly thanked the participants and expressed his deep appreciation for the tremendous and outstanding work performed by Ms Karaborni to have a successful and result-oriented Meeting and get more than expected outcomes. He also thanked Ms Hanifa Mezoui, Chief of the NGO Section for her support to the UN-NGO-IRENE development.

76 Participants attended the Meeting as follows:

- ◆ **40 representing NGOs from the Caribbean region and Central America (Barbados, Costa Rica, Dominica & St Vincent, Haiti, and Mexico)**
- ◆ **6 representing international NGOs**
- ◆ **3 representing the Government of Haiti**
- ◆ **25 students in foreign affairs**
- ◆ **1 international expert**
- ◆ **1 representative of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)**

The meeting agreed on the relevance and the need for an Informal National Network of NGOs in the in Haiti. NGO representatives noticed that such an initiative was a timely one and need to be extended to other countries of the region

It was agreed that the primary focus for the Network should be on the NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC, but that it needed to go beyond this to include all NGOs supporting the goals of the United Nations, notably as set out in the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs.

Building on the work of existing NGO coalitions, participants underlined the need for the Network to be quickly operational to facilitate the access of Haitian NGOs to the global scene.

Consideration was given to the need for a database of Haitian NGOs to strengthen networking and exchange of information, innovative experiences and best practices among the NGO community.

Participating NGOs stressed the vital importance of mobilizing additional resources in order to realize the Network's potential. Information about sources of funding could be disseminated through the Network.

Following substantial and fruitful working groups and discussions, the meeting agreed on the following major issues:

## **I. OBJECTIVES**

The following objectives were agreed:

1. To strengthen and promote partnerships initiatives and projects among and between the Haitian NGOs, the United Nations, Government, Corporate Sector and Donor Community;
2. The network should serve as a focal point and clearing house among the Haitian region ECOSOC accredited NGOs and should help other leading and committed NGOs to apply for consultative status with ECOSOC;
3. To establish permanent dialogue and direct contacts between NGOs, the NGO Section/DESA and the United Nations in general.

## **II. STRUCTURE**

It was agreed that the structure of the Network would be flexible and open, and optimize the use of Information and Communication technology (ICT). Much of the actual networking would be conducted through the Internet. It was considered necessary to set up a Web portal for the Network and facilitate information sharing activities.

To better serve the needs of the beneficiaries of the Network and contribute to an effective and concrete implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the outcomes of the major UN conferences, 7 thematic working groups were formed to come up with 7 NGO thematic focal points and a comprehensive strategic action plan based on the specific needs of each sector/theme. Following the working groups presentations, it was agreed to establish the 7 following NGO thematic focal points:

## **Thematic Focal Points**

1. **Poverty and Extreme Poverty Reduction and Hunger (MDG 1)**
  - ◆ **FOCIDES**
2. **Education (MDG):**
  - ◆ **Foundation Faith & Love in Action Ministries**
3. **Gender Equality & Women Empowerment (MDG 3):**
  - ◆ **FONDHABISA**
4. **Health (MDGs 4, 5 and 6):**
  - ◆ **Institut Femme Pereo**
5. **Environment, Habitat and Sustainable Development (MDG 7):**
  - ◆ **Caribbean Institute for Applied Geography (Institut Caraibe de Geographie Appliquee) : CIAG**
6. **Disability:**
  - ◆ **Foundation Remy Gonc**
7. **Peace, Security, Conflict Prevention, Human Rights, Governance and partnership (Millennium Declaration):**
  - ◆ **FONDHABISA**

## **III. STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN**

The meeting concluded with a discussion and adoption of a Strategic Action Plan, which includes the preparatory work for the Annual Conference of the UN-NGO-IRENE/Haiti and other main networking activities as well as activities and projects related to each thematic focal point to cover all relevant Millennium Declaration and MDGs for Haiti.

Other crucial activities will be discussed and included in the Network Strategic Action Plan during upcoming sessions of respective focal points with relevant NGOs and the UN-NGO-IRENE Annual Conference.

## **IV. ENLIGHTENMENT IN THE PRESS**

Press information and invitation about the Capacity Building Meeting to Launch the UN-NGO-IRENE in Haiti was sent to several mass-media and news agency representatives.

Several media representatives attended at the meeting. The event was enlightened on TV Channels and reported in the newspapers.

Press information about the results of the meeting was sent again to all mass-media and news agency representatives. Several articles were published at the newspapers (attached)

## **V. VISIT TO NGO PROJECT**

The UNDESA Representative visited on 6 September 2005 the FONDHABISA Headquarters in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. After the presentation on the project activities made by the project managers, a friendly discussion followed particularly on the participation and involvement of the beneficiaries as well as on the projects' impact on the target groups and the collaboration of the local authorities and other NGOs. Ms Karaborni appreciated the visit, exchanged her views and extensive experience in this field and expressed her wish to develop such projects in other countries of the Caribbean region with the help of FONDHABISA and the coordination of the newly established UN-NGO-IRENE.