

Alliance for a Responsible, Plural and United World

World Citizens Assembly

Lille – December 2nd to 10th, 2001

Socioprofessional Group

NGO

Participants :

Antonin Prébois (takes notes), France ; Bouchentouf Mohamed, Algeria ; Bourjaily Dale Anne, Netherlands ; Civici Adrian, Albania ; Commenne Vincent, Belgium ; Cotera Aflonso, Peru ; Derausseau Tapas, India ; Eulalia Flot, Ecuador ; fatima Jibrell, Somalia ; Gerard Gasselin, France ; Igbusor Otive, Nigeria ; Jaiswal Rakesh Kumar, India ; Jhon Steward, Zimbabwe ; Karmaker Ranjan, Bangladesh ; Khadra Yusaf Ali ; Somalia ; Kurokawa Hirokawi, Japan ; Marti Oliveja, Spain ; Martial Cosette, France ; Mashkalo Valdimir, Russia ; Mbaou Ngagné, Senegal ; Montenegro Raul Alberto, Argentina ; Mukaikubo Toru, Japan ; Nebbia Alejandro, Argentina ; Philippe Amouroux (organizer), France ; Radhakrishnan Mita, India ; Razakharivalo Charlot, Madagascar ; Saifi Isant , Afghanistan ; Sandro Guiglia , Italy ; Sidibe Idrissa, Mali ; Silvio Prado, Ter Ellen Hellena, Netherlands ; Urbain Njatang, Cameroon ; Valayer Dora, France ; Wheeler Rob, USA ; Xercavin I Valls Josep, Spain ; Yanda Bililo Stella, Region of the Great Lakes (East Africa) ; Yolanda Ziaka, Greece .

Summary about the questioning of the participants

Philippe Amouroux :

I identified seven big types of questions from what was said this morning.

The propositions and the strategies that will come out of the meeting (2)

How can the NGOs have a common strategy, only one voice, how can we get out with a global vision, can we go further than the existing documents, can we work on the way changes arrive, how can we reach clear, collective results...

Are the propositions concrete and can we apply them on the field...

The process during the meeting (3).

How can we go further into topical questions :how can we go further into strategic axes; will we work on empowerment and globalisation ; will we talk about common interests...

Making concrete alliances here: making alliances; working with people who come from other regions;

Will I be able to present my experience or my situation

After the meeting (2)

How will the meeting's conclusions be glorified: will there be an international diffusion of the products, how will the work on the charter be carried...

Will there be a continuation of the action, of the alliance, of the networks.

Exercise of cartography of the NGO network about the question: What must be changed.

120 propositions are made by the 47 participants at the workgroup. A proposition was made to put together 21 main lines.. It is temporary and it must be discussed again on 4th december 2001.

1)Regional governance
including the European political unity

2)World political governance

3)State reform
non-corrupted / stronger / which integrates citizens' criterion...

4) International reform of the financial system
tobin tax / International Monetary Funds Monetary Balances / fiscal paradises

5) Active subsidiarity and territorial management

6) Common good management
definition of the common good / fair sharing of natural resources / environmental management / access to the common good for all

7) Sustainable development and environment
sanctuary of the forests / ecosystem management / integration of environmental criteria / demography management / health

8) Economic actors' behaviour (companies)
Companies: social repproting

9) Economic actors' behaviour (citizens)
Citizen : ethical consumption and anti-consumerism

10) Establishing another vision of economy (ethical / responsible / of solidarity)
economy to the man 's service / social and ethical dimension in economy / integrating social culture in globalisation...

11) Establishing a peace culture
education to peace and ethics / cooperation / conversation of the armament industry

12) Education to citizenship.
Education to environment / diversity as a key of development .

13) Reinforcement and organization of the NGOs to the world level.
Reinforcing the networks...

14) Involvement of the NGOs in the national and international political decisions.
Reform of the electoral system so that the minorities can express themselves.

15) The way to finance the NGOs .

16) Reinforcement of the alliance's role
Role of mediator in finance/ mediatizing the products of the workshop/.strenghtening the NGO network / widening the alliance to social movements/ organization of the alliance.

17) Respect of cultural and biological diversities.

18) Improving the systems of citizen involvement.

19) Putting an end to corruption.

20) Putting an end to situations of wars, re-establishing peace.

21) Feminine involvement and feminization of power.

Summary of the work carried out in subgroups on the application of the Charter in the sphere of NGOs
The exercise consisted in going over the principles of the Charter on Human Responsibilities again and seeing how they applied to the contexts of NGO activities.
The group was split into subgroups depending on their working languages.

Spanish-speaking Group

Principle 1

Reinforce the participation of NGOs and of other civil-society organizations so that human rights, as well as economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights become effective, by:

- denouncing violations and educating people
- setting specific alternatives to fight against poverty, exclusion, and the destruction of natural resources
- being more present in the public sphere, in those places where political decisions are taken, at local, national, and international level
- organizing an international campaign to foster peace and peoples' self-determination

Measures:

- Promote an international watch to monitor these rights
- Foster cooperation with other civil-society organizations belonging to the same field and reinforce the existing networks by making common dialogue possible

Principle 2

Work o build a full-fledged, individual, and collective citizenship that makes it possible to safeguard people's freedom and dignity while respecting diversity and asserting the identity of peoples and social sectors in such a way that human cohabitation becomes possible.

Measures:

- Recover the symbols of dignity by fostering self-confidence, one's own respect for individuals and peoples
- Work to attain transparency and assert ethical values
- Make the rhetoric and practice of NGOs coherent
These main lines are cross-disciplinary.

English-speaking Group

We did not really work on the principles but rather on the entire sector and its responsibilities.
The complex identity of NGOs: there is a great variety of them, which is enriching but also problematic.
Those who become involved in the NGO sector are mainly volunteer workers, which is positive, but problems arise due to the fact that this is not a professionalized sector, full of capacities. But there is a perverse effect with regard to the professionalization of NGOs: it is difficult to make them accountable.
The identity of NGOs is made up of agents who can promote social change, circumvent injustice and make up for state deficiencies.
Due to their characteristics, NGOs must be seen as a socially responsible service sector; therefore, they have great responsibility.

The challenges of the NGO sector

A key question is that of governance within NGOs and how they account for their *raison d'être*, for their legitimacy.

Their autonomy and their instrumentalization must also be considered. This goes back to the question of their financing and their political autonomy.

The management and administration of funds must conform to a code of behavior. It is also necessary to consider what funds and subsidies are granted to them and what regulations are applied to them.

If NGOs cannot be technically competent, they are not locally responsible. This is why they can legitimately ask for subsidies.

Possibilities of alliances among NGOs

The alliance could make several contributions to the NGO sector

One of the key elements in the world of NGOs is networks. An alliance could provide help, assist NGOs from the South in accessing world networks.

NGOs can act as models in the organization of activities in order to make up for state deficiencies. But NGOs do not exert pressure on the states they way they should. NGOs are not really taken seriously. Therefore, a high degree of coordination among all NGOs and at all levels must be established.

Specifically, NGOs try to implement some measures, organize events to foster social change. Much more information should be exchanged on how to do this successfully.

We acknowledge the importance of an international coalition of the civil society. But it is difficult for NGOs from the South to take part in it. This issue could be dealt with by the Alliance. It could participate in similar cases involving the setting of a code of behavior...with other (civic) networks.

French-speaking Group

The group tried to review all the principles.

They noticed that a charter of responsibilities would be useful to assess the coherence of NGOs as far as their objectives, status, and practices are concerned. Hence, they wished to include a charter of responsibilities in the preamble of NGO statutes.

Principle 1

NGOs must develop the capacity to prevent conflicts in the contexts in which they operate. But also internally. Non-violent resolution of internal conflicts should be part of their responsibility.

It is not up to NGOs to dispense justice, rather, they have to bring to light the injustice that they encounter. When information becomes denunciation there is a risk of producing perverse effects (NGOs taking the law into their own hands). Hence, it would be advisable to make alliances with local populations, with those who fight against injustice locally.

Principle 2

The right of NGOs to exist and acknowledgment of their actions. The responsibility involved in its implementation must be carried out at three levels: acknowledging the freedom and dignity of all members within the NGO; acknowledgement of NGOs among themselves; acknowledgement of other actors and sectors (states, companies...NGOs must not operate in a closed world).

Principle 3

Risk of contradiction in the actions of NGOs and among short-term measures (often connected to the search for funds). This race for funds may harm the sustainability of the measures. There is a risk of interrupting the implementation of some measures without knowing what the consequences will be for the territories and populations in the long run.

It is necessary to reinforce the mechanisms of assessment and for transferring skills ... in order to perpetuate long-term effects. Short and long-term measures can coexist.

Principle 4

The word "reciprocally" must be added at the end of the principle. Those NGOs concerned with social and humanitarian development should take the environment into account. Reciprocally, environmental NGOs should not ignore their social and political contexts.

Principle 5

Pursuit of economic prosperity. NGOs often strive for economic survival. But this does not mean that the question on how to regulate the competition among NGOs to obtain funds must be overlooked. It is necessary to share resources in an equitable way (among NGOs from the North and NGOs from the South and among NGOs

and the populations in which they operate).

Two ways of regulating market mechanisms:

□

by heightening public awareness and exerting pressure and by denouncing the harm and the injustice caused by the market;

□

by fostering economic innovation and economic partnerships in the alternative solution to the market.

All of which could be expressed as follows: NGOs should take part in the promotion of an equitable and socially responsible market.

Principle 7

Preserve the regenerative and innovation potential, add participation to the collective and democratic decision-making process as a means to reconcile unity and diversity.

Two other principles were put forward:

□

NGOs have to guarantee participatory and democratic internal organization.

□

NGOs must not accept funds from associates who do not respect the principles of the Charter of Human Responsibilities.

Japanese Group

The problem is that we are an NGO set up by the city of Hiroshima, which rallies 150 cities in the world. Thus, our organization is almost a rallying of local communities. We work on peace (in the broad sense) but are specialized in those issues concerning nuclear armament.

Principle 1

The quest for peace

We have a very varied, specific action program. Our activities include “The World Conference of Mayors for Peace”. So far, 570 cities in the world have endorsed it.

We seek to reestablish peace through humanization. Justice must be done to attain peace, not war in the name of peace or justice. Hence, we appeal to the need for reconciliation and humanity to reach sustainable peace.

Principles 2 to 5

In August 2001, the General Assembly of the “World Conference of Mayors for Peace” was held in Hiroshima and Nagasaki (200 people from 105 cities of 28 countries and 2 organizations). Some specific measures – linked to principles 2,4 and 5 – were taken there:

□

Start protecting our planet’s environment

□

Conversion of armament industries into (peace) civil products

□

Support the reconstruction of cities destroyed by conflicts

Proposal to modify the wording of principle 5 to avoid misunderstandings: “The resources of the Earth must be shared in an equitable way to serve the well-being and the development of human beings. In order to achieve this, the market has to be “regulated”. (“economic prosperity” is a problematic term).

Principle 6

NGOs must keep a watchful eye on material development, research, and innovation and they must have the means to do it. Good human development and preservation must be respected. NGOs must permanently be called into question, but not only them, citizens as well.

Principle 7

The group was a little confused because they did not understand what was meant by “challenges of the future.”

Principle 8

We need to set up a solid international system so that NGOs can train their militants, and have legal protection

and financial aid.