

# SUMMARY

**T**here was hardly any need for government when human population was low. The division of function between ruler and subjects occurred only, if at all, within the family. The largest social groups, whether tribes or villages, were little more than loose organizations of families from which every elder or family head had an equal voice. Chieftains, if there were, had strictly limited powers.

The rise of agriculture began to change this state of affairs. In Iraq, the invention of irrigation ushered grander arrangements. Control of the flow of water down the Tigris and Euphrates rivers had to be coordinated by a central body, so as to provide water to all fields. As these skills evolved, society also evolved.

Unfortunately, the young cities of Iraq later quarrelled over the distribution of the rivers' water, and their wealth excited the greed of nomads outside the still comparatively small area of civilization. War came, and military leadership became an important element of kingship as divine sanction. It was to remain so throughout the long history of monarchy: whenever kings neglected their military duties, they endangered their thrones.

## **The Rise of Civilization**

Military crises — civil war or barbarian invasion or both — called for the strengthening of government. The effort to secure a measure of peace and prosperity legitimized asserting authority over vast distances, the raising of large armies, and the gathering of taxes to pay for them. These requirements in turn fostered literacy and numeracy and the emergence of what later came to be called bureaucracy, government.

Bureaucratic imperialism emerged and expanded with civilization.

Yet, diverse governmental practices evolved with time as civilizations worked at defining different parts of the territory. In the Orient, a general liberal attitude toward human creativity existed, giving rise to great cultures despite the existence of despotism.

Oriental despotism lasted as long as the economies of Asia rested on manual labor and handicrafts; it became obsolete when the introduction of modern industry brought a need for more elaborate governmental organization.

As states grew and human technologies developed, the functions of governments became more complex and extensive. Under absolute monarchies, which represented the dominant form of government in Europe from 16th to 18th century, the task of coordinating the administration of royal decrees was carried out by a growing class. (This class transformed into the bureaucracy that is central to the "orderly" functioning of modern governments.) Thus, national government took a definitive centrality.

### The Rise of Independence

Many centuries later, colonialism began to shed off its grandeur.

After World War II (WWII), anticolonialism became a potent political force. The great colonial powers found it increasingly difficult to hold on to their overseas territories. The end of the colonial era began when Britain granted independence to India in 1947. France later relinquished its hold on Indo-China, and the Dutch were forced out by the

Indonesians.

As colonialism declined, the number of independent nations grew simultaneous with internationalism. People of the South anchored their model of national development on the government institutions of modern States. There was a prevalent belief that the bureaucracy was an ally of the poor and the weak. The people saw the State as a way out of poverty, an instrument for liberation and social change. New alliances appeared in their place to address various problems on a wide basis.

### The wielders of powers

The first major organization of the states of the world was the League of Nations. It was dedicated to the preservation of peace, international cooperation, and improvement in human welfare. But the League's lack of political success tended to overshadow its welfare and humanitarian achievements. Thus, in 1946, its assets were turned over to the United Nations (UN).

In 1944, the allied nations led by the United States (US) and Britain created the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as a response to the devastation caused by WWII. The WB's thrust was to provide assistance to its member-governments in rebuilding their war-devastated economies. The IMF, on the other hand, was charged with the responsibility of fostering stability and security in the global monetary system. The WB and the IMF were mandated to be the primary global ministers of post-war reconstruction and development.

The WB agencies, together with some regional development banks (e.g., Asian Development Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, African Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development), comprised the multilateral development bank (MDB) system.

As trade among countries expanded, the production of goods became increasingly specialized — components and raw materials from one country were shipped overseas for assembly and processing, then returned to their country of origin, or re-exported elsewhere. This led to the creation of international institutions, promoting trade among countries. Such a vision came to life with the birth of the International Trade Organization (ITO) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

In 1980, the WB adopted "structural adjustment lending" or SALs, which accounted for about 25 percent of WB lending operations. Though structural adjustment programs (SAPs) introduced by the IMF and the WB differ slightly from country to country, these typically involve three types of broad policies:

- ↻ Expenditure-reducing policies, or those aimed at removing the country's external and internal deficits by reducing domestic spending (e.g., wage control, reduction in government spending, decreasing amount of credit accessible to public);
- ↻ Expenditure-switching policies focused at changing the basic structure of the economy by shifting the country's economic resources from "non-tradeable goods and services" (e.g., subsistence crops, public services like health and education); and,
- ↻ Institutional policy reforms which are generally outward-oriented and aimed at achieving efficiency (e.g., trade liberalization, privatization, fiscal reform).

With the end of the Cold War, MDBs grew to become perhaps the most potent inter-governmental institutions influencing Third World development, putting greater intervention over governance processes of low-income borrower countries. MDBs have shaped the directions of public spending and borrowing, which often require developing member countries (DMCs) to modify their domestic policies and priorities.

But as national governments incurred astronomical debts to international financial institutions, the intermediation of the IMF and WB in the affairs of the state became more prominent. Hence, substantial amounts of the national budget, for example, were allocated for debt repayments to the North, leaving Third World Countries with less resources to manage their national development. Worse, foreigners' intrusion in the economy and national priorities of Third World Countries, through economic privatization and global market integration, further weakened the people's control over their resources and fate.

Through the SAPs, IMF and WB were able to remold a country's national economy and administrative processes to conform to their economic and political ideology. The national interest came to be equated with the interests of the state and its ruling forces.

In effect, national governments -- in allegiance to the conditionalities of these institutions -- have helped isolate communities by increasing state power but at the same time decreasing people's participation. This phenomenon has led to increasing poverty among the rural populace, further erosion of the natural resource base, greater food insecurity and the loss of indigenous culture and identity. Women are especially affected in their traditional capacities as food producers, health care givers, home managers and community organizers. Moreso, this widened the gap between the rich and the poor, preserving the dualistic economy and practices of their colonial masters.

The failures of national programs due to the mismatch of western-based economic prescriptions with the lifestyle of Asian societies made

the vision of Third World countries graduating to a fully-developed nation more difficult to achieve.

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## The People Speak

The rise of people's movements and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is a clear indicator that institutions give powers to promote the common welfare. It also shows the limited capacity of the civil bureaucracy to respond to social issues and to provide basic services.

A long history of nationalist and social movements, agrarian struggles and religious influence played key roles in shaping the NGO sectors in India, Indonesia, Philippines and Sri Lanka. In India, Nepal and Thailand, indigenous self-help village societies emerged in the context of the relative isolation of villages and the absence of the colonial power. But it was the entry of foreign-based NGOs that influenced heavily the development sectors in Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan. The Bangladesh NGO sector grew particularly strong in the 1970s, due to massive relief and rehabilitation efforts and resources poured in by the international community following the war for independence in 1971.

The 1980s may well be called the decade of NGOs as the sector became a significant factor in national development. NGOs have displayed their capacity to reach communities through informal, flexible, innovative and cost effective approaches. NGOs have shown action-oriented results, new concepts that would find socio-political space at macro and micro level.

Based on the country reports and supplemented by a strategy paper written by Antonio B. Quizon last November 1994, it is noted that in several Asian countries, NGOs have been able to make significant and visible contributions to national development in varying degrees and magnitude, by: (a) shaping public policy; (b) providing experiments that have successfully been adopted at national programs; or (c) directly implementing programs at a significant national scale. Table 1 identifies these key NGO impact areas, which emphasize and build upon people's participation:

On a larger context, it has become paramount among NGOs to introduce institutional and policy reforms within the MFIs given the amount of influence they wield. Some NGOs directly challenge the issues surrounding MFIs' growth-oriented paradigm.

For example in 1988, the Asian NGO Coalition

Table 1: Significant NGO Impact Areas in Nine Countries

Country	Significant NGO Impact Areas
<i>Bangladesh</i>	Health and family planning Institution of primary health care approach Passage of the generic drugs law Credit and livelihood-generation Alternative systems for collective marketing Introduction of new agricultural systems Implementation of massive afforestation programs Setting up of nursery systems
<i>India</i>	Agrarian reform and resource rights Productivity and distribution of <i>bhoodan</i> and <i>gramdan</i> lands Credit and livelihood-generation Facilitation of poor's involvement in collective economic activities Human rights, peace work Cultural rights and social integration Formal and non-formal educational programmes Women's rights and issues Constituency and movement-building
<i>Indonesia</i>	Environmental protection Recognition of NGO roles in the National Basic Law for the Protection of the Environment Human rights issues

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Table 1 (continued)

<i>Country</i>	<i>Significant NGO Impact Areas</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Significant NGO Impact Areas</i>
<i>Malaysia</i>	Consumer awareness and protection Environmental protection Public awareness and constituency-building	<i>Philippines (con't.)</i>	National coalition-building among fisherfolk organizations Environment: Public awareness and constituency-building
<i>Nepal</i>	Environment: Community Forestry Community and rural development activities Non-formal education Health	<i>Sri Lanka</i>	Provision of credit to poor, particularly on women Setting-up of Cooperatives Pre-school education in grassroots communities Health: Developing village-based preventive health care system Environment: Public awareness and constituency-building, Tree Planting Activities
<i>Pakistan</i>	Income generation: savings and credit Environmental protection, training on natural resource management Community Organizing: establishment of family planning centers, health care	<i>Thailand</i>	Environment: Public awareness and constituency-building Community organizing: rural and urban community development, children and youth development Health: community health promotion Human Rights Communications: media for development, technical support services and information dissemination
<i>Philippines</i>	Agrarian Reform (AR) National coalition-building among peasant organizations Passage of Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law Tripartite field implementation of AR Agriculture/Forestry/Fisheries Introduction of farming systems Banning of certain agri-chemicals		

(ANGOC) and the Environmental Policy Institute (now Friends of the Earth-US) first entered into a partnership to address MDB-related issues, but with more focus on the Asian Development Bank (ADB). As the campaign gained momentum, the effort included not only arresting badly-designed, destructive projects but also engaging the Bank in more constructive dialogue on policy reforms and on development models which incorporate greater transparency and public accountability. (Please refer to related section on the Asian Development Bank Campaign).

An alternative course of action is the implementation of large-scale service programs to reach wider areas and beneficiaries. NGOs helped develop self-reliant communities which replicate and expand practices that increase the quality of life of the poor. One experience the successful oral rehydration training program of the

Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) which benefitted 90 percent of the poor households in Bangladesh.

Also, people from the voluntary sector started to enter institutions to effect changes from within. A number of NGO leaders are occupying high positions in government to bring in the agenda of the poor and disadvantaged. NGO leaders in the Philippines are occupying key cabinet positions in government, such as the Health and Agrarian Reform Departments.

### Needed policy reforms for effective people's participation

Although NGOs and the voluntary sector have made modest gains in development, a lot more work can be done to build people's participation if the prevailing legal and policy environments are favorable to them.

Participation cannot be catalyzed under an authoritarian framework of government. Even under democratic societies, public policies formulated with minimal or no popular consultation are less likely to achieve successful results than those that institutionalize adequate venues and mechanisms for people's participation.

Most Asian governments have official policy pronouncements which recognize the role of NGOs and the voluntary sector. But in many instances, actual government practices contradict with official declaration and commitments on popular participation and people empowerment. Legal restrictions are imposed on the official registration of societal groups and NGOs. Stringent controls are placed on funding, particularly those sourced from foreign donors. Restrictions on travel, both within and outside the country, close monitoring and at times prohibition of certain NGO activities — all these serve to hamper the evolution of real people's participation.

Similarly, MFIs exert increasing influence over society, to the point of reducing people's countervailing power to control them. There is too much planning from the center, tending to assist mainly the urban areas. Hence, the outer regions, normally the rural areas, surrounding the capital receive less support and

resources. Faceless professional bureaucrats run public institutions. The depersonalized nature of public administration shields officials from the consequences of their actions.

Concretely, the participants in the Fourth Asian Development Forum were one in calling for reforms within multilateral institutions like the WB and the ADB, citing perennial problems in project financing. Among them:

- ↗ People in the beneficiary and affected areas are not included in the planning stage of the project. Hence, alternatives to the proposed project are not considered. The experience of people who know the area best is superseded by the often dubious expertise of technical advisers and consultants.
- ↗ The Bank approaches a project with a "no retreat, no surrender" credo. Hence, even if it commissions studies and impact assessments, the findings do not influence its decision to go ahead with the project. Indeed, the studies are commissioned largely to lend credibility to its funding decisions. When risks are identified, the Bank writes them off by enumerating the projected benefits, and is thus able to report zero risk.
- ↗ The Bank would occasionally admit to committing mistakes. But it would just as easily justify another project formulated according to the same flawed appraisal techniques. People calling attention to this fact are dismissed as "unscientific, rigid, closed, anti-change".
- ↗ In its cost-benefit analyses, the Bank uses data gathered not from the people but from borrower governments. Results of studies are distorted to overestimate the benefits and underestimate the costs.

In many Asian countries, NGO action is still effectively curtailed by an inhospitable policy environment. By and large, actual government practices contradict with official declaration and commitments on popular participation and people empowerment. Meanwhile, in countries where voluntary action is tolerated, or even encouraged, NGOs often risk being co-opted by government and rendered ineffective. Based on Quizon's strategy paper and country presentations during the Fourth Asian Development Forum, the legal framework for NGO activities varies widely among Asian countries. A comparative study is presented in Table 2:

**Table 2: Laws and Regulations on NGOs in Selected Asian Countries**

<i>Country</i>	<i>Salient Features of Existing Laws and Regulations on NGOs</i>
<i>Bangladesh</i>	<p>1961: The Voluntary Social Agencies Ordinance specifying that all voluntary agencies must register and be approved by the Registration Authority; this body also has the powers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) approve the constitution of agencies, and all amendments thereof</li> <li>b) inspect all books of accounts and other records of agency</li> <li>c) suspend or dissolve the agency for failure to comply with the ordinance</li> </ul> <p>1978: Foreign Donations Regulation requires NGOs to report any foreign aid received and obtain prior approval of foreign-funded activity</p> <p>1982: Ordinance No. XXXI prohibits any citizen or NGO from receiving any foreign aid without prior permission; also, donors must obtain prior government approval for any foreign contributions to any citizen or NGO</p> <p>1983: Nira-III of the Security Branch of the Ministry of Home Affairs sets the procedure governing foreign donations</p>
<i>India</i>	<p>Five-Year Plan recognizes role of voluntary organizations</p> <p>1984: Foreign Contributions Regulation Act requires NGOs which receive foreign aid to register with the Ministry of Home Affairs</p>
<i>Indonesia</i>	<p>Law No. 2-1982 recognizes the roles of NGOs in addressing environmental and development problems</p> <p>Law No. 8-1985 on Social Organization stipulates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) State ideology of Pancasila be the guiding principle of all social organizations</li> <li>b) Obligatory registration of social organizations</li> <li>c) Social organizations must report and receive approval of foreign aid</li> <li>d) An umbrella organization be set-up to coordinate the activities of social organizations</li> <li>e) Social organizations operating at village level coordinate the activities with the LKMD</li> <li>f) Government can suspend and dissolve social organizations</li> </ul>
<i>Malaysia</i>	<p>Societies Act of 1966 specifies that all social organizations must register and be approved by the Registrar of Societies</p> <p>1983: Amendments to the Societies Act stipulates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) social organizations must report all foreign financial and organizational assistance to Registrar</li> <li>b) Registrar is authorized to: forbid foreign contract; conduct searches of social organizations without a warrant; remove members from social organization's Board of Directors dissolve social organizations</li> </ul>

Table 2: (continued)

Country	<i>Salient Features of Existing Laws and Regulations on NGOs</i>
<i>Nepal</i>	<p>1992-97: Eight Five-Year Plan recognizes NGO role and to help increase NGO effectiveness, stipulates that government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) define specific areas/sectors where NGOs have comparative advantage</li> <li>b) simplify rules and regulations for NGO registration and organization</li> <li>c) modify tax laws</li> </ul> <p>1993: Amended Social Welfare Act changes the (former) Social Services National Coordination Council (SSNCC) into the Social Welfare Council (SWC) and stipulates that NGO membership in SWC is now discretionary</p>
<i>Pakistan</i>	<p>1961: similar to The Voluntary Social Agencies Ordinance of Bangladesh</p> <p>1962: Rules issued on the Voluntary Social Agencies Ordinance stipulates specific requirements and procedures covering registration, maintenance of accounts and registers, change of address, etc. of the agency</p> <p>1987: Memo No. 150 of the Economic Affairs Division creates a Standing Committee to review all proposals for funding of NGOs from foreign assistance funds</p>
<i>Philippines</i>	<p>1987: Sec 23, Article II of the Philippine Constitution states that "the State shall encourage NGOs, community-based or sectoral organizations"; while Art XIII on the Roles and Rights of People's Organizations (POs) stipulates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) "the State shall respect the role of independent POs"</li> <li>b) "the right of the people and their organizations to effective and reasonable participation at all levels... shall not be abridged"</li> <li>c) "the State shall, by law, facilitate the establishment of adequate consultation mechanisms"</li> </ul> <p>1989: NEDA Board Resolution No. 2 provides guidelines for GO/NGO Collaboration, which includes accreditation for program participation, availment of tax exemption, funding support and incentives to NGOs, and provision of mechanisms for GO/NGO Collaboration</p> <p>Article III, Chapter IV of the Local Government Code spells out the following policies for NGOs and POs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) "local government units shall promote the establishment and operations of POs and NGOs to become active partners in the pursuit of local autonomy"</li> <li>b) "local government units may enter into joint ventures and other cooperative arrangements with POs and NGOs to engage in the delivery of certain basic services, ... and enhance the economic and social well-being of the people"</li> </ul>



Table 2: (continued)

Country	Salient Features of Existing Laws and Regulations on NGOs
Sri Lanka	Voluntary registration for groups seeking legal status, i.e., CAP 105, Trust Act with Public Trustee, Company Act No. 17/1982, Voluntary Social Service Service Organizations Act of 1981
Thailand	There are two different legal aspects concerning NGOs. The law refers to non-profit organizations either as foundation or associations; applications for registration stipulate that both must not be involved with politics.  To have a legal identity and status, foundations are required to register; they are not automatically given tax exempt status.

In the experience of Asian NGOs, there are three types of over-all policy environment for NGOs which determine the context for GO-NGO relations, to wit:

- ↗ *Highly Restrictive:* Existing laws & regulations tend to censor NGO actions, and require prior Government permission by NGOs for certain "normal" activities, such as organizing meetings or receiving foreign grants. There is a lack of guarantees of freedom of expression, assembly against arbitrary arrest, and detention.
- ↗ *Regulative:* Laws and regulations on basic freedoms are present, and sets broad parameters for NGO activities.

- ↗ *Supportive:* Fundamental laws not only recognize basic freedoms, but actively promote government collaboration with NGOs and the voluntary sector.

The table below summarizes the over-all policy environment for NGOs and the scope of NGO development activities in nine Asian countries.

Table 3: The Policy Environment for NGOs in Selected Asian Countries

COUNTRY ENVIRONMENT FOR NGOs	OVERALL POLICY	SCOPE/STRENGTH OF INDIGENOUS NGO DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES
Bangladesh	Highly Restrictive	Broad
India	Regulative	Broad
Indonesia	Highly Restrictive	Moderate
Malaysia	Highly Restrictive	Limited
Nepal	Regulative (in transitions)	Broad
Pakistan	Highly Restrictive	Limited
Philippines	Supportive	Broad
Sri Lanka	Regulative	Moderate
Thailand	Regulative	Limited

## Learnings and Insights

1. The NGOs' strength lies in establishing credibility and acceptance by the community. NGOs identify themselves with the poor people. Working from below with zeal and enthusiasm, their basic task is to empower the people by making them aware of their potentials, rights and obligations as members of a free, independent and democratic society.

2. In the absence of a strong power base in the rural areas, the rural elite class has come forward as a ready-made agent of the government. In return, it has appropriated for themselves the benefits of government-designed development projects, thereby denying the rural poor of their share.

3. Trade has played a key role in fueling growth in a number of Asian countries. Yet, there are increasing cautionary notes about over-reliance on trade to act as engine of growth. Although the WB has changed its approach considerably over the last decade, the **thinking** of the Bank still remains the same. It assumes that the poor cannot provide the growth-push. If the poor are positioned outside the growth endeavor, it follows that they will be denied of its fruits.

4. After years of advocating for decentralization and self-governance, the NGO sector has of late realized that some degree of state intervention in the economy is essential to protect communities from unregulated market activity. With the implementation of GATT, and the unrestricted flows of capital which are expected to accompany it, the government's role as buffer will become more crucial.

However, it is not the NGOs' intention to give the state control of

the market. Nor are they advocating socialism. What they envision is for the State to take on a more activist role in the economy, whereby communities (or civil society) in alliance with the state will regulate the economy through a democratic and rational decision-making process.

5. Legislation alone cannot bring about social reform. Voluntary agencies will have to target two levels: a) firstly, to try and ensure that "genuine" candidates stand for elections; and, b) once elected, to monitor their participation. On this light, the Philippine and Indian participants share concrete experiences in the promotion of NGO participation in local government structures.

However, the participants also realized that though there is a need for electoral politics, NGOs have a political role to play outside it. The danger in participating in electoral politics is that it creates in people's minds the illusion that there is no alternative to running a polity outside the electoral process.

6. Moreover, NGOs may find themselves unprepared when this much-vaunted political space does open up for them. There is the added danger too that NGOs will be caught up in the "transitional" mindset that often comes with holding public office.

7. While working with the elected representatives is important, it is much more critical to work at the community level to bring about an awareness of the concept of free and honest elections. NGOs should empower the people to be vigilant on their representatives. There is an area for example, where the Bangladeshi NGOs can closely link with other Asian NGOs to learn more on strengthening POs — an area where Bangladeshi NGOs need more information and support.

8. The only way to counter-balance actions of government officials is through democratic institutions, including an independent judicial system and an investigative and free press.

9. Networking among NGOs is absolutely necessary so that they can share experiences and benefit from the successful strategies adopted by other NGOs. Likewise, networking enhances NGOs' advocacy role with governments and international institutions. For instance, the Nepalese NGOs intimate that they have learned important lessons on advocacy strategies from NGOs in India and Philippines. Moreover, they were able to get a direct linkage with Ms. Medha Patkar of

the Save the Narmada Dam Movement. This linkage will strengthen their efforts with the Nepali government in advocating for the review of the construction of the Arun Dam.

- ↪ Of particular importance to NGOs is a need for continuous dialogue with government with a view to evolve policies and procedures that satisfy both NGOs and the government.
- ↪ With regard to GO-NGO partnership, the following actions are needed: a) develop mutual trust and respect between GOs and NGOs; b) guarantee independence and autonomy of NGOs; c) define the respective roles of GOs and NGOs in development work; d) establish institutional framework for effective GO-NGO collaboration; e) set-up criteria for accreditation and representations of social development NGOs; and, f) extend funding support and incentives to NGOs and POs.

### Action plans

At the end of the five-day Forum, the participants agreed on the following Plan of Action:

#### I. Information Sharing

This involves the active and timely exchange of information among NGOs on the current developments at the regional and national levels. For instance, one particular issue that needs to be constantly updated is the legal and policy environment for NGOs.

Specifically, the following action agenda shall be pursued at various levels:

- ↪ Examine existing publications managed by NGOs as possible channels of information. The publications will be developed into a "development magazine" and will be sustained by subscriptions.
- ↪ Use and maximize all available communications resources (e.g., mass, print, electronic media) to supplement existing newsletters and magazines of the NGOs. Also, NGOs can take advantage of the interest of the local press by beefing-up linkages with the local community media. National focal groups shall focus on national papers or journals. At least once a month, the focal point organizations will take care of feeding the local and national press with updates on Asian development activities and information, to easily reach people.

Audio-visual materials could also be maximized for information sharing or influencing sympathetic film-makers to highlight the region's development causes.

- ↪ Publish a "Tool Kit," or a primer on information on such institutions as the WB, IMF, WTO, etc., and the issues associated with these. This is one way of making the issue popular and demystified to NGOs, and more important, to the communities.
- ↪ Develop a mechanism, if not a newsletter, through which information from focal NGOs can be disseminated to NGOs and other tactical alliances. ANGO can serve as a clearinghouse for this purpose. The ANGO Secretariat shall compile all electronic mail addresses and facsimile numbers.
- ↪ Formulate a common format for documentation of project experiences to identify strengths and weaknesses that address the following issues: relevance, community participation, sustainability, cost effectiveness, and impact. Once documented, these experiences on NGO-GO collaboration can be disseminated to other groups doing similar studies.

#### II. Solidarity Building

This area refers to supporting proactively grassroots struggles in transforming institutions. In a sense, solidarity building is also linked with information sharing, on how we express our sense of oneness on certain concrete issues.

⇒ Devise a system through which NGOs can respond quickly to issues which involve fellow NGOs.

NGOs could express solidarity simply through letter barrages to the respective heads of state of the country besieged by the issues. For instance, at the time Patkar, a leader of the movement opposing the Sardar Sarovar dam in the Narmada valley, was fasting to signify her continuing protest, NGOs could have sent letters to the Indian prime minister or sent postcards to Patkar herself to show their solidarity.

The focal point should be alert on informing other countries about these issues to initiate such influence.

⇒ Draw up a hit list of issues to tackle so as not to spread resources and efforts too thinly. This hit list should be updated constantly and by the focal organizations. NGOs in the area of these priority issues should monitor any developments and inform other agencies at once. Each country should likewise draft and update their respective list of issues.

On the other hand, NGOs should not only be reacting to certain actions of institutions but also be promoting NGOs positive efforts in empowering communities.

As for this Forum, Table 4 below lists the issues raised, together with the corresponding focal NGOs assigned to provide information on them.

Groups involved in cases of ADB projects should inform ANGO of the situation and how the latter can assist in the local campaign.

### III. Capability Building and Institution Building

This action point looks into the development of the organizational capacities of NGOs and the communities to engage in policy advocacy with institutions. Similar efforts and resources should be given to individual NGO and particularly community leaders who work directly on the issues.

Given a multiplicity of existing training institutes in each country, a further possibility for enhancement is setting-up an exchange program or a region-wide training. Among them are:

⇒ NGOs are welcome to seek help from the People's Management School, which specializes in management for people at the grassroots level. The idea is to look systematically for management concepts that would enable people at the communities to effectively interface with the environment and take responsibility for their development. For more details, contact Mr. Ahjay Mehta of Seva Mandir.

⇒ The Technical Cooperation in Developing Countries (TCDC) in Indonesia can link up with other institutions within the region specializing in institution building. Interested parties can channel their inquiries to Mr. Emmanuel Haryadi of Bina Swadaya.

Table 4: Focal Points on Issues Raised

Issue	Focal Organization
Narmada Dam in India	Association of Voluntary Agencies in Rural Development (AVARD)
Arun Dam in Nepal	Rural Reconstruction of Nepal (RRN) and NGO Federation of Nepal (NFN)
Toxic Fertilizer in Bangladesh	Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD)
Aquaculture/shrimp culture in India and Bangladesh	Gandhi Peace Foundation (GPF) and other NGOs representing countries where such projects are being set up
Environment and forest conservation	Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia (WALHI) and NGO Coordinating Committee on Development in Thailand (NGO-COD)
Local governance and decentralization	AVARD in India and Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (PhilDHRA)

↗ NGOs seeking to participate in the campaign for reforms in multilateral development banks such as the ADB are welcome to join a month-long ADB Campaign Internship being sponsored by ANGOC. Interns will be trained and participate in the ongoing ADB campaign.

↗ There is an ongoing 6-month training for rural development workers and welcomes applicants for this annual training. Aspiring trainees can send their formal requests to Fr. Antonio Ledesma, SJ of the South East Asia Rural Social Leadership Institute (SEARSOLIN). □

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*“There is need for electoral politics, but NGOs [also] have a political role ...outside it.”*

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