The United Nations has a long history of operating with non-governmental organizations. Antti Pentikäinen gives in this book an overview of this relationship from the founding of United Nations to our time. The book also tries to reveal the future of non-governmental organizations in the United Nations.


The book serves the process in which non-governmental organizations find a stronger role in supporting the United Nations’ reform. It also aims to increase the role of non-governmental organizations in the future form of global governance.

The key finding in this book is that non-governmental organizations, united in networks, are currently becoming even more powerful than individual nation states in global politics. Despite all the problems, a new source and user of power has occurred in the world politics.

* * *

The study in this book has been ordered by the United Nations Association of Finland and financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland. The policy of UNA-Finland has been to contribute to the process with concrete proposals especially on increasing the role of non-governmental organizations in the United Nations Millennium Meetings to carry on proposals in this field.
Creating Global Governance

The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations in the United Nations

UNA-Finland
September 2000
Antti Pentikäinen
## Disposition

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1. Introduction

1.1. The United Nations and the Current Challenges of Global Governance

The founding of United Nations has to be examined against the reality of the Second World War. It was founded in 1945 to prevent the reoccurrence of such wars. Already the League of Nations had this task. When it had failed in this task there was a strong need for a new organization. United Nations could celebrate its 50th anniversary in 1995 with the knowledge that there had not been any major wars during these 50 years. But still the world was far from being a peaceful place. Also the United Nations could have been criticized for failing to prevent many of the wars and humanitarian catastrophes that had occurred during its existence.

Towards the end of the Millennium the recent changes in global economical and political life have been bringing new challenges and pressure to the need of reforming the United Nations. The process of globalization is changing the world to a more interdependent system.

“Toward the end of the second millennium of the Christian Era several events of historical significance have transformed the social landscape of human life. A technological revolution, centered around information technologies, is reshaping, at accelerated pace, the material basis of society. Economies throughout the world have become globally interdependent, introducing a new form of relationship between economy, state, and society, in a system of variable geometry.”

This interdependence has brought totally new challenges to the share and use of power in international organizations and networks of states. These challenges will be, with assistance of sociologist Manuel Castells, specified in more detail in later parts of this study. In any case, this interdependence has brought the United Nations to the center of the question of how states will govern their economy, political systems, and people in the time of globalization.

We have witnessed recently a tendency to develop further the structures where states share power in global level. Even though we have the G8 (group of 7 economical major powers and Russia), the World Trade Organization (WTO), World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), in addition to the United Nations (UN) the form of the global governance remains still unsolved. At the same time several citizens groups have become active at influencing the process of globalization, and often to the opposite direction than states. This was clearly visible for example in Seattle during the meeting of World Trade Organization (WTO) on 28.11.–3.12.1999 when non-governmental organizations almost prevented the meeting from taking place.

The United Nations, which has often been sidelined in the recent creations of global governance, will have its own Millennium Meetings in the year 2000 to face the current challenges of the organization and globalization.

Besides the global challenges the United Nations (UN) has also some of its own problems to solve. During the existence of UN the world has faced several catastrophes where the UN has failed to meet the needs of people. Recently such cases have been, for example, the massacres and ethnic cleansing in Rwanda and Kosovo. Major reasons for the failures in these catastrophes have been not only the will or lack of will of UN member countries but also the UN system itself, which prevents the organization from working effectively in such situations. At the same time, the UN has also failed to bring to the agenda the ethnic cleansing of Kurds in Turkey, and it was unable to stop similar activities in East Timor before and after the referendum on independence during the fall of 1999.

Secretary General Kofi Annan has announced that the ultimate goal of the meetings in the year 2000 is to discuss and bring forward the UN reform. The Secretary General has drafted a report "We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century" to facilitate the upcoming discussions.

“Ultimately, then the United Nations exists for, and must serve, the needs and hopes of people everywhere. For its first 45 years, the United Nations lived in the grip of cold war, prevented from fulfilling some of its core missions but discovering other critical tasks in the conflict’s shadow. For 10 years now, the United Nations has been buffeted by the tumultuous changes of the new era, doing good work in many instances but falling short in others.

Inspired by this, the United Nations Millennium Meetings are Millennium Forum (May 21.-26.) organized for non-governmental organizations, Millennium Assembly (from September on) as General Assembly and Millennium Summit (September 4.-7.) for world leaders.


Secretary Generals (SG) report UN in the 21st Century was published in 27.3.2000 in New York 2000.
Now, the Millennium Summit offers the world’s leaders an unparalleled opportunity to reshape the United Nations well into the twenty-first century, enabling it to make a real and measurable difference to people’s lives.

The report gives a general overview of the change in the world order as a basis of work of the UN. The challenges of today and globalization are different from those of 1945 and from the circumstances in which UN was founded. The report includes a section “Renewing the United Nations”.

The upcoming Millennium Assembly and Summit are the first meetings since the creation of the UN to discuss openly the future and reforming of the UN.

Despite the need of reforming the UN there are no big expectations concerning the upcoming meetings. The UN member countries share a sense of skepticism rather than enthusiasm. Most likely the UN reform will not be brought significantly forward during the Millennium Meetings due to the lack of will of UN member countries.

Finland will become the chair country of the Millennium Assembly and Summit. Nor does the Finnish leadership have high expectations towards the Millennium Assembly and Summit. The role of the chair country will still be essential if something is to be decided upon and done.

It is widely agreed that the United Nations must sooner or later face the needs of globalization and must change to remain as a key element in the future global governance. While the UN reform is lacking active and wide support from its member countries, many, like UN Secretary General Kofi Annan at WTO Seattle meeting, have started to look to the citizens’ groups and civil society to find new avenues to empower the change.

On the other side of the barricade in Seattle was Martin Khor, Director of the Third World Network, one of the ideological leaders of the anti-globalization movement, and thus also Seattle demonstrations. A few months later, Khor spoke at the Millennium Forum, organized for non-governmental organizations (NGO) at the UN, surprisingly formulating a positive approach for the anti-globalization movement towards reforming the UN, to make it a key element of global governance and setting out thus a new agenda for NGOs.

“The major countries refuse to democratize at the international level, where the global decisions are taken mainly by the G8 or the OECD or the Bretton Woods institutions and WTO, without the adequate participation of smaller nations, let alone the civil society.

One of our central issues at the (Millennium) Forum is how to revitalize the influence of the UN. In truth, as we all know, the UN has been disempowered not because it is inefficient or useless but because it is too transparent and too democratic, and its decisions are taken with the participation of all countries. ... The major powers decided in the early 1990s to reform and reshape the UN, and transferred its authority on economic and social issues over to the IMF, World Bank and WTO, institutions, which they control. ... Thus, we need democratization of global institutions, and to inject people’s rights into them. For that to happen, the big powers have to agree to loosen their grip on international institutions and relations. They will do this only when the people’s movements and civil society let it be known that this is their wish. We need the UN to have more power. Yes the UN should also reform, especially in the decision-making structure and system of the Security Council. It should be more efficient and effective to serve “we the peoples.” ... Yes the World Bank, IMF and WTO may have important roles to play, but these roles must be the appropriate ones promoting the right policies, and their current oversized roles have to shrink to appropriate sizes and functions. There must be a return transfer of power and authority from these institutions (and from rich-country exclusive mechanisms like the G8 and the OECD) to the UN. We invite the UN and the governments to join us. But with the UN or without it, we the people will have to do it, to carry out our mission of bringing about a better world.”

Martin Khor is one of the key persons formulating the policy within non-governmental organizations active in global issues. Actually, a widening group of states, individuals, and non-governmental organizations have

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7 Mr. Harri Holkeri of Finland was appointed to be a candidate to chair the Millennium Assembly and Summit. The role of the chair country will still be essential if something is to be decided upon and done.

8 The Author of this study has had discussions concerning the topic during May of 2000 e.g. with President Martti Ahtisaari, upcoming President of UN GA Harri Holkeri, Ambassador Marjatta Rasi and several civil servants of Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs located in Helsinki and in New York.

9 United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan had a speech at the WTO meeting in Seattle in December 1999.

10 Martin Khor (Director of the Third World Network) 2000.
continued to debate the new possibilities of strengthening the role of the United Nations in global governance as a whole and to develop further the democratic bodies of the UN.

My hope is that this study could serve the process in which non-governmental organizations find a stronger role in supporting the United Nations’ reform and on increasing the role of non-governmental organizations in the future form of global governance.

1.2. Background, Relevance and Material of the Study

The main focus of this study will be in the United Nations. The study has been ordered by the United Nations Association (UNA) of Finland and financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland. UNA-Finland has recently increased its role in the global NGO community. The policy of UNA-Finland has been to contribute to the process with concrete proposals especially on increasing the role of non-governmental organizations in the United Nations. This study aims to support this policy. The year 2000 will already provide first options at the United Nations Millennium Meetings to carry on proposals in this field.

In the debate of United Nations reform one element is the future role of non-State actors. The role of non-State actors has become an essential dimension of public life in all parts of the world. The growing influence and role of non-State actors and especially non-governmental organizations has been visible also in the work of the United Nations. Former UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali stated in 1996:

“The United Nations was considered to be an forum for sovereign states alone. Within the space of a few short years, however, this attitude has changed. Non-governmental organizations are now considered full participants in international life.”

The United Nations has a long history of operating with non-governmental organizations. This relationship is the main focus of this study. This study will try to give an overview of this relationship from the founding of United Nations to our time.

The topical current debate about global governance and the rising role of non-governmental organizations in this debate provides an interesting background for this study. This practical reality is linked also to the debate of the future of democracy. One of the proposals, to meet the demands of the current democracy deficit in global governance and to regain legitimacy, is to enable stronger involvement of participatory democracy in addition to representative democracy. This study will try to give a perspective to these questions on the basis of UN and NGO relations.

Just recently, the Secretary General of United Nations Kofi Annan confirmed the new rising role of non-governmental organizations in the United Nations stating also a list of interesting questions related to this topic: “A strong civil society promotes responsible citizenship and makes democratic form of government work. In the year 2000, alongside the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations, civil NGOs will be holding Millennium Forum that will provide an excellent opportunity to further cement our relationship.” The three phrases from Secretary Generals statement: strong civil society, responsible citizenship and democratic form of governance, point out to the main questions behind this study.

This study will cover the following questions:
1. ● How have non-governmental organizations been involved in the United Nations throughout its history?
2. ● What kind of proposals are there at the moment which would develop this relationship further?

This study will also tackle the following questions:
3. ● How does the time of globalization change nature of civil activism?
4. ● What kind of democratic forms of governance might the time of globalization require?
5. ● From the experience of UN NGO relations, what possible role could participatory democracy have in future forms of global governance?

The main questions to be answered are number one and two. Thus, the methodological approach selected for this study has been to have

11 http://www.ykliitto.fi/

12 Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs is preparing to chair the Millennium Assembly and Summit in September 2000.

13 Chairperson of UNA-Finland Mrs. Sirpa Pietikäinen was elected as chair of the board of World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA) on April 2000. UNA-Finland has also taken an active role in cooperation with several large global NGOs on forming a new NGO coalition to support the UN reform. This coalition was founded at the Millennium Forum and was named Citizens’ Century (http://www.citizencentury.net/).

dialogue with the current reality and active debate. Firstly, this means that the aim of this study has been to cover as extensively as possible the documented sources of the United Nations’ relations with non-governmental organizations. This study includes all relevant UN documents and large amount of NGO documents from this field. The second aim has been to analyze broadly the sources and examine the situation since the establishment of the UN to the current state of affairs. The theoretical debate about the possible future role of participatory democracy in global governance has supported analysis in this study, but the aim of this study has not been to concentrate on dialogues with the theories. It is impossible in this study to cover even partly the possible future forms of global governance or neither even the possible ways to include participatory democracy. Still this study can by the experience of UN and NGO relations contribute also to this ongoing debate. In practical terms most valuable outcome of this study will be related to the future of non-governmental organization in the United Nations.

The concept of a non-governmental organization is rather difficult. This question is approached in chapters two and three. Even more difficult is the concept of the platforms of these NGOs. The analysis of the different NGOs active in UN has been out of the reach of this study. There are more than 1500 individual NGOs, which have a consultative status in the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. It has been impossible to make well structured analysis of these NGOs and others active in the field. This question remains still highly valuable when analyzing the role of NGOs and the proposals they produce.

The first phase of the study was used to support the preparations and work at the Millennium Forum NGO meeting. This means that the study includes three proposals that were presented at the Forum. The second phase was made after the Forum and includes some remarks on possible future steps concerning NGOs’ involvement in the United Nations and on forming global governance. Third phase is to a publication produced from this study for United Nations Association of Finland for it’s political work.

The material of this study can be divided mainly in to four categories. The first category is (a) the official United Nations documentation. These documents have been rather easy to find and categorize. These documents are described clearly in (b) the text and bibliography. More problematic was the second category of non-governmental organizations’ documentation. In this category there remained several unsolved problems. There have been several thousand pages of NGO documentation collected for this study, and it is rather difficult to judge which of these documents have a major, or even a minor role in the historical process and in the current debate. Firstly, the variety of organizations is considerable. Secondly, the nature of the documents varies also greatly. The NGO documentation includes official policy papers, published books and leaflets, web page articles, unpublished plans, etc. The NGO paper documentation has been mainly collected from the archives of the author, from Sirpa Pietikäinen and UNA-Finland, but also from several international NGO conferences around the world. A large amount of documentation has been collected from the World Wide Web (www). Such collection of NGO documentation is always exclusive and the judgment as to the relevance of these documents as made by the author and is imperfect. The aim has been to give an overview of the NGO opinion at that current stage. The nature of these NGO documents is mainly described in the footnotes and in the bibliography. c) Third category is the governmental documents, which are collected from the library of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland and from www. d) Fourth category is the literature. The main source of theoretical reference was selected to be from Professor Manuel Castells’ trilogy16, which is covered in the next chapter. On analyzing the UN and NGO relations, the main references are found from two books. First book is from 1996 “NGOs, the UN & Global Governance”17, edited by Thomas Weiss and Leon Gordenker, and second book is from 1999 “Whose World is It Anyway? Civil Society, the United Nations and Multilateral Future”18, which is Professor Peter Willetts article in book edited by John W Foster and Anita Anand. This category also includes a few earlier, similar studies made in Finland concerning UN and NGO relations. Three such studies have helped to identify the main questions for this study: Miko Lempinen’s research from 1999 on human rights and NGOs consultative relationship19, Annika Lindblom’s pro gradu research from 1997 on NGOs’ influence and strategies in the UN,20 and Minna Luosujärvi’s pro gradu research from 1999 on the Ottawa process to ban land mines21.

17 Weiss and Gordenker 1996.
18 Willetts 1999, Edited by Foster and Anand.
19 Lempinen 1999.
20 Lindblom 1997.
21 Luosujärvi 1999.
2. Non-Governmental Organization, Power and Globalization

2.1. General Remarks on Manuel Castells’ Trilogy

Sociologist Manuel Castells, Professor of City and Regional Planning at University of California Berkeley, has recently written three books: “The Rise of the Network Society”, “The Power of Identity”, and “The End of the Millennium”. These books are the theoretical reference of this study and basis analyzing the changes in democracy in evolving global time.

In his trilogy, Castells presents a broad account of the major social, economic and political transformations, which reconfigure the landscapes of societies and human life across the world. His focus is in information technology but the books cover analysis on social movements and nation states as well. The key phrase for Castells is Net. Castells sees our societies polarized between the question of personal or collective identity as our culture, organizations and institutions lose relevance because of the various aspects of globalization and inexorable processes of the global Net.

The trilogy aims at providing a comprehensive overview of the forces and actors, which drive the world towards globalization, as well as of those fueling the struggles to maintain or reconstitute historically specific group identities and intricate forces. As a result Castells senses “the embryos of a new society, labored in the fields of history.” These new embryos he calls social movements, which actually produce the identities, which change people’s approach and thinking in the global time.

What differentiates Castells from many other accounts of the globalization processes is the depth in which he describes how the process is played out between and within various social and regional contexts.

Castells is not seeking for a new theory but his method is “communicating theory by analyzing practice.” This means, in his writing, that very distinct theoretical models inform the analysis but are hardly specified. Rather, they structure the account implicitly. The underlying model is a kind of dialectical interaction of social relations and technology. Although this model is the procedural core of all three books, Castells has elaborated his theory in more detail in an earlier book, The Informational City (1989).

This model, which Castells has chosen, also frames the theoretical reference of this study. Castells does not provide us with a formulated theory but rather elements to understand and analyze the reality and change under the process of globalization.

2.2. The Rise of the Network Society

Castells first book in the trilogy, “The Rise of the Network Society”, is most well formed and clear in argumentation. It provides excellent material to understand the change forced by technological revolution. Castells names five characteristics to help define the evolutionary logic of the current, “informational mode of development”, which together form the “Information Technology Paradigm.”

1. Information is the raw material as well as the outcome. “These are technologies to act on information, not just information to act on technology.”
2. Because information is an integral part of all human activity all individual and collective existence are directly shaped by technology.
3. Information technologies foster a new networking logic, because it allows one to deal with complexity and unpredictability, which in itself is increased by these technologies.
4. The networking logic is based on flexibility. This reforms for example institutions and organizations.
5. Specific technologies converge into highly integrated systems.

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22 By Net he means naturally the Internet but also other flows of information between citizens, cities, regions, financial institutions, entertainment complexes, consumers, and governments.

23 Castells 1997, 362.

24 Castells 1997, 3.


The process of this evolutionary mode of development goes in Castells' opinion through three distinct stages: (a) automation of tasks (rationalization of existing processes), (b) experimentation of uses (innovation of new processes), and (c) reconfiguration of applications (implementation of new processes, thus creating new tasks). The reflexivity of the technologies, the fact that every outcome can be turned instantly into raw material for the next cycle because both are information, has allowed for the speed-up of the process of innovation. This makes all fields of human action more adjustable for the needs of development especially from actors, which are flexible to use the opportunity.

This “historical sequence of the Information Technology Revolution” process is the starting point of his trilogy. First section includes analyze of the informational economy, the process of globalization and international division of labor. In Castells' opinion the global economy is characterized “by its interdependence, its asymmetry, its rationalization, the increased diversification within each region, its selective inclusiveness, its exclusionary segmentation, and, as a result of all those features, an extraordinarily variable geometry that tends to dissolve historical, economic geography.”

These new patterns of the global economy have been developed under the force of restructuring the capitalist enterprise from 1970's on, and with increasing speed in the 1980's. The economical restructuring is based on new organizational arrangements, which are resulted in the changes in the networking logic. Result is a network enterprise or organization, which is a phenomenon comprising from shifting internal hierarchies and changing patterns of competition and cooperation across institutions. The network enterprise is “that specific form of enterprise whose system of means is constituted by the intersection of autonomous systems of goals.” The working conditions in such enterprises or organizations are significantly different from those of traditional industrial corporations and the results are changing work and employment patterns.

Castells forms a phase, “the space of flows”, by which he means the integrated global networks, which are results of the new flexibility. This is constructed by several connected elements: the private networks, corporate Intranets; semi-public, closed and proprietary networks such as the financial networks; and public, open networks, the Internet. It is this space of flows in which the social organizations constitute themselves. It is the distance, which makes the two modes gain their independence and it is in the linking by which they gain their interdependence.

Castells describes the space of flows by three element. The first is the (a) technical element: the circuit of electronic impulses that form the technological infrastructure of the network. The second is the (b) geographical element: the topology of the space formed by its “nodes and hubs.” Hubs are defined by Castells as networks, which link to specific places with specific social and cultural conditions. A node is the “location of strategically important functions that build a series of locality-based activities and organizations around the key functions of the network.”

Third element is the (c) social element in which the dominant, managerial elite uses the network.

Castells defines the space of flows even more precisely in The Informational City (1989), where he states:

“While organizations are located in places, and their components are place-dependent, the organizational logic is placeless, being fundamentally dependent on the space of flows that characterizes information networks. But such flows are structured, not undetermined. They possess directionality, conferred both by the hierarchical logic of the organization as reflected in instructions given, and by the material characteristics of the information systems infrastructure... The space of flows remains the fundamental spatial dimension of large scale information processing complexes... The more organizations depend, ultimately, upon flows and networks, the less they are influenced by the social context associated with the places of their location. From this follows a growing independence of the organizational logic from the societal logic.”

Castells end the first volume by forming his vision: “if by history we understand the moment when, after millennia of a prehistoric battle with Nature, first to survive, then to conquer it, our species has reached the level of knowledge and social organization that will allow us to live in a...”

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29 Castells 1996, 32.
31 Castells 1996, 106.
32 Castells 1996, 171.
33 Castells 1996, 413.
34 Castells 1996, 413.
35 Castells 1996, 415.
predominantly social world. It is the beginning of new existence, and indeed the beginning of a new age, the information age, marked by the autonomy of culture vis-à-vis the material bases of our existence. Castells might be right with the cultural autonomy, but what else new can the information age provide for human existence waits to be seen.

### 2.3. The Power of Identity

Castells’ second volume, “The Power of Identity”, includes the analysis of change in power after the information revolution and globalization. Power is increasingly concentrated in the space of flows, “the power of flows takes precedence over the flows of power.” The space of flows expresses the dominant social logic in the information society.

Castells proceeds further with his interesting findings on the change of identities. He defines that “each type of identity-building process leads to a different outcome in constituting society.” He proves the premise of a correlation between a dominant identity and the social institutions of the society. He discovers three different types of identity:

1. **Legitimizing identity**: introduced by the dominant institutions of society to extend and rationalize their domination over social actors. Legitimizing identities generate civil societies in the sense of what Max Weber called rational power.

2. **Resistance identity**: produced by those actors who are in a position/condition of being excluded by the logic of domination. Identity for resistance leads to the formation of communes or communities as a way of coping with otherwise unbearable conditions of oppression.

3. **Project identity**: proactive movements which aim at transforming society as a whole, rather than merely establishing the conditions for their own survival in opposition to the dominant actors. (For example feminism and environmentalism fall under this category).

In the analysis, Castells observes the social movements as they are shaped by the interplay of these three different types of identity. Identity is defined as “the process of construction of meaning on the basis of a cultural attribute, or related set of cultural attributes, that is/are given priority over other sources of meaning.”

Castells gives the second volume three practical examples of resistance identity, chosen for their radical differences in context and goals, but including some remarkable similarities: Mexico’s Zapatistas, the American Militia, and Japan’s Aum Shinrikyo (the group which released poison gas in Tokyo’s subway system on March 20, 1995). While each movement reflects the historical differences of their constituency and the threats they fight against in the transformation of their specific social landscape, “they all challenge current processes of globalization, on behalf of their constructed identities, in some instances claiming to represent the interest of their country, or of humankind, as well.”

In the second section Castells provides analyze on a few major pro-active movements: environmentalism, feminism, and gay and lesbian movements. They represent the conflict and interrelated character of identity building. Castells relates them to the end of the patriarchalism, which not only opens up new possibilities of self-determination but also at the same time provokes reactions to protect what is perceived as threatened. Castells stresses: “there is no predetermined directionality in history... A fundamentalist restoration, bringing patriarchalism back under the protection of divine law, may well reverse the process of undermining the patriarchal family, unwillingly induced by informational capitalism, and willingly pursued by cultural social movements.”

Then Castells proceeds to analyze the change in the power under pressure of globalization. The classic embodiment of legitimizing identity, the nation state, is losing its power, “although, and this is essential, not its influence.” The loss of power stems from a loss of sovereignty, effected by the globalization of core economic activities, of media, of communication, and, especially for the developing countries, the globalization of crime and law enforcement.
One of the most obvious examples for the loss of sovereignty of a nation state can be found in the currency exchange markets, which have, in the late 1980’s, outgrown the capacities of the central banks to control them. They now link up national currencies. This enforces financial coordination undermining the possibilities of national governments to formulate independent economic policy. The welfare state, form of many western nation states, is under double stress. Not only are the national budgets tighter under the coercion of the global financial markets, but also the global firms can take advantage of cost differentials in social benefits and standards. As a result, “welfare states are being downsized to the lowest common denominator that keeps spiraling downwards.”

Not only are the nation states loosing their ability to secure welfare, but also power as well. Castells points clearly also out the problematic question of nation-state as global actors. While the nation-state is loosing power, it is not easy for the states to create sufficient global governance. According to Castells, the created international institutions reflect the same problems as nation state.

Castells reminds that the nation-state still remains crucially important because it is the only legitimized entity from which multinational cooperation can be built to meet the increasingly pressing global problems. However, this proves to be a dilemma. On the one hand, it increases the pressure on the nation state to effect decisions in the international arena and, on the other, it diminishes its credibility in the area of domestic policy through its being constrained by an ever more restrictive network of global agreements.

“The World Trade Organization has been set up to make compatible free trade with trade restrictions in a non-disruptive mechanism of control and negotiation. The United Nations is vying to establish its new, double role as a legitimate police force on behalf of peace and human rights, and as a world media center, staging global conferences every six months on the headlines of humankind: environment, population, social exclusion, woman cities, and the like.”

This does not yet provide in Castells opinion reasonable form of political decision making. Castells also covers the future scenes to reform the way states operate on a global level. He expresses his doubts concerning efficient and reasonable global governance. “Most assessments of this growing process of internationalization of state policies seem to doubt the feasibility of global governance as fully shared sovereignty, in spite of this notion’s powerful rationale. Rather, global governance is usually considered as the negotiated convergence of national governments’ interests and policies. Nation-states, and their elite’s, are too jealous, of their privileges to surrender sovereignty, besides under the promise of tangible returns. In addition, according to opinion polls, it is highly unlikely, in the foreseeable future, that the majority of citizens in any country would accept full integration in a supranational, federal state. The US experience of federal nation building is so historically specific that, in spite of its forceful appeal, it can hardly be a model for late millennium federalists in other areas of world.”

In this problematic situation Castells sees that there is one element, which has reacted to the needs of global decision making: the civil society. “Furthermore, the growing incapacity of states to tackle the global problems that make an impact on public opinion (from the fate of whales to torture of dissidents around the world) leads civil societies to increasingly take into their own hands the responsibilities of global citizenship. Thus, Amnesty International, Greenpeace, Medicins sans frontièrs, Oxfam, and so many other humanitarian non-governmental organizations have become major force in the international arena in the 1990s, often attracting more funding, performing more effectively, and receiving greater legitimacy than government sponsored international efforts. The “privatization” of global humanitarism is gradually undermining one of the last rationales for the necessity of the national-state.

Castells proves that the social movements are not only building identities in the global era, but they are also taking power in order to shape human life and societies. He states human rights and environmentalism as examples of views promoted by civil society. No one can complain that these ideas would not have changed much already in human life.

“In sum, what we are witnessing is, at the same time, the irreversible sharing of sovereignty in the management of major economic, environmental, and security issues, and, on the other hand, the entrenchment of nation-states as the basic components of this entangled web of political institutions. However, the outcome of such process is not the reinforcement of nation-states,

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46 Castells 1997, 267.
47 Castells 1997, 267.
49 Castells 1997, 268.
50 Castells 1997, 268.
but the systemic erosion of their power in exchange for their durability. This is, first of all, because the processes of relentless conflict, alliance and negotiation make international institutions rather ineffective, so that most of their political energy is spent in the process, rather that in the product. This seriously slows down the intervening capacity of states, unable to act by them selves, yet paralyzed when trying to act collectively. Moreover, international institutions, partly to escape from such a paralysis, partly because of the inherent logic of any large bureaucracy, tend to take on a life on their own. So doing, they define their mandate in ways that tend to supersede the power of their constituent states, instituting a de facto global bureaucracy.51

Castells’ vision of current global governance is hopeless but realistic. The biggest losers in his opinion are the nation states. “The price paid by nation-states for their precarious survival as segments of states’ networks, is that of their decreasing relevance, thus undermining their legitimacy, and ultimately furthering their powerlessness.52

This is part of a serious democratic deficit and a fundamental change in the political system. Castells concludes his analysis of the nation-states: “Nation-states have lost their sovereignty because the very concept of sovereignty ... implies that it is not possible to lose sovereignty “a little bit”: this was precisely the traditional causus belli. Nation-states may retain decision making capacity, but having become part of a network of powers and counter powers, they are powerless by themselves: they are dependent on a broader system of enacting authority and influence from multiple sources.

Castells proceeds with his analysis of democracy. The result of the current situation with the nation-states is a crisis of democracy on the national and local level. The nation-state offloads responsibility for integrating its own constituency, which has been achieved through locally built instruments of the welfare state and disappears into an increasingly abstract arena of international organizations. The traditional institutions of democracy are caught in a “fundamental contradiction”: “Yet, on the other hand, nation-states survive beyond historical inertia because of the defensive communalism of nations and people in their territories, hanging onto their last refuge not to be pulled away by the whirlwind of global flows. Thus, the more states emphasize communalism, the less effective they become as co-agents of global system of shared power. The more they triumph in the planetary scene, in close partnership with the agents of globalization, the less they represent their national constituencies. End of millennium politics, almost everywhere in the world, is dominated by this fundamental contradiction.53 This contradiction does not necessary help the citizens of states, which are more and more in their practical life dependent on decisions taken at the global level.

Also, the more the nation-states withdraw from their citizens, the more the need to find alternative identities grow. Trapped between the increased articulation of diverse, often opposite identities and the need to act on a global scene, the traditional democratic institutions are being voided of meaning and legitimacy: they lose their identity. New identity, and new forms of democracy will arise from identities, which aim to change the world under conditions of globalization, so hopes Castells at the end of the second volume. Castells stresses that historical development has no qualitative directionality and no pre-determined outcome.

Despite skepticism Castells still does point out three trends, which he sees as potential paths of democratic reconstruction54:

1. ● His first point is the re-creation of local state.
2. ● Secondly, he points out electronic communication enabling horizontal communication among citizens.
3. ● His third point refers also to the topic of this study: The rising role of grass root level civil society.

The last aspect has also possible critical implications for the current democratic system: “The impact of such developments on democracy are unclear. On other hand, allowing issues mobilization to bypass formal politics may undermine even further the institutions of democracy.55 It is often typical for Castells to give rough visions but not to take responsibility to develop them in more detail. He often points out at the same time several critical and positive aspects attached to his vision. By this he tries to avoid taking strong positions and to remain analytical. Sometimes this approach anyhow makes Castells sayings weaker. Despite his critical points Castells final view of the role of civil society and NGOs seem to be very positive. “On

51 Castells 1997, 268-269.
52 Castells 1997, 269.
53 Castells 1997, 304-305.
54 Castells 1997, 308.
56 Castells 1997, 352.
the other hand, if political representation and decision-making could find a linkage with these new sources of inputs from concerned citizens, without yielding to technological savvy elite, a new kind of civil society could be reconstructed, thus allowing for electronic grass rooting of democracy.  

Castells sees the strengthening role of civil society especially in the development “of symbolic politics, and of political mobilization around “non-political” causes.”  

“Humanitarian causes, such as the ones supported by Amnesty International, Medicins sans frontières, Greenpeace, Oxfam and Food First, and thousands and thousands of both local and global activist groups and non-governmental organizations around the world, are the most powerful proactive, mobilizing factor in international politics.”  

Castells reminds also that typically these NGO actions are not strictly political but are supported by most of the political groups. These mobilizations ask citizens to put pressure on public institutions and private firms claiming that they can jointly make a difference. 

“Ultimately, their horizon is to act on the political process; that is, to influence the management of the society by representatives of society. ... These forms of political mobilization, which could be defined as issue-oriented, non-partisan politics, seem to win increasing legitimacy in all societies, and to condition the rules and outcomes of formal political competition. They re-legitimize the concern with public affair in people’s minds and lives. They do so by introducing new political processes, and new political issues, thus furthering the crisis of classic liberal democracy while fostering the emergence of the yet to be discovered, informational democracy.”  

Castells’ opinion is supported by the recent and even more organizational actions carried by the non-governmental organizations (NGO) from within the United Nations. This gives more confidence in actions taken to support UN reform presented later in this study.

2.4. The End of the Millennium

Castells’ third volume analyzes the collapse of the Soviet Union, the rise of the Fourth World, the perverse connection between the global criminal economy and the current global economical system. It also analyzes the Asian crisis from the perspective of globalization and state and on the unification of Europe.

The third volume ends with a conclusion section where Castells collects his analyses and proposals from all three books. In the conclusions, Castells returns, with a sense of prides, back to the social movements he witnessed in his early career in university life, movements, which have also brought, so Castells claims, new elements into our identity and have also changed human life. “From these movements sprang the ideas that would be source of environmentalism, of feminism, of the endless defense of human rights, of sexual liberation, of ethnic equality, and of grass root democracy. The cultural movements of the 60s and early 1970s, in their affirmation of individual autonomy against both capital and the state, placed a renewed stress on the politics of identity. These ideas paved the way for the building of cultural communes in the 1990s, when the legitimacy crisis of institutions of the industrial are blurred the meaning of democratic politics.”  

This statement also pictures Castells own ideological background, although he has successfully distanced him from political barriers in his analyses. Castells has been close to Marxist ideology.

Castells continues with analyze on the impacts of globalization on the democracy. He reminds about the transformation in power relations.

“The main transformation concerns the crisis of a nation-state as a sovereign entity, and the related crisis of political democracy, as constructed in the past two centuries. Since commands from the state cannot be fully enforced, and since some of its fundamental promises, embodied in the welfare state, cannot be kept, both its authority and its legitimacy are called into question. Because representative democracy is predicted on the notion of sovereign body, the blurring of boundaries of sovereignty leads to uncertainty in the process of delegation of peoples will. Globalization of capital, multilateralization of power institutions, and decentralization of authority to regional and local governments include a new geometry of power, perhaps including a new form of state, the network state.”

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57 Castells 1997, 352.
58 Castells 1997, 352.
59 Castells 1997, 352.
60 Castells 1997, 352.
61 Castells 1997, 352.
62 An example of such action is the NGO campaign for International Criminal Court that was adopted by the General Assembly of UN in the spring 2000.
Castells’ prophecy of the network state is interesting but it remains uncertain what this kind of state will be and how the current power structures will be transformed. Castells does not aim to give clear responses, but in his analysis on the current problems in this aspect he is clear. The question of sovereignty becomes to the center of the solution in global governance.

Globalization does not create solutions for the crisis of democracy, nor does it transfer power to new, effective democratic bodies. As Castells states: “As politics become theatre, and political institutions are bargaining agencies rather than sites of power, citizens around the world react defensively, voting to prevent harm from the state in place of entrusting it with their will. In a certain sense, the political system is voided of power, albeit not of influence.” This protectionism is clearly visible, as Castells proved in the second volume, in different form around the world. Even though people react in this way the power does not disappear. In Castells’ opinion, it comes in the information society “inscribed, at a fundamental level, in the cultural codes through which people and institutions represent life and make decisions, including political decisions.”

This transform of power from states to networks is one of his key findings. This gives power to social movements, which channel autonomous identities against pattern of domination. This brings new elements in the aspect of civil society. “What is characteristic of social movements and cultural projects built around identities of the Information Age is that they do not originate within the (traditional) institutions of civil society. They introduce from the outset, an alternative social logic, distinct from the principles of performance around which dominant institutions of society are built.” Examples of traditional and dominant civil society institutions are in Castells opinion for example labor unions, which have become part of the establishment. New forms of citizens’ movements and organizations will rise in various forms.

Castells has one hope he refers to, which is the rising of local democratic institutions. How these institutions could use power in time of globalization remain open, as Castells states: “The state does not disappear, though. It is simply downsized in the Information Age. It proliferates under the form of local and regional governments, which dot the world with their projects, built up constituencies, and negotiates with national governments, multilateral corporations, and international agencies. The era of globalization of the economy in also the era of localization of policy. What local and regional governments’ lack in power and recourses, they make up in flexibility and networking. They are the only match, if any, to the dynamism of global networks of wealth and information. As for people they are and will be, increasingly distant from the halls of power, and disaffected from the crumbling institutions of civil society.”

The proposal of reforming the local democratic institutions is quite unclear. But also the question of global governance remains quite open throughout Castells’ conclusions. He repeats: “Nation-states will survive, but not so their sovereignty. They will band together in multilateral networks, with a variable geometry of commitments, responsibilities, alliances and subordinations.”

Castells does not formulate what kind these multilateral networks should be in order to meet the demands of democracy and globalization. He states quite simply that “Global geopolitics will also be managed by multilateralism, with the United Nations, and regional international institutions ... playing an increasing role in the management of international and even national conflicts. They will increasingly use security alliances, such as NATO, in the enforcement of their decisions.” In the analysis of global governance and the position of the United Nations he even seems to be unskilled. At least he does not touch upon the theoretical dilemma of democracy in global decision-making and the democracy deficit in the current structures.

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3. Non-Governmental Organizations

This is mainly a study of the relationship between the United Nation and non-governmental organizations. What are these non-governmental organizations? There are several theories of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Still theories have certain problems especially when the methodological approach is not to report theories. The approach of this study on these terms could be summarized by Leon Gordenker and Thomas G. Weiss note:

“Theoretical explorations have tended to be few in number and specific to a particular sector of activity, especially aspects of economic and social development and of the environment. A considerable body of writing has a primarily legal character, which overlooks or understates the richness of NGO activity and politics.”

One of the key constitutional rights in a democracy is the right for citizens to organize themselves. Non-governmental organization is a general definition for such organizations, which are created from the interests of citizens. The landscape of non-governmental organizations is a diverse and difficult to define in a satisfactory way. This chapter will try to identify some characters, which can help to understand what a non-governmental organization (NGO) is, although much controversy remains in the concept.

A host of alternative usage challenges the term “non-governmental organization”. These include officials, independent sector volunteer sector, civic society, grassroots organizations, private voluntary organizations, transnational social movement organizations, grassroots social change organizations, and non-state sectors. Many of these organizations are very close to one another by virtue of their nature. Often these like-minded organizations may develop lasting relationships to one and other, and thus form meta-organizations. There are also a great variety of different kinds of platforms, umbrella organizations and federations.

MA Martti Mukkonen reports the classical understanding of civil society: “it is a sphere where independent citizens rule themselves.

Muukkonen points out how the modern usage of civil society is quite flexible. Generally in his opinion it means “the political sphere where independent citizens can arrange their government.”

In any case, citizens advocate the power of the people, and they often use their power through networks and organizations. As such, the growth of NGOs arises from the demands made by citizens for accountability from the institutions of governmental and economical power. In this way NGOs compete with governmental and economical powers for guidance in aspects of social life. They function to serve underrepresented or neglected populations, to expand the freedom of or to empower people, to engage in advocacy for social change, and to provide services.

NGOs’ status and relations with the political institutions of the society change also largely depend on the context. Relevant for the study is how the United Nations has organized its relations with NGOs. Actually, the most common definition of NGOs’ status in decision making of any institutions is the United Nations Charter article 71. It gives NGOs a definition and position, which has never been removed. NGOs are legally and formally recognized valuable partners in all fields of society and in the international community. The arrangements between the UN and NGOs will be covered in the next chapter in more detail.

Often NGOs raise issues to the political agenda of societies. They politicize issues, which they believe political institutions should be concerned about. They also bring local experience to bear on international decision-making. This element is important especially when NGOs aim to bring legitimacy to the global governance. Although it is important to note that many NGOs seem to have existence only linked to the international bodies. These NGOs lack also themselves reasonable connection to the grassroots level. At the same time, most of the NGOs have not managed to break out of the local setting and become engaged in international activities.

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Gordenker & Weiss 1995, 358.
Korten 1990, 95-112.
United Nations Charter Article 71: Untitled (Arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations): “The Economic and Social Council may make suitable arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations which are concerned with matters within its competence. Such arrangements may be made with international organizations and, where appropriate, with national organizations after consultation with the Member of the United Nations concerned.”
Castells 1997, 352.
If NGOs operate under the level of governments, they parallel the pattern of inter-governmental organizations (IGO), particularly those of the UN system. IGOs do not govern but they attempt to cope with and help manage complex interrelationships and global political, economic and social changes by arranging co-operation of other actors, especially governments. Distinctions between IGOs and NGOs rest on legal grounds and tend to exaggerate the boundary between the two categories. In reality there are great variations within, and unclear borderlines between, the two categories. There have been a variety of proposals to renew the terminology and definitions of non-state actors. This study retains the traditional non-governmental organization definition. Apart from the function of representing people acting of their own volition NGOs have other defining characteristics. NGOs are formal organizations that intend to continue existence. They are self-governing on the basis of their own constitutional arrangements. They are separate from governments and they are not in business of making distributing profits.

While theoretical approaches provide little specific insight into the nature and function of NGOs, some generalizing about NGOs that operate in the international environment is necessary for the better understanding of NGOs roles. It is still important to be aware that none of the theoretical approaches to international co-operation appears fully apt for an investigation that emphasizes concrete activities and observation born of participation. “Rather, it might be better to base such an examination on a close scrutiny of goals, relationships among various organizations and operating methods. This may eventually lead to more general conclusions about the weight and scope of NGO participation in international co-operation.”

The following NGO dimensions introduced by Leon Gordenker and Thomas Weiss are helpful when trying to identify the different natures and structures of the NGOs.

The general concept of democracy includes the participation of non-state actors. Non-state actors include business, non-governmental organizations (NGO), etc. They provide their expertise for political processes and they are listened to in a variety of ways in the regional, national, continental, and international structures.

**NGO Dimensions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizational Dimensions</th>
<th>Governance Dimensions</th>
<th>Strategic Dimensions</th>
<th>Output Dimensions</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geographical range:</td>
<td>Governmental contact:</td>
<td>Goal definition:</td>
<td>Information:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Intergovernmental</td>
<td>Single issue</td>
<td>Expert advice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sub-national</td>
<td>International</td>
<td>Multicultural</td>
<td>Financing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>conferences</td>
<td>Broad social</td>
<td>Material goods and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>Church related</td>
<td>Support for policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Social ideology</td>
<td>Mobilization of opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sub-national</td>
<td>Revolutionary/</td>
<td>Maintenance of interorganizational relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>rejections</td>
<td>Political feedback among governmental units</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
<pre><code>                       | Informal international |                     | Encouragement of networks |
</code></pre>
<p>|                           |                       |                     | Education of specific publics |</p>

- **Support base:**
  - Personal memberships
  - Other organizations
  - Quasi-governmental
  - Mixture of above

- **Range of concern:**
  - Norm setting
  - Policy setting
  - Policy execution
  - Contractor
  - Mediation between levels

- **Personnel:**
  - Managerial
  - Basic research
  - Expert and professional
  - Undifferentiated

- **Financing:**
  - Membership dues
  - Contributions
  - Endowment income
  - Compensation

- **Legal relationships:**
  - General rules
  - Regulations
  - Ad hoc guidelines

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80 Weiss and Gordenker (ed.) 1996, 42.
The role of NGOs is also linked closely to the nature of democracy, as explained by Peter Willets:

“Democracy requires at least two processes to occur for individuals to influence policy-making. The first is to provide for open, public debate, so a wide range of ideas under consideration and, within practical limits, every participant can make his or her own contribution. NGOs can contribute effectively to such a broad and open debate. The second is the legitimization of decisions by everybody having a vote either directly on the choice to be made, or indirectly through the election of representatives. But NGOs cannot really claim to be more democratic, more representative or more legitimate as decision-makers than elected governments. Only when a government is authoritarian does the prospect arise of NGOs being more authentic as the voice of the people.”

Political-economist Robert Putnam has used a term called “social capital” to identify the role of NGOs in social development and society in general. This “social capital” contributes to the capacity of society to help in human development. Putnam’s studies of regional economic development in Italy showed clearly that regions with higher endowments of social capital were far more successful at stimulating and sustaining economic growth, social progress, and democracy over a long period than regions with less social capital.

Putnam points also out that social capital has powerful consequences because civic networks and norms ease the dilemmas of collective actions by institutionalizing social reciprocity and social trust, and by facilitating political and economic transactions. Well-developed networks of civil society also amplify the flows of information and help transmit knowledge of people’s reputations that lower economic and social transaction costs, and provide the means for reliable political, economic and social collaboration – all of which are essential to effective governance.

The Commission for Global Governance, which members are mainly formed heads of states, studied the reforming of the United Nations, examined NGOs and observed “in their wide variety they bring expertise, commitment, and grassroots perceptions that should be mobilized in the interests of better governance.”

At the moment NGOs vitally participate in the international system. They contribute valuable information and ideas, advocate effectively for positive change, provide essential operation capacity in emergencies and development efforts, and generally increase the accountability and legitimacy of the global governance process.

NGOs can bring to the global policy making process a vitally important voice that complements and widens the policy discourse, resulting in better and more legitimate decisions. Nevertheless, NGOs cannot claim to be paragons of virtue or perfect expressions of public interest. NGOs can not claim to represent people better than democratically elected governments.

But the crisis in the current systems of representative democracy in sovereign states and the democracy deficit in global institutions have given space for the increasing role of NGOs. People are seeking for power they have through activism, which is finding totally new elements with the process of globalization. Anyhow the concept of civil activism and non-governmental organizations remains only partially touched in this study.

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81 Willets 1999, 261.
82 Putnam 1994, 31-34.
83 Putnam 1994, 31-34.
84 Commission for Global Governance 1995, 254
4. The United Nations and NGOs

4.1. General remarks

The United Nations (UN) has a long history of working with non-governmental organizations. The UN is the only global organization which works at the moment to achieve international peace, security, social development, and justice. The UN is an inter-governmental organization that has 185 member states. The UN is not a world government. None of the member countries give up their sovereignty when they join the organization. The UN can only work when it gets a mandate from the member countries.

Although the position of the UN is not the same as it was during the cold war and even though there has been many bureaucratic and organizational problems, the UN has kept its position as the main forum for global policy. Since the end of cold war the UN has also become more than just an inter-governmental organization. With the process of globalization the whole economical and social concept of the world has changed. When the states, the people and their non-governmental organizations turn their faces to global policy making, many have their hopes in the UN. The new dimension to the whole dilemma is the role of democracy within decision-making at the global level. The role of non-governmental organizations is part of this debate.

Already the League of Nations had formal co-operation with NGOs, and in some sense it was even more progressive in this area than its successor, the UN. Nonetheless, the role of NGOs within UN has a long history. The basis of NGO involvement has already been set in the Charter of the UN since 1948. According to chapter X, article 71, the Economical and Social Council had the right to negotiate with non-state actors when it was believed to be relevant.

This statement in the Charter was the outcome of NGOs’ lobbying: “The draft of the UN charter had no provision for NGOs. In 1945, when the charter was to be finalized, a group of US NGOs, some official consultants to the US delegation, and few international NGOs, led by World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), lobbied hard. They obtained several important amendments, widening the range of issues the UN would cover and upgrading the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to the status of a principle organ. ... A new article – Article 71 – provided NGOs access to ECOSOC, thus becoming the rock on which all UN relations with NGOs were built.”

The statement in the Article 71 gave the Economical and Social Council (ECOSOC) the chance to determine what the relationship should be in practice: “Early attempts to give meaning to article 71 were heavily colored by cold-war maneuvers, but a growing list of organizations with consultative status developed around fairly restricted practices laid down by ECOSOC.”

The role of the Economical and Social Council (ECOSOC) is to co-ordinate the UNs’ and its special organizations’ work in the field of economics and social issues. The Council prepares policies on issues, which relate also to humanitarian and cultural issues. 54 countries belong to ECOSOC and they are selected thrice annually.

The World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) also took a position, when the Charter was drafted, to expand NGO involvement to the General Assembly. It demanded, with the support of Soviet Union and France, a voice in the General Assembly with a permanent seat and right to vote. Many governments objected and it was decided that the NGOs would be kept out of the General Assembly and would not have equal status with governments in any of the UN forums.

At the moment all main institutions, their subcommittees, and working groups have some kind of working relationship with NGOs. The process to clarify and develop further the role of NGOs in the UN has increased recently.

Two recent Secretary-Generals have shown activity in this area. Former UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali published two reports about democratizing global governance, in which the role of NGOs was one element. Boutros-Ghali confirmed in 1996: “The United Nations was

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88 United Nations Charter, chapter X, article 71: “The Economical and Social Council may make suitable arrangements for consultations with non-governmental organizations which are concerned with matters within its competence. Such arrangements may be made with international organizations and, where appropriate, with national organizations after consultations with the Member of the United Nations concerned.”
89 Willets 1999, 248.
90 Gordenker and Weiss (ed.) 1996, 22.
91 Willets 1999, 248-249.
considered to be a forum for sovereign states alone. Within the space of a few short years, however, this attitude has changed. Non-governmental organizations are now considered full participants in international life.\textsuperscript{92a} The Secretary General Kofi Annan has also frequently affirmed the importance of NGOs to the United Nations. In his opinion NGOs are partners in “the process of deliberation and policy formulation and in the execution of policies”.\textsuperscript{92b} Annan has also expressed hopes that NGOs would start to support the UN reform, which is currently stuck in the bureaucracy of the UN due to the lack of interest, leadership, and will of the UN member countries.

Some UN member countries have also expressed interest to develop further the role of NGOs. Germany, which was European Union presidential country in the first half of 1999, affirmed during its presidency that NGOs are essential partners for government and the international community, and speaking of their capacity to participate constructively in policy making and implementation in global platforms as well\textsuperscript{92c}. In the recent years such countries as Canada have produced resolutions to United Nations General Assembly on increasing NGOs roles.

The Secretary – General report from April 2000 addressed to the Millennium Assembly about UN reform continues with same approach: “Better governance means greater participation, coupled with accountability. Therefore, the international public domain – including the United Nations – must be opened up further to the participation of the many actors whose contributions are essential to managing the path of globalization. Depending on the issues at hand, this may include civil society organizations, the private sector, parliamentarians, local authorities, scientific associations, educational institutions and many other.”\textsuperscript{92d}

NGOs themselves widely believe that their partnership is implemented still only at rhetorical or symbolical level. NGOs have expressed on a regular basis their dissatisfaction with the current arrangements, and are hoping that the United Nations would find new ways to be more open to NGO partnership.\textsuperscript{92e}

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations has studied some ways to strengthen and transcend the framework of NGOs in order to gain more meaningful access to the UN and its negotiation and decision-making processes in Resolution 1996/31. This resolution establishes new accreditation rules for NGOs. Since the adoption of Resolution 1996/31 NGOs have enjoyed advances but also setbacks as well.

The General Assembly has recently been asked to examine the question of the participation of non-governmental organizations in all areas of work of the United Nations. In this study there will be a brief summary of the experience gained thorough the previous arrangements for consultation between the non-governmental organizations and the Economic and Social Council.

The Millennium Forum organized in spring 2000 at the request of Secretary-General Kofi Annan was also an attempt to develop further NGOs involvement. The Millennium Forum was the first NGO meeting in the UN buildings, where NGOs from all sectors of UN activity held meetings without sectorial barriers. The Millennium Forum process and its results will be analyzed later in this study.\textsuperscript{92f}

The following chapters will provide in more detail the history and the current debate of NGOs role in the UN.

\section{4.2. Developments in the Current Status of NGOs in the UN}

\subsection{4.2.1. ECOSOC}

On the basis of the United Nations Charter, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) started to prepare consultation practices with NGOs. On the 27th of December 1950, according to ECOSOC resolution 288 B (X) these arrangements were finally stated officially.

The year 1968 brought difficulties to the NGOs involvement. The New York Times published articles, which said that the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was funding a few important NGOs that had a consultative status in the ECOSOC. This lead to the first major review in UN and NGO relations. Professor Peter Willets provides insight: “There was an uproar after a series of articles in New York Times about secret CIA funding of some NGOs at the

\textsuperscript{92a} Weiss and Gordenker (ed.) 1996, 7.

\textsuperscript{92b} Annan 1998.

\textsuperscript{92c} Regional Hearing of Europe for the Millennium Assembly 1999.

\textsuperscript{92d} Secretary General report: We the people: the role of the United Nations in the 21st Century 2000, 8.

\textsuperscript{92e} Referring to the statements from the NGO meetings organized in addition to the UN international conferences in the 1990s (Rio de Janeiro, Copenhagen etc.).

\textsuperscript{92f} About 1400 representatives from NGOs met at the Millennium Forum on 22.–26.5.2000 in New York.
height of the Cold War. This led to a major review of ECOSOCs relations with NGOs ending in May 1968 with the endorsement of Revised Version of the statute, ECOSOC Resolution 1296 (XLIV).98

Many countries, especially developing countries, complained that the west was using NGOs in the cold war battle. Some more regulations concerning NGOs’ involvement were included in the resolution due to this occasion. On the 23rd of May 1968, ECOSOC resolution 1296 (XLIV) was adopted.

In the resolution 1296, the basic right of consultative NGOs is the right to give consultations in the ECOSOC, to its permanent and ad-hoc committees. NGOs with consultative status also have the right to be accredited to the UN’s international conferences and to have consultations with the UN secretariat99. Consultative membership also gives NGOs also an important advantage: they have the right to attend an area of delegations where they may lobby the representatives of governments and UN officials100.

The NGOs with consultative membership in ECOSOC had already established in 1948 a platform called the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations (CONGO) to guard NGOs’ rights and develop their role within ECOSOC. At the moment, CONGO deals mainly with procedural questions, but it has subcommittees where substance is also discussed, e.g., human rights, equality, and environmental questions. CONGO has also sponsored many NGOs’ alternative summits organized besides UN’s international conferences.

In ECOSOC, according to the “Arrangements for Consultation with Non-Governmental Organizations”, NGOs have to fulfill not only formal criteria, but they have to prove to be working on active and continuous basis. The main field of the work of NGOs has to be similar to ECOSOC and the goals of the NGOs similar to the spirit of the UN. In practice, an NGO has to apply for consultative membership, which is a time and energy consuming process. The Committee on Non-governmental Organizations (CONGO) of ECOSOC deals with applications, but ECOSOC needs to make the final decision. This committee consists of 19 UN member countries101.

The consultative membership in the ECOSOC has been divided into three categories for NGOs. Category I is the highest category. According to a 1995 ranking, 69 NGOs in all have this status, e.g., the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Rotary International, and the World Wide Fund for Nature International (WWF)102. In Category II there are NGOs (in all 436) which field of work is not as broad as in Category I. Such NGOs are, e.g., Amnesty International, Greenpeace International, OXFAM, and the World Organization of the Scout Movement103. The lower consultative status within ECOSOC is called Roster status. This status is given to NGOs, which can prove to be able to give ECOSOC temporary assistance from their field of specialty. 563 NGOs had this status in 1995.104

ECOSOC’s Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations (CONGO) has discussed since the approval of Res. 1296 the role of NGOs to ECOSOC105.

In 1981, CONGO made five suggestions as improvements. (1) First, the committee requested stronger participation of NGOs in conferences organized by the UN. NGOs should also be included in the national and regional preparations. (2) Second, the procedures of NGOs’ involvement in the different UN committees should be made clear and harmonized. (3) Co-operation between the UN secretariat and NGOs should be enlarged. (4) The NGO unit of the UN should be made stronger. (5) And finally, the NGOs should be encouraged to widen their participation and consultations also at the regional level. ECOSOC invited CONGO to present their proposals at the Council meeting in 1983.

In 1990, CONGO and the consultative members of ECOSOC had consultations on the corrections to the Res. 1296. The representatives of the consultative member NGOs highlighted especially two issues: 1) the consultative status should be enlarged to the main committees of the General Assembly of the UN and 2) all consultative members of ECOSOC should have access to all UN conferences and their preparations.

CONGO decided to establish a working group in order to study possibilities to improve the status of consultative members. The working

98 Willets 1999, 249.
99 Resolution 1296 (XLIV) Arrangements for Consultation with Non-governmental Organizations Part I 1968, 621-630.
100 Riddel-Dixon 1995, 294.
101 The Arrangements for Consultation with Non-governmental Organizations, Part I, 616.
102 General Review of Arrangements for UN Consultations with Non-Governmental Organizations (I), List of non-governmental organizations in consultative status with ECOSOC as at 31 July 1995, 282.
103 General Review of Arrangements for UN Consultations with NGOs (I) 1995.
104 General Review of Arrangements for UN Consultations with NGOs (I) 1995.
105 General Review of Arrangements for UN Consultations with NGOs (I), 285-287.
The main questions and problems on process can be divided into four categories. (1) The involvement of national NGOs, (2) rearrangements of the categories of consultative status, (3) accreditation and rights of NGOs in the UN conferences, and (4) the NGOs’ right to participate in the General Assembly, the Security Council, and in the meetings of the Bretton Woods institutions.

Despite the fact that Resolution 1996/31 did not manage to solve all these problems, the debate continued. Right after the adoption of the Resolution, ECOSOC made a new decision:

“At its 489th plenary meeting on 25 July 1996, the Economic and Social Council, reaffirming the importance of the contributions of non-governmental organizations to the work of the United Nations and taking into account the contributions made by non-governmental organizations to recent international conferences, decided to recommend that the General Assembly examine, at its fifty first session, the question of the participation of non-governmental organizations in all areas of the work of the United Nations, in the light of the experience gained through the arrangements for consultation between non-governmental organizations and the Economic and Social Council."

NGOs were not satisfied with Resolution 1996/31. This ECOSOC decision gave NGOs the chance to continue the fight. Professor Peter Willets provides insight into the background tensions among NGOs:

“(From Rio Earth Summit) The NGO community had no specific proposals to take to New York, and among the permanent mission at the UN headquarters the status of NGOs became intensely controversial. ... Despite the debate and detailed committee work in the three reviews, the official procedures specified in the three versions of the statute have remained virtually the same as the consultative arrangements adopted in the late 1940s."

The fight to gain access through ECOSOC into the UN bodies has not been easy for the NGOs. Despite the limits and only few improvements in the status, NGOs have managed to find a much stronger role in UN bodies with their creativeness and informal procedures.
“To summarize, the ECOSOC statute defines a minimum baseline for NGO participation in ECOSOC and its official subsidiary bodies. It also legitimizes participation in much wider range of bodies. However, what actually happens in a particular time and place depends on the policies of the intergovernmental relations at the meeting and the skills of the NGOs in the playing the diplomatic game.”

These skills and the practical level of NGOs work will be analyzed in later chapters. In the next page there will be few diagrams summarizing NGOs involvement’s in ECOSOC.

### The Three Levels of ECOSOC Consultative Status for NGOs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Category A or I or General Status</th>
<th>Category B or II or Special Status</th>
<th>Register or Roster</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
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<td>745</td>
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</table>
The work of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG), which was concluded by the adoption of Resolution 1996/31, also contained discussion concerning the widening of NGO access to other UN bodies. When the mandate of the group was focused on NGO participation in UN international conferences, most of the amendments of the NGO statute were made in these terms. Thus, in the final outcome, the greatest changes to the text of the statute were the new definitions for NGO participation in the UN conferences.

Despite the fact that NGO access to the General Assembly was not mentioned in the terms of reference for the OEWG individual governments, NGOs kept the debate open. When the OEWG did not give opportunities to have a real debate on how to provide access to the Assembly or the agencies, it was postponed. The OEWG agreed to start a separate discussion on the question. ECOSOC then recommended “that the General Assembly examine, at its fifty-first session, the question of the participation of non-governmental organizations in all areas of work of the United Nations.” The review closed with no practical recommendations but still left the question open.

The role of NGOs has also been brought up regularly in General Assembly agenda by the UN international conferences. When discussing the results from the World Summit for Social Development, the General Assembly made Resolution 54/23 on Involvement of civil society and other actors:

“11. Takes note of the decision adopted by the Preparatory Committee at its resumed first session on accreditation and modalities for participation of non-governmental organizations at the special session, and recalls General Assembly decision 54/407 of 8 October 1999 on arrangements regarding participation of non-governmental organizations in the special session.”

The draft decisions A/54/45/Add. 1, which was included in the Resolution, is an example of the current problematic situation where the GA needs time after time, to decide on NGOs’ access to subsidiary bodies. This duplicative work causes frustration when the renegotiating occurs every year on the same issues.

The General Assembly discussed the same issue, when it covered the International Conference on Population and Development. This Resolution 53/183 is almost word by word identical to the later Resolution 53/189 on Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

The next place for a general debate after the work of OEWG was the General Assembly itself on January 1997. While discussing the results of the UN International Conference in Rio, i.e. the Earth Summit, the GA adopted into its language the new definition “Major Groups” with the intention of extending their participation rights.

At the same time, the GA working group on UN reforms set up a subgroup on NGO participation. The work of this subgroup proved to be a disaster. It held meetings for six months without an agreement on its mandate. It is interesting to note that the United States was at this time in favor of NGO access to the General Assembly while the G-77 was blocking it, when it had previously being fighting for it.

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120ECOSOC Decision 1996/297.
121General Assembly Resolution 54/23: Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development on Involvement of civil society and other actors (including draft decisions for adoption by the General Assembly, A/54/45/Add. 1).
122General Assembly Resolution 53/183: Implementation of the Programmes of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. “The General Assembly (5.) Stresses the need for the effective participation of actors of civil society, particularly non-governmental organizations, in the preparations for the special session, as well as the need to ensure appropriate arrangements, taking into account the practice and experience gained at the Conference, for their substantive contributions to and active involvement in the preparatory meetings and the special session, until the President of the General Assembly, in consultation with Member States, to propose to Member States appropriate modalities for their effective involvement in the special session.”
123General Assembly Decision 51/467: Participation of major groups, including non-governmental organizations, in the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly. “At its 96th plenary meeting, on 18 April 1997, the General Assembly, recalling its resolution 51/181 of 16 December 1996, in which it recognized, inter alia, the important contributions made by major groups, including non-governmental organizations, at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 3 to 14 June 1992, and in the implementation of its recommendations, and recalling also that in the same resolution it invited the President of the General Assembly, in consultation with Member States, to propose to Member States appropriate modalities for the effective involvement of major groups in the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly: (a) Decided that major groups, as identified in Agenda 21 and represented by non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and on the roster, would be invited to participate in the plenary meeting of the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly in the debate on an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21; (b) Decided also that representatives of such major groups who could not be accommodated in the debate on an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21 in the plenary meeting of the nineteenth special session may be invited to address the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the special session; (c) Invited the President of the General Assembly to extend invitations to representatives of such major groups to participate in the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly; (d) Decided that arrangements concerning the participation of representatives of such major groups in the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly would in no way create a precedent for other special sessions of the Assembly.
124G-77 is a name for group of 77 countries coming from developing regions mainly Asia and Africa.
125Willets 1999, 275.
While the Working Group failed to find any solutions to the problem, reality seemed to favor a more positive outcome. NGOs managed to get involved at the General Assembly’s special sessions. The General Assembly’s President Razali Ismail ruling gave NGOs speaking right at the end of the debate at each of the meetings of the Earth Summit II: “For the first time in the history of the UN, NGOs had direct official public participation in plenary meetings of the General Assembly.”

Despite these problems in the Working Group, the Canadians did not give up and brought a proposal to the General Assembly, requesting the Secretary-General to report on existing practices on NGO involvement. The report, United Nations Document A/53/170, which the Secretary-General then gave, was criticized as being “poorly drafted, incomplete, making trivial proposals for reform and avoiding all the contentious political questions.

Canada has been one of the most active countries in the field of NGO participation. Canada tried again in late 1998 by bringing the topic back to the agenda. This time the General Assembly agreed to request governments and NGOs to submit comments on the Secretary-General’s report.

NGOs are seeking to build a coalition to react to the current situation. Professor Peter Willets recalls a strong unity and involvement in the NGO movement concerning reactions to the Secretary-General’s report: “The arguments will be lost in further obscure reports and procedural debates, unless the issue is revitalized during the forthcoming Special Sessions and the Millennium Assembly.”

Also the International NGO Conference in Seoul on October 1999 called on NGOs to “strengthen our strategies for securing access to all areas of work of the United Nations including the General Assembly and the Security Council.”

Despite these goals and actions not much have been gained. Previously, in addition to the governments of member countries, only the UN secretariat, the Pope, and PLO’s Jasser Arafat have had the right to take part in the formal meetings of the General Assembly. ECOSOC’s consultative members have had the right to attend the Special Sessions of the General Assembly which related to questions of development, drugs, racism, e.g. The NGOs’ involvement in the General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on June 1997 on sustainable development can be seen as a breakthrough. Recently, the International Committee on Red Cross (ICRC) and later the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have received an observer status in the General Assembly of the UN. The argument in the 1999 GA decision states “in consideration of the special role and mandates conferred upon it by the Geneva Conventions.” At the later stage, the USA in particular has opposed the granting of observer status to NGOs, and no further applications have been considered.

NGOs formed in May 2000 a new network, International NGO Task Group on Legal and Institutional Matters (INTGLIM), to bring back the NGOs’ access to the General Assembly to the agenda. The goal of INTGLIM was to achieve a limited extension of UN consultative arrangements on NGO Participation in the Work of the United Nations General Assembly. The proposal was planned to be taken to the Millennium (55th) UN General Assembly’s agenda. INTGLIM claimed that the resolution would formally recognize only “key elements from fifty-four
years of existing practice of NGO participation in the work of the General Assembly.\textsuperscript{135}

In the draft Resolution, INTGLIM makes clear that the aim of the Resolution is not to reduce the rights of states, but rather to help NGOs find new ways of consultation. The goal itself is not set very high, which is wise if the Resolution is to be accepted. The background of the Resolution is to simplify the “hundreds of resolutions extending ad hoc consultative and participatory rights to NGOs over the last five decades in international meetings and conferences convened by the United Nations.”\textsuperscript{136} Behind the proposal is also frustration from the duplicative renegotiating, which occurs every year on the same issues. INTGLIM believes that this only occurs because a few member states oppose increased participation of NGOs.

“The proposed resolution calls upon the General Assembly to extend limited consultative arrangements to NGOs to the General Assembly, its Main Committees and, as appropriate, its subsidiary and ad hoc bodies. These arrangements include the right for accredited NGOs to attend UNGA open meetings, receive documentation, and be able to make available their reports and written documents, as is regularly done at many UNGA meetings. It does not call for extending other consultative rights such as speaking rights or the right to have written statements translated and circulated.”\textsuperscript{137}

The proposed resolution establishes procedures by which NGOs shall be granted consultative status to the General Assembly. INTGLIM relies on ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31 that establishes uniform procedures for “Participation of Non-Governmental Organizations in International Conferences Convened by the United Nations General Assembly and Their Preparatory Processes.”\textsuperscript{138} This consultative status should be granted without prejudice to NGOs, which have that status in ECOSOC. The INTGLIM draft Resolution is in Annex 3.

During the writing of this study, it has still remained unclear if INTGLIM managed to achieve its goals. Nonetheless, it is a fine example of well-done and constructive NGO lobby work. The proposal itself would be progressive and take the role of participatory democracy within the UN to a totally new phase.

\textsuperscript{135} INTGLIM General Assembly NGO Resolution dated on May 2000 (http://www.worldfederalist.org/) (12.7.2000).

\textsuperscript{136} INTGLIM GA NGO Resolution (http://www.worldfederalist.org/) (12.7.2000).

\textsuperscript{137} INTGLIM GA NGO Resolution (http://www.worldfederalist.org/) (12.7.2000).

\textsuperscript{138} ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31.

\textsuperscript{139} Security Council Standing Order, Article 39.

\textsuperscript{140} The Author had a meeting with James A. Paul on March 2000.


\textsuperscript{142} General Review of Arrangements for UN Consultations with NGOs (I), p. 285-287, 293.
Since 1984, NGOs even without consultative status in ECOSOC have been able to be accredited to UN conferences. The role of the Earth Summit in Rio has already been mentioned several times. The Rio conference in 1992 was officially named the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). At UNCED, NGOs had also a visible impact in the final resolution on sustainable development. This resolution, Agenda 21, contained guidelines, which asked all national and international institutions to establish open dialogue with non-governmental organizations. Agenda 21 opened the way for all later discussions and revision, which has been reported earlier in this study. At the UNCED, NGOs’ involvement at the UN’s international conferences was at the highest stage. After UNCED, ECOSOC organized a Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) and gave all NGOs present at the UNCED conferences a Roster status at ECOSOC. After UNCED, NGOs have also had access to the preparations of UN conferences, which was not possible before the Rio meeting.

4.2.5. The UN Secretariat

The UN secretariat’s role is to facilitate all UN institutions and organizations and put into practice the decisions of various UN bodies. The secretariat also organizes all UN meetings and conferences. The role of secretariat is crucial when NGOs try to get involved in the activity of the UN. Often very minor issues, like the lack of bureaucratic resources, become obstacles for NGO involvement.

NGOs have often complained that the role of UN secretariat has not been supportive towards NGOs involvement. The secretariat’s response has been that they have too little recourse to give assistance to NGOs. The UN secretariat has special sections which mainly does and co-ordinates the work of NGOs. In the unit of Division for Policy Co-ordination and Economic and Social Council Affairs there is a special NGO unit. This unit works as a secretariat for the Committee on Non-governmental Organizations of ECOSOC but also serves as an information office for NGOs.

The NGO unit of Department of Public Information (DPI) is also an important unit for NGOs. The aim of this unit is to spread information about the UN through NGOs to the public. The DPI is also a source of official documents, not only for NGOs, but also for all that have an interest. NGOs also have admission to some of the decision making of secretariat.

4.2.6. United Nations special agencies

The United Nations Special Agencies are currently, in addition to the General Assembly, highly ranked in the NGOs’ goal setting. Professor Peter Willets states: “NGOs should gain access to all the specialized agencies. While it was stated in general terms, the real goal was to gain access to the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and the World Bank, which are both UN agencies, and ultimately the World Trade Organization (WTO) which is not (an UN body).”

The United Nations’ specialized agencies are independent organizations with their own statutes, budget, secretariat, procedures, and location. The specialized agencies’ relations with NGOs vary depending on the nature and history of the agency.

Of the agencies, UNESCO has been most co-operative with NGOs, although it has reduced some provisions in recent years. UNESCO has

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146 NGOs like InterAction, International Council of Voluntary Agencies, International Committee on Red Cross etc. have access to Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) etc.
147 Willets 1999, 271.
provided office space, subventions and access to policy making. ILO has had a structure that gives trade unions and employers’ organizations voting rights. In the more important institutions NGOs have not been well recognized and the goal has been to open access to Bretton Woods institutions, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund. The World Bank has had a separate but rather small NGO Committee, and the IMF has not had a formal system at all. The extension of an NGO presence would nowhere else cause such a radical transformation to the current system in question.

In the World Bank the presence of NGOs can be seen in the change of the policy priorities. New goals have been given to poverty alleviation, environmental assessments, and awareness on the social impact, as well as in the transparency of the projects and on needs for local consultations on project designs. In Bretton Woods institutions, developing countries are especially hoping to gain support from NGOs, e.g., on the pressing for the relief of debt. The IMF has itself started to undergo some changes to improve transparency, due to the crises in South East Asia, Russia, and Brazil, and has begun to recognize the significance of social factors in economic stability. The campaign for debt reduction called Jubilee 2000 could prove to be a good start of NGO influence. Professor Peter Willets points out practical goals such as: “a carefully targeted attempt to persuade G7 governments to accept an NGO presence at the Interim Committee, the Development Committee and the Board of Governors. The latter two are joint bodies of the Bank and the Fund. A first step might be to bring the members of the Bank NGO Committee into their meetings.”

NGOs are seeking also access to influence the World Trade Organization as was seen in Seattle in December 1999. The WTO is not a UN agency. This fact can be an obstacle, but on the other hand it might also be a positive factor. The WTO Establishing Agreement provides “for appropriate arrangements for consultation and co-operation with non-governmental organizations.” This gives a good basis for NGOs to continue the work of opening access to, e.g., ministerial conferences.

4.3. The Future of the Role of Non-Governmental Organizations in the United Nations

4.3.1. Work Continues to Improve NGO Access to UN Bodies

The fact that NGOs have a formal status in the UN is exceptional amongst the intergovernmental bodies throughout the world. Despite this, many of the NGOs are dissatisfied.

In practice the question of NGOs participation is not one-sided. History has shown that when the access has become easier for NGOs, they have unexpectedly used their rights less. This remarkable finding has been reported by Peter Willets: “Together in the Council and Committee hearings, the numbers have gone down: twenty to thirty NGOs made oral statements on forty to sixty occasions a year in the 1950s. Yet, fewer than ten NGOs spoke on fewer than twenty occasions per year in the 1990s.” There are several reasons for this. NGOs are frustrated by their inability to achieve more support for their goals, and the UN’s bureaucratic procedures cause frustration. The UN has become a larger and more complex institution. At the same time, in global terms, the ECOSOC and even the General Assembly have become less important in world politics. Still, in some opinions, the fact that NGOs have an formal right to participate in the UN matter more than what those rights are and how they are used.

At the same time, some NGOs have managed to gain greater influence than what the formal rights would give. Through their competence and lobbying skills, some NGOs have even gained an important role in some policy-making processes. When NGOs have become a more integral part of the system, they have gained increasing access to many private or informal meetings and bodies, where the policies are often drafted and then passed on to formal bodies for approval.

NGOs’ relations to UN bodies have been generally more progressive in United Nations field operations. Many NGOs have a crucial role, e.g., on bringing the aid in war zones to people. The aim of the ECOSOC reviews

References:

Willets 1999, 277-278.


29-11.-4.12.1999 in Seattle during WTO negotiations the protest, which were started by Trade Unions’ demonstrations, broke out into violent conflict with the security and police forces.

Agreement Establishing WTO Article V.
in the statutes of 1968 and 1996 was to examine the procedures based on the practical experiences gained from the field. Despite this intention, both times the outcome was controversial. The informal rights the NGOs had previously have been reduced, nor have any new formal rights been authorized.

The United Nations International Conference Earth Summit in 1992, where NGOs became a central part in the political process, brought the item back to the agenda, as stated in the chapter covering ECOSOC. The aim in Rio was to transfer the NGO involvement to the whole UN system. When this process changed to become only a review in the current ECOSOC procedures, it caused great dissatisfaction within the NGOs involved. Many of the results were quite the opposite of what the NGOs had initially expected. Still, the ECOSOC did leave the question of widening NGO access to other UN bodies open by concluding “with a view to update them, if necessary.”

The aim of Agenda 21 was “not to produce grand declarations which would be forgotten. It was to result policy changes being implemented.” The Earth Summit wanted that the involvement of NGOs would expand to all parts of UN. Similar expectations have been expressed throughout the 1990s in the UN international conferences.

In 1998, Secretary-General Kofi Annan published his second report on the relationship of the non-governmental organizations to the United Nations. The report serves as the basis for the ongoing discussion on UN-NGO relations. NGOs claimed that it was poorly drafted and narrowly focused. Still the report opened once again the debate of the role of NGOs in the UN. The General Assembly also formally decided to open it for contribution and comments from both UN member countries and NGOs.

Despite the setback, many NGOs are continuing their struggle. NGOs seem to understand, that to reach their goals they might need long term commitments to their goals. For example, the Global Policy Forum (GPF), when reacting to the Secretary-General’s 1998 report on NGO relations, made this point: “Secretariat, delegations and NGOs should work together to consolidate the new arrangements for NGO consultation contained in ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31. Secretariat, delegations and NGOs should work together to define “existing practices’ in various UN forums and to extend “best practices’, including practices of NGO consultation with the General Assembly, its Main Committees and Subsidiary Bodies.

The GPF requests the General Assembly to pass a resolution, which is similar to the INTGLIM proposal, giving the GA consultative rights to NGOs already in consultation with ECOSOC. Such rights should apply at least to the General Assembly, its Main Committees and Special Sessions. Rights to Subsidiary Bodies should also be considered. The GPF calls on the GA to pass a resolution establishing strong and uniform rights of access to Special Sessions, especially those that undertake reviews of major conferences. In the GPF’s opinion, all NGOs accredited to the conference should be accredited to the Special Session.

The Secretary General’s report from March 27th 2000, “We the people: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century”, also gave input to the discussions on the UN and NGO relationship: “(332.) We also need to adapt our deliberative work so that it can benefit fully from the contributions to articulating and defending global norms. It is clear that the United Nations and the world’s people have much to gain from opening the Organization further to this vital source of energy and expertise – just as we have gained from closer institutional links and practical co-operation with national parliaments.

The report also had some practical proposals, which call for innovative new practices, which is not that innovative of a proposal in itself. The consultations before the adoption of the resolution 1996/31 already brought the open questions and procedures to the table. Currently, political will would be much more important to push forward the process. It is notable

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[154] Agenda 21, paragraph 27.9.: “All parts of the UN system “including international finance and development agencies” should review “ways of enhancing existing procedures and mechanisms by which non-governmental organizations contribute to policy design, decision making, implementation and evaluation”.

[155] ECOSOC Resolution 1296 (XLIV).


that also the Secretary General is, for different reasons, currently lacking that will. New working groups only push the solution further.

“(333.) I would ask the General Assembly, therefore, to explore ways of improving these relationships. As a first step, an expert group, including representatives of civil society organizations, might be asked to prepare a study of innovative “best practices’ in how those organizations contribute to the work of United Nations in all its aspects. Such a study could form the basis adopting new ways of involving civil society more fully in our common endeavors.”

It is understandable that many NGOs are not satisfied with these concrete steps proposed in the report. Once again the NGOs must consider taking a leading role for themselves if they wish to achieve something new in connection with the Millennium Assembly and Summit processes.

Nicholas Dunlop from Earth Action points out the topical opportunity for NGOs: “In September, 2000, at a Millennium Summit at UN headquarters, the world’s leaders will meet to discuss ‘The United Nations in the Twenty-First Century’. This is the first time since the founding of the UN that national leaders have convened to consider long-range improvements in our global institutions.”

4.3.2. Would New Definitions Change Policies?

The discussion on the definition of an NGO became timely recently, when ECOSOC in November 1996 granted Roster status to the National Rifle Association (NRA). Many NGOs reacted critically to the membership of this patriotic North American gun lobby.

It is natural that in the NGO movement there are differing ideas about the “true” nature of an NGO and about whom of them should be accepted as legitimate partners by the UN. In many presumptions only “true” NGOs are networks or movements of ordinary people demanding progressive social change. However, the question is not as easy as it might first seem.

In the world of politics the description non-governmental organization (NGO) has become a widely used definition. Within the UN, the definition NGO has been used from the beginning. Formally, in diplomatic language, NGO stands for a body which is eligible to gain consultative status with the UN ECOSOC. The ECOSOC statute has defined the basis of such a legitimate NGO.

In the statutes it says that firstly, NGOs must be “concerned with matters falling within the competence of the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies.” At the moment this requirement does not have any significance since ECOSOC covers so wide range of subjects. Secondly, NGOs running for consultative status should prove that their aims and purpose conform to those of the UN. This criterion was used during the cold war to prevent the admission of NGOs from another block. Recently, the areas of controversy have been human rights and sexual politics. Thirdly, UN Charter Article 2(7) prohibits intervention in the “domestic jurisdiction” of a state. This means that to gain consultative status, e.g., concerning human rights, NGOs must not focus exclusively on a situation in one country, but they have to have a general concern with human rights. In practice NGOs, which are critical to their governments’ human rights policy have had difficulties in getting the status. Human Rights NGOs have expressed strong concern about this problem, the result of which is that only NGOs who are favored by, e.g., dictatorial governments, can gain status in ECOSOC.

The fourth points in the ECOSOC regulations are the demands on NGOs’ organizational side. NGOs should have established headquarters, a democratically adopted constitution, and an executive body that is responsible for the determination of policy. There have been exceptions, such as research bodies, service providers, and fund-raisers. The fifth requirement considers the independence of an NGO from government. A government or intergovernmental agreement cannot establish an NGO. The final criteria deal with the fact that there are local, provincial, national, international and global organizations. In the first years ECOSOC reconciled with only a few national NGOs. At the moment, national

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\[164\] Dunlop 1999.

\[165\] NRA is an influential gun lobby organisation from the USA.

\[166\] Willets 1999, 250.

\[167\] ECOSOC Statutes: Arrangements for Consultations with Non-governmental organizations.

\[168\] UN Charter Article 2(7).


\[170\] ECOSOC Statutes.
NGOs, including members of international non-governmental organization (INGO) are encouraged to apply for consultative status.171

“In the contribution of NGOs is to make the UN system more open and transparent, the principle cannot be applied in a partial or biased manner. Business federations, the Catholic Church and the NRA (National Rifle Association) have as much right as environmentalists, woman’s groups and human rights organizations to be accepted as NGOs. The more conservative groups might even faithfully represent the view of more people than groups from progressive social movements.”172

The recent globalization process and creation of the global governance has again brought up the discussion of the role of the other Social Partners of the UN. These social partners are, e.g., international business and local democratic institutions. It is natural that the UN hopes to gain grater partnership with the global business corporations. This would possibly bring new private money into the UN and help it gain a greater role in global economical questions. NGOs have been critical to such tendencies. Many of them in principle are against the involvement of business partners. They see that this could harm the independence of the UN. Some fear that business would gain a better role in the UN and NGOs would be left aside.173

This discussion found some new dimensions at the UN International Conference called the Earth Summit in 1992. During the preparations of the Earth Summit the steering group174 for NGO participation included business groups as a part of the “independent sector.” The phrase later changed. The Agenda 21, which was adopted at the Earth Summit, includes a section where understood as “social groups” which should be given attention because “one of the fundamental prerequisites for the achievement of sustainable development is broad public participation in decision-making.” This paper listed nine major groups: woman, children and youth, indigenous people, NGOs, local authorities, workers and their trade unions, business and industry, the scientific and technical community and farmers.

This section attempted to define the non-governmental partners of the UN in a new way. However, this new definition got strong opposition already during the preparations of the Earth Summit by the NGO movement. Professor Peter Willets points out some problems in it and states that the list of major groups is arbitrary: “It includes woman but not men, the young but not the elderly, farmers but not fishing communities, trade unions but not professional associations, natural scientists but not social scientists, and industry but not services. It is incoherent as it includes local authorities despite the fact that they are arms of government. It is illogical because it excludes NGOs as a separate category when the other eight major groups are all represented at the UN under the heading of NGOs.”175

In 1995 the UN Secretariat had an initiative to include the new definitions of major groups and social movements into the statutes for the NGOs, but did not succeed. The Habitat II UN Conference in June 1996 and in its follow-up brought even a new phrase: “social partners”. At the Habitat it was used extensively. In the Resolution 16/12, May 1997, where the UN Secretariat was encouraged to collaborate with social partners, they were defined as: “local authorities and relevant actors of civil society, particularly the private sector, non-governmental organizations and research organizations.” This loose formulation allows more flexible arrangements than the Agenda 21’s list of nine major groups. In any case, the term “social partners” has lately come into increasing use, even though it is not yet clearly defined. In the world of diplomacy these terms aim to include more partners than just the NGOs recognized by ECOSOC.176

Another one of the new phrases is the civil society. Somehow it sounds better and more positive than non-governmental organization and many of the NGO have accepted it and use it themselves. Some NGOs strongly oppose this definition. In their opinion it includes business, etc., which they don’t want. They fear that by this change in the wording, the UN will change its policy without discussing through the difficult matter.177 The Global Policy Forum states on its policy paper from June 1999: “UN should cease to use the term ‘civil society’ interchangeably with non-governmental organizations.” Secretariat or UN agency proposals to increase UN interaction with private business or other non-state actors should be fully and openly discussed, with an eye to its future impact on relations with NGOs.178

172 Willets 1999, 261.
173 Reference to discussions in the Millennium Forum at the working group 6 on UN and NGO relations.
174 The International Facilitating Committee (IFC).
175 Agenda 21 was adopted at the Earth Summit on June 21st 1992.

176 Willets 1999, 258.
177 Willets 1999, 258.
178 Reference to discussions with James Paul, Director of Global Policy Forum, at the Millennium Forum.
At the same time, the NGOs keep emphasizing the importance of awareness of the diversity among the traditional NGOs. "There can be no objective test to separate major groups from other social groups, progressive from conservative movements, or non-political from political groups. There is no such thing as a true NGO, beyond being non-commercial and non-violent. 180 Some NGOs even want to clarify the definitions themselves: "(NGOs) make important contributions towards bringing about good society. It is important to recognize, however, that they are not the totality of civil society."

In any case, as the terminology is under transition, the phrase non-governmental organization remains as the only one that is formally accepted. As practice shows, many NGOs would not even accept all NGOs as partners of the UN. This brings into the agenda the need of the NGO movement itself to discuss the nature of being an NGO and an internal code of conduct, which will be covered in this study in a later chapter.

4.3.3. Renewing the Codes of Conduct of the UN for the NGOs

The practical element of the UN and NGOs is naturally always a topical question. A big part of the NGO dissatisfaction towards the current UN system on a day to day basis arises from practical and procedural problems. NGOs are also often unaware of the practices and they lack clear guidance for their work. Due to the unawareness of procedural practices NGOs often fail to reach their goals. NGOs come from a variety of backgrounds and locations and naturally they have different abilities to adapt to the UN system. A big question is that should NGOs become structurally and mentally part of the system before they are able to contribute and if not how much should the system enable the NGOs to contribute. These questions are linked to the practical element of the day to day life of NGOs in the UN bodies and premises. These practical elements are not the main focus of the study, even though they are part of the NGOs’ involvement. Thus, the issue will be covered only partly.

The power and influence of an NGO is largely dependent on its own actions: how it works, prepares, participates and how skilled it is in lobbying, etc. This study will cover this matter only briefly, but nonetheless, the following is Peter Willets list of some such factors:

- precedents on what has occurred in previous meetings of the same body
- the personal attitudes towards NGOs of the delegate in the chair
- the feeling among the majority of the delegates about the likelihood of NGOs improving or reducing their chances of achieving the outcome they prefer
- expectations that NGOs have information, skill, experience or political understanding, which need to be considered before taking any decisions

NGOs can increase their opportunities to speak, gain attention and affect a negotiating process by:

- following the expected patterns of diplomatic behavior and language
- gaining respect from the delegates for their command of the issues
- maintaining awareness of the shifting flow of the debate
- exercising careful political judgment on when, how and whom to lobby

NGOs can partly blame themselves for not winning stronger involvement. NGOs have failed to mobilize a unity for their own participation. While NGOs have managed to influence outcomes of particular UN international conferences, they have failed to have enough impact in UN bodies “Because they have put little effort into these procedural questions, the fine policy declarations are often only partially implemented.” 182

There are also several procedural problems that have not been solved that unnecessarily limit the work of NGOs, and thus cause frustration. The blame is often squared upon the rules of the game set by UN:

“The rules of the game do matter. The NGO community needs a central body with expertise on what those rules are and how to use rules to make their voice heard in UN policy making.”

ECOSOC Committee on NGOs (CONGO) aim has been to operate as such body but it has not had enough support even from NGOs. One of the CONGO’s aims is to consult with NGOs about the operation of the consultative arrangements 185.

180 Willets 1999, 261.
181 The Commonwealth Foundation: Civil Society in the New Millennium project.
182 Willets 1999, 266.
183 Willets 1999, 281.
184 Willets 1999, 282.
185 The Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Status with ECOSOC (CONGO) was renamed in 1997 to be "in Consultative Relationship with the UN". CONGO was first established in 1946. CONGO has now 19 members, which serve four-year terms. The functions are to 1) consider applications from NGOs in consultative status, 2) consider request by General Status NGOs to place an item on the agenda of the Council (ECOSOC), 3) consider request by General and/or Special Status NGOs to be heard by the Council, 4) review the reports submitted every four years by General and Special Status NGOs, 5) consider whether the consultative status of an NGO should be suspended or withdrawn, 6) consult with NGOs about the operation of the consultative arrangements and 9) deal with any question referred to it by ECOSOC or by Secretariat.
NGOs have been trying to form and develop further a central body to protect their rights. The Global Policy Forum (GPF) proposes the CONGO to hold a consultation meeting with NGOs during each of its sessions and to consider other means to increase dialogue with NGOs. Committee should take steps to de-politicize its work on accreditation, including possibly using the recommendation of an expert body. A more precise definition of accreditation criteria would also help. Committees need to drop consideration of new rules restricting NGO access, while at the same time consulting with NGOs to rectify problems of conduct or promoting more effective interaction at intergovernmental meetings. This is all mentioned in the GPF’s statement.

These practical problems came up recently when Secretary-General Kofi Annan published in 1998 his second report on the relationship of the non-governmental organizations to the United Nations. It has been claimed to be poorly drafted and narrowly focused.

The report has been opened by the General Assembly for contribution and comments from both UN member countries and NGOs. The Global Policy Forum (GPF) is one of the few NGOs, which have reacted to the Secretary-General’s report. NGOs criticize the UN about failures in the practical procedures, but generally lack interest on developing them further.

The Global Policy Forum’s (GPF) statement gives insight to many practical problems that NGOs face. The GPF sets as a first goal the most extensive access as possible to UN information for NGOs. In the GPF’s opinion, all official documents should be available from the web. Also, free access to the Optical Disk System and Treaty Database have been requested. The GPF also makes note of the drafting process. Transparency and efficient consultation require that the draft texts, non-papers, and other non-public documents on a selective basis would be available.

The second topic for the GPF is access to premises. The security and other access limitations have caused problems for NGOs. Security can be seen as an excuse to limit NGO participation. “The secretariat has recently promulgated restrictive security rules that have made NGO entry to UN buildings more difficult and have closed off sections of the UN headquarters complex to NGOs.” The GPF requests that the security system should treat NGOs the same as delegates, press and UN staff. Also open dialogue on the security issues with the NGOs is requested. The GPF asks that the Secretariat should clearly explain the need for security arrangements and should announce new rules reasonably in advance, after full consultation. Also, the Secretariat and the NGOs should consult together to create clearer rules and regulations ensuring NGO rights and responsibilities in the UN buildings. The GPF also asks the Secretariat to look into the broad issue of NGO-related physical facilities at the UN, including conference space and meeting rooms.

Thirdly, the GPF points out the need for advocacy and support within the Secretariat and UN agencies for NGOs. The GPF also mentions the need for consultation in administrative decision-making. The GPF recalls more bilateral communication between NGOs and the Secretariat: “Secretary General should meet from time to time with working NGO representatives to consider how a partnership can best be built and how the UN can best work with NGOs, especially in its deliberative and administrative operations.” In the GPF’s opinion it is the Secretary-General’s duty to ensure that the Secretariat understands the meaning of NGO dialogue. The Secretary-General should consider Secretariat-wide initiatives to define and strengthen the culture of openness, accessibility, and partnership with NGOs. The Secretary-General should also create a new focal point office exclusively for NGOs in the Secretariat, perhaps in his Executive Office. The Inter-Departmental Working Group on NGOs should again include NGO representatives, on a regular basis in its sessions. NGOs could also be useful while evaluating the services provided by e.g. the DPI and ECOSOC Offices. The GPF also requests the UN and UN system agencies to substantially increase the budget of NGLS to consolidate its present work and to support an increase in its work program.

The GPF takes also notice of the need of Delegations and NGOs to continue to build closer relations, as a key element in strengthening NGO work at the United Nations. The need for office and meeting space is also mentioned: “Secretary General should broadly consider the space needs of NGOs, both for meetings and for offices.”

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188 Willets 1999, 275.
189 Paul 1999, 5-7, 23.
From the GPF’s position paper it can be seen that often the problems which cause frustration among the NGO movement are quite small and bureaucratical. This practical approach is naturally needed and it is an important part of UN Secretariat and NGO dialogue. But it is also clear that NGOs need a longer-term vision, which can gain stronger political support. The identification and formulation of this vision is a true challenge for the global NGO movement.

The code of conduct is a basis of a respectful relationship. These problems unnecessarily weaken the relationship between the UN and NGOs. In any case, NGOs should not forget their own role in creating a working culture where contributions are welcome.

The United Nations’ University has an ambitious plan to collect the current codes of conduct, not only from the UN, but also from national level. The draft of this huge project was presented at the World Civil Society Forum in December. The aim of the study is to provide valuable pointers down the road of good principle and good practice. The study also gives NGOs some basis on their defense to gain respectful codes of conduct when their representativity, professionalism, and accountability are criticized. “When civil society organizations themselves take the initiative to create and implement their own codes of conduct, they provide a convincing response to external attempts to weaken the innovativeness and diversity that are their strengths.”

4.4. The Millennium Forum as Part of the UN Millennium Meetings

4.4.1. Remarks about the Preparations and Expected Outcome

One of the most recent platforms for NGO and UN dialogue was the Millennium Forum organized in May 2000 at UN headquarters. The history of this meeting goes back to the General Assembly meeting in December 1997, where it adopted a Resolution, which stated relating to ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31: “the General Assembly recognized the need to consider changes within the United Nations of a more fundamental nature than those encompassed by that resolution, and invited the Secretary General to elaborate further his proposal in that regard.”

The Secretary General reacted to this request later in his report for the General Assembly by stating that: “the year 2000 constitutes a unique and symbolically compelling moment for Member States to articulate and affirm an animating vision for the United Nations in the new era.” The Secretary General also proposed that the General Assembly of the year 2000 would be called “The Millennium Assembly” and that there would be an additional “Millennium NGO Forum” in conjunction with the Assembly. He also wanted to put forward UN NGO relations by proposing that the “member states consider convening a ministerial-level Special Commission to examine the relations among the various component parts of United Nations system.”

The Millennium Assembly and the additional Millennium Summit of the heads of the governments were given a high level political agenda. According to the Secretary General “The Millennium Summit would be asked to provide guidance to the Organization (UN) for meeting the challenges of the new century.” The specific questions would be: (a) What kind of United Nations do Member States desire? (b) What substantive objectives are they prepared to support? and (c) How should the United Nations relate to the growing number of international institutions, an increasingly robust global civil society and ever more integrated global

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196World Civil Society Forum (WOCOSOC) was organized by several global NGOs and UN secretariat at 7.-11.12.1999 in Montreal. The topic was Building Global Governance Partnership. Aim was to collect the leaders of global NGO movement to plan the actions of the coming year. The author of this study was also present there.

197Kunugi and Schweitz 1999, xi.

198General Assembly Resolution 52/12B 19th of December 1997.

199Secretary General Report to GA A/52/850.

200Secretary General Report to GA A/52/850.
markets and systems of production? These discussions would be facilitated by a report from the Secretary General, which he promised to be submitted in midsummer 2000\textsuperscript{202}. The themes would also be discussed in informal regional events where representatives of NGOs could also participate\textsuperscript{203}.

Some of the UN member states, mainly the USA, feared the potential NGO influence on the Millennium Assembly and compelled the Millennium NGO Forum to be held at an earlier stage. The financial resources of the Millennium Forum were also cut and thus, the NGOs based in New York faced a difficult decision. The Secretary-General had proposed to hold a meeting, but there was no money for it. These NGOs knew that they needed to do the organizing and fundraising work themselves. The NGOs decided to organize the meeting\textsuperscript{204}.

The preparations of the Millennium Forum where given to a separate executive committee\textsuperscript{205} which worked in co-operation with The Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations (CONGO)\textsuperscript{206}. Millennium Forum executive committee was supported with a broader steering committee\textsuperscript{207}.

CONGO has sponsored a series of consultations organized by the CONGO Chair’s Task Force on UN Reform. These consultations have operated also as preparations for the Millennium Forum. Other topics have been the UN Reform and the increasing of NGO access to the UN\textsuperscript{208}.

The Preliminary Report of Millennium Forum preparations stated as a goal for the Forum:

“It is a well established fact that NGOs have effectively participated in the work of the League of Nations, they were present at the founding of the United Nations, and they have been effective partners of the United Nations ever since. It is therefore logical that NGOs play an important role when mission and future of the United Nations for 21st century is examined and the future structure is consulted upon by member states.\textsuperscript{209}"

The goals of the CONGO Task Force determined the objectives of the Millennium NGO Forum as:

1. \(\bullet\) To create a forum for channeling the imaginative and forwarding looking ideas and vision of NGOs at the local, national, continental and international levels.
2. \(\bullet\) To create an organizational structure whereby NGOs with Consultative Status, DPI NGOs, local and national NGOs, thematic networks, coalitions and other organizations of civil society could participate effectively.
3. \(\bullet\) To make the process for NGO participation democratic, transparent and representative.
4. \(\bullet\) To establish an efficient system for gathering and distributing information on local, national, continental and international Millennium NGO Forums through the operation of Websites, List Servers and Electronic Discussion Forums\textsuperscript{210}.

As expected, the Executive Committee of the Millennium Forum planned “to prepare a consolidated report that would feed to the Report of the Secretary General for the mid summer 2000.”\textsuperscript{211}

The question of output is naturally relevant in the analyze. It seems that the Executive Committee of the preparations saw as main output and way to influence the Millennium General Assembly through the Secretary-General’s report. This goal setting had several problems. First, the Secretary-General’s report “UN in the 21st century”\textsuperscript{212} would be highly important, but no one knew what of the NGOs proposals would be included in the report – if any. The second problem was the timing. The reported was planned to published in the midsummer 2000, but the timetable changed. It was finally published before the Millennium Forum. The third problem was the question of how this NGO opinion would be established.

The UN Secretariat requested to receive the contributions as early as January 2000, four months prior to the Millennium Forum. The NGO community preparing the Millennium Forum started to prepare a draft

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{202}The report: We the People: UN in the 21st Century was published in April 2000.
\bibitem{203}Secretary General Report to GA A/52/850.
\bibitem{204}Chair of the preparation committee Techeste Abderom in the opening session of the Millennium Forum on 21st of May.
\bibitem{205}Members of the executive committee are: Co-chairs Techeste Abderom, Dianne Dillonridgley and vice-chairs Sadha Acharya, Emeralda Brown, Ramon Casals, Malick Gaya, Malcolm Harper, Jan Lonn, Alaf Mahfouz, Bill Pace, Shazia Z. Rafi and Elanie Valdov http://www.millenniumforum.org/html/Mfexecom.html.
\bibitem{206}CONGO operates under ECOSOC.
\bibitem{208}Abderom 1998, 5.
\bibitem{209}Abderom 1998, 5-6.
\bibitem{210}Abderom 1998, 7.
\bibitem{211}Secretary General report to General Assembly A/52/850.
\end{thebibliography}
paper for discussion at the Millennium Forum\textsuperscript{213}. Dr. Waldaba Stewart and Edith Ballontyne were appointed to prepare a “Vision statement” in consultations with many NGOs and other civil society partners. According to Ballontyne, “parts of this Vision statement” might be submitted to UN Secretary Generals office in December (1999) in way of making an input into the Secretary-Generals report to the Millennium Assembly.\textsuperscript{214}

Finally the main outcome, the Declaration of the Millennium Forum, was accepted by the UN Secretariat as an official document of the Millennium Assembly and Summit, which means that it will be presented to the participants of these meetings as part of other documentation.\textsuperscript{215}

The procedure was controversial as one of the aims of the Forum was “to suggest new possibilities for an organizational structure whereby the peoples of the world can participate effectively in global decision-making in the context of the United Nations.”\textsuperscript{216} But to reach this objective the practical output of the Millennium Forum should have been more structured.

Professor Peter Willets stated clearly the possible significance of the meeting: “There will be a Millennium Forum associated with the Millennium Assembly. ... If all these events generate a positive atmosphere it will be important for the NGO community to seize the opportunity to capitalize on the ad hoc concessions and gain a permanent relationship with the General Assembly.”\textsuperscript{217} Professor Willets gave also other goals for the process: “NGOs do need to gain access to the IMF, WTO and the (UN) General Assembly and they need to work hard on the political process of gaining access. Indeed, these should be the major priorities for the Millennium Forum and the Millennium Assembly.”\textsuperscript{218}

There were many hopes expressed for the Millennium Forum. The regional horizon of Europe called on the UN to define the new partnership accordingly: “A number of NGOs expressed a strong desire to see their partnership with the United Nations evolve on a more equal footing. To that effect, they aspire to the establishment of a Civil Society Forum and to

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{214} Email from Edith Ballontyne on 28th of July 1999 to Millennium NGO forum mailing list.
  \item \textsuperscript{216} (http://www.millenniumforum.org/html/Mfobject.html) (15.2.2000).
  \item \textsuperscript{217} Willets 1999, 277.
  \item \textsuperscript{218} Willets 1999, 280.
  \item \textsuperscript{219} Organized on 8th of July 1999 in Geneva.
  \item \textsuperscript{219a} The main themes of Millennium Forum were 1) Peace, security and disarmament, 2) Eradication of poverty, 3) Human Rights, 4) Sustainable development and the environment, 5) Facing the challenge of globalization: achieving equity, justice and diversity and 6) Strengthening and democratizing the United Nations and International institutions. http://www.millenniumforum.org/html/Mthemes.html. Such themes were: food, religion, mental health, women, children, peace, disarmament, aging, employment and poverty, environment and sustainable development, disabled, human rights, substance abuse, media, private sector, science and technology, social development, family, indigenous peoples, minority rights, education, culture, water, reproductive health, migration, girl child, citizenship and governance, habitat, environmental health, values, international security, torture, international law and legal institutions, humanitarian issues, video and teleconferencing, UN funding. (http://www.millenniumforum.org/html/Mthemes.html) (15.2.2000).
\end{itemize}


the creation of mechanism giving them better access to the various United Nation bodies.\textsuperscript{219a}

The regional hearing for Western Asia, mainly Arab states, tackled the question of civil society participation: “Other civil society representatives were of the view that a source of the predicament in the Arab world were not to be found exclusively in exogenous factors, but also in the lack of democracy, human rights and good governance.”\textsuperscript{219b}

Many countries and regions hoped that the new NGO coalition could support their internal goals and work. The spectrum of these hopes is as wide as the variety of NGOs, which of course makes it more difficult for participating NGOs to find common positions.

NGOs also prepared some internal hearings prior to the Millennium Forum. The NGO conference in Seoul\textsuperscript{220} stated in their final declaration: “despite the difficulties and complexities of the task at hand, it is in the power of governments and international organizations, in partnership with NGOs and civil society, to do much better and rapid progress.”\textsuperscript{221} The Seoul Conference also requested the governments to “fully respect the role of NGOs as legitimate partners of effective governance and as representatives of the public interest” and the UN to “build upon progress made in recent years in deepening partnership with NGOs and provide every opportunity for NGO participation in its work.”\textsuperscript{222}

The NGOs seem to have agreed largely on the goal to increase their participation, but lack ability to form how it should be developed further. The goal setting of the Forum reflected the variety among the NGOs.

The work in the Millennium Forum was divided into several topics from the area of globalization and human development\textsuperscript{223}. Under these
topics there were policy papers prepared prior to the Forum via the Internet. The sessions of the Forum were also based on these topics divided into six working groups.

4.4.2. Proposals for the Millennium Forum

One of the aims of this study was to provide the Millennium Forum process some proposals on how to improve NGOs’ involvement in the United Nations and in global issues. These proposals are not unique but as stated here they are developed in the United Nations Association of Finland and within this study. In the following text, three proposals will be introduced. The outcome can be observed set against the final declaration of the Millennium Forum and the final discussion paper of the Theme Six, which covered these proposals. In the Final Declaration, which will be analyzed later, was a call for permanent Civil Society Forum, call for support for the southern NGOs and stronger involvement of NGOs in the Security Council.

The World Civil Society Forum (WCSF)

The idea of having a global platform for NGOs is not new: “Since 1970s NGOs have formed wider networks and established multi-issue coalitions to lobby UN forums.” In some cases, like in the women’s movement, the aim has been to mainstream women’s perspectives also through NGOs. There have also been processes with narrow foci. Some individual NGOs have established joint campaigns to target specific policy objectives. Examples of such can be, e.g., the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and the Jubilee 2000 Coalition.

So far the actions to build a general form of cooperation have failed. There are several reasons. Peter Willets notes one: “Too narrow and unambiguous objectives are not giving NGO community enough enthusiasm.” Millennium Forum was a unique meeting in this context, but in the Forum the scope was rather too wide than too narrow.

Here are several reasons to form a platform. One of the biggest is the access to power it provides. The second reason is for the procedural clearance it gives to the forming of policies. The third is the continuity it enables. To reach a platform, the first step is to achieve unity on a given goal. In practice, this requires that the NGO movement is capable of uniting, of making joint policies, and of identifying common goals. The second step is to find a united voice. There must be a procedure how NGOs can bring forward their opinions, expertise, and democratically defined common positions.

NGOs have been building a common platform already for some time. For example, the Coalition for a Strong United Nations has “called for Creation of a Civil Society Forum, broadly representative of non-governmental organizations now accredited to the UN and other civil society organizations that monitor certain global functions. The Civil Society Forum would advise the General Assembly.”

The Charter of Global Democracy urged in it’s urgent action plan to “give the UN General Assembly powers to scrutinize the work of UN agencies and other agencies of global governance; create an annual Forum of Civil Society; open international institutions to increased participation by civil society.”

The problem of these proposals has been the positions of UN member countries that have not been willing to establish such a Forum. The global NGO movement should consider starting to operate such a NGO Forum by other means if it is impossible to gain support or approval by the UN General Assembly. To be able to work and bring forward policies the Global NGO movement needs a permanent meeting place. It was proposed by the first version of this study that at the Millennium Forum NGOs should decide to meet each other on a continuous basis. The aims of these meetings should be similar to the Millennium Forum. A specific future task for the civil society and NGOs would be to bring forward the UN reform and build public support for democratic global governance. The Millennium Forum could be a start for a working and united Global Civil Society Movement.

Could such a forum provide democratic legitimacy to UN bodies? It is important to make few remarks to such proposals, as Willets points out: “It is widely believed that the presence of NGOs makes the UN more democratic, NGOs are supposed to be “the voice of the people’. What does this mean?”

226 Willets 1999, 257.
227 Willets 1999, 257.
228 UNA Finland Strategy Meeting Minutes 1999 (http://www.citizenscentury.net/) (15.2.2000).
230 The Charter for Global Democracy is drafted and adopted by some British members of parliament and some science persons like Anthony Giddens in 1999.
231 Willets 1999, 260.
The proposal of stronger NGO participation is linked to the debate on the general democratic element of the United Nations. In this respect, some NGOs think that a global NGO platform could represent the opinion of people and give legitimacy to global decision making. More popular still is the opinion that a new global parliament should be formed. In any case, it is important in theoretical and practical terms to note that there is this division. NGOs cannot claim to represent people better than those governments, which are freely elected by people. The Civil Society Forum can not be a democratic Global Parliament but as separate proposal this has also been on the table for awhile.

The idea of a People's Assembly had been proposed already in the 1920's to be a part of the League of Nations. In the 1945 Ernest Bevin said in the House of Commons that “there should be a study of a house directly elected by people of the world to whom the nations are accountable.”

For example, the Coalition for a Strong United Nations called “for gradual establishment of a Peoples Assembly or second chamber of General Assembly, representative of the people of the world, initially appointed by national parliaments and eventually directly elected by world citizens, as in the development of the European Parliament.”

Notable is that NGOs are the ones starting to become active also in this respect: “together they (international institutions such as G8, Bank, Fund, WTO...) have created what can be seen as dominant and exclusive institutions of world government. All too often they are influenced by transitional corporations, which pursue their own world strategies. These agencies of actual world government must be made accountable. If there are to be global policies, let them be answerable to the people of the world. ... What we want from the Millennium Assembly and Member States is decisive action to put these principles into practice.”

NGOs and individuals have formed a range of campaigns and networks to bring forward the idea of a People's Assembly, or at least of how it should be formed. An example is the Millennium People's Assembly Network (MPAN). Earth Action has also organized a campaign in which they aim: “to make global decision-making more accountable to the public, we need a democratic People's Assembly at the United Nations.”

Thus, it is important to note the division, although it is not possible to cover the NGOs' positions towards new forms of representative democracy in this study.

**Civil Society Fund (CSF)**

NGOs from the southern countries have had a relatively weak presence at the UN. This issue relates to the stability of global civil society. There is a fear that the UN and Global NGO Movement becomes only a western privilege. The Secretary-General should produce a report on the topic: “NGOs and delegates might convene a special joint working group to consider options. All concerned must engage in serious and broad based planning, followed by action.”

The International NGO Conference organized in Seoul in October 1999 also recognized this problem. We need to “develop genuine partnership between Southern NGOs and NGOs based in the North to support the development of institutional capacity for policy advocacy for the implementation of long-term sustainable development programs and in order to ensure effective delivery of humanitarian assistance.”

NGOs from southern countries also have many other needs than just travel subsidies. The Secretariat should meet office and meeting space needs of visiting Southern NGOs. The Secretariat should broaden programs for orientation and assistance to visiting Southern NGOs. The UN should organize more events in Southern venues, including regional events, special regional hearings, etc. The UN should develop a substantial trust fund to bring Southern NGOs to major meetings and conferences. “The UN could take a number of other steps... a much larger trust fund to bring (Southern) NGOs to UN sessions (should be established)...” The Secretariat should make more use of video conferences and other modern electronic technology to promote consultation with Southern NGOs. The Secretariat, delegates, and NGOs should convene a working group to explore ideas and means to increase Southern NGO participation.

It was proposed that the Millennium Forum should have decided to establish a Civil Society Fund by the NGOs to support the participation of southern NGOs to future UN meetings. It is widely recognized

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232Green and Lerner, A Brief History of the People's Assembly Movement (http://www.ourvoices.org/) (15.2.2000).
235Dunlop 1999.
that the lack of southern NGO participation can only be improved with reasonable support for NGO creation and facilitation of their international involvement. Civil Society Fund could be created by the financial contribution of several UN Member States (such as Canada, Norway, Australia, Finland etc.) and by support of several entrepreneurs (Soros, Turner etc.). This fund could initially enable the participation of southern NGOs in the global civil society movement.

Civil Society Security Council (CSSC)

The transparency of the Security Council’s work and decisions have been a big goal for NGOs. Some NGO have even dreamed about access to the Security Council. The question has been in the agenda in the recent UN NGO relations reforms but has not been taken forward. Still, many NGOs keep on working in the crisis areas and do a huge amount of crisis prevention and management work that certainly would contribute to the work of the Security Council. At the same time, some UN member countries, especially the USA, have been opposing this and have even tried to limit NGOs possibilities to discuss Security Council issues.

It was proposed by the first version of this study, that in the case of security issues, NGOs should not wait for approval of the UN and its member countries. NGOs could independently form an structure which could include those NGOs who are specialized in conflict prevention, resolution, crisis management, or human rights issues. These NGOs could meet in advance of the UN Security Council meetings and influence the policies in both direct and indirect ways.

It was proposed that the Millennium Forum should decide to establish a Civil Society Security Council (CSSC) which should be supported by regional CSSC’s. These CSSC’s could meet prior to the UN security councils and give Civil Society’s contributions straight and through media when needed for the UN Security Council.

4.4.3. Analysis of the Millennium Forum
Meeting and Results

In the final declaration of the Millennium Forum the participants formed their understanding of the importance of the meeting:

“We, 1,350 representatives of over 1,000 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other civil society organizations from more than 100 countries, have gathered at the United Nations (UN) Headquarters in New York from 22 – 26 May 2000 to build upon a common vision and the work begun at civil society conferences and the UN world conferences of the 1990’s, to draw the attention of governments to the urgency of implementing the commitments they have made, and to channel our collective energies by reclaiming globalization for and by the people.200 The process of the Millennium Forum provided a great opportunity to analyze the position and status of NGOs’ coalition building on influencing the globalization process. Generally, NGOs seem to have been able to form coalition under different sub themes of the UNs’ work, but the general cooperation over this division has been still weak.

Two documents were presented to the participants of the Forum. The first document was the collection of opinions of the six sub themes, which was done via Internet. The second document was more problematic for the participants. The co-chair of the executive committee of preparations, Mr. Techeste Ahderom, had drafted a final declaration. This drafting procedure was complained in several interventions during the Forum.

Generally, it was clearly visible that NGOs reacted positively to the meeting, but were confused by of the lack of procedures that would help them to work together. NGOs, which were working to achieve democracy in global governance, seemed to have difficulties at forming democracy in their own meetings. This was partly caused by the difficult circumstances of the meeting and by lack of the resources for the preparations. Despite these problems, the Forum opened the declarations to a complex system of contributions. Firstly, the working groups covered the draft documents. Secondly, the drafting team had additional hearings for contributions. Thirdly, also the final drafting of the declaration was opened to all participants to ensure that their proposals were noted. General procedure was to adopt only proposals which were not actively opposed by the participating delegates.

In the evaluation of the Forum, the Executive Committee, which was in charge of the preparations, gave reflected upon the critical comments expressed during the Forum. “The final Declaration might not include every item that was discussed or proposed at the Forum, and although the process by which it was drafted might at times have veered towards the appearance of chaos, we think the end product speaks for itself. We are proud to have played a small role in organizing a gathering that

200Millennium Forum Final Declaration 2000 (http://www.millenniumforum.org/) (9.8.2000). The participant list of the Forum may also be found from this site.
could produce a document as stirring, comprehensive, and concrete as the Declaration.241

The evaluation also pointed out some procedural developments, which could help the NGOs form their opinion. Clear procedures were part of what NGOs requested: “Others have suggested that a more formal procedure for discussion and voting might, in the future, smooth the consultative process.”242 Voting procedures were seem important also “in striving for consensus, we made it possible for a small minority to block the will of the majority. And so, in the future, we might perhaps look at taking formal votes and requiring a simply majority – or even a two-thirds majority – before any measure is approved by any future Forum.243

The Final Declaration of the Millennium Forum was named “We the Peoples Millennium Forum: Declaration and Agenda for Action Strengthening the United Nations for the 21st Century.”244

The first notable dimension in the declaration is the attitude towards globalization. The Millennium Forum participants did not oppose the globalization process. Rather it “should be made to work for the benefit of everyone; eradicate poverty and hunger globally; establish peace globally; ensure the protection and promotion of human rights globally; ensure the protection of our global environment; enforce social standards in the workplace globally.”245 The declaration states that finally this can be achieved through democracy: “This can happen only if global corporations, international financial and trade institutions and governments are subject to effective democratic control by the people.”246

The declaration puts its hopes into “a strengthened and democratized United Nations and a vibrant civil society as guarantors of this accountability.”247 At the same time the declaration warned that without democracy, globalization would in the end be against the interest of everyone.

The final declaration of the Millennium Forum divided its practical goals into three categories: actions for civil society, governments, and the UN. These goals were set under the six sub themes of the forum. The last priority theme for Millennium Forum, strengthening and democratizing the United Nations and International Organizations, holds the greatest relevance for this study. The declaration sets as a priority goal the increasing of the role of the United Nations in the global governance. The UN has given in the declaration a large scale of tasks: “A challenging task is to firmly protect the integrity of the United Nations, counter the erosion of its role and to further strengthen and augment international institutions capable of implementing and enforcing international standards, norms and law, leading toward the formation of a new political and economic order.”248

NGOs seem to have accepted the need for global governance. They seem to be currently more concentrated on the goal setting than nation-states. The NGOs present at the Millennium Forum are looking for a global law and governance guided by democracy and protecting humanity.

The declaration’s concrete goals are divided into three sections. The first goals are referred to the UN to be implemented. The second category is for governments and the third for the civil society.

The declaration sets for the United Nations as a main goal the strengthening of the UN General Assembly to ensure that it can fulfill the mandates it already has according to the UN Charter. The second goal is to make the Security Council more representative of the world. NGOs claim that permanent membership in the Security Council fails to accommodate evolving realities and UN should begin to phase out the existing permanent membership in favor of a more flexible and accountable system. Their solution is that the Council should be enlarged with newly elected members drawn from the member states from different regions of the world on a rotational basis. NGOs also hope to limit the use of veto. First step should be in their opinion an enlargement of the area of “procedural votes” for which the Charter excludes the veto. The veto must be restricted to Chapter VII peace issues only. NGOs do not accept the use of veto in election of the UN Secretary-General. In the security issues NGOs hope to see a far more institutionalized and analytical approach to the causes of war and the ways to prevent conflict. NGOs hope to also strengthen the status of the International Court of Justice (ICJ).249
An interesting proposal is the creation of a UN parliamentary body related to the UN General Assembly. It is formulated as a consultative Parliamentary Assembly, which would have its membership selected through an election process, and should conduct its business in an open, democratic manner. The final discussion paper of the Theme Six gives more concrete insight into the proposal: The new UN Parliamentary body related to the UNGA can be achieved by first encouraging the growing cooperation between the Inter-Parliamentary Union, other parliamentary bodies, and the United Nations in more regular consultation. The second means would be to “support the establishment of a consultative UN Parliamentary Assembly comprised initially of representatives of existing parliaments from around the world who would convene on an annual basis prior to the UN General Assembly in order to make recommendations concerning the agenda before the GA. Representatives from the parliaments should be elected and the UNPA must be open and transparent. NGOs of civil society must be able to have a consultative relationship to it." The NGOs, which aim to achieve democracy on a global level, are not yet that innovative with the concrete proposal of how to form this democracy. The discussions at the Forum did not yet find new solutions to form democracy but rather the NGOs saw transformation of the representative democracy from state level to global level as a solution.

Also the proposals from the field of NGO participation are rather less progressive. The declaration hopes to see more NGO representatives based in developing countries, Eastern Europe, as well as indigenous peoples, and to get UN documents translated into several new languages.

For the governments, the declaration urges to increase the regular and peacekeeping budgets of the United Nations and to pay UN dues on time, in full, and without conditions. The UN must, in the opinion of the declaration, also vigorously explore the possibilities of alternate funding from such sources. These sources could include fees for the commercial use of the oceans, fees for airplane use of the skies, fees for use of the electromagnetic spectrum, fees on foreign exchange transactions (i.e. the Tobin Tax), and a tax on the carbon content of fuels.

The declaration requests the governments to also extend consultative rights of access and participation to NGOs in the UN bodies. "Governments should complete the process of extending NGOs rights of access and participation to the General Assembly and its Main Committees and subsidiary bodies."

The only goal given to the civil society in this section was the support of the creation and funding of a Global Civil Society Forum "to meet at least every two to three years in the period leading up to the annual session of the General Assembly, provided that such a forum is conducted democratically and transparently and is truly representative of all sectors of civil society and all parts of the world." The declaration does not give proposals how this democracy, transparency and representation in permanent Civil Society Forum would be secured. This is a debate, which can only be taken by the civil society and NGO representatives themselves. Recent history has shown that it has been rather difficult.

The final version of the discussion paper of the Theme Six group of the Forum gives more insight into the proposals. It claims that a big part of the democratization and strengthening of the General Assembly is the extension of “consultative rights to civil society representatives, non-governmental organizations and parliamentarians at all levels of the UN. Governments should complete the process of extending NGOs rights of access and participation to the General Assembly and its Main Committees and subsidiary bodies (based in principle on the arrangements agreed to in Resolution 1996/31)." The working group aims to establish a “Voluntary Fund to facilitate participation by NGOs from developing countries so as to enable a more balanced NGO participation."

250 (http://www.millenniumforum.org/) (9.8.2000). Section strengthening the UN and international institutions in the final declaration.

251 (http://www.millenniumforum.org/) (9.8.2000). Section strengthening the UN and international institutions in the final declaration.


253 (http://www.millenniumforum.org/) (9.8.2000). Section strengthening the UN and international institutions in the final declaration.


255 (http://www.millenniumforum.org/) (9.8.2000). Section strengthening the UN and international institutions in the final declaration.
Some NGOs have also created their own proposals, such as the idea of the Global People’s Assemblies, which was also promoted in the discussion paper of Theme Six. It aims at creating a representative global people’s assembly to further “promote dialogue, cooperation, and partnership between and among governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and the people of the world.”\(^\text{259}\) This proposal is linked to a campaign of an NGO named the Millennium People’s Assembly Network (MPAN), which has organized some sessions on an ad hoc basis. This proposal has high goals. For example, “to assist with the holding of elections and/or representative selection processes. Such people’s assemblies will be based upon the principles and the developing charter of both a global people’s assembly and the United Nations and will represent to the fullest extent possible the voice of the people in global decision-making. Such assemblies will draw attention to the linkages between local and global issues; provide the means for local communities and the citizenry to participate in global decision-making processes; and provide increasing support for the work of the United Nations.”\(^\text{259}\) Such proposals provide something new to the agenda of the debate of global democracy, but easily fall into a category of nice NGO proposals with no ability to be currently implemented.

Generally, the Millennium Forum provided a great observation point from which to examine the current positions of NGOs on global issues and the United Nations. It seemed that the biggest goal of the Forum was to start a tradition of NGO meetings, which cover all sectors of UN work. The NGO community present managed in the area of resource acquisition rather well in connection with the preparations, but the meeting was flawed by the lack of democratic and transparent procedures. Also, the NGOs failed to build strong unity behind the issues important to them. It was rather difficult at certain points to reach consensus from the controversial proposals, which made the declaration weak.

NGOs seem to organize quite well under certain subthemes such as environment, human rights, and development issues, but lack coalitions that would cover all sectors or the general policy towards the United Nations. NGOs currently lack leadership concerning their common position on implementing their goals on a broader base. The Millennium Forum brought forth a few characters, which seemed to guide NGO opinion toward this direction. The first was the Director to the Third World Network. The second was the Director of Earth Action, Nicholas Dunlop, who managed to enter the final plenary session and convince a significant portion of the participants to join a new coalition established at the Millennium Forum called Citizens Century. The aim of Citizens Century is to build a NGO coalition to support the UN reform.\(^\text{260}\) This coalition was also the goal of the project, of which this study is a part: “The problem is not the lack of ideas on reforming the UN or establishing global governance but rather on how to reach results. Within the Millennium Forum Process there are possibilities to establish a network of NGOs to reach some kind of force of pressure and also united policies to bring forward the changes.

NGOs seem to have quite a unified intention to increase the NGOs’ access and participation in governmental and international structures. At the same time they seem to be confused on what to do in practice: what should be the practical goals on how could they reach them. This element was a weak part of the Millennium Forum outcome. NGOs seemed to be able to say how world should look like but lacked ability to form concrete goals on how they could be better involved and form a force of power to carry them on. One exception was the International NGO Task Group on Legal and Institutional Matters (INTGLIM), a coalition from which proposals have been presented at other stages in this study. Maybe the creation of these coalitions was one of the most influential outcomes reached at the Forum.

The proposals from the first version of this study were recognized in the discussions and partly included in the documentation produced at the Forum. Despite this, the Millennium Forum did not take those strong independent steps towards establishing its own forms of cooperation for the NGOs. In any case, even the Millennium Forum, proved as accurate one of Manuel Castells’ theories on how the Internet empowers the NGOs to take a stronger role on setting agenda for the global debate: “We are, by and large, satisfied that the Internet can be an extremely important tool for global civil society consultations. And we believe that much more can be made of it in the future.”\(^\text{262}\)


\(^{260}\) Citizens Century has been partly facilitated by the UNA-Finland. The author, Rauno Merisaari and Sirpa Perttikainen (the last person mentioned with greatest impact) have had a role in the development of the mentioned coalition. For more information see (http://www.citizenscentury.net/).

Non-Governmental Organizations and the Challenge of Global Governance:
5. Outcome and Proposals

5.1. Who are we: Defining the Nature of Global Non-Governmental Activism

The nature of non-governmental organizations is as diverse as the grass root level reality. Definitions and coalitions are always exclusive. This basic nature of non-governmental activism can not be changed.

At the same time, as explained by Manuel Castells, the role of non-governmental organizations and civil society is increasing with the process of globalizations. NGOs, as explained in this study, have managed to form sectorial coalitions under certain subthemes in international politics (human rights, environmental issues, development issues, etc.). Just in the recent years, NGOs have had a few successful cross sectorial campaigns, such as the ban on land mines, International Criminal Court, Jubilee 2000, etc, but generally cross-sectorial coalitions are rather weak.

NGOs organized in cooperation with the United Nations' Millennium Forum in May 2000. The meeting showed well, how NGOs are currently quite united in global goal setting but lack procedures and cooperation bodies. A big question, when global NGO community gets organized, is if the nature of non-governmental activism can be secured at the global politics. How can national and local NGOs be linked to such a body? What are the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion?

The NGO coalitions operating at the global level and with the United Nations have naturally the option of remaining as informal campaign platforms, but the NGO community as a whole is facing new challenges. The level of NGO participation is becoming so broad that the question of forming a universal NGO platform is becoming timely. Such formulation might in practical terms have some critical implications, but a relevant question is can the NGOs full fill their task in the time of globalization without such a platform? The aim of civil movements is to bring people's voice through participatory democracy to the bodies of representative democracy. These pathways of people's opinion are organized in various ways, but it is up to these civil movements to create enough power to ensure that the voices are heard. Currently, the participation of NGOs is coming to the stage where a global platform of NGOs could take their involvement substantially forward.

In addition to these developments, the recent history of non-governmental organizations in the United Nations brought up three other dimensions to the same question. The first dimension is the number of NGOs, which has dramatically increased during the 1990's. The UN Secretariat and especially the NGO community itself have difficulties dealing with the vast variety of organizations. The second element is the debate about the nature of an "true" NGO: Does National Rifle Association (NRA) have the same rights as Greenpeace? Are some NGOs really democratic and representative? This debate has caused confusion especially among the NGO movement itself. The third dimension is related to the coalition building of NGOs on a global level. What kinds of procedures can NGOs form, and what kinds of cooperation bodies are even possible? The international conferences of the UN have witnessed over 20,000 NGO participants at the same congress. How can democratic opinion building and electoral procedures be introduced in such a group?

These questions are partly paradoxical and the answers controversial. Still, NGOs are aiming to achieve more recognition and positions in global institutions. The NGO community needs to start the debate and find their own solutions to these problems. This is the first proposal of this study. NGOs need to define themselves the criteria for a representative and democratic NGO that has legitimacy to represent civil society and people in the global institutions and in the NGOs' internal cooperation bodies. A complicated question is the self-regulatory instruments of networks of diverse NGOs which come from different fields of interest. This dialogue should also focus on the need of finding ways to include the voices of people and NGOs from the Global South.

5.2. About the Role of NGOs: Short-term Goals and Long-term Vision

NGOs have been involved in the UN system since its creation. Throughout the century there has been strong pressure among the NGO movement and by some governments to improve the forms of this participation. Even though each of the reviews have resulted in rather controversial outcomes, reality seemed to ultimately favor more NGO involvement. NGOs are at a critical point in their relationship with the
NGOs have a great deal to contribute to the United Nations. This has been clearly visible especially in the UN field operations and International Conferences. Thus, it is natural to develop further the consultative rights of NGOs. The wider participation as an element of participatory democracy in global governance remains yet unsolved.

The recent revisions and debates have brought the key questions to the table, which will have to be answered by delegations, the Secretariat, and the NGO movement. Each party naturally will bear part of the responsibility for the final outcome, but NGOs need wider support from UN member countries.

While waiting for this support, or while building the coalitions to achieve this support, NGOs should also take the agenda into their own hands. As stated earlier, it is also notable that NGOs have a broad range of opinions and contributions in different areas of world politics, but lack a clear and common vision on how their opinions would have more impact in the policy making bodies.

NGOs need to be active in the short-term, but they need to also have a long-term vision. Action is needed in a number of important policy and practical areas – action that will address and solve security issues, strengthen support for NGOs within the Secretariat, maximize the availability of documents and information for NGOs, and lead to a better quality of consultation and expansion of NGO access to new areas of the intergovernmental process. While considering and addressing these short-term goals, the NGO community should develop a long-term vision not only about the role of NGOs in the UN, but also about the global governance.

The second proposal of this study is that NGOs active in global issues should take the agenda into their own hands, as well as forming cooperation bodies and platforms for global NGO cooperation. They do not necessarily need to wait for approval from governments, but they can already proceed on their own. Often the governments and international bodies just need to start to take into account the opinions of such platforms. Some of such proposals were analyzed in the chapter covering the Millennium Forum.

5.3. The Role of NGOs on Reforming the United Nations

Professor Manuel Castells, as sited earlier, has shown how the information revolution and globalization process are changing the world. The share of power is under transformation, especially in global issues where nation states have not found a form of governance, which would save their sovereignty and power. Meanwhile, the civil society has taken the agenda and is a new element in the sharing of power:

“Ultimately, their horizon is to act on the political process; that is, to influence the management of the society by representatives of society. ... These forms of political mobilization, which could be defined as issue-oriented, non-partisan politics, seem to win increasing legitimacy in all societies, and to condition the rules and outcomes of formal political competition. They re-legitimize the concern with public affair in people's minds and lives. They do so by introducing new political processes, and new political issues, thus furthering the crisis of classic liberal democracy while fostering the emergence of the yet to be discovered, informational democracy.”

The element of participatory democracy is already rather old. What makes Castells’ finding interesting is the new global element. The civil society has become new user of power, especially in global issues. Actually, civil society is taking power from the forms of governance organized by nation-states:

“Furthermore, the growing incapacity of states to tackle the global problems that make an impact on public opinion (from the fate of whales to torture of dissidents around the world)

263 Willets 1999, 281.

leads civil societies to increasingly take into their own hands the responsibilities of global citizenship. Thus, Amnesty International, Greenpeace, Médecins sans frontières, Oxfam, and so many other humanitarian non-governmental organizations have become major forces in the international arena in the 1990s, often attracting more funding, performing more effectively, and receiving greater legitimacy than government-sponsored international efforts.

Castells does not only report the change, but also places his hope on the rising role of civil society in global politics. He sees that this might also harm the position of already weakened nation states, but finds the impact still positive. What Castells is seeking is a new form of democracy empowered with new technology:

“If political representation and decision-making could find a linkage with these new sources of inputs from concerned citizens, without yielding to technological savvy elite, a new kind of civil society could be reconstructed, thus allowing for electronic grass rooting of democracy.”

This problem has been envisioned also by the actors of civil society. The lack of clear goals has been especially visible related to the United Nations. The reforming of this lone democratic global institution has not found overwhelming support among the UN member countries: “So far almost all national governments have been very passive in preparing Millennium Assembly and Millennium Summit. There is generally spread fatigue on UN reform process. ... The urgent task now for the NGOs is to provoke government to be active in the preparatory process. At later stage NGOs should move to consider more specified questions. ... In order to achieve results you have to be well organized, your objectives clearly defined and you must have allies among the governments.”

NGOs find themselves responsible for provoking action on the reconstruction of democratic governance to meet the demands of globalization. NGOs envision themselves as part of this new form of democratic governance:

“Governments, their leaders and officials are expected by citizens to take the initiative to share information, built transparency, assure accountability, and enable participation. At the same time, citizen activism, leadership, association and engagement are also needed to deepen democracy. In the new consensus, citizen activism is not against the state, it is, as noted, for a strong state and for deepening democratic governance.”

The new element of participatory democracy is interesting, although it is out of the reach of this study. A second interesting question is the formulation of democratic global governance, which naturally cannot be covered in this study. From this point on, this study will only try to examine the experiences of the NGOs in the United Nations and what kind of role the NGOs could have on the reforming of the United Nations, supported with Professor Castells’ findings.

The United Nations’ reform can be approached from at least three dimensions. The first is naturally the history of UN reform with all the various proposals. The second way to approach is to take into account the reality of the UN’s current situation: What would need to be reformed. The third way is to study the general needs of global governance. What would the people of the world need? What would be a reasonable form of legitimate, democratic, and transparent governance?

As stated earlier, this study will not try to cover these questions, but just touch the role of NGOs in this process. Many international institutions are currently under big changes and NGOs hold various positions towards these changes. In the recent year, e.g., at the meetings of World Trade Organization (WTO) and International Monetary Fund (IMF), the NGOs expressed their opinions by demonstrating in the streets. The Millennium Forum proved that the majority of NGOs might have a different approach to the developments within the United Nations (UN).

The Charter of Global Democracy gives insight: “(Global government) is not (currently) found at the United Nations. Rather, the UN has been sidelined, while the real business of world government is done elsewhere. Global policies are discussed and decided behind closed doors by exclusive groups, such as the G8, OECD, the Bank of International Settlements, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization and others.”

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265 Castells 1997, 268.
266 Castells 1997, 352.
268 The Commonwealth Foundation: Civil Society in the New Millennium project 1999.
NGOs also have a strong opinion, that it is their task to push the process further: "Left to themselves, national governments are unlikely to agree on far reaching international reforms."

In the recent years, as stated many times, NGOs have managed to form coalitions which have been able to create enough power to not only bring issues to agenda, but also to reach the goals they seek for. Also, the list of these coalitions have been reported several times: the campaign against land mines, Jubilee 2000 debt reduction campaign, campaign against MAI-treaty and the campaign for International Criminal Court.

At the Millennium Forum, NGOs formed a coalition called Citizens Century to support the general perspective of reforming the United Nations to make it a legitimate, democratic, and accountable form of governance. The declaration states: "If faster progress is to be made, we must find ways for world civil society – the ever growing community of citizen groups around the planet concerned with issues on the UN agenda – to take the initiative in improving the UN."

It is not yet clear what will be the outcome of this coalition, but it is an example of how NGOs are widening their scope of taking the setting of the global agenda into their hands. And it is also clear, as Professor Castells has proved that the global civil society has yet the most unused capacities of power. It is up to the NGOs to find the way to use it.

6. Summary

Methodological approach of this study was selected to be pragmatic. The aim was to have dialogue with the reality of United Nations (UN) and contribute to the current political debate of the future role of non-governmental organizations (NGO) rather than discuss with the political theories. Thus the theoretical reference was taken from Professor Manuel Castells who has a same type of approach in his recent studies.

There were two main questions for this study. First was: How have the non-governmental organizations been involved in the United Nations throughout its history? Second was: What kind of proposals are there at the moment which would develop this relationship further? The study also aimed to touch the changing nature of civil activism in the time of globalization and the possible roles of participatory democracy in future forms of global governance.

NGOs have been a part of the formal UN bodies since it’s creation. In the recent years the role of NGOs has increased especially rapidly in global politics. Within UN their role has been substantial for example in the UN International Conferences and field operations. Despite this the current state of affairs of NGOs formal participation in UN has not changed much from 1945. In each of the three reviews of NGOs role in 1950, 1968 and 1996, the aim was to increase NGOs rights but the outcome was rather controversial. UN is in total still in transformation from the world of sovereign states to meet the needs of global interdependence and global decision making.

NGOs seem to largely accept the need to form democratic global governance. They seem to be in the goal setting currently even more progressive than nation states. For NGOs the United Nations is this democratic body rather than G8, World Bank, International Monetary Fund of World Trade Organization.

The political coalition building of NGOs in global level is still under construction. The Millennium Forum on May 2000 provided grate opportunity to analyze the position and status of NGO activity and coalition building in global level. Generally NGOs have seemed to be able to form coalitions under different subject themes but the general cooperation over this division is still weak. NGOs also seem to have agreed largely on the goal to increase their participation but NGOs have seemed to lack ability to form united concrete goals on how they should be better involved and to create a force to carry them into practice. Currently NGOs...
are forming coalitions to achieve more formal positions in UN bodies, which might change this inability. A good example of such a new initiative is the International NGO Task Group on Legal and Institutional Matters (INTGLIM) coalition, which aims to open the United Nations General Assembly to NGO consultations.

In this respect it is notable that often large and influential NGOs are not that interested on NGOs general networks or actions to revise NGOs rights. They have often managed to increase their own power by informal procedures and the revisions have only taken many these informal rights away. Also NGOs active with such coalitions and general UN reform issues are often based in New York and have often week links to grass root civil societies in other parts of the world.

NGOs meet a paradox when they work at global level. The nature of NGO activism is diverse in grass root level but to achieve goals NGOs need to work united at the global level. This requires also exclusive definitions and procedures. The number and diverse natures of NGOs are becoming a problem even for NGOs when they are trying to achieve better recognition. Currently NGOs are aiming to create a permanent civil society forum based on the experience of Millennium Forum. The structure and membership of such a forum is still quite unclear. The NGOs need to solve how democracy, transparency and representation would be secured also among their own structures as well. This is a debate, which can only be taken by the civil society and NGO representatives them selves. In the previous history such self-observation has been rather difficult. Anyhow NGOs seem to need a global body to take their involvement properly to a new stage. NGOs should also take the formulation of their co-operation bodies into their own hands.

In general the future role of participatory democracy in UN and in global institutions is still very unclear. This debate is also linked to the overall reforming of democracy and ongoing transformation of power from nation states to international co-operation bodies. NGOs don’t have currently common visions and solutions how the participatory democracy should be finally linked to representative democracy and global institutions.

Despite all these challenges and the recent setbacks with UN, NGOs have become more powerful in global issues. This has been recently visible on one aspect for example in the meetings of World Trade Organization and International Monetary Fund. In general the more substantial role of NGOs has been explained by Professor Manuel Castells. NGOs have been taking the agenda and widening the scope of global issues by bringing new trends to political debate and decision making. Such trends are for example environmentalism, human rights, development issues et cetera. Besides this trend building NGOs have managed even to change substantial policies and create global institutions. Good examples of such resent campaigns with grate results are the MAI-Treaty, Jubilee 2000, Ottawa process and International Criminal Court, which are explained earlier in the study.

The NGOs trend building is coming extremely interesting when it is starting to relate to the forming of democratic, legitimate and transparent global decision making and governance. Currently NGOs are building coalitions not only to make the need for a democratic global governance a trend but also to create proposals to develop further global institutions as whole.

The key finding of this study relates to the transformation of power of sovereign nation states to global institutions. As Professor Castells has explained, these nation states have not yet managed to create sufficient enough global decision making nor find a satisfactory way to be involved in global politics. Professor Castells also noted that the role of NGOs is rising in this period of transformation. The key finding of this study is that these NGOs, united in networks, are currently becoming even more powerful than individual nation states in global politics. Despite all the problems in NGOs networks, a new source and grate user of power has occurred in the world politics. This transformation and of the way NGOs use their power would need further studying.
7. Annexes

7.1. Annex 1

ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31: Consultative relationship between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations

* Part IV: Consultation with the Council

Provisional agenda

27. The provisional agenda of the Council shall be communicated to organizations in general consultative status and special consultative status and to those on the Roster.

28. Organizations in general consultative status may propose to the Council Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations that the Committee request the Secretary-General to place items of special interest to the organizations in the provisional agenda of the Council.

Attendance at meetings

29. Organizations in general consultative status and special consultative status may designate authorized representatives to sit as observers at public meetings of the Council and its subsidiary bodies. Those on the Roster may have representatives present at such meetings concerned with matters within their field of competence. These attendance arrangements may be supplemented to include other modalities of participation.

Written statements

30. Written statements relevant to the work of the Council may be submitted by organizations in general consultative status and special consultative status on subjects in which these organizations have a special competence. Such statements shall be circulated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the members of the Council, except those statements that have become obsolete, for example, those dealing with matters already disposed of and those that had already been circulated in some other form.

31. The following conditions shall be observed regarding the submission and circulation of such statements:

(a) The written statement shall be submitted in one of the official languages;

(b) It shall be submitted in sufficient time for appropriate consultation to take place between the Secretary-General and the organization before circulation;

(c) The organization shall give due consideration to any comments that the Secretary-General may make in the course of such consultation before transmitting the statement in final form;

(d) A written statement submitted by an organization in general consultative status will be circulated in full if it does not exceed 2,000 words. Where a statement is in excess of 2,000 words, the organizations shall submit a summary which will be circulated or shall supply sufficient copies of the full text in the working languages for distribution. A statement will also be circulated in full, however, upon a specific request of the Council or its Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations;

(e) A written statement submitted by an organization in special consultative status or on the Roster will be circulated in full if it does not exceed 500 words. Where a statement is in excess of 500 words, the organization shall submit a summary which will be circulated; such statements will be circulated in full, however, upon a specific request of the Council or its Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations;

(f) The Secretary-General, in consultation with the President of the Council, or the Council or its Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, may invite organizations on the Roster to submit written statements. The provisions of subparagraphs (a), (b), (c) and (e) above shall apply to such statements;

(g) A written statement or summary, as the case may be, will be circulated by the Secretary-General in the working languages, and, upon the request of a member of the Council, in any of the official languages.

Oral presentations during meetings

32. (a) The Council Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations shall make recommendations to the Council as to which organizations in general consultative status should make an oral presentation to the Council and on which items they should be heard. Such organizations shall be entitled to make one statement to the Council, subject to the approval of the Council. In the absence of a subsidiary body of the Council with jurisdiction in a major field of interest to the Council and to organizations in special consultative status, the Committee may recommend that organizations in special consultative status be heard by the Council on the subject in its field of interest;

(b) Whenever the Council discusses the substance of an item proposed by a non-governmental organization in general consultative status and included in the
agenda of the Council, such an organization shall be entitled to present orally to the Council, as appropriate, an introductory statement of an expository nature. Such an organization may be invited by the President of the Council, with the consent of the relevant body, to make, in the course of the discussion of the item before the Council, an additional statement for purposes of clarification.

* Part VII: Participation of non-governmental organizations in international conferences convened by the United Nations and their preparatory process.

41. Where non-governmental organizations have been invited to participate in an international conference convened by the United Nations, their accreditation is the prerogative of Member States, exercised through the respective preparatory committee. Such accreditation should be preceded by an appropriate process to determine their eligibility.

42. Non-governmental organizations in general consultative status, special consultative status and on the Roster, that express their wish to attend the relevant international conferences convened by the United Nations and the meetings of the preparatory bodies of the said conferences shall as a rule be accredited for participation. Other non-governmental organizations wishing to be accredited may apply to the secretariat of the conference for this purpose in accordance with the following requirements.

43. The secretariat of the conference shall be responsible for the receipt and preliminary evaluation of requests from non-governmental organizations for accreditation to the conference and its preparatory process. In the discharge of its functions, the secretariat of the conference shall work in close cooperation and coordination with the Non-Governmental Organizations Section of the Secretariat, and shall be guided by the relevant provisions of Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) as updated.

44. All such applications must be accompanied by information on the competence of the organization and the relevance of its activities to the work of the conference and its preparatory committee, with an indication of the particular areas of the conference agenda and preparations to which such competence and relevance pertain, and should include, inter alia, the following information:

(a) The purpose of the organization;
(b) Information as to the programs and activities of the organization in areas relevant to the conference and its preparatory process and the country or countries in which they are carried out. Non-governmental organizations seeking accreditation shall be asked to confirm their interest in the goals and objectives of the conference;
(c) Confirmation of the activities of the organization at the national, regional or international level;
(d) Copies of the annual or other reports of the organization with financial statements, and a list of financial sources and contributions, including governmental contributions;
(e) A list of members of the governing body of the organization and their countries of nationality;
(f) A description of the membership of the organization, indicating the total number of members, the names of organizations that are members and their geographical distribution;
(g) A copy of the constitution and/or by-laws of the organization.

45. In the evaluation of the relevance of applications of non-governmental organizations for accreditation to the conference and its preparatory process, it is agreed that a determination shall be made based on their background and involvement in the subject areas of the conference.

46. The secretariat shall publish and disseminate to Member States on a periodic basis the updated list of applications received. Member States may submit comments on any of the applications on the list 14 days from receipt of the above-mentioned list by Member States. The comments of Member States shall be communicated to the non-governmental organization concerned, which shall have the opportunity to respond.

47. In cases where the secretariat believes, on the basis of the information provided in accordance with the present resolution, that the organization has established its competence and the relevance of its activities to the work of the preparatory committee, it shall recommend to the preparatory committee that the organization be accredited. In cases where the secretariat does not recommend the granting of accreditation, it shall make available to the preparatory committee its reasons for not doing so. The secretariat should ensure that its recommendations are available to members of the preparatory committee at least one week prior to the start of each session. The secretariat must notify such applicant of the reasons for non-recommendation and provide an opportunity to respond to objections and furnish additional information as may be required.

48. The preparatory committee shall decide on all recommendations for accreditation within 24 hours after the recommendations of the secretariat have been taken up by the preparatory committee in plenary meeting. In the event of a decision not being taken within this period, interim accreditation shall be accorded until such time as a decision is taken.

49. A non-governmental organization that has been granted accreditation to attend a session of the preparatory committee, including related
preparatory meetings of regional commissions, may attend all its future sessions, as well as the conference itself.

50. In recognition of the intergovernmental nature of the conference and its preparatory process, active participation of non-governmental organizations therein, while welcome, does not entail a negotiating role.

51. The non-governmental organizations accredited to the international conference may be given, in accordance with established United Nations practice and at the discretion of the chairperson and the consent of the body concerned, an opportunity to briefly address the preparatory committee and the conference in plenary meetings and their subsidiary bodies.

52. Non-governmental organizations accredited to the conference may make written presentations during the preparatory process in the official languages of the United Nations as they deem appropriate. Those written presentations shall not be issued as official documents except in accordance with United Nations rules of procedure.

53. Non-governmental organizations without consultative status that participate in international conferences and wish to obtain consultative status later on should apply through the normal procedures established under Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) as updated. Recognizing the importance of the participation of non-governmental organizations that attend a conference in the follow-up process, the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, in considering their application, shall draw upon the documents already submitted by that organization for accreditation to the conference and any additional information submitted by the non-governmental organization supporting its interest, relevance and capacity to contribute to the implementation phase. The Committee shall review such applications as expeditiously as possible so as to allow participation of the respective organization in the implementation phase of the conference. In the interim, the Economic and Social Council shall decide on the participation of non-governmental organizations accredited to an international conference in the work of the relevant functional commission on the follow-up to and implementation of that conference.

54. The suspension and withdrawal of the accreditation of non-governmental organizations to United Nations international conferences at all stages shall be guided by the relevant provisions of the present resolution.

### 7.2. Annex 2

INTGLIM Draft GENERAL ASSEMBLY NGO RESOLUTION – 2000 on NGO participation in the United Nations General Assembly

The General Assembly,

Recalling the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular Article 10, which indicates that recommendations of the Economic and Social Council fall within the competence of the General Assembly, and Article 71, which empowers the Economic and Social Council to make suitable arrangements for consultation between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations;

Recalling Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996, which defines the nature and modalities of consultative relations between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations, setting forth arrangements for consultations with the Economic and Social Council, its commissions and other subsidiary organs, arrangements for participation of non-governmental organizations in international conferences convened by the United Nations and their preparatory process, and the principles to be applied regarding the establishment and the nature of consultative relations; and which further calls for “appropriate seating arrangements and facilities for obtaining documents during public meetings of the General Assembly dealing with matters in the economic, social and related fields;”

Recalling Economic and Social Council decision 1996/297 of 25 July 1996, which calls upon the General Assembly to examine the question of the participation of non-governmental organizations in all areas of the work of the United Nations, in light of the experience gained through the arrangements for consultation between non-governmental organizations and the Economic and Social Council; as well as the interpretative statement read by the President of the Council upon the adoption of the decision;

Recalling General Assembly decision 52/453, which, recalling ECOSOC resolution 1996/31 and ECOSOC decision 1996/297, calls upon the Secretary-General to prepare and circulate for the General Assembly a report on existing arrangements and practices for the interaction of non-governmental organizations in all areas of the work of the United Nations; and General Assembly decision 53/452, which requests the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States, members of the specialized agencies, observers and intergovernmental organizations, as well as the views of non-governmental organizations on his report;
Recalling the report of the Secretary-General on arrangements and practices for the interaction of non-governmental organizations in all activities of the United Nations system (A/53/170), and the views of members states, members of the specialized agencies, observers, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations from all regions on the report of the Secretary-General (A/54/329), in which the importance of the contribution by non-governmental organizations to many areas of the work of the United Nations is recognized;

Recalling the procedures established for NGO participation in General Assembly special sessions devoted to follow-up to the United Nations World Conferences, inter alia, follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (A/51/467), to the World Summit for Social Development (A/54/23), to the International Conference on Population and Development (A/53/183) and to the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (A/53/189);

Recognizing the importance of the contribution by non-governmental organizations to the General Assembly, while maintaining the integrity of intergovernmental decision-making;

1. Decides, in light of the experience gained through the arrangements for consultation between non-governmental organizations and the Economic and Social Council, to invite non-governmental organizations to participate in its work and in the work of its Main Committees, Special Sessions and, as appropriate, subsidiary and ad hoc bodies in accordance with the procedures set forth in the annex;

2. Decides that Part VII of ECOSOC resolution 1996/31 shall apply to special sessions of the General Assembly, unless otherwise decided;

3. Requests the Secretary-General to ensure appropriate seating arrangements and facilities for obtaining official United Nations documentation for non-governmental organizations during open meetings of the General Assembly and of its Main Committees, Special Sessions and, as appropriate, subsidiary and ad hoc bodies, and to make provisions for non-governmental organizations at open meetings to make available their written contributions;

4. Encourages its Main Committees, Special Sessions and subsidiary and ad hoc Bodies to develop further ways and means to improve their substantive interaction with non-governmental organizations, inter alia, through consultations, dialogues, panel discussions, and, as appropriate, oral and written statements by NGOs;

5. And requests the Secretary-General to continue to explore ways and means of encouraging and facilitating the participation in its work of non-governmental organizations from all regions, particularly from the developing countries.

Annex of the Resolution

Procedures by which NGOs shall be granted consultative status to the General Assembly, its Main Committees, Special Sessions and Subsidiary and Ad Hoc Bodies

NGOs eligible for consultative status with the General Assembly:

1. Upon adoption of this resolution, non-governmental organizations in general and special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and those on the Roster shall be granted consultative status with the General Assembly, without prejudice to the formalization of procedures for granting consultative status with the General Assembly.

2. For other non-governmental organizations, the General Assembly shall establish procedures, taking into account those set forth in Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31, to review new applications and to monitor consultative status with the General Assembly.

7.3. Abbreviations

CC Citizens Century
CIA Central Intelligence Agency
CONGO Conference of Non-governmental Organizations of ECOSOC
CSF Civil Society Fund
CSSC Civil Society Security Council
DPI Department of Public Information
ECOSOC Economic and Social Council of United Nations
FIDH International Federation of Human Rights
GA General Assembly
GPF Global Policy Forum
G8 Group of 8 major economical powers (former G7)
IASC Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICC International Criminal Court
ICJ International Court of Justice
ICRC International Committee on Red Cross
IFC International Facilitating Committee
IGO Inter-governmental organization
INGO International Non-governmental organization
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