

Annex 4

DISCUSSION TOPICS

I. Network's objectives

a. Long run Goals of The NGO Informal Regional Network

1. To ensure that national, sub-regional and regional NGOs granted with consultative status with ECOSOC have access to information that will enable them to participate to the fullest extent in the activities of the Council and the UN at large
2. To create a consensus for change through the networking and collective action of NGOs acting nationally, regionally and globally
3. To enhance the contribution of all eligible NGOs by making it possible for them to share creative solutions to global problems achieved by people centered action at the grassroots level
4. To join interrelated, multiple and unconnected local initiatives through a global vision and enhance the capacity to mobilize action on an increasingly wider scale and engage governments
5. To provide through the joint efforts of the NGO community in the region and worldwide, the effectiveness of working across geographic, racial, ethnic, religious and even ideological borders for a common goal
6. To use NGO networks as a mobilizing tool to advance the global development debate and to consolidate NGO efforts for economic, social and sustainable development.

b. Objectives of the Tunis Meeting

1. Presentation of the overall concept of the NGO Informal Regional Network
2. Identify key issues and challenges that are,
 - (a) region specific
 - (b) common to all
 - (c) potential strategies regional /common
 - (d) inventory of available expertise and how to share in relation to identified needs
3. Formulate a strategic action plan to enhance capacity building for African Informal Regional Network including outline programme / project proposal for each regional network represented.

c. Objectives of the Annual Coordinator Meetings

1. Provide an opportunity to share successes and lessons learned
2. Propose strategies for more effective collaboration
3. Review preparations for participation in each forthcoming ECOSOC High-Level Segment
4. Strategic planning for regional activities responding to United Nation's priorities identified for the coming year
5. Identify obstacles to implementation of the NGO Informal Regional Network and seek solutions.

II. Achieving the Network's objectives

a. Establishing channels of communication:

1. **-between the NGO Section/DESA, the designated NGO Informal Regional Network Coordinator and its network partners;**
2. **-among the organizations within a given network.**
 - (i) Identifying and assessing existing channels of communication
 - (ii) Identifying viable alternatives to information and communication technology (ICT)
 - (iii) Bridging the digital divide – strategies to support and maximize use of ICT initiatives at different stages of development
 - (iv) Collection and dissemination information in addition to that transmitted by the NGO Section/DESA

b. Promoting Collaboration and Coalition-Building

Design and implementation of activities and coordinating mechanisms to facilitate networking and coalition building, such as:

- (i) Meetings/seminars/regional forums to enable network organizations to discuss common concerns and explore ways of working together at all levels (national, regional and cross-sector)
- (ii) Building comprehensive databases on network organizations including their mandates and areas of concern and activities

- (iii) Establishing clearinghouses for information exchange and sharing of experience among organizations.

c. Empowering Network NGOs Through Collective Action

- (i) Organizing and coordinating the annual regional input to be presented to the High-level Segment of the Economic and Social Council
- (ii) Strategies to promote consortia of NGOs to establish and/or strengthen working partnerships with national governments, regional and international agencies
- (iii) Identifying partners and forming linkages with NGOs in other regions

d. Capacity-building for NGOs

- (i) Assessing needs and designing strategies to address them
- (ii) Identifying sources of expertise for training program, and advisory services at national, regional and inter-regional levels.
- (iii) Identifying and exploring ways in which the NGO Informal Regional Network Coordinators might exchange support in the form of sharing expertise/experience in areas such as:
 - Capacity-building in organizational development and management skills
 - Strategies for identifying and mobilizing resources
 - Understanding the policy-making process at the national, regional, governmental, and intergovernmental levels
 - Advocacy and implementation of operational programs and projects.

e. Structuring Networking Activities to Enhance the NGO Contribution to Priority Areas Identified for Action by the United Nations at the Start of the 21st Century, in accordance with the Road Map for the Implementation of the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Forum Declaration.

The following areas have been identified and selected by the representatives of NGOs in Aracaju as issues of global concern for the Informal Regional Network:

- i. Trade Access
- ii. Debt relief
- iii. Increased ODA
- iv. Halving poverty by 2015
- v. Food
- vi. Water
- vii. Education
- viii. Health (halt HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases)
- ix. Special assistance to children orphaned by HIV-AIDS
- x. Shelter
- xi. Gender Equality
- xii. Youth employment
- xiii. Voluntarism

f. Formulating a Successful Program/Project Proposal, Including Fundraising