



# UN NGO IRENE

Informal Regional Networks

## “We the People...”

...even though the United Nations is an organization of states, the Charter is written in the name of ‘We the Peoples’. ...Ultimately, then, the United Nations exists for, and must serve, the needs and hopes of the people everywhere.”

The United Nations in the twenty-first century - Report of the Secretary-General to the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations.



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Group of 77

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Office of Human Resources for International Cooperation (UNHRIC/DESA)

Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries (OSCAL/DESA)

Department of Public Information (DPI)

Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS)

United Nations Industrial Development (UNIDO)

United Nations Institute for Training and Research/International Training Centre for Local Actors (UNITAR/CIFAL)

Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CONGO)

International Association of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions (IAESCSI)

World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA)

Euro-Arab Network of NGOs for Development and Integration (READI)

World For World Organization (WFWO)

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## 1945

"The Economic and Social Council may make suitable arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations which are concerned with matters within its competence."

Charter of the United Nations Article 71

Since it was established, the UN Secretariat has provided support to NGOs seeking consultative status with ECOSOC. These functions are presently carried out by the NGO Section, located within the Division for ECOSOC Support and Coordination of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA). Its functions are based on Article 71 of the Charter of the United Nations and on Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and the consultative arrangements redesignated in resolution 1996/3:

Serving as the substantive secretariat of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations.

Processing of applications from NGOs seeking consultative status with the ECOSOC.

Processing of quadrennial reports on the activities of NGOs in consultative status.

Acting as a focal point within the United Nations Secretariat, by providing advice and information on matters related to NGOs, including servicing of UN conferences and special sessions of the General Assembly.

Providing accreditation to representatives of NGOs in consultative status with the ECOSOC.

Maintaining close contacts and liaisons with NGOs, including through coordination with the Conference on NGOs in Consultative Status with the ECOSOC.

## 1996

The Economic and Social Council confirmed the "need to take into account the full diversity of non-governmental organizations at the national and international levels" to ensure "a just, balanced, effective and genuine involvement of non-governmental organizations from all regions and areas of the world", and extended the consultative relationship to include national, sub-regional and regional organizations.

*Economic and Social Council Resolution 1996/31*

## 1999

"The Section will work to improve the exchange of information through informal networks of country or regionally-based NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, which will serve as links between the NGO Section and NGOs in each region."

*General Assembly Report of the Secretary General A/54/520*

## 2000

Report of the Secretary-General to the millennium Assembly of the United Nations reaffirmed that "the United Nations exists for, and must serve, the needs and hopes of people everywhere".

## 2001

"...we are building new partnerships with the business community, non-governmental organizations and other civil society actors in order to promote information sharing and learning to support operational delivery and to mobilize private funds".

Launching of the UN-NGO-IRENE Worldwide in Aracaju, Brazil (April 2002)

*Report of the Secretary-General A/58/1 6 September 2001*



# What will the Regional Networks do?

## 2002

Launching of the UN-NGO-IRENE/Africa in Hammamet, Tunisia (January 2002).  
ECOSOC Decision E/2002/225 establishing a general voluntary fund for UNNGO-IRENE (July 2002).  
Preparatory meeting to launch the UN-NGO-IRENE in Beijing China (October 2002)

## 2003

Launching of the UN-NGO-IRENE/Eastern Europe, in Bucharest, Romania (May 2003)

Consultative status is being granted to a steadily increasing number of NGOs from countries and regions that provide geographical diversity, but are often economically distressed. A significant number of organizations, therefore, find themselves financially and logistically disadvantaged and thus unable to make full use of their consultative status by participating in economic and social development at the international level.

In light of the growing impact and influence of non-governmental organizations in the global arena, it is increasingly important that the concerns raised, the positions taken and the voices heard should be truly representative of NGOs worldwide.

### End isolation and Enhance the Global Debate

Draw even the smallest most isolated national NGOs into a system that provides information, communication and support for meaningful participation in the economic and social sector at every level. Organizations deprived of up-to-date information will have the opportunity to maintain regular contact between the United Nations and the large network of NGOs worldwide. As a result, they will have the opportunity to contribute or participate in UN activities as well as in the interactions that are now carried on through electronic communications networks.

### Promote Collaboration

Establish coordinating mechanisms to enable NGOs to interact and join forces in furthering common causes.

### Empower through Collective Action

Promote group action to reinforce the message of like-minded organizations in their dealings with government, donors and the general public at the national, regional and international levels.

### Strengthen the NGO Sector from within

Establish support systems within and between regions whereby training and advisory support will be exchanged to strengthen national and regional capacity to participate fully in both policy planning and implementation of economic and social development activities. Under the Regional Network System, training and development programs would be offered in areas such as: organizational management, implementation of technical programs and projects for development, skills for evaluation and analysis of policies and plans for development.

# Millennium Development Goals

## Establish the Global Context for NGO Activities

Provide action-oriented guidance and support within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to enable network participants to ensure that their contribution and that of the NGO sector as a whole will be truly significant in furthering achievement of the goals set by the global community for the 21st century.

- I Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger
- II Achieve Universal Primary Education
- III Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women
- IV Reduce Child Mortality
- V Improve Maternal Health
- VI Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases
- VII Ensure Environmental Sustainability
- VIII Develop a Global Partnership for Development

## The purpose of the Informal NGO Regional Networks

Spearheaded by the NGO Section, the overarching goal of UN-NGO-IRENE is to enhance the NGO contribution to the United Nations Economic and Social agenda and strengthen the sector from within by building parity among its organizations. Achievement of this overarching goal is based on providing access to up-to-date information and the benefits of ongoing communications through a technology-based system designed to promote interactive exchange among NGOs and between NGOs and United Nations. In addition, under the Network's training component, capacity building programs will strengthen national and regional organizations as effective participants in economic and social development both operationally and at the policy level.

The regional networks will be implemented by the NGO Section, UN/DESA, with the support of its Network Partners, the intermediary activities of designated regional coordinator organizations, and the active participation of the NGO community worldwide.

## Establishment of the General Voluntary Trust Fund in Support of UN-NGO-IRENE

The ECOSOC in July 2002 adopted decision E/2002/225 to establish a general trust fund in support of the UN-NGO-IRENE. This fund will focus on helping UN-NGO-IRENE to accomplish the following activities:

1. Networking and exchange of information and experiences among NGOs.
2. Capacity building and training activities for NGOs in the relevant areas of the Millennium Development Goals.
3. Promote coordination at all levels to generate partnership initiatives between government, civil society, the private sector, and the United Nations.