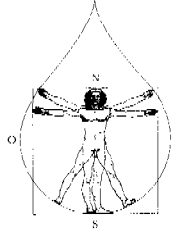


THE INTERNATIONAL
SECRETARIAT
FOR WATER
Non-Governmental Organizations
in Interaction
toward Water Supply and Sanitation

LE SECRÉTARIAT
INTERNATIONAL
DE L'EAU
Les Organisations Non Gouvernementales
en interaction
pour l'eau et l'assainissement

EL SECRETARIADO
INTERNACIONAL
DEL AGUA
Las Organizaciones No Gubernamentales
en interacción
por el agua y su saneamiento

205.1 92RE



REPORT OF THE
**INTERCONTINENTAL FORUM
NGOs - WATER - ENVIRONMENT:
STRATEGIES FOR THE FUTURE**

DECEMBER 12 - 14, 1991
STRASBOURG, FRANCE

ORGANIZED AND HOSTED BY
**THE INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT FOR WATER
ASSOCIATION EAU VIVE
PROGRAMME SOLIDARITE EAU
INSTITUT POUR LE CONSEIL EN ENVIRONNEMENT**

IN COLLABORATION WITH
**THE GOVERNMENTS OF FRANCE, CANADA AND ITALY
THE CITY OF STRASBOURG
AND
PROWESS - UNDP/WORLD BANK WATER AND SANITATION PROGRAM**

January 1992

FORUM INTERCONTINENTAL

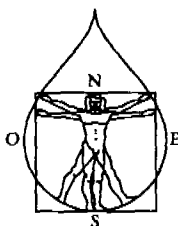
« ONG-EAU-ENVIRONNEMENT: STRATÉGIES POUR LE FUTUR »

INTERCONTINENTAL FORUM

« NGOs-WATER-ENVIRONMENT: STRATÉGIES FOR THE FUTUR »

FORO INTERCONTINENTAL

« NGO-AGUA-MEDIO AMBIENTE: ESTRATEGIAS PARA EL FUTURO »



STRASBOURG

12-13-14 DÉCEMBRE 1991



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PREFACE

We, the representatives of 30 voluntary, non-governmental organizations and research institutions from Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe and North America submit the following report as a statement:

That the provision of drinking water and safe sanitation all over the world in disadvantaged and poor communities living in rural and urban areas is no longer only a technical problem. Increasingly, it is becoming more a social, political and economic problem of accessibility and of a just distribution of water. In many areas where the communities have been made aware through the efforts of voluntary agencies and NGOs, the demand for drinking water and sanitation as a right has put pressure from below on the government and donor organizations to change their strategies and look for alternative solutions that are low cost, innovative and which respond to the real needs of communities.

The question of ownership of the infrastructure and control of scarce natural resources - by the communities themselves who are the actual end users - has to be addressed very seriously by governments and international donor agencies.

A far greater involvement of women in the decision making process at the grass roots in the selection and certification of potability is a process that has been started by many voluntary organizations and NGOs and this process needs to be given more visibility.

Like war is too big an issue to be left to the generals alone, drinking water and safe sanitation is too crucial an issue to be left to engineers and technocrats. In the choice of technology and in the process of planning and implementation of drinking water and sanitation schemes at the community level, the collective knowledge, wisdom and skills of people need to be given first priority. Government and international agencies need to act as facilitators, and not duly impose solutions or strategies that are neither sustainable or suitable. International fora such as the Collaborative Council for Water and Sanitation and the International Secretariat for Water play an important role in this regard.

The issue of self-respect within communities and the development of confidence in their own capabilities can be addressed only if voluntary groups, NGOs, government and international agencies start trusting in the power, capabilities and potential of the communities to tackle their own problems. Only then will communities have enough space to grow and reduce their dependency on external resources.

Sanjit Bunker Roy
Chairperson
Intercontinental Forum on NGOs -
Water - Environment: Strategies for the Future
December 1991

INTRODUCTION

The proclamation emanating from the Safe Water 2000 Global Consultation of September 1991 (the New Delhi Declaration) states that strong institutions are essential for sustainability. Sound management, motivated people and an enabling environment of appropriate policies, legislation and incentives are some of the essential ingredients.

With the adoption of structural adjustment policies, governments are disengaging from their traditional role of provider of services and financier of the development of social infrastructures, such as water supply and sanitation services. Instead, they are being encouraged to become promoters and facilitators for the planning and implementation of water supply and sanitation schemes. Local public, private and community organizations, associations and institutions are expected and encouraged to become active in the planning of public-sector policies and programs, and in the delivery of services. Not only is there a call for increased decentralization, but also for a devolution of authority and responsibility to the non-governmental sector. Governments are expected to provide guidance and support to this strategy, to coordinate the allocation of resources, and to ensure the application of national standards and regulations.

As part of this strategy, NGOs are being encouraged to become involved in the development and implementation of national policies and programs. The successful and innovative approaches they have developed and implemented are to serve as models, to be replicated and expanded in scale. They are encouraged to develop a symbiotic relationship with national and local governments. NGOs will be expected to support and assist the government in formulating and realizing activities within a national policy framework. Concomitantly, governments are encouraged to support the role of NGOs to replicate their approaches.

Simultaneously there is increased recognition in most developing countries of the critical state of the physical environment, the causal factors of its deterioration, and the impact on human health and social well-being. Water resources management within the context of local water basins and the impact of water supply and sanitation activities on local hydrological resources are fast becoming important issues within the NGO community. NGOs are involved directly in the debate on the role of the physical environment within the national context.

Where and how do local NGOs fit into this scenario, and how best can they compete for and utilize effectively the scarce resources available to implement water supply and sanitation activities? This report is the output of the Intercontinental Forum

for NGOs - Water -Environment: Strategies for the Future, which was held December 12 - 14, 1991 in Strasbourg, France. The discussion and recommendations presented in this report are intended to provide NGOs, government agencies and ministries, external support agencies and other interested parties guidance as to the activities that NGOs deem to be important to facilitate their integration into the national water supply and sanitation policy and program development and implementation process. They are designed as well to improve the operational effectiveness and sustainability of the NGOs, as well as the pertinence and impact of the activities that they undertake in cooperation with the people in the communities where the activities take place.

BACKGROUND

The promotion and strengthening of linkages among NGOs involved in the planning and implementation of water supply and sanitation development activities was one of the primary objectives of the NGO International Forum, held in Montreal in June 1990. Representatives of over 80 NGOs attended, many from developing countries. The Forum provided an opportunity to exchange experiences and ideas, and to draft a set of principles and recommendations to guide them in the development and implementation of 'water and sanitation for development' projects. The 'Montreal Charter', as it became known, calls for the reinforcement of the capacity of NGOs to plan, implement and manage water supply and sanitation activities, and for an integration of the NGO community into the policy and program formulation policies in developing countries.

We have to understand what is at stake here. I have the impression that the Strasbourg meeting is propitious, in that it arrives at a moment just after the completion of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, when the donor agencies risk replaying the same way of doing things as has occurred over the past ten years, and where the NGOs run the risk of continuing to be marginal players in the development process. The external support agencies have money, but they are searching for new mechanisms and means of programming it. If the NGO community really wants to access these funds, and we believe that we have innovative and valuable ideas that could attain the objectives that we are all striving for, then we have to propose concrete, realistic and feasible action programmes that are well thought out and prepared, that identify expected outcomes and the risks involved. That's the challenge here at Strasbourg.

- representative of an NGO

The NGO community is interested and willing to assume an expanded role within the community development process. But, it must occur in an orderly and incremental fashion. NGOs and their community partners

must become proactive, able to develop and present to potential resource sources a well-grounded and comprehensive plan of action. They should be in a position to affect thinking and action on development issues. A protocol is required for actions, developed by NGOs in consultation with their partners. It should serve as a basis for the development of a relationship with multilateral and bilateral agencies, and should set the framework for the definition of expectations, activities, roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder in future community development initiatives.

As a result of the Montreal Forum, Oxfam-Québec was given the mandate to coordinate a preliminary meeting of NGOs present at the New Delhi Global Consultation. One of the outcomes of this meeting was the creation in May 1991 of the International Secretariat for Water (ISW), the mandate of which is to assist NGOs to reinforce inter-linkages and to provide technical assistance and support where and when requested.

One of the activities put forth in the International Secretariat for Water's plan of action during 1991 relates to the organization of what are known as the H₂O Seminars. Organized and hosted by NGOs in developing countries, their overall objectives are:

- to identify issues that affect the development and implementation of water supply and sanitation projects;
- to identify factors that affect the capacity of NGOs to implement larger-scale projects;
- to exchange experiences on modalities of project design and implementation; and,
- to identify the means for promoting and strengthening the role of NGOs within the national sector-related policy and program development and implementation process.

The first of these was held in October 1991 in Abidjan, Ivory Coast; the second in Manila, Philippines, in mid-November 1991; and the third, for Latin American NGOs, took place in Quito, Ecuador in early December 1991. All defined regional NGO issues and concerns. The Asian consultation was able also to define country-specific strategic plans and activities designed to initiate and reinforce their relationship with government agencies within the national policy and program framework.

OBJECTIVES AND AGENDA OF THE INTERCONTINENTAL NGO FORUM

The regional H₂O seminars culminated in a meeting of NGOs and other interested parties involved in water, sanitation and environmental activities in developing countries. The **Intercontinental Forum: NGOs - Water - Environment: Strategies for the Future** took place in Strasbourg, France, between December 12 - 14, 1991. It brought together the representatives of several NGOs who attended the three regional consultations, as well as representatives of NGOs, bilateral and multilateral donor agencies, and other interested parties from Europe and North America.

The overall purpose of the Intercontinental NGO Forum was to present to a wider audience for further discussion the results and recommendations of the three regional H₂O seminars. The specific goals of the meeting were:

- to summarize the results of the discussions from three regional NGO consultations on water supply and sanitation issues which took place in Abidjan, Manila and Quito,
- to define activities that could be implemented by NGOs, either on an individual or consortium basis, to facilitate and promote the integration of NGOs into the national water and sanitation policy and program development process, based on the conclusions these seminars and taking into consideration the principles of the Montreal Charter;
- to develop a common NGO strategy for these activities. Specifically, which are the actions that can be shared, and what kind of mechanism does it entail within the context of the existing cooperative arrangements among NGOs?; and,
- to reach a consensus for a statement that could be tabled at the Conference on NGOs, Environment and Development (Paris: December 17-20), at the International Conference on Water and Environment (Dublin: January 1992) and at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro: June 1992).

The anticipated outcome was a commitment by NGOs to carry out the activities defined during the meeting, as well as a statement of support by donor agencies and the 'northern' NGOs to support the 'southern' NGOs in their efforts.

The recommendations emanating from the Intercontinental NGO Forum were presented at the 1991 NGO Conference in Paris, where a framework for a common approach by NGOs for the definition of input to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) was to be developed. The report of the Intercontinental NGO Forum will be presented also at the International Conference on Water and the Environment (scheduled for Dublin in January 1992), and ultimately, to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, June 1992).

The tone of the meeting was consultative, to encourage participants to present and discuss candidly their experiences, perspectives and ideas. As with the regional H₂O seminars, a consultative mode was adopted in recognition of the heterogeneity of the NGOs present. Several were from developing countries, with their experiences particular to their relationships with their respective governments, bilateral and multilateral funding agencies, and NGOs from North America and Europe. Other participants represented recently created NGOs from east and central Europe, which have very little experience in accessing funds from external sources and liaising with foreign-based NGOs. The North American and western European NGOs brought to the meeting their won experiences in dealing with multilateral and bilateral agencies and local NGOs.

A certain degree of flexibility was incorporated into the Forum's agenda. While a framework for an agenda had been planned beforehand, the details were open to discussion and modification, to take account of the direction and content of the deliberations. The agenda adopted at the Forum is presented in Annex 1.

The primary purpose of the first day was to provide an opportunity to the representatives of the NGOs that had organized and hosted the three regional NGO consultative meetings to present a summary of their meetings' deliberations and recommendations. The participants representing NGOs from east and central Europe were also invited to present an overview of their respective organization's mandate, activities and concerns. This was followed by a discussion in plenary of the presentations, as well as a definition of the questions that would be the basis of discussions for the remainder of the meeting.

The agenda for the second day concentrated on the definition of concrete action plans for NGOs. Based on a discussion of the questions emanating from the deliberations of the three regional H₂O seminars, participants defined three questions that would form the basis of the discussions at the Intercontinental Forum (Box 1). Three working groups were formed to examine each of the questions. Participants self-selected

BOX 1

Three key questions for NGOs to consider during the Strasbourg Forum:

- What are the initiatives/tangible activities that NGOs can undertake to reinforce their collaboration with governments, donor agencies, local communities and other NGOs?;
- What initiatives/tangible activities should NGOs undertake to reinforce their competence, effectiveness and credibility?; and,
- What initiatives/tangible activities should NGOs undertake to utilize the competence and knowledge of communities to plan and implement water supply and sanitation activities?

their working group. Each working group was charged to define a set of activities which would support the achievement of the objective contained in the assigned statement. These were then presented to the plenary for further discussion and comment.

The afternoon session of the second day concentrated on the definition of activities that could be undertaken by NGOs, either separately or collectively, to respond to the three questions. The activities were developed in workshops that grouped the participants by region (by consensus of the Forum participants). Six working groups were constituted: Asia, Africa, Latin America, North America, Western Europe and East/Central Europe. Participants were instructed to define specific activities that would respond to the needs of their respective regions, keeping in mind the criteria of feasibility, practicality and resource constraints.

The regional working groups presented the proposed activities in plenary during the third and final day of the Forum. This followed a presentation about the direction and nature of NGO-related programs by the representatives of several external support agencies. The final agenda item involved the approval of a statement from the Forum (see Preface).

SYNTHESIS OF THE REGIONAL H₂O SEMINARS

The purpose of the H₂O seminars was to bring together the representatives of local NGOs involved primarily in water and sanitation development activities, to define their concerns and the issues that face their organizations, and the activities that could serve to promote and facilitate their integration into the national water and sanitation policy and program development and implementation process. The general framework established to guide the deliberations during the regional seminars included the following as objectives:

- to define the activities that can be taken by NGOs to increase the visibility of their activities within the water and sanitation sector;
- to demonstrate the need for the active involvement of NGOs in national water and sanitation policy and program development and implementation; and,
- to define the mechanisms that will promote and enhance their role in this process.

Three seminars were organized:

1. The *Seminaire International d'Abidjan sur ONG/Eau/Environnement* [PanAfrican NGO Consultative Meeting on Water and the Environment] took place in Abidjan (Ivory Coast) between October 21 and 25, 1991;
2. The Asia NGO Consultative Meeting on Water Supply and Sanitation was held in Manila (Philippines) between November 10 and 13, 1991; and,
3. The *Forum Quito H₂O: Agua Saneamiento Medio Ambiente y Desarrollo* [Quito H₂O Forum: Water Sanitation Environment and Development] took place in Quito (Ecuador) in early December, and was attended by the representatives of Latin American NGOs.

All NGOs attending the regional seminars were involved in water supply and sanitation development activities, their experience, life span, expertise, orientation, and the scale of their operations and *modus operandi* varied. Most work independent of government, directly with community organizations or through a partnership approach with other national NGOs. Few had received direct funding from a government agency to design and carry out a community development activity.

BOX 2

**SEMINAIRE INTERNATIONAL D'ADIDJAN
SUR ONG/EAU/ENVIRONNEMENT**

**ABIDJAN, IVORY COAST
21 - 25 OCTOBER 1991**

Organizers: *la Ligue internationale d'études et de la promotion de la santé communautaire (LIEPSC) (Ivory Coast); Union africaine des distributeurs d'eau (UADE) (Morocco); le Centre régional de l'eau potable et de l'assainissement (CREPA) (Burkina Faso); and Réseau africain de développement intégré (RADI) (Senegal).*

Participants: Representatives of over 120 African and non-African NGOs operating on the continent, as well as the representatives of several multilateral and bilateral donor agencies.

Conclusions: Water is a basic human right.

There exists a limited knowledge in the general public about the relationship between housing, water, sanitation and human well-being and health.

There is a lack of training and education with a view to increasing public awareness.

The restrictive modalities applied to financial support given to NGOs and their limited capacity in generating local funds is a major problem.

There is a lack of standards and mechanisms relating to sanitation and solid waste collection and disposal.

An integrated water resources management strategy within community development activities should be adopted by NGOs and governments.

Funding: Governments of Canada, France, Switzerland, United States

Assistance: Water and Sanitation for Health Project (WASH), International Secretariat for Water

The nature and content of the deliberations at each of the three regional meetings were a product largely of their scale and the individual and collective experience of the participating NGOs. For example, the tone of the PanAfrican seminar was very philosophical (Box 2). Many delegates emphasized the right of people to have access to adequate supplies of clean water. There was also much discussion concerning the relationship of local NGOs and their respective governments. Many NGOs in Africa work closely with disadvantaged and marginal communities, and are involved in issues that government agencies either choose to ignore, or are incapable of dealing with. While many NGOs acknowledge the potential for NGOs to influence government policy within the water and sanitation sector, they point out that often their activities may contradict or be in conflict with existing policies. The issue becomes one of the means by which local NGOs can be effective and influential, without antagonizing government authorities.

Although the meeting did not produce concrete country-specific action plans, it appears to be the first meeting of sector-related NGOs in Africa, and marks an important contribution to the establishment of inter-NGO linkages. The seminar's recommendations include a call for stronger linkages between NGOs and research and planning institutions, the reinforcement of linkages among African NGOs, including the creation of the 'Panafrican Alliance of NGOs for Environment and Development (APED)', and the strengthening of linkages with NGO networks working in the field of water and sanitation in other continents.

On the other hand, the discussions at the Asian NGO Consultative Meeting centred on the pragmatic (Box 3). Participants discussed at length the relationship between their organizations and their respective governments, and identified several factors that limit their integration into the national policy development process. The issue at hand for many was how to improve the trust and confidence by governments for the role that NGOs can and do play in the community development process. They also identified issues that affect their relationship with external funding sources. This discussion was not limited to multilateral and bilateral donor agencies, but touched also on the relationship between local NGOs and the large international ('northern') NGOs that operate in developing countries.

Finally, the participants discussed also the factors that limit the capacity of local NGOs to operate efficiently and effectively. Many of these relate to the lack of secure and long-term financial resources to cover recurrent operating costs, funding modalities, the limited managerial capabilities of most NGOs, and other personnel training issues.

BOX 3

ASIA NGO CONSULTATIVE MEETING

**MANILA, PHILIPPINES
NOVEMBER 10-13, 1991**

Organizers: The Asian Alliance of Appropriate Technology Practitioners (APPROTECH ASIA)

Participants: Representatives of nine indigenous NGOs from seven south and southeast Asian countries.

Conclusions: NGO/government relationship should be improved through a more cooperative and direct dialogue between them. NGOs should attempt to improve their credibility by demonstrating to government the successful approaches and technologies, and by providing government agencies and decision-makers with relevant and valid information.

Many of the problems relating to the sustainability of NGOs are due to structural and process factors within the funding mechanism. NGOs must work with external funding agencies and organizations to develop more flexible and long term funding mechanisms.

The exchange of information among NGOs about their activities and experiences, and the pooling of resources, are critical to their continued viability and survival. National, regional and intercontinental NGO networks are one means of achieving this and should be created quickly.

There exist mechanisms that could serve to integrate NGOs into the national water supply and sanitation policy and program development and implementation process. The International Training Centers, developed by the UNDP and the World Bank, are an example. NGOs should become participating organizations within the Centers.

Funding: PROWESS - UNDP/World Bank Water and Sanitation Program

Assistance: International Secretariat for Water

BOX 4

**FORUM QUITO H₂O: AGUA SANEAMIENTO
MEDIO AMBIENTE Y DESARROLLO**

**QUITO, ECUADOR
DECEMBER 2-4, 1991**

Organizers: REDES, an umbrella organization for a network of Latin American NGOs involved in sector-related activities, and CIUDAD, a local research organization.

Participants: Representatives of 18 NGOs from eight Latin American countries.

Conclusions: the political context within which NGOs work and communities exist must be taken into consideration when discussing and developing water supply and sanitation programs

NGOs should seek to work cooperatively with governments within a democratic context, but should be aware of the risk of becoming the scape-goat for government's failure to effectively and adequately meet the needs of the people by taking on the responsibility for the planning and implementation of community services

NGOs must contribute to promoting a democratization of the planning and management of community services

NGOs must develop an agenda and action plan about environmental issues, resources and potential activities

NGOs should spearhead a campaign to eliminate all forms of irrational consumption of water and other resources, as well as the deterioration and contamination of the environment

NGOs should promote an integrated, multidisciplinary and participatory approach to problem identification and resolution

NGOs should be the link between research and action

NGOs should create public awareness about environmental issues and to identify appropriate and effective communications methods for the dissemination and popularization of such information

FUNDING: International Secretariat for Water; REDES

The meeting produced several recommendations designed to strengthen the capacity of NGOs to influence government policy and to develop and manage development activities. These include the establishment of national NGO networks, the institution of regular national fora on water and sanitation issues and activities, and suggestions for new modalities for the funding of NGO activities by multilateral and bilateral donor agencies and international NGOs.

The Latin American consultation focused on the socio-political and economic constraints to the achievement of community development activities in general, and water supply, sanitation and environmental activities in particular (Box 4). The traditional approach by public sector agencies for the planning and implementation of water supply and sanitation activities in Latin America has tended to be sectoral bound and narrowly defined. Viewing water resources within the context of a national heritage and a vital element of development has been ignored. The destruction and wastage of natural resources is viewed by the participating NGOs as a primary concern that should be dealt with quickly. This requires the adoption of a broader, multidisciplinary approach to problem-solving.

The participants were quick to point out that NGOs should not be seen as a substitute for state responsibilities and activities. NGOs, government agencies and funding organizations should seek to establish mechanisms that facilitate and promote an inter-agency dialogue of the issues and the definition of approaches that capitalize on the resources and experience of each party to improve the economic and social well-being of communities without endangering the quality of water resources. More emphasis should be put on building linkages between NGOs and research and training institutions, the latter having the capacity to provide the NGOs with the resources required to carry out important sector studies. Emphasis should be placed on applied research, and the application of its findings into field activities.

Despite the substantial differences in scale and the background and experiences of their participants, the seminars were successful in defining many of the issues that local NGOs face, and their concerns at becoming involved in expanded and government-led activities. At two of the seminars, activities were defined that are expected to result in strengthening the capacity of indigenous NGOs to influence government policy and programming.

Many of the issues raised during the course of the regional H₂O seminars are similar to those cited in development literature and at previous NGO fora.¹ Several are generic issues, such as the emergence and evolution of NGOs, their capacity to define, implement and manage development activities, their role within the development process, and their relationship to the other 'partners' in the development process (communities, other NGOs, government ministries and agencies, donor agencies). Others are specific to the activities relating to the role of NGOs within the water supply and sanitation sector.

The most frequently voiced issues related to the relationship between local NGOs and external funding agencies, primarily the multilateral and bilateral donor agencies. They reflect the difference in scale and perspectives concerning the approach to be taken towards 'development' (the donor agencies concentrating on the output of projects and how resources are expended, while NGOs tend to be concerned with the causal factors of poverty and inequality and on a process that develops people). Remarks about the piecemeal project-by-project approach used by many donor agencies, as opposed to the more integrated approach used by many NGOs, was also mentioned. NGOs remarked about the difficulties experienced in accessing funds from and building a sustained relationship with external support agencies, the bias of donor agencies towards large, macro-scale projects, and the tendency of donor agencies to bureaucratize the development process. In essence, NGOs fear being reduced to what have been termed 'conduits of development assistance' for the external support agencies.²

¹ Drabek, Anne G. (ed.), 'Development Alternatives: The Challenge for NGOs' *World Development Papers from the World Development/Overseas Development Institute Symposium 1986*, Vol. 15, Supplement, 1987.

Gorman, Robert F. (ed.), *Private Voluntary Organizations as Agents of Development* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1982)

PACT Asian Linkages: NGO Collaboration in the 1990s - A Five Country Study (Private Agencies Collaborating Together (PACT): New York, 1989), 211 pages plus annexes.

Mburu, F.M. 'Non-governmental organizations in the health field: collaboration, integration and contrasting aims in Africa' *Soc. Sci. & Med.* 29(5), 1989, pp. 591-598

Tendler, Judith, *Turning Private Voluntary Organizations into Development Agencies: Questions for Evaluation* (Washington, DC: USAID, 1982)

² Garilao, E.D. 'Indigenous NGOs as Strategic Institutions: Managing the Relationship with Government and Resource Agencies' *World Development* Vol. 15, Supplement, pp. 113-120, 1987.

The relationship between local NGOs and governments was another important issue, although the nature of the relationship appears to be a point of debate among NGOs. Some propose a cooperative relationship with government as a means of influencing government policy and programs. On the other hand, there are many NGOs that perceive the government as the 'opposition', with the NGOs confronting and challenging the state. But, in general, they agree that their role is not to supplant or compete with government on development activities. Nevertheless, given that governments in many developing countries are becoming disengaged increasingly from the provision and financial support of development activities, NGOs are striving to demonstrate their importance as partners within the national development process, through the demonstration of NGO successes, the provision of information and data, and their capacity to undertake a greater role.

The third category of issues raised during the regional H₂O seminars relate to the institutional and operational/managerial capacities of indigenous NGOs. Some of the more frequently mentioned issues were:

- the need for timely and detailed information about NGO experiences and approaches used in community development activities, their relationship with government and external funding sources, and their position on water supply and sanitation issues;
- the need for improved linkages among NGOs, at the national, regional and international levels;
- the small-scale of operation and fragile nature of many NGOs, given their reliance on external funding sources and a high degree of voluntarism;
- the need for sustained support for institutional capacity building and strengthening (particularly for NGO operations);
- the need for greater human resources development/skills development training within NGOs;
- the need for a greater degree of 'professionalization' of local NGOs, without losing their comparative advantages and transforming themselves into 'bureaucratic institutions' that no longer respond to the needs and perceptions of people.

The discussions served to highlight the insecurity within the 'southern' NGO community concerning the viability of their organizations, and the issues inherent within the concept of a 'scaling-up' of activities within a national policy framework. They recognize that they

do not possess the requisite resources nor necessarily the capabilities to undertake an expanded role within the development process. They also reflected upon and were concerned about the implications that involvement in this framework and a change in their scale of operations would have upon their relationship and capacity to respond quickly and effectively to the needs and demands of their constituent populations.

Nevertheless, they recognized the need for NGOs to improve their capacity to develop and produce sound position papers that will influence government policy and programs. They want to become involved in a national framework. The challenge is to identify the means of strengthening their capabilities and role without compromising their integrity and comparative advantage over government agencies and the multilateral and bilateral donor agencies.

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES FOR NGOS

The activities defined by the NGOs during the course of the Strasbourg Forum are intended to respond to the issues raised in the previous section of the report: the relationship between NGOs and the other participants in the development process (communities, governments, external funding agencies) and the problems attendant to the institutional sustainability, operation and management of an NGO. Some of the activities proposed are very general, no more than intentions. Others were quite well defined, and some NGO representatives were able to commit their organization to undertake certain activities.

The goal of the exercise was to move beyond a statement of 'what should be done', to a definition of concrete and realistic actions that could serve to strengthen the role and effectiveness of NGOs within the national water supply and sanitation sector.

NGOs should not, nor do they have the resources to compete with the bilateral and multilateral agencies in implementing large-scale projects. They should recognize their strengths within the community-centred and innovative activities that they undertake, which the external support agencies are not able to do. Their comparative advantage is in their capacity to learn quickly and apply what they have learned.

*- a representative of an
external support agency*

BOX 5

ACTIVITIES DEFINED BY NGOs DURING THE STRASBOURG FORUM RELATING TO THE THREE BASIC QUESTIONS EMANATING FROM THE THREE REGIONAL H₂O SEMINARS

- **What are the initiatives/tangible activities that NGOs can undertake to reinforce their collaboration with governments, donor agencies, local communities and other NGOs?**

NGO/Government Relations:

- representation of NGOs at meetings of regional intergovernment bodies
- development of a framework at the regional level for regular government/NGO consultations
- north-south-east NGO cooperation: representation at the United Nations General Assembly
- north-south-east cooperation for lobbying of governments
- promotion and facilitation of a south-south dialogue through regional consultations between governments and NGOs

NGO/External Funding Sources:

- representation/participation of NGOs on the Collaborative Council for Water and Sanitation
- representation of NGOs at World Bank and regional Bank (AfDB, ADB, IDB) meetings
- lobbying efforts for the creation of a special fund for NGOs within each bilateral and multilateral agency
- elaboration of a policy for NGO/external funding agency cooperation where none exist currently
- that the isw be provided data about funds allocated to the wss sector by external support agencies for each year and particularly funds to ngos, for the creation of a data bank

NGO/community relations:

- organization of a permanent mechanism for collaboration and evaluation within each country
- the establishment of local small business enterprises to promote and facilitate autonomous management of development activities by communities

NGO/Private Enterprise Relations:

- establish a partnership for the purpose of training NGOs in the planning implementation and management of projects

BOX 5 (CON'T)

ACTIVITIES DEFINED BY NGOs DURING THE STRASBOURG FORUM
RELATING TO THE THREE BASIC QUESTIONS EMANATING FROM
THE THREE REGIONAL H₂O SEMINARS

- **What initiatives/tangible activities should NGOs undertake to reinforce their competence, effectiveness and credibility?**
 - development of an NGO directory at the national level
 - development of a compendium on information sources (what institutions possess what information on what technologies/approaches and on how to access information)
 - NGOs to carry out training needs analysis on a country by country basis regarding human resources development and the application of technology
 - creation of national NGO networks/forums
 - organization/implementation of national WSS workshops
 - preparation/production/dissemination of national and international NGO newsletters
 - development of state-of-the-art national WSS situation analysis report
 - organization of community to community workshops/exchange visits
 - broaden NGO policy/program focus to incorporate water resources issues
 - NGOs explore feasibility and mechanisms to generate resources locally (human, financial, material)

- **What initiatives/tangible activities should NGOs undertake to utilize the competence and knowledge of communities to plan and implement water supply and sanitation activities?**
 - RURAL COMMUNITIES HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS TO SOLVE THEIR OWN WSS PROBLEMS. HOWEVER, NO ONE IS LISTENING TO THEM OR TAKING THEM SERIOUSLY. DOCUMENT SOLUTIONS THE COMMUNITY HAS TO OFFER TO REGARDING a) THE LOCATION OF WATER SOURCES; b) THE SITING OF PIPED WATER SOURCES; AND c) THE MAINTENANCE OF THEIR WATER SUPPLY SYSTEMS: Collect information and document the experiences and perceptions of communities on the following topics: location of water resources, the siting of piped water resources, and the management and maintenance of their water supply systems.

 - WOMEN HAVE BEEN NEGLECTED IN THE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF WSS PROGRAMMES ALTHOUGH IT IS GENERALLY ACCEPTED THAT THEY ARE AFFECTED THE MOST. THERE IS GENERAL RESISTANCE IN MATTERS CONCERNING SITE SELECTION, CERTIFICATION OF ADEQUATE QUANTITIES OF WATER AND THE REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE OF HANDPUMPS AND PIPED WATER SYSTEMS IN RURAL AREAS. WHERE VOLUNTARY GROUPS HAVE INITIATED SUCH ACTION ALREADY, CASE STUDIES NEED TO BE DOCUMENTED AND DISSEMINATED: Collect information and document, using case studies, the role of women in the planning, management and decision-making concerning water supply and sanitation services.

BOX 5 (CON'T)

- IN MATTERS CONCERNING ACCESSIBILITY TO DRINKING WATER THE REAL ISSUES EXPRESSED BY THE COMMUNITY ARE a) OWNERSHIP OF INFRASTRUCTURE; b) CONTROL OVER THE MATERIAL RESOURCES; c) MANAGEMENT OF SYSTEMS. ALL ARE CRUCIAL IF COMMUNITIES WANT MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS THAT ARE SUSTAINABLE AND NOT DEPENDENT ON OUTSIDE INTERVENTIONS. HIGHLIGHT EXISTING ON-GOING EXAMPLES WHERE SUCH ISSUES HAVE ALREADY BEEN ADDRESSED BY RURAL COMMUNITIES AND SOME TANGIBLE IMPACT HAS ALREADY BEEN FELT. THERE ARE LESSONS HERE THAT GOVERNMENTS AND INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES CAN LEARN FROM: Often the principle issues expressed by communities relate to the ownership of the water supply and sanitation services and facilities, control of the use and management of material resources, and the management of the systems. Document through case studies the success stories and their tangible impacts.
- INFORMATION MUST LEAD TO KNOWLEDGE BECAUSE DISSEMINATION OF KNOWLEDGE LEADS TO EMPOWERMENT. NGOS HAVE A CRUCIAL ROLE TO PLAY IN SHARING INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE THAT ENABLE COMMUNITIES TO TAKE THEIR OWN DECISIONS. INFORMATION ABOUT SUCCESS STORIES NEEDS TO BE PRODUCED AND DISSEMINATED AND BY COMMUNICATIONS MATERIALS THAT COMMUNITIES CAN USE TO MAKE THEIR OWN DECISIONS, THEREBY REDUCING DEPENDENCY ON GOVERNMENT: NGOs have a crucial role to play in sharing information and knowledge that enable communities to take decisions. Information about success stories should be produced and disseminated using communications materials such as videos so that communities can learn how to make their own decisions, thereby reducing dependency on government.
- DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITIES AT THE EXPENSE OF THEIR DIGNITY AND SELF-RESPECT IS NOT DEVELOPMENT. IT HAS BEEN AGREED THAT BUILDING/STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF COMMUNITIES, UTILIZING TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND LOCAL SKILLS NEED TO BE GIVEN THE HIGHEST PRIORITY. IDENTIFY KEY INPUTS IN THE PROCESS OF CAPACITY BUILDING IN COMMUNITIES WILL SET AN EXAMPLE FOR REPLICATION IN COUNTRIES AND REGIONS: Dignity and self-respect are important elements in the development process. Beside disseminating information about 'success stories' on community-led initiatives, the relationship among communities should be strengthened, such that they learn directly from each other.

Prior to studying the issues and definition of activities on a regional basis, the participants were charged to define a set of generic activities specific to the three overall discussion questions as a basis for further dialogue (Box 5). Some of the proposed activities are ambiguous and actually represent statements of principle rather than concrete activities. Nonetheless, they identify, at least from the NGO perspective, issues that should receive priority consideration in the definition of NGO-related actions. It should also be kept in mind the heterogenic character of the Forum's participants. There was substantial discussion among all participants as to the practicality, feasibility and soundness of some of the proposed activities.

The first working group's task was to identify the means to improve collaboration between NGOs and the other actors within the development process (see Annex 4 for a report from this working group on its deliberations). The group decided that it was important for NGOs to define their distinct role (the characteristics and functions that distinguish them from the other agencies and organizations) and the framework of the relationship to be established with each. Caution should be exercised by NGOs when becoming involved in expanded activities within a national policy framework. Otherwise, they concluded, NGOs run the risk of assuming attributes that will change their character, making them indistinct from government and donor agencies. Although the definition of specific activities was considered to be of secondary importance, the working group did identify several.

The second working group was charged to study the issue of improving the effectiveness, credibility and competence of NGOs, in order that they could contribute within the national water supply and sanitation policy framework. The participants felt that credibility (and hence the ability of NGOs to influence decisions and generate funds) was a function of effectiveness and competence. Activities have to be defined taking into consideration for whom NGOs are to be credible (communities; government; donor agencies; other NGOs). As well, a distinction needs to be made between internal efficiency of the NGO, and the effectiveness and impact of its activities. The activities identified by this working group tended to be very practical, reflecting the inclination of the participants towards identifying means and mechanisms to strengthen the internal operations and sustainability over the long term of NGOs as institutions.

The third working group dealt with the issue of integrating the knowledge base and experiences of communities directly into the national decision-making process. Their concerns were similar to those of working group 1 in terms of the potential for compromising the distinct character of NGOs. The four issues highlighted by the working group emphasize a need for greater knowledge about the experiences and the internal decision-making process within communities, and the need to bring this information to the attention of decision-makers.

One issue common to all three working groups relates to the production and dissemination of information about community and NGO activities, and the lack of mechanisms that reinforce the linkages among NGOs. The lack of national, regional and intercontinental linkages and information exchange mechanisms among NGOs, and between NGOs and the other actors in the development process was identified as a major shortcoming, and a factor which limits greatly the capacity of NGOs to influence decision-making within government and their dependence on external funding sources.

The small regional working groups studied the generic activities developed for each of the principal questions, and decided which were the most relevant and important to their particular situation and needs. They then identified activities that their respective NGOs would plan and carry out over the next few years. Briefly, the activities proposed for each region were:

■ **AFRICA**

1. **WHAT ARE THE INITIATIVES/TANGIBLE ACTIONS THAT NGOs CAN UNDERTAKE TO REINFORCE THEIR COLLABORATION WITH GOVERNMENTS, DONOR AGENCIES, LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND OTHER NGOS?**

REPRESENTATION OF NGOs AT REGIONAL INTERGOVERNMENT BODIES (OAS, OAU, ETC) AND DEVELOPMENT OF A FRAMEWORK AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL FOR REGULAR GOVERNMENT/NGO CONSULTATIONS: One of the outcomes of the Abidjan NGO Meeting in October 1991 was the decision to establish a PanAfrican Alliance of Environmental and Development NGOs. The Alliance would be composed of representatives of existing NGO networks within Africa. Its activities would include the definition of themes and issues that require further study and action by NGOs, and the organization of continental and regional fora. The reports emanating from these meetings would be submitted to the various regional political and economic bodies and organizations. The Alliance would also seek to lobby these groups, in order to ensure that the continental voice about NGO activities and concerns is heard.

The African participants propose as well the creation of national networks of environment and development NGOs. Specifically, with financial support and guidance from Eau Vive (France), they propose the establishment of NGO networks in two West African countries on a pilot basis: Mali and Burkina Faso. The national networks would organize national fora on water and sanitation issues and activities, which could form the basis for government/NGO/private enterprise dialogue and action.

THAT THE ISW BE PROVIDED DATA ABOUT FUNDS ALLOCATED TO THE WSS SECTOR BY EXTERNAL SUPPORT AGENCIES FOR EACH YEAR AND PARTICULARLY FUNDS TO NGOs, FOR THE CREATION OF A DATA BANK: The delegates from African NGOs believed this to be a priority activity, to be undertaken by the ISW as soon as possible. They propose that, in early 1993, an

evaluation of the exercise be undertaken, to identify problems that impeded the collection of data and preparation of an annual report. They also felt that the report should contain more than superficial data about funding amounts. It should also contain an analysis of the NGO-related program of each donor agency.

2. **WHAT INITIATIVES/TANGIBLE ACTIONS SHOULD NGOs UNDERTAKE TO REINFORCE THEIR COMPETENCE, EFFECTIVENESS AND CREDIBILITY?**

DEVELOPMENT OF AN NGO DIRECTORY AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL: The African participants believe this activity to be a logical consequence of the creation of the national NGO networks. Guidance should be provided by the ISW as to the format and content for national NGO directories. Given the active role of sector-related NGOs in the Ivory Coast, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Mali and Kenya, the delegates propose that these countries serve as the first to develop the NGO directories.

CREATION OF NATIONAL NGO NETWORKS/FORUMS AND THE ORGANIZATION/IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL WSS WORKSHOPS: The delegates propose that regional NGO seminars be organized and held every two years on specific sector-related topics. The first, to be organized by the PanAfrican Alliance in cooperation with the ISW, would be held one year after the Rio de Janeiro United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, for the purpose of assessing the impact of UNCED on the African continent, specific to the water and sanitation sector.

ORGANIZATION OF COMMUNITY TO COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS/EXCHANGE VISITS: RADI (Senegal) prepared a very preliminary proposal for a project about an exchange among villagers in Senegal and Burkina Faso, with the objective of identifying solutions to community water supply and sanitation issues through an interchange of ideas among villagers, without the intervention of external 'experts' (Box 6).

BOX 6

Community-to-community exchange project proposal

Prepared by Ibrahima Cheick Diong
RADI/Senegal

The transfer of expertise and technologies (both apparatus and processes) has tended to be viewed in a North-South context. However, in Africa, a tradition of knowledge, skills and expertise exchange among villages has existed for some time, particularly within the water supply and sanitation sector. People in Africa want to put into practice their own knowledge and skills, and to share them with others who face similar situations and problems. The exchange of information about successes and failures, as well as about the technologies available and used, serves to reinforce the capacity of people to find appropriate solutions. In this context, the Réseau africain du développement intégré (RADI/Senegal), in cooperation with the International Secretariat for Water (ISW), proposes a pilot project that would support a community-to-community fora about water supply and sanitation issues and technologies, between villagers from Senegal and Burkina Faso.

The project corresponds to one of the ISW's stated objectives, to facilitate and promote the resolution of water supply and sanitation issues and problems through a direct dialogue among people about their experiences, knowledge and skills. The objective of the exercise would be to facilitate an exchange of knowledge, skills, ideas and experiences among rural villagers, without the presence of external NGO or other people.

The proposed methodology would see the convening of a fora between villagers from Senegal involved in water supply and sanitation projects and villagers from Burkina Faso, also involved in water supply and sanitation activities in their respective villages. The Senegalese component would be comprised of 56 people, being two men and two women from each of the 14 projects supported by RADI situated in the Thies region. The Senegalese visitors would live with their Burkinabais hosts for a period of one week, during which they would discuss water supply and sanitation issues, and the means they developed to resolve them.

A return visit by the villagers from Burkina Faso would be made to their Senegalese counterpart villages later in the year. An evaluation of the exercise would be undertaken by RADI in early 1993, to determine the outcome of the exchange, and its impact on Senegalese and Burkinabais villages.

The proposed budget for the project would total approximately FCFA 50,000.

- **NGOs EXPLORE FEASIBILITY AND MECHANISMS TO GENERATE RESOURCES LOCALLY (HUMAN, FINANCIAL, MATERIAL):** RADI has provided support over the past five years to revenue-generating activities in rural villages, designed to permit the villagers the autonomy to decide for themselves the nature of community development activities. It was proposed that RADI assemble case studies of these activities, as well as 'lessons learned', and publish them during 1992.
3. **WHAT INITIATIVES/TANGIBLE ACTIVITIES SHOULD NGOS UNDERTAKE TO UTILIZE THE COMPETENCE AND KNOWLEDGE OF COMMUNITIES TO PLAN AND IMPLEMENT WSS ACTIVITIES?**
- **IN MATTERS CONCERNING ACCESSIBILITY TO DRINKING WATER THE REAL ISSUES EXPRESSED BY THE COMMUNITY ARE a) OWNERSHIP OF INFRASTRUCTURE; b) CONTROL OVER THE MATERIAL RESOURCES; c) MANAGEMENT OF SYSTEMS. ALL ARE CRUCIAL IF COMMUNITIES WANT MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS THAT ARE SUSTAINABLE AND NOT DEPENDENT ON OUTSIDE INTERVENTIONS:** Highlight existing on-going examples where such issues have already been addressed by rural communities and some tangible impact has already been felt. There are lessons here that governments and international agencies can learn from. The African participants perceive this as an important activity, and propose that the PanAfrican Alliance examine this further for possible action.

■ **ASIA**

1. **WHAT ARE THE INITIATIVES/TANGIBLE ACTIONS THAT NGOS CAN UNDERTAKE TO REINFORCE THEIR COLLABORATION WITH GOVERNMENTS, DONOR AGENCIES, LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND OTHER NGOS?**

The Asian NGOs represented at the Strasbourg meeting were of the opinion that the ISW should play a lead role, on behalf of its constituents, to represent NGOs at intergovernmental regional bodies (such as the Organization of American States, the Organization of African Unity). The objective of these consultations would be to lobby governments to integrate NGOs into the national water supply and sanitation policy and program development and implementation process, as well

as bringing to their attention the successful activities of NGOs and community organizations. They also believed that the ISW, or its regional representative, could play an important role in advancing the cause of the NGO community within the water and sanitation sector, through participation at meetings on sector issues and activities at the World Bank and regional Banks.

2. WHAT INITIATIVES/TANGIBLE ACTIONS SHOULD NGOS UNDERTAKE TO REINFORCE THEIR COMPETENCE, EFFECTIVENESS AND CREDIBILITY?

- **DEVELOPMENT OF NGO DIRECTORIES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL:** One of the outcomes of the regional NGO consultative meeting held in Manila was agreement that the NGO communities in each country would benefit from the preparation of a directory about NGOs at the national level. Further discussion was held at the Strasbourg meeting, and the following were defined as concrete activities for the NGOs present:
 - the NGO Forum for Drinking Water and Sanitation (Bangladesh) is to update the directory it produced in 1990.
 - Approtech Asia is to followup with the NGOs that attended the Manila meeting, to determine the status of proposals to develop national sector-related NGO directories.
 - the ISW is encouraged to develop guidelines about the format, content and style for NGO directories, so that a standard format can be adopted on a regional basis.

- **NGOS TO CARRY OUT TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS ON A COUNTRY BY COUNTRY BASIS CONCERNING HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY APPLICATION:** Approtech Asia intends to develop a plan of action for such an analysis for its Asian members during 1992, with advice from the ISW. It will share the proposal with NGO networks from Latin America and Africa, to determine whether a dialogue on south-south issues in this area would be worthwhile.

- **CREATION OF NATIONAL NGO NETWORKS/FORA:** The creation and strengthening of national and regional sector-related NGO networks and fora was a major topic of discussion during the Manila Consultative Meeting. Representatives of NGOs in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Philippines and Bangladesh were especially interested in this activity. Approtech Asia, as convenor of the Manila

meeting, in collaboration with the NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation (Bangladesh), will contact each of the participants of the Manila meeting, to determine what they have done in this regard, and to provide information/guidelines from the Bangladesh experience to assist them in establishing networks in their respective countries. A representative from the Bangladesh group would visit NGOs in other Asian countries to assist them in setting up their respective networks.

- PREPARATION/PRODUCTION/DISSEMINATION OF NATIONAL AND REGIONAL NGO NEWSLETTERS: Approtech Asia and the NGO Forum (Bangladesh) will publish information about the Manila and Strasbourg meetings in their respective newsletters.
 - ORGANIZATION OF COMMUNITY TO COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS/EXCHANGE VISITS: The representatives of the three NGOs from Asia felt the community-to-community exchange visits to be a potentially important mechanism to reinforce community development activities. Over the next several months the NGOs will identify potential communities and develop proposals for exchange visits and/or seminars among community members.
3. WHAT INITIATIVES/TANGIBLE ACTIVITIES SHOULD NGOS UNDERTAKE TO UTILIZE THE COMPETENCE AND KNOWLEDGE OF COMMUNITIES TO PLAN AND IMPLEMENT WSS ACTIVITIES?
- RURAL COMMUNITIES HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS TO SOLVE THEIR OWN WSS PROBLEMS. HOWEVER, NO ONE IS LISTENING TO THEM OR TAKING THEM SERIOUSLY. DOCUMENT SOLUTIONS THE COMMUNITY HAS TO OFFER TO REGARDING a) THE LOCATION OF WATER SOURCES; b) THE SITING OF PIPED WATER SOURCES; AND c) THE MAINTENANCE OF THEIR WATER SUPPLY SYSTEMS: The Social Research Centre (India), over the next three months, intends to collect this information from the communities with which it works. This will then be forwarded to the ISW, for dissemination to interested parties.

- **WOMEN HAVE BEEN NEGLECTED IN THE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF WSS PROGRAMMES ALTHOUGH IT IS GENERALLY ACCEPTED THAT THEY ARE AFFECTED THE MOST. THERE IS GENERAL RESISTANCE IN MATTERS CONCERNING SITE SELECTION, CERTIFICATION OF ADEQUATE QUANTITIES OF WATER AND THE REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE OF HANDPUMPS AND PIPED WATER SYSTEMS IN RURAL AREAS. WHERE VOLUNTARY GROUPS HAVE INITIATED SUCH ACTION ALREADY, CASE STUDIES NEED TO BE DOCUMENTED AND DISSEMINATED:** The Social Research Centre (India) will document in audio-visual media the activities of the communities with which it works. This will be forwarded to the ISW, for wider dissemination.
- **IN MATTERS CONCERNING ACCESSIBILITY TO DRINKING WATER THE REAL ISSUES EXPRESSED BY THE COMMUNITY ARE a) OWNERSHIP OF INFRASTRUCTURE; b) CONTROL OVER THE MATERIAL RESOURCES; c) MANAGEMENT OF SYSTEMS. ALL ARE CRUCIAL IF COMMUNITIES WANT MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS THAT ARE SUSTAINABLE AND NOT DEPENDENT ON OUTSIDE INTERVENTIONS. HIGHLIGHT EXISTING ON-GOING EXAMPLES WHERE SUCH ISSUES HAVE ALREADY BEEN ADDRESSED BY RURAL COMMUNITIES AND SOME TANGIBLE IMPACT HAS ALREADY BEEN FELT. THERE ARE LESSONS HERE THAT GOVERNMENTS AND INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES CAN LEARN FROM:** Again, the Social Research Centre is to send to the ISW for wider dissemination information about its experiences in this regard.
- **INFORMATION MUST LEAD TO KNOWLEDGE BECAUSE DISSEMINATION OF KNOWLEDGE LEADS TO EMPOWERMENT. NGOS HAVE A CRUCIAL ROLE TO PLAY IN SHARING INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE THAT ENABLE COMMUNITIES TO TAKE THEIR OWN DECISIONS. INFORMATION ABOUT SUCCESS STORIES NEEDS TO BE PRODUCED AND DISSEMINATED AND BY COMMUNICATIONS MATERIALS THAT COMMUNITIES CAN USE TO MAKE THEIR OWN DECISIONS, THEREBY REDUCING DEPENDENCY ON GOVERNMENT:** The Social Research Centre has produced videos that are used to assist communities to make decisions on community development issues and activities. They are to forward these to the ISW, for cataloguing, copying and dissemination to interested parties.

DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITIES AT THE EXPENSE OF THEIR DIGNITY AND SELF-RESPECT IS NOT DEVELOPMENT. IT HAS BEEN AGREED THAT BUILDING/STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF COMMUNITIES, UTILIZING TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND LOCAL SKILLS NEED TO BE GIVEN THE HIGHEST PRIORITY. IDENTIFY KEY INPUTS IN THE PROCESS OF CAPACITY BUILDING IN COMMUNITIES WILL SET AN EXAMPLE FOR REPLICATION IN COUNTRIES AND REGIONS: Around December 1992, the Social Research Centre proposes organizing and hosting a meeting for interested NGOs to demonstrate the participative approach it uses in its relationship with communities.

■ LATIN AMERICA

1. WHAT ARE THE INITIATIVES/TANGIBLE ACTIONS THAT NGOS CAN UNDERTAKE TO REINFORCE THEIR COLLABORATION WITH GOVERNMENTS, DONOR AGENCIES, LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND OTHER NGOS?

The Latin American participants perceived the activities relating to the establishment and strengthening of linkages between NGOs and government agencies (at the international and regional levels) and with the multilateral and bilateral agencies to be within the realm of activities for the ISW. They perceived the activities relating to the strengthening of linkages between NGOs and governments on the national level as the responsibility of local NGOs. They propose that efforts be taken over the next three years within the Latin American region to establish (where they do not exist) national-level mechanisms to bring together NGO representatives and those of government agencies and ministries responsible for water, sanitation and environmental issues and activities.

2. WHAT INITIATIVES/TANGIBLE ACTIONS SHOULD NGOS UNDERTAKE TO REINFORCE THEIR COMPETENCE, EFFECTIVENESS AND CREDIBILITY?

DEVELOPMENT OF AN NGO DIRECTORY AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL: The Latin American participants support the idea of developing national sector-related NGO directories. REDES proposes to contact other NGOs in Latin America to determine whether national NGO directories exist already. If not, as with the other participants, they propose that the ISW develop guidelines for their format and content, and provide financial and technical support.

- DEVELOP OF A COMPENDIUM ON INFORMATION SOURCES (WHAT INSTITUTIONS POSSESS WHAT INFO/HOW TO ACCESS INFORMATION): The Latin American NGO representatives felt that access to information about the experiences of other NGOs and parties involved in water and sanitation activities, and about related technologies, to be a priority issue. They propose that the ISW identify information sources, and share this with REDES, which would then disseminate this information to other NGOs in Latin America.
 - NGOS TO CARRY OUT TRAINING NEEDS ANALYSIS ON A COUNTRY BY COUNTRY BASIS CONCERNING HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY APPLICATION: REDES will undertake to develop a project proposal in cooperation with universities, the private sector and the technical personnel of municipal water and sanitation departments.
 - ORGANIZATION/IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL WSS WORKSHOPS: REDES and CIUDAD will continue to organize and hold regional seminars and conferences for NGOs on water, sanitation and environmental issues.
3. WHAT INITIATIVES/TANGIBLE ACTIVITIES SHOULD NGOS UNDERTAKE TO UTILIZE THE COMPETENCE AND KNOWLEDGE OF COMMUNITIES TO PLAN AND IMPLEMENT WSS ACTIVITIES?
- WOMEN HAVE BEEN NEGLECTED IN THE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF WSS PROGRAMMES ALTHOUGH IT IS GENERALLY ACCEPTED THAT THEY ARE AFFECTED THE MOST. THERE IS GENERAL RESISTANCE IN MATTERS CONCERNING SITE SELECTION, CERTIFICATION OF ADEQUATE QUANTITIES OF WATER AND THE REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE OF HANDPUMPS AND PIPED WATER SYSTEMS IN RURAL AREAS. WHERE VOLUNTARY GROUPS HAVE INITIATED SUCH ACTION ALREADY, CASE STUDIES NEED TO BE DOCUMENTED AND DISSEMINATED: REDES intends to develop and publish a series of case studies about the role of women in water, sanitation and environmental activities in rural and periurban communities. The network also intends to collect and publish case studies on community experiences and activities, to demonstrate how communities themselves identify and solve problems.

■ WESTERN EUROPE

The NGOs based in Western Europe have a tradition of identifying and undertaking community development activities in developing countries, either as the primary agency or in collaboration with local NGOs and community organizations. The priority for them, according to the representatives of several Western European-based NGOs attending the meeting, is to identify the means to more effectively liaise with and support the activities of their peers in developing countries. This includes new financing mechanisms and modes for developing country-based NGOs, and the transfer of technologies, knowledge and skills to improve their management capabilities.

The creation and strengthening of national and regional NGO networks was also identified as an important issue for west European NGOs. The participants suggest that the ISW establish a framework and develop guidelines about the structure and content for national NGO directories.

They also thought that more information about the mandates, funding priorities and the mechanisms for accessing funds from external support agencies useful, particularly given the indication by several donor agencies of their intention to shift additional funds towards NGOs. Although most west European NGOs had links already with bilateral and multilateral donor agencies, they propose that the ISW develop a basic information package about donor agency funding mechanisms and information requirements to access funds. This draft information kit would then be reviewed, and information added by the NGO as to additional funding sources, or queries for clarification on the information contained in the draft package.

Finally, many European NGOs have assisted already in sub-national, national and regional NGO fora in developing countries. However, information about them has not been distributed widely. As a means of disseminating more widely the results and deliberations on sector-related NGO workshops, the NGOs are to provide the ISW with reports on these workshops and seminars. The ISW could then prepare a brief compendium about the workshops, to be distributed to NGOs worldwide.

■ EAST/CENTRAL EUROPE

The creation of non-governmental organizations is a relatively recent phenomenon in the countries of eastern and central Europe. Their number and impact on political decision-making vary greatly. For example, In Czechoslovakia, many small environment and ecology NGOs have been founded since the establishment of the democratic regime. However, the number of NGOs in Poland is presently very small, and their relationship to government still uncertain.

Representatives from two NGOs and one government agency attended the Intercontinental NGO Forum. All agreed that NGOs will and should play an important role in the definition of problems and solutions to environmental situations in eastern and central Europe. The political climate in many countries is conducive to a partnership approach between NGOs and government agencies for the development and implementation of national policies and programs relating to water, sanitation and other environmental issues. Government ministries and agencies are still in the process of evolving from a centralized to a decentralized mode of operation, and are faced with many serious environmental issues. Resources are very scarce to resolve the problems, and the active participation of NGOs is one means of capitalizing on the resources external to the public sector which can be used. Hence, it can be expected that the number of NGOs will continue to expand, as will their role in defining issues and solutions.

Exchanging information about mandates, organizational structures and processes, activities and experiences can serve to strengthen the capacity of NGOs to function effectively and efficiently. To date, NGO networks on a national basis are rare and fragmentary. There are none existing on a regional scale. As a first step towards the creation of national and regional NGO networks, the three participants identified two priority activities:

- the production of a compendium on NGOs for the various East and Central European countries; and,
- the organization and implementation of national and regional NGO fora on environmental and NGO issues.

As none of the participating agencies has experience in the two proposed activities, they propose that the International Secretariat for Water accept to develop guidelines as to the type of information that should be included in an NGO compendium, and to assist NGOs in East and Central Europe to organize and administer national and regional fora.

As an initial step, the representative from the Water Supply Foundation (Poland) agreed to develop a directory about NGOs involved in environmental issues and activities within Poland during 1992, with the assistance of the ISW. It will also take the lead to contact sector-related NGOs in other East and Central European countries about the need for and the content and structure of a regional meeting on sector/NGO issues and activities. This activity is scheduled to take place during the latter part of 1992, with a regional meeting proposed for 1993.

To assist NGOs from this region, the three participants also felt that it was very important that linkages be established with like-minded NGOs from Europe, who could provide moral support, guidance and technical assistance to their peers in east and central Europe. They also indicated that NGOs in east and central Europe require information about research and training institutions, funding agencies, and existing NGO networks.

■ NORTH AMERICA

Only two NGOs from North American were able to accept the invitation by the Forum organizers. The two NGOs present were from Canada, and the activities proposed relate only to that country:

- a conference/seminar for Canadian NGOs involved in water supply and sanitation activities in developing countries, to discuss, among other issues, their experiences and approaches to liaising with their developing country peers. The objective would be to identify innovative and solid approaches that will serve to strengthen the capacity of local NGOs and community groups to carry out their activities in an effective and efficient manner, and which will support their long-term institutional sustainability;
- the development of a proposal for an internship programme for developing country NGO personnel, to work with their Canadian counterparts to increase their knowledge about Canadian NGOs and funding sources, and to strengthen their managerial and technical skills; and,
- the continued financial support to the ISW by Oxfam-Québec for activities proposed by NGOs.

The ISW intends during 1992 to contact U.S.-based NGOs, to determine their interest to become involved in a North American forum on sector-related NGOs, their issues and concerns, and the means of strengthening southern NGOs.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The meeting in Strasbourg is the first to bring together the representatives of NGOs involved in water supply and sanitation from both the north and south to identify, discuss and commence the planning process for activities that are designed to strengthen the integration of NGOs into national sector policy and program planning and implementation. The Forum served to highlight the diversity of opinion within the NGO community, and the problems associated with seeking a common perspective and position on their issues and concerns.

The Forum was successful in initiating a process that hopefully will result in the creation and reinforcement of national NGO networks on water and sanitation, as well as the forging linkages on an intercontinental basis between NGOs. Many other NGO activities were identified, most focusing on the means to strengthen the capacity of NGOs and their constituents to influence decision-making within the development process. It also provided an opportunity for NGO representatives and those of external support agencies to exchange opinions about these issues, and to start a dialogue on the means to resolve them.

Finally, the Forum served to demonstrate that NGOs do have an important role to play within the national policy and program development and implementation process, and that they are capable of initiating activities that should serve to strengthen their credibility, effectiveness and competence. It is the intention of the International Secretariat for Water to work with the NGOs further, to assist them in developing concrete proposals for the activities identified, and to followup on them.

ANNEX 1

**AGENDA FOR THE INTERCONTINENTAL FORUM
NGOs - WATER - ENVIRONMENT: STRATEGIES FOR THE FUTURE**

THURSDAY DECEMBER 12: SUMMARY OF REGIONAL SEMINARS

0930 BEGINNING OF THE FORUM:

- Welcoming address by representative of the City of Strasbourg
- Chairman's introductory remarks
- Introduction to the agenda and proposed methodology of the Intercontinental Forum

1030 PRESENTATION OF THE REPORTS FROM THE REGIONAL SEMINARS (ASIA, AFRICA, LATIN AMERICA)

PRESENTATION OF WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION ISSUES AND CONCERNS BY REPRESENTATIVES FROM EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

DISCUSSION BY PARTICIPANTS

1230 LUNCH

1430 CONTINUATION OF DISCUSSION

1730 CONCLUSION OF FIRST DAY'S PROCEEDINGS

FRIDAY DECEMBER 13: DEVELOPMENT OF NGO ACTION PLANS

0900 FIRST WORKGROUP SESSION:

DEFINING POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES FOR NGOs UNDER THE FOLLOWING HEADINGS:

1. **WHAT ARE THE INITIATIVES/TANGIBLE ACTIONS THAT NGOS CAN UNDERTAKE TO REINFORCE THEIR COLLABORATION WITH GOVERNMENTS, DONOR AGENCIES, LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND OTHER NGOS?**
2. **WHAT INITIATIVES/TANGIBLE ACTIONS SHOULD NGOS UNDERTAKE TO REINFORCE THEIR COMPETENCE, EFFECTIVENESS AND CREDIBILITY?**
3. **WHAT INITIATIVES/TANGIBLE ACTIVITIES SHOULD NGOS UNDERTAKE TO UTILIZE THE COMPETENCE AND KNOWLEDGE OF COMMUNITIES TO PLAN AND IMPLEMENT WSS ACTIVITIES?**

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1230 LUNCH

1430 SECOND WORKGROUP SESSION:
DEFINING NGO ACTIVITIES ON A REGIONAL BASIS BASED ON DELIBERATIONS OF MORNING
SESSION

1730 CONCLUSION OF SECOND DAY'S PROCEEDINGS

SATURDAY DECEMBER 14: PREPARATION OF STRATEGIES AND CONCLUSION

0900 PRESENTATION BY UNDP, INTERNATIONAL WATER BUREAU (FRANCE) AND OTHER PARTIES
CONCERNING LINKAGES/FUNDING OF NGOs

1000 PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED REGIONAL AND NATIONAL NGO ACTIVITIES

1200 CONCLUDING REMARKS BY CHAIRPERSON

1230 CLOSURE OF INTERCONTINENTAL NGO FORUM

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ANNEX 2

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS THE INTERCONTINENTAL FORUM NGOs - WATER - ENVIRONMENT: STRATEGIES FOR THE FUTURE

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ANNEX 3

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF REPORTS OF H₂O SEMINARS AND OTHER SUBMISSIONS PREPARED FOR THE INTERCONTINENTAL FORUM AVAILABLE THROUGH ISW

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ANNEX 4

REPORT OF WORKING GROUP 1

COLLABORATION WITH GOVERNMENTS, EXTERNAL FUNDING SOURCES, LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR

The task at hand for working group 1 was to discuss the relationship between local NGOs with the existing national power structure. We believe it of greater importance that strategies be defined for NGOs (what makes us distinct from the other actors; clarification of the basic elements of a framework that would define how we would establish a relationship with them) rather than concentrating on defining and implementing proposed activities. In this regard, we identified four strategies:

1. Maintain a language/framework/specific rationale, starting at the field level, quite distinct from the public and private sectors, which would include:
 - redefining the debate about the role of the public/private/NGO sectors without repeating the same arguments. National policies are to be based on the realities and the actions from the field level, and NGOs must be able to influence government policies and activities
 - NGOs must refuse the transfer of administrative responsibilities from government for community development activities
 - NGOs must not become overly structured nor caught up in the bureaucratic activities that characterize government
 - 'financial sustainability' should not be accepted as the sole criterion upon which to base the intention to make NGOs more effective and professional
 - a long term perspective of development and the role of NGOs has to be incorporated into any agreement among the various actors
 - NGOs must demonstrate that they are capable of doing more important activities with less resources - this is their central comparative advantage over government and donor agencies
 - NGOs must ensure that their intention to serve the greatest number of people possible is maintained as a central element of development strategies
 - NGO autonomy must be maintained. NGO programs and activities cannot be defined in terms of the priorities of government and donor agencies, but rather by the needs of people.
2. Convince the multilateral and bilateral agencies to modify their funding strategies such that they provide direct funding to local NGOs:
 - this could be the basis for the establishment of a World Bank for NGOs, distinct from the existing model wherein governments and NGOs negotiate for funds from the same agencies.
 - private sector resources are an important element to be tapped.
3. Diversity is strength: the NGO community is not a homogeneous entity. Rather, the specificity of each continent, country and region should be recognized.
4. NGO/NGO linkages are extremely important and should be strengthened:
 - the linkages between northern and southern NGOs must be maintained and reinforced, but the relationship must be changed so that southern NGOs are not simply the means through which northern NGOs carry out development activities planned without the collaboration of local populations
 - a main task of the northern NGOs is to facilitate the attainment of strategy (1) above
 - what works for one NGO may not work in another context - models and activities undertaken in one instance should not be transferred (adopted). Policies, activities etc. have to be defined within the local socio-political, economic and environmental context.