

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS  
OFFICE FOR ECOSOC SUPPORT AND COORDINATION  
**UN-NGO-IRENE UPDATE**

Special Issue 1  
October 2008

# CELEBRATING SEVEN YEARS OF UN-NGO-IRENE



*We had a very successful ECOSOC High-Level Segment (ECOSOC-HLS) 2008 and I would like to seize this opportunity to underline the importance of MDG Goal Number 8: "Develop a global partnership for development".*

*Since 1998, my role as a Chief NGO at the United Nations has been to innovate, promote and foster the creation of such Global Partnerships in civil society, through UN-NGO-IRENE. This powerful initiative, composed of 3170 NGOs accredited by ECOSOC, led by very committed NGO Coordinators with the purpose of finding and creating synergies to leading to MDG implementation. Seven years after, we celebrate a new anniversary in this special issue of "UN-NGO-IRENE Update".*

*Focusing on the special celebration organized last July, we go over the main progress and challenges we faced at the global and regional level. I hope you enjoy it and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support in helping achieve these extraordinary results with very few resources and on such a short time frame.*

*Looking forward to a continued healthy and prosperous partnership, and more achievements toward the MDGs.*

**Ms. Hanifa Mezoui**  
Chief of NGO Section  
UNDESA



**Representation.** Experts and regional coordinators from all network regions gathered to celebrate the UN-NGO-IRENE anniversary.

On July 2, 2008, in the context of the Economic and Social Council High-Level Segment (ECOSOC-HLS), regional representatives gathered together to celebrate and review the progress of seven years of intensive work at the United Nations NGO Informal Regional Networks (UN-NGO-IRENE). The meeting, entitled "2001-2008: Consolidating the UN-NGO-IRENE within the United Nations", consisted of an opening statement by Dr. Deisi Kusztra, President of the World Family Organization, followed by a panel discussion composed by experts and regional coordinators of the network.

In her statement, Dr. Kusztra highlighted

that the success of the UN-NGO-IRENE network is an achievement made possible by the celebrated vision of former governor and current member of the National Parliament of Brazil, H.E. Dr. Albano Franco, who was a guest of honor to this celebration.

The UN-NGO-IRENE network was created in response to the Secretary-General Report of 1999 to the Assembly underlining that



H.E. Dr. Albano Franco

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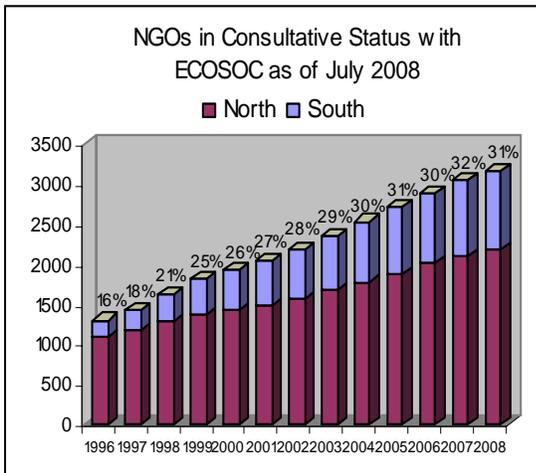
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the United Nations Secretariat NGO Section should establish non-governmental organization regional networks to improve the exchange of information.

Ms. Hanifa Mezoui, Chief of the NGO Section at the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and UN-NGO-IRENE Central Coordinator, explained that the purpose of the UN-NGO-IRENE network is to improve the partnership and sharing of information between the UN and NGOs, while she also emphasized the responsibility that the NGOs share for their commitment to positive work for ECOSOC.

As a result, the exchange of information through informal networks of country or regionally based NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC has improved, as well as helped as a way of establishing a link between the UNDESA NGO Section and NGOs in each region.

There is no doubt that coordinating the work of the United Nations with 350 NGOs involved in UN-NGO-IRENE presents a significant challenge. In order to tackle it, the

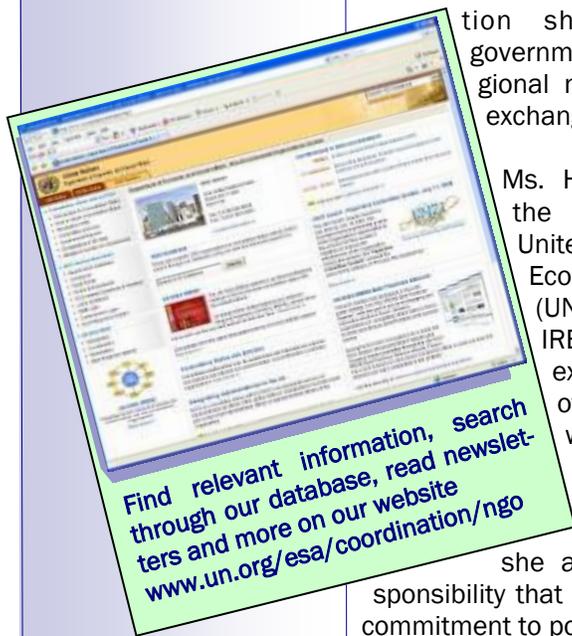


**South-North Gap.** Although still a work in progress, the UN-NGO-IRENE helped to reduce it

network has appointed regional coordinators to help convey and communicate issues to ECOSOC, as well as mechanisms for engaging governments and academia to implement a shared language to address and spread knowledge regarding the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Another important aspect in establishing a global network is to have a balanced regional representation, specially when it refers to the current sizable gap between NGOs from the South and NGOs from the North. Although it is still a work in progress, the network and the outreach activities organized through it have already made a measurable difference in the geographical distribution of the NGOs in status with the Economic and Social Council and in achieving greater representative party as envisaged in ECOSOC resolution 1996/31.

Ms. Mezoui remarked that due to the UN-NGO-IRENE outreach programs, the



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## LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN



The success of the UN-NGO-IRENE network is an achievement made possible by the celebrated vision of former governor and current member of the National Parliament of Brazil, H.E. Dr. Albano Franco. His belief is our belief in the network to galvanize governments, civil society, and the private sector. Together, governments, civil society, academia, families, and individuals can hold effective dialogue and work hand-in-hand in achieving peace and promoting development.

**Dr. Deisi Kusztra, UN-NGO-IRENE Latin America Region Coordinator**

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number of civil society organizations in consultative status with the Council originating from the South now comprised 31%; an increase from 15% from the period 1996 to 2008.

An important action taken to achieve

this progress was the establishment a number of NGO coalitions from Africa, Europe, the Middle East and India since the creation of IRENE seven years ago. These coalitions have developed a range of operational projects through the advisory and capacity-building functions of UN-NGO-IRENE. The Network also fostered sharing of experiences and best practices among NGOs from different re-

## AFRICA



The UN-NGO-IRENE network for Africa, born in 2003, is based in Tunis, and involves more and more African NGOs each year. The African Union (AU) possesses its own structure to address social, economic and political issues and currently includes 130 NGOs; 2 NGOs per national country, 2 NGOs per sub region; 8 NGOs from the continent, and 20 NGOs from the diaspora. The link between African NGOs and the United Nations remains very strong and also that the AU could join the Asia-Pacific and Latin America as a regional representative coordinator. In sum, Africa stands committed to fight the challenges concerning water sanitation, poverty, education, maternal mortality, HIV/AIDS, and conflict

**Hon. Mme. Saida Agrebi, UN-NGO-IRENE Africa Region Coordinator**

gions and countries for sustainable development and peace, as well as providing policy guidance, advisory services and training, and adapted innovative experience to their specific context. In other words, they took the maximum of benefit from the networking possibilities.

Finally, though not less important, is the role that information technology had in strengthening and sustaining UN-NGO-IRENE. The technical cooperation activities for capacity-building programs for and with policy makers and NGOs at the country level that were carried over in this period, where only possible through the deployment of efficient information-sharing and communication systems in developing countries, small island states and countries with economies in transition.

In addition to that, the

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Submit your Best Practice to be included on the UN-NGO-IRENE Best Practices Network website  
[www.un.org/esa/coordination/ngo/irene](http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ngo/irene)

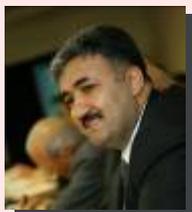
## ASIA-PACIFIC



This year the third conference of UN-NGO-IRENE / Asia-Pacific was held in Beijing on 28-30 April 2008, under the theme "Sustainable Development and Green Olympics". During the conference, discussions were particularly focused on the topic of Sustainable Development and Civil Society. A recommendation paper to the Annual Ministerial Review at the United Nations ECOSOC HLS was approved by the Conference. The participants attended activities such as signing for Sustainable Development and Green Olympics, tree planting at the Great Wall Friendship Forest and the 100-day countdown civil celebration. They also visited Qinghe Wastewater Treatment and Reclamation Plant and Olympic venues.

**Mr. Cui Jianjun, UN-NGO-IRENE Asia Pacific Region Coordinator**

## CENTRAL ASIA AND EASTERN EUROPE



There is a steady increase in the number of NGOs involved with the UN-NGO-IRENE network in this region. In 2003, there were 60 NGOs from these regions participating in the network and attending meetings; by 2005, this number had increased to 120 NGOs. The UN-NGO-IRENE meetings in Central Asia and Eastern Europe revealed the attempts to share MDG knowledge and demonstrated the beginning of NGO networking. The opportunity for progress is possible now that the structures have been established. Moreover, none of these successes would have been possible without the firm commitment of individuals.

**Mr. Nedim Kaya, UN-NGO-IRENE Eastern Europe Coordinator**

work” web portal can be accessed at:

<http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ngo/irene>

The event, which was preceded by a two panel presentations on “The formulation of Public Policies and Delivering of Basic Services to the Family in the Context of Sustainable Development”, concluded with an award to Mrs. Mezoui, Mr. Nikhil Seth (Director of Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination at UNDESA) and H.E. Dr. Albano Franco. In the words of Dr. Kuzstra who made the concluding remarks: “These awards represented a way to commemorate the success of UN-NGO-IRENE in promoting the principles of the World Family Organization, espe-

terms of reference of the NGO Informal Regional Network, mandates, inter alia, the establishment of a technology based system that facilitates interactive exchange at the regional and global level between the United Nations and NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council.

cially providing a platform for dialogue and action involving both the public and private sectors, as well as for the free flow and sharing of information and knowledge.”

### Have you submitted your Quadrennial Report

This year the committee discussed measures related to quadrennial reports and adopted an oral decision to have a letter sent to the 169 NGOs that had failed to submit their quadrennial reports for more than 2 reporting periods. Remember that suspension or withdrawal of consultative status might be applied if your organization fails to submit the quadrennial report on time.

To support this mandate, Ms Mezoui announced that the NGO Section had launched a new web portal. The “UN-NGO-IRENE Best Practices Network” web portal aims to empower the awareness in regards to the work being carried out by NGOs around the world, and to further increase the relationships between civil society and the United Nations.

The “UN-NGO-IRENE Best Practices Net-



**Award.** Dr. Kuzstra conferred awards to Mrs. Mezoui, Mr. Seth and H.E. Dr. Franco, whom she appointed “Founding Fellow #1”

## EDITORIAL NOTE

The UN-NGO-IRENE Update is a publication prepared by the NGO Section of the Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination – Department of Economic and Social Affairs. This Newsletter is not an official document of the United Nations nor does it express the official position of the United Nations. Editorial team: Hanifa Mezoui, Patty Elahi, Ola Goransson and Diego Rumiany.

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