



Ministerial Level Breakfast Round Tables NGOs Forging Powerful Partnerships: Political, Public and Private

The theme for the 2005 High Level Segment

“Achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, as well as implementing the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits: progress made, challenges and opportunities”

1. While the Ministers and Heads of Delegations participating in the high-level segment of the 2005 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council meet in New York from 29 June to 1 July, to discuss the theme: “Achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, as well as implementing the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits: progress made, challenges and opportunities” , the Ministerial Level Breakfast Round Table has as its theme, **“NGOs-Forging Powerful Partnerships: Political, Public and Private”-proposing, reviewing and presenting pragmatic partnerships initiatives for the consideration of ECOSOC.**
2. The need for effective partnerships has been reinforced time and again and has also found strong support in the Secretary-General’s report, “In Larger Freedom” that proposes an agenda to be taken up, and acted upon, at the summit-“The world needs strong and capable States, effective partnerships with civil society and the private sector, and agile and effective regional and global intergovernmental institutions to mobilize and coordinate collective action”.
3. As more and more Civil Society organizations including NGOs, Local authorities, Academia and large philanthropic organizations enter into formal and informal partnerships with other stakeholders from the political, public and private sector- towards achieving their objectives, we see the civil society organizing itself around the principles of Collective Responsibility, Collective Accountability, Collective Trust, Collective Hope, Collective Sharing, Collective Inspiration etc. The roundtable is organized around these thematic clusters.
4. In presenting its proposals, the roundtable should take into account the **ICT** challenge. While access to ICTs can educate, entertain and enrich our lives, ICTs, together with other tools, can also play a vital part in helping achieve the much broader goals of the Millennium Declaration be it poverty eradication, democracy, governance, sustainable development or in meeting the special needs of Africa and the need to mainstream Information and communication technologies as an important tool towards achieving the goals.
5. The 8th MDG ‘Develop a Global Partnership for Development’ serves as a beacon to help achieve the other 7 MDGs **to translate commitment into action** especially with **Globalization**, and the environment change, there are concrete efforts taking place right now to build bridges between the Government and the non-profit sector - to strengthen relationships with the third pillar of the society – the corporate entity. Of course the relationship between government and the private sector is evolving as well.
6. It is very clear why governments around the world are increasingly turning to multi-stakeholder partnerships as a means of cost cutting and alternative service delivery. **It is an effective method for**

gaining access to capital and for leveraging it. It is also a way to gain access to specialized, private sector expertise. The private sector, often, has more freedom and expertise to respond quickly to market forces - to base decisions about service delivery on sound business principles and local circumstances.

7. The excellent **synergy** that can be forged between the various sectors, recognizing what each has to offer and drawing upon the expertise of all sectors to achieve the development objectives of the society has to be enhanced with the active participation of communities across the globe at the regional and country level through the new formed partnerships that seek private sector expertise, public sector participation and the political will as well as the grassroots support through CSOs as we move into this new 'Post Millennium Project' era.
8. These partnerships need to show a clear benefit to the **public good** because working together each partner can collectively achieve much more than alone. The discussions around the roundtable seek to demonstrate the clear benefits of a partnership in expediting the process of achieving the MDGs, by coming up with definite proposals and partnership initiatives in building human capital, sharing of technologies, supporting health care initiatives, mobilizing resources and in giving each other a hand.
9. Another issue in forging these partnerships is to ensure that they have a **transparent accountability** regime. As the public's funds or the public's interests are involved, it is important that these projects not be understood as being "just another business". We need to be able to answer important questions like: "Where is the public interest?", "How is it being promoted?", "How is it being protected?" and most importantly, "How is it helping achieve the MDGs?"
10. Collective accountability should be front and centre in all mechanisms to be proposed. While the government has a lot to learn from the private-sector and vice versa, while the two have to draw their inspirations from the Non-profit sector. The public sector has a lot to offer in terms of ideas and conceptual approaches. The ultimate aim should be to strike a balance - incorporating the best of the government, private and public sector practices into a new management style that serves the public interest better than ever before.
11. Novel Informal Partnerships are emerging at the interdepartmental and intergovernmental partnerships level. Over the past year, the non-governmental organizations that work with the United Nations through the mechanisms of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the Department of Public Information (DPI) have entered into innovative partnerships in their efforts to support the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and coordinate their work with the Organization. In September 2004, the ECOSOC NGOs, in particular those belonging to the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CONGO) and the Executive Committee of the 1,500 NGOs associated with DPI, joined forces to organize the 57th Annual DPI/NGO Conference entitled "The Millennium Development Goals: Civil Society Takes Action".
12. Determined to continue their partnership in support of the MDGs, the NGOs decided to form the Millennium+5 (M+5) NGO Network, a coalition between the NGO/DPI Executive Committee and CONGO. The M+5 NGO Network, established in January 2005, has coordinated NGO participation in the several ECOSOC-related meetings including the Commission on Social Development in February, the Commission on the Status of Women in March, the Commission on Sustainable Development in April, the Non-proliferation Treaty Review Conference in May and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in May and others to identify specific concerns and recommendations that civil society would like to bring to the High-level Meeting of world leaders (the September Summit) in September. The M+5 NGO Network also has representation on the General Assembly President's Task Force on the Hearings with Civil Society (23 – 24 June) and is preparing a report to be presented at the Hearings. The Report may also be considered at the 58th Annual DPI/NGO Conference "Our Challenge: Voices for Peace, Partnerships and Renewal" (7 – 9 September). The Conference will highlight the proposals of the Secretary-General in his report "In Larger Freedom: Towards Security, Development and Human Rights for All" especially the reforms and recommendations advancing the MDGs.

13. Last but not the least the informal network of NGOs under the umbrella of UN-NGO-IRENE(United Nations Informal regional Network) has had tremendous success in building capacity of NGOs at the regional level including their substantive contributions to the High level Segment of ECOSOC.

Questions for Discussion:

1. How can partnerships of government, the private sector, and civil society best be utilized to develop comprehensive national and regional plans and strategies to address the growing need for achievement of MDGs?
2. How can participants assist in the formulation of policies and practices for increased community participation?
3. How can governments streamline regulatory frameworks for Partnerships for all sectors, provide each with technical and capacity-building assistance as they address the needs of people?
4. What are the complementary roles of each sector in these 'Powerful Partnerships' in formulating policies to address cross-cutting issues, such as development of Human Capital, use of ICT's, corporate social responsibility;
5. How can existing partnerships be strengthened to meet the emerging needs of people living in developing countries to maintain the long-term health and quality of life?
6. How to integrate corporate social responsibility in determining alliances and networks of civil society organizations with other private sector organizations. The private sector must begin to communicate more with the public and take into account the social impacts of their work. And augment their role in capacity development of the public sector.

Conclusion:

The paper brings to the fore issues as they relate to Formal and Informal Partnerships and other novel partnerships. Both established formal institutional linkages and informal networks have emerged around particular interventions. Both are characterized by phases of planning, implementation, division of tasks, and sharing of information and resources.

Conceptually, Formal Partnerships differ markedly from informal networks. Formal Partnerships are very institutional in nature, and have written and laid down goals and procedures. Informal Partnerships depend more on individual efforts to network than on organizational mandates or initiatives. The perception of Formal Partnerships is that everything is formalized and laid down, and that all participants know their own and other actors' responsibilities. Organizations are represented on the boards of other collaborating institutions or organizations. Informal Partnerships or networks depend on personal contact among the members of different organizations, tend to be determined by need and are developed when required, and are automatically dissolved once the purpose is served. Also the informal partnerships are often forged because of the underlying legal, political, and institutional obstacles to forming effective formal partnerships.

Support for networking is rapidly replacing the more conventional approaches to technical assistance and may provide a way in the future as we endeavor to work together towards a global partnership for all in collectively achieving the Internationally agreed development goals.