"Civil society occupies a unique space where ideas are born, where mindsets are changed, and where the work of sustainable development doesn't just get talked about, but gets done."

Kofi Annan
United Nations Secretary-General

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FOREWORD

Events of the last few years have demonstrated that civil society organizations in various forms – policy groups, peoples' movements, trade unions, formal and informal associations – have emerged as a powerful force for social justice and equity across and within borders. They have launched campaigns and initiatives that have transformed the development agenda at global, national and community levels.

The power of civil society organizing was clearly evident during the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. The summit also demonstrated that sustainable development is an issue that is both too big and too small for governments. While governments are indispensable, the challenge today calls for a multi-stakeholder approach – broad partnerships with different sectors of civil society and indeed every citizen. Such an approach cannot be entirely voluntary, but calls for government commitment and accountability. We need a framework that lets us measure the success of such partnerships with time-bound targets.

The Millennium Development Goals, endorsed by all heads of states and governments at the Millennium Summit of 2000, and resoundingly reaffirmed in Johannesburg, provide us with such a framework, to which all partners are accountable. As a policy framework, it creates space for political debate. It also calls for a broad rather than a compartmentalized approach because, to achieve impact by 2015, we must progress on all the goals simultaneously. As the United Nations embarks on a campaign to realize the goals, it needs strategic and creative alliances with civil society networks not only to help to build political will but also to raise public awareness and sustain momentum for a diverse set of targets on the road to 2015. Civil society skills in driving broad-based mobilization and creating bottom-up demand that holds leaders accountable will be essential to placing the Millennium Development Goals at the heart of national debates and development priorities. UNDP is committed to ensuring a voice for national civil society groups in the preparation of national reports tracking progress on the goals. Civil society organizations with a policy focus are contributing to efforts to ensure that the World Bank poverty reduction strategy papers are aligned with the objectives of the goals. In many of the world's poorest countries, CSOs are directly involved in the poverty reduction strategy process to bring people's priorities to the table. Theirs is a crucial contribution that UNDP will continue to support.

The range and versatility of civil society actors in addressing substantive policy and programming issues underscores the relevance of strong UNDP partnerships with civil society. The CSO Advisory Committee to the Administrator, composed of leading development practitioners from around the world, is testament to the importance that we attach to this relationship. It provides us with strategic guidance and policy advice in all our thematic areas and is a key forum for us to debate – and agree or disagree – on our future trajectory.

As the lead United Nations organization in poverty reduction and sustainable development, UNDP has a natural constituency in civil society organizations that are consistent and effective advocates for the poor and marginalized. This report is a snapshot of our long and multifaceted record in helping to empower and work with civil society organizations as they perform this critical task. The changing landscape of development makes it all the more imperative that we broaden and deepen these partnerships in pursuit of our common goals.

Mark Malloch Brown
Administrator

PREFACE

Partnerships with civil society organizations complement the work of UNDP with governments in essential ways. Civil society is both a vital resource and a critical constituency for UNDP in a world characterized by increasingly complex development challenges. These include rising conflict within and between states, an expanding HIV/AIDS epidemic and rapid depletion of the natural resource base on which future livelihoods depend. It is impossible to envision a future without vibrant partnerships with civil society organizations.

This report is a contribution to the inquiry of where UNDP and CSOs can together maximize their development impact. It presents, with examples, the range of UNDP-CSO partnership initiatives in programme implementation and policy advice throughout our thematic areas – from poverty and HIV/AIDS to environmental governance, conflict prevention and peace-building. The report highlights the multifaceted nature of UNDP engagement with civil society, and points to key roles that UNDP is called on to fulfil – of trusted convener, negotiator and facilitator, a provider of space for policy options and excluded perspectives, an enhancer of CSO capacity and a disseminator of instructive best practice. Drawing from the examples of partnership, the report suggests ways to strengthen UNDP engagement with CSOs for human development. What you have before you is a handbook of best practices for engagement with civil society.

A new generation of innovative policies guides our engagement with a broad range of civil society actors. Two key policies on engagement with CSOs and with indigenous peoples and their organizations were endorsed in 2001. They constitute a formal expression of UNDP commitment to deepen its partnership with CSOs. To assist country offices in applying these commitments, a practical source-book on civil society organizations was published in 2002.

We believe that dynamic partnerships with civil society organizations are essential for generating public awareness and political support for human development priorities, as well as for implementing programmes. Civil society must be at the heart of any sustainable development response. We are committed to creating the political space for CSOs to express alternative views and influence policy dialogue and decision-making, as well as supporting their work in addressing the rights and needs of vulnerable and marginalized people throughout the world.

This report on best practices has been a collaborative effort led by the Civil Society Organizations Division. We hope that you will find this a useful presentation of current interesting practices.

Bruce Jenks
Director
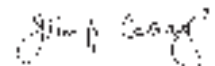Bureau for Resources and Strategic Partnerships

STATEMENT

We all know that to be a vibrant mechanism for peace and development in the 21st century the United Nations must adapt to the new voices of civil society organizations throughout the world. Providing civil society actors with a forum for real debate and ability to influence policy directions is essential for the relevance of the United Nations as a development organization.

A recent unique initiative is the Civil Society Organizations Advisory Committee to the Administrator set up by UNDP in 2000. UNDP invited 12 representatives of leading civil society groups (ten from the South and two from the North), selected for their policy expertise, to be on the committee. Many of us were deeply sceptical of recent United Nations initiatives to bring the private sector into a closer embrace with the organization, and one of our reasons for joining was to monitor the nature of the new partnership between UNDP and global corporations. Our larger motivation was to see if we could help to forge more dynamic relationships between UNDP and civil society across a range of issues. We prioritized our areas of engagement to include globalization and poverty reduction, conflict prevention and peace-building, human rights and human development and private sector engagement.

We are very pleased with the results. Our mandate in the committee is modest but crucial: to provide policy advice to the Administrator and senior management and to assess progress on recommendations and prioritize areas for UNDP-CSO partnership. Our ability to consult with UNDP Administrator Mark Malloch Brown and senior UNDP management has led to four developments:
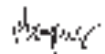
1. We have been able to initiate frank discussions on issues where civil society groups have been wary of certain UNDP initiatives. In the current climate, where corporate and other interests are trying to steer the United Nations in various directions, this advisory role is vital.

2. Through the committee, civil society groups have been able to influence UNDP policies and programmes. The UNDP policy on indigenous peoples is one example of such engagement. Our advice has helped to shape UNDP policies on the private sector, trade and inclusive globalization.

3. A committee sub-group is working with the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery to ensure links between poverty, exclusion, human rights and conflict resolution efforts. UNDP has moved forward on the committee's recommendation that regional/country offices also set up civil society advisory committees. We have welcomed the opportunity to co-organize events, at UNDP headquarters as well as at international venues.

4. Beginning in 2002, we have entered into discussions with the Human Development Report Office, which prepares the extraordinary Human Development Report to provide inputs that address civil society concerns and perspectives.

The United Nations is central in identifying creative solutions to the grave crises that face humanity and the planet. The experience of the UNDP CSO Advisory Committee in securing civil society input into one of the most critical organizations of the United Nations provides a worthy model for the rest of the United Nations system.

John Cavanagh
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Victoria Tauli-Corpuz
Executive Director, Tebtebba Foundation, the Philippines
Committee Co-chairs (2002-2003)

ACRONYMS

AGFUND
Arab Gulf Fund for United
Nations Development Organizations

BCPR
UNDP Bureau for Crisis
Prevention and Recovery

BDP
UNDP Bureau for Development Policy

BONASO
Botswana Network of AIDS
Service Organizations

BONELA
Botswana Network of
Ethics, Law and HIV/AIDS

BONEPWA
Botswana Network of
People Living with AIDS

BRSP
UNDP Bureau for Resources
and Strategic Partnerships

CAWTAR
Centre of Arab Women
for Training and Research

CBO
Community Based Organization

CEA SURF
Central and East Africa
Sub-Regional Resource Facility

CEPROSH
Centre for Human Solidarity

COPRESIDA
Presidential Council for AIDS

COPODE
Committee of NGOs Fighting Desertification

CSO
Civil Society Organization

DFID
Department for International
Development of the United Kingdom

FAS
Femmes Africa Solidarité

GEF/SGP
Global Environment
Facility/Small Grants Programme

GIPA
Greater Involvement of People
Living with or Affected by HIV/AIDS

GROOTS
Grassroots Organizations Operating
Together in Sisterhood

GTZ
Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Technische Zusammenarbeit

HIPC
Heavily Indebted Poor Countries

HPP
Highland Peoples Programme

HURIST
Human Rights Strengthening

ILO
International Labour Organization

IMF
International Monetary Fund

IPEA
Institute for Applied
Economic Research, Brazil

IPO
Indigenous Peoples Organization

LIFE
Local Initiative Facility
for Urban Environment

MDGs
Millennium Development Goals

MNLF
Moro National Liberation Front

NGO
Non-governmental Organization

ODA
Official Development Assistance

PEAP
Poverty Eradication Action Plan

PLWHA
People Living with HIV/AIDS

PRSP
Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers

RBA
UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa

RBAP
UNDP Regional Bureau
for Asia and the Pacific

RBAS
UNDP Regional Bureau for the Arab States

RBLAC
UNDP Regional Bureau for
Latin America and the Caribbean

REDOVIH
National Network of
People Living with HIV/AIDS

SPARC
Society for the Promotion
of Area Resource Centres

TUGI
The Urban Governance Initiative

UNAIDS
United Nations Joint
Programme on HIV/AIDS

UNDP
United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO
United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNFPA
United Nations Population Fund

UNICEF
United Nations Children's Fund

UNIFEM
United Nations Development
Fund for Women

UN-Habitat
United Nations Human
Settlements Programme

UNV
United Nations Volunteers

WCAR
World Conference against
Racism, Racial Discrimination,
Xenophobia and Related Intolerance

WSSD
World Summit on Sustainable Development

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OVERVIEW

This report is part of an ongoing inquiry into the evolving nature of UNDP partnerships with civil society organizations (CSOs). The 32 examples of civil society partnerships in four thematic areas cited here provide practical insights from country experiences, with the goal of promoting innovation and improving learning and practice. The report builds on the work of a number of previous publications documenting the expanding context of UNDP partnerships with civil society, from community experiences in poverty reduction and citizens' participation in budgetary processes to conserving indigenous knowledge and enabling sustainable recovery from crisis.

The CSO Division in the Bureau for Resources and Strategic Partnerships invited country offices, sub-regional resource facilities and regional and substantive bureaux to share experiences of partnerships with civil society organizations. The substantive areas covered include globalization, trade, debt and poverty reduction, conflict prevention, peace-building and disaster management, environment and sustainable development, and HIV/AIDS, with special attention accorded to the cross-cutting issues of human rights, gender and partnership with indigenous peoples. The strongest examples received were in the areas of poverty reduction, environmental management and sustainable development, conflict prevention, peace-building and recovery, and HIV/AIDS. Accordingly, the report addresses these specific themes, combining research and interviews with the principal actors. The report is not intended to be an exhaustive account; instead, it seeks, through examples, to capture and distill the essence of emerging UNDP-CSO partnerships that are increasingly shaping development outcomes.

In the core area of poverty reduction, the report reveals a growing emphasis on developing the capacity of civil society organizations to advance the interests of the poor, especially in scenarios where governments are unresponsive. This shift away from delivering goods and services or operating as social welfare groups has enabled civil society organizations to gain entry into critical policy-making arenas, especially policies linked with external debt relief in the world's poorest countries. Chapter 1 describes the extent and impact of civil society participation in a range of poverty reduction processes, with examples of poverty monitoring in Ethiopia, participatory budgets in Ghana, decentralized approaches involving indigenous peoples in the Mekong sub-region, the poverty reduction strategy papers in Uganda, community-based employment in Yemen and poverty hearings in Zambia.

In the area of environmental management and sustainable use of ecological resources, community-based and grass-roots organizations have long led the field with local initiatives in sustainable development, a role that has grown in importance in the environmentally disastrous decade since the Earth Summit. Governments and development agencies recognize the urgent need to adapt community-level successes more widely. Chapter 2 looks at ways in which communities have forged partnerships to address the interrelated challenges of environment and development, with examples of partnerships in combating desertification in Burkina Faso, making sustainability more than an environment issue in Estonia, facilitating dialogue and action that empowers people to claim their rights and entitlements in the Philippines, harnessing renewable sources of energy in India, conserving biodiversity in Mexico, improving urban governance in Sri Lanka and protecting traditional knowledge in Viet Nam.

The prevention of conflict and the rebuilding of societies after war or natural disasters must involve communities and their organizations in order to have a lasting effect. Civil society organizations – particularly those representing indigenous peoples, ethnic and racial minorities and women, who are most affected by such crises – bring unique skills in mediation and reconciliation to the negotiations table. They also ensure that crisis recovery efforts adopt a human rights dimension through their articulation of issues of inclusion and participation. In several crisis countries, the success of recovery efforts hinges on developing

the capacity of CSOs and working in partnership with them at the political and community levels. Chapter 3 casts a wide net, covering community projects and national women's consultations in Afghanistan, data-based research on racial inequality in Brazil, peace-building in Côte d'Ivoire, customary law among indigenous peoples in Guatemala, transition from earthquake relief to sustainable recovery in India, conflict resolution between the Government and organizations representing indigenous peoples in Ecuador, women's peace initiatives in the Mano River countries in West Africa, and peace and development programmes to address the impact of insurgency in Nepal and in the Philippines.

Perhaps the most visible development impact of civil society engagement is in the expanding crisis of HIV/AIDS. CSOs bring a multitude of strengths and strategies to the many frontlines of the battle against the epidemic. They have pressured governments to admit the extent of HIV/AIDS in their countries and develop public policy and programmes. Through community-based testimony, national and international networking and street protest, CSOs have brought the imperatives of prevention, care, treatment, support and research into government agendas. They have monitored human rights violations of people living with HIV/AIDS, created safe spaces for those infected, and reached out to vulnerable and ostracized groups. They have broken taboos, challenged stigmas, fought discrimination and raised public awareness. Chapter 4 examines the indispensable role of community groups and national and regional networks in containing the epidemic, whether in leading prevention and support initiatives in Burkina Faso, South Africa and the Dominican Republic, addressing risk factors in low-prevalence Mongolia or combating trafficking through regional initiatives in South Asia.

In conclusion, the report summarizes the specific strengths that CSOs and UNDP bring to their partnership that help to make a real difference in development impact. It examines organizational challenges to integrating civic engagement across all thematic areas, and suggests strategies to move forward.

Key Findings

The country experiences cited in this report demonstrate that UNDP-CSO partnerships create the most synergy when each side maximizes its relative advantages. A common theme is that at the most basic level, CSOs articulate excluded perspectives and pressing development concerns, and UNDP supports their efforts and helps to create policy space. As the accompanying table shows, CSOs have played one or more of the following defining roles: articulating citizens' interests and defending their rights, mediating between citizen and state, and mobilizing communities and grass-roots organizations. Partnerships had the most impact when UNDP played one or more of the roles it committed to in its policies of engagement with civil society organizations and with indigenous peoples. Ultimately, the quality of partnership was critically shaped by the collective ability of CSOs and UNDP to respond with sensitivity and backbone to the diverse development challenges.

The civil society function of voicing the public interest is often a critical starting point for social transformation – and an irreplaceable one in countries with weak or unresponsive governments.

> **The civil society function of voicing the public interest is often a critical starting point for social transformation.**

This leadership role assumed by CSOs – representing women, indigenous peoples, ethnic and racial minorities and ex-combatants – emerges most strongly from the experiences of Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, the Mano River countries and the Philippines in resolving conflict and bringing about reconciliation. In Brazil, the efforts of

The World Social Forum in Porto Alegre reflects the emergence of an international civil society movement that responds to diverse agendas, strategies and good practice and mobilizes millions of people.

CSOs representing Afro-Brazilians in focusing government attention on racial inequality have contributed indirectly but no less critically to defusing potential conflict.

The ability of CSOs to articulate and defend citizens' rights has become pivotal to shaping public policy and societal attitudes towards HIV/AIDS in strong and weak states alike. In Burkina Faso, civil society groups took the lead in tackling an overwhelming threat, catalysing the sort of government action and public engagement that have made the country a leading example of synergistic efforts in combating the epidemic. Leadership training and innovative approaches to involve the communities are emerging as key strategies in HIV/AIDS prevention in South Africa. CSOs in South Asia have broken the silence and stigma associated with the epidemic by acting on multiple fronts, often collectively and across borders. By identifying risk factors that could hasten the spread of HIV/AIDS in Mongolia, still a low-prevalence country, civil society groups there have focused timely government attention on averting a potential crisis.

Given the politically charged and sensitive nature of the terrain in both these arenas, the impartial yet supportive presence of UNDP, providing space, training and resources, has been key to successful outcomes. Mediating with governments while encouraging a vibrant civil society are two roles that UNDP is most called on to play in its partnerships with civil society in conflict prevention and HIV/AIDS.

The convening role of UNDP has equally important political implications in poverty reduction, particularly in countries where governments are required to formulate poverty reduction strategy papers to qualify for external debt relief. The Uganda experience demonstrates the twofold challenge facing UNDP – to provide governments with the technical assistance they need to map out their own strategies while facilitating genuine civil society participation that ensures a PRSP process that is nationally driven. Elsewhere, in Ethiopia, Yemen and Zambia, UNDP has brought its strengths as a facilitator and convenor to build

on CSO initiatives to defend citizens' rights and mediate between citizen and state.
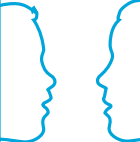
In the area of sustainable development, where community initiatives are increasingly shaping national responses, UNDP-CSO partnerships have coalesced around efforts to "scale up" local projects for wider impact. In the ecologically rich Sierra Gorda in eastern Mexico, for example, local communities worked with the authorities to propose solutions to preserve and regenerate this natural sanctuary. The citizens' consensus led to a federal decree establishing the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve. The UNDP Capacity 21 programme and the Global Environment Facility supported workshops in which local communities participated, and helped to empower civil society organizations throughout the country to engage in conservation strategies.

In India, where community-based solar engineers have pioneered the use of solar power for village electrification, a UNDP-CSO partnership demonstrates the role of renewable energy in eradicating poverty and creating sustainable livelihoods among low-income communities. In both countries, community based organizations uniquely placed to play a mobilizing role have tapped into local energies, talents and resources to demonstrate alternative solutions, while UNDP has brought these efforts to fruition by providing the institutional and financial support needed to bring about dissemination replication and actual policy changes.

These experiences show that civil society engagement with governments and UNDP has been key to:

→ Providing policy choices that place people at the centre when setting priorities and allocating resources;
→ Driving policy change toward sustainable development through community-level pilot initiatives that integrate economic, social and environmental concerns;
→ Giving a voice to marginalized and disenfranchised groups to articulate and advocate their human rights, participate in conflict prevention and resolution and rebuild communities and habitats.

KEY FINDINGS ON ROLES OF UNDP AND CSOs IN COUNTRY PARTNERSHIPS

Thematic Area	Country	Articulate citizens' interests	Defend citizens' rights	Mediate between citizen and state	Mobilize community energies	Provide services
POVERTY REDUCTION	Arab States		yes			
	Ethiopia	yes		yes		yes
	Ghana	yes				
	Mekong Sub-region	yes				yes
	Uganda	yes		yes		
	Yemen	yes		yes	yes	yes
	Zambia	yes		yes		
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	Burkina Faso	yes			yes	yes
	Estonia	yes			yes	yes
	Guatemala	yes			yes	
	India	yes		yes	yes	yes
	Mexico	yes	yes		yes	
	United Rep. of Tanzania	yes			yes	
	Philippines	yes	yes	yes		
	Sri Lanka	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
	Viet Nam	yes			yes	yes
CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RECOVERY	Afghanistan	yes				
	Brazil	yes	yes	yes		
	Côte d'Ivoire	yes	yes	yes		
	Ecuador	yes		yes		
	Guatemala	yes		yes	yes	
	India	yes		yes	yes	
	Mano River Countries	yes		yes		
	Nepal	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
	Philippines	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
	Slovakia	yes		yes		yes
HIV / AIDS	Burkina Faso	yes	yes	yes		yes
	Botswana	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
	Dominican Republic	yes	yes		yes	yes
	Mongolia	yes	yes			
	South Africa	yes		yes	yes	yes
	South Asia	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

ROLE OF UNDP				
Convenor, mediator, facilitator	Broker of space	Enhancer of CSO capacity	Enabler of vibrant civil society	Disseminator of best practices
yes	yes	yes		
yes	yes	yes		
yes	yes	yes	yes	
yes	yes	yes		
yes	yes		yes	
yes	yes	yes		yes
yes	yes	yes		yes
		yes		yes
		yes		yes
		yes		yes
		yes		yes
		yes		yes
		yes	yes	yes
		yes		yes
yes	yes	yes		yes
		yes		yes
yes	yes		yes	
yes	yes			
yes	yes			yes
yes	yes	yes		
Yes		Yes		yes
yes	yes	yes		yes
yes	yes	yes		yes
yes	yes	yes	yes	
yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
yes	yes	yes		yes
yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
yes	yes	yes		

The UNDP roles in these country experiences exemplify the commitment of the organization, set out in the new policies on UNDP engagement with CSOs, to the multiple roles it will play to encourage a vibrant civil society:

→ convenor, negotiator and facilitator;
→ broker of space for excluded perspectives and policy options;
→ enhancer of CSO capacity;
→ supporter of vibrant civil society;
→ disseminator of instructive practice.

Context

The multiple levels of civic engagement in this report reflect the rapidly expanding landscape for civil society organizations. The growing influence of CSOs in the development arena in recent years is now well documented. The integration of the world economy, the growing interdependence of governments and the emergence of multiple cen-tres of power outside the state have galvanized a range of citizens' organizations and coalitions into concerted actions to address issues of social justice, human rights, sustainable development and the broader equity implications of globalization. They include global and regional civil society net-works, national non-governmental or community based organizations, and grass-roots movements for dispossessed population groups such as indigenous peoples and poor women.

The World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil, now in its third year, draws close to 100000 civil society activists – from trade unions, landless movements, women's organizations, environmental groups, peace movements and development NGOs. It reflects the emergence of an international civil society movement that responds to diverse agendas, strategies and good practice, and is not shaped solely by the priorities determined by official and intergovernmental processes. Despite their differences, the individuals and organizations gathering under the World Social Forum's common platform – "another world is possible" – see themselves as a citizens' counterpoint to the World Economic Forum that takes place in Davos, Switzerland.

Porto Alegre has inspired numerous regional and national social forums worldwide, mobilizing millions of people. The collective energy in articulating people-centred development alternatives signifies a groundswell for change that policy-makers can no longer afford to ignore.

Civil society engagement with the United Nations has grown exponentially. In 2000, the number of CSOs officially accredited to the United Nations Economic and Social Council was 1900, more than double the number at the 1992 Earth Summit. Through the United Nations conferences of the 1990s, CSOs have steadily increased their sphere of influence and impact by broadening development frameworks in terms of human rights, gender equity and sustainable development. In the words of Secretary-General Kofi Annan, civil society has the capacity to keep the United Nations "on our toes, to push the envelope and say and do things we do not dare – but that are helpful to the cause." By the time of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), civil society representatives in government delegations to United Nations conferences were a common rather than an exceptional feature.

Civil society organizations have effectively demonstrated their ability to transform this power of advocacy into policies for change. They have taken the lead in asserting the priority of human development needs. They have launched high profile and effective campaigns to improve the poor's access to essential medicines, especially for HIV/AIDS, and to cancel the debt of the world's poorest countries. Much of the impetus for landmark new institutions, such as the International Criminal Court and the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, has come from human rights advocates and organizations. On these and other pressing devel-opment concerns, CSOs find that the scope for civic engagement, internationally as well as in their own countries, has increased dramatically. CSOs have emerged as policy advocates and advisors to government agencies and multilateral institutions on issues ranging from trade, aid and

poverty reduction to environmental management, conflict prevention and resolution, and health and habitat. Policy-makers increasingly recognize the critical role of CSOs in building constituencies and consensus and no longer regard them solely as agents to implement programmes.

UNDP and Civil Society

The unprecedented citizens' mobilization in the late 1990s for development with a human face underlined the need for UNDP, as the development arm of the United Nations, to strengthen civil society alliances in addressing human development and human rights challenges.

The establishment of the CSO Advisory Committee to the Administrator in May 2000 reflects the priority accorded by the organization to civil society.[1] The creation of the committee was a central outcome of extended consultations with civil society leaders and UNDP senior management. It is composed of leading civil society activists, thinkers and practitioners, most of them from the South, and reports directly to the Administrator (see annex 1). It provides UNDP with strategic guidance and policy advice on substantive policy areas (governance, debt, trade, human rights, poverty reduction, conflict prevention and peace-building, environment and gender) and on future directions. At each of its annual meetings, the committee has provided policy advice to the Administrator and senior management in practice areas and prioritized areas for UNDP-CSO partnership.

Dialogue with committee members and other leading development practitioners was instrumental in the delineation of five core UNDP principles and commitments to guide partnerships with CSOs. They are:

1. Horizontality and trust — grounded in a mutual respect for the contribution that each partner can make to development;
2. Obligations of duty bearer within a rights-based framework — not only does it make sense for UNDP to engage with CSOs, it is also a duty;
3. Mutually agreed agenda setting — reflects the commitment to develop agendas jointly wherever possible;
4. Recognition of rich diversity within civil society — UNDP commits to understand better and engage with a broad cross-section of civil society;
5. Macro-micro coherence — UNDP partnerships aim to balance and create bridges between local and national issues, as well as between national and global issues.

These principles underpin the new policy on UNDP engagement with CSOs, which provides a strengthened framework to guide engagement with CSOs operationally and politically and highlights policy and programmatic implications. This policy defines civil society as a third sector, existing alongside and interacting with the state and private

CIVIL SOCIETY AND WHAT IT MEANS

Civil society is often described as the space between the citizen and the state, where the will of citizens is manifested and mobilized outside official auspices. CSOs are non-state associations whose main aims are neither to generate profits nor to seek governing power. CSOs unite people to advance shared interests and agendas ranging from ephemeral and parochial to enduring and universal. They may be described as individuals grouped privately to pursue a mutual or public good. CSOs are extraordinarily diverse, reflecting the societies in which they are rooted. Environmental groups, think tanks, trade unions, religious congregations, and grassroots and indigenous peoples' movements are examples of CSOs. Non-governmental organizations are only one of the many types of CSOs and tend to be associated with service provision.

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[1] The decision to establish the committee was taken based on discussions at three international workshops convened by the Administrator in 1999 and 2000. See http://www.undp.org/cso/resource/html for the report of the global workshop on governance for human development, where much of the discussions took place.

industry. UNDP takes a broad view of civil society organizations, of which non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are an important part, and collaborates with CSOs whose goals, values and development philosophy correspond to its own.

The CSO policy is one of a new generation of policies approved over the last two years (see annex 2). The 2001 policy on indigenous peoples, the first of its kind in the organization, provides UNDP staff with a framework to develop sustainable partnerships with indigenous peoples and their organizations in preventing and resolving conflict, enhancing democratic governance, reducing poverty and sustainably managing the environment. It identifies – as priority areas for engagement – ownership and use of land and natural resources, poverty, protection of cultural and intellectual property, and participation in political processes. It also endorses the principle of free prior-informed consent in development programmes. Both policies have benefited from consultations with country offices and were reviewed and endorsed by the CSO Advisory Committee. The committee also reviewed the 2001 policy statement on working with the business sector to ensure a commitment to corporate social responsibility in engagement with the business sector. A CSO sourcebook, published in 2002, assists country offices to develop policy and programme initiatives with civil society organizations at the local and national levels.

Strategic Partnership with Civil Society

The United Nations Millennium Development Goals and the overarching goal of poverty eradication are at the core of the UNDP mandate, heightening the need for civil society partnership. UNDP now works closely with civil society groups in policy and programme levels in all its practice areas, with a range of synergistic initiatives that both support civil society actors and benefit from their reach and experience.

By 2001, UNDP country offices were reporting increasingly diverse activities and partnerships with civil society in core development sectors. In 25 countries, UNDP supported civil society

forums or provided training to CSOs to contribute to national poverty reduction strategies. Twenty country offices reported capacity development of civil society to advance human security as a significant activity in 2001. UNDP involved civil society groups in 22 countries in local decision-making processes through dialogue, training in participatory planning, budgeting and democratic governance practices. In Ghana, for example, partnership be-tween the country office and civil society is exemp-lified by UNDP-sponsored activities such as human rights advocacy, public constitutional education, quarterly government-civil society dialogue and the publication, launch and dissemination of the nat-ional human development report (UNDP 2001).

With the publication of the UNDP Human Development Report since 1990 – seen as an expression of the sustainable human development framework to end poverty – CSOs have identified UNDP as an ally, greatly strengthening the organization's opportunities for alliance-building. Civil society organizations have not only contributed to the analysis in the global and country reports but also used them – often far more effectively than UNDP has done – for advocacy with governments. In a growing number of countries, the national human development reports have emerged as pivotal forums for civil society participation and influence in national policy dialogue and agendas. Crucially, the human development paradigm provides UNDP with a mandate to be a forceful human rights advocate for the most vulnerable and disenfranchised sections of society, in particular indigenous peoples.

The location of the CSO division in the newly created Bureau for Resources and Strategic Partnerships underlined the UNDP commitment to pursue and consolidate substantive alliances with a broad range of civil society partners. As substantive alliances are underpinned by policy context, CSO partnerships are developed in close collaboration with the Bureau for Development Policy and its sub-regional resource facilities (see annex 3).

In many developing countries, CSOs have considerably expanded the scope of their activities

over the last decade, attracting significant recognition and donor attention. Their emergence as major players in bringing about economic and social change not only affects their relationships with governments but also among themselves. Given the vast and highly differentiated nature of CSOs, the very nature of the terrain is complex and carries multiple values, experiences and interests. The varied roles may not always complement one another, which is why a strategic partnership framework is crucial but can also become a contested arena. Messages from CSOs vary with type and location, with their preoccupation and their experiences. Those that work with grassroots groups on income generation, for example, have different priorities compared with those that work on civil and political rights or those that operate in the global or regional policy arena. Not all CSOs play 'watchdog' roles; many choose to work in consulting and advisory capacities with governments and private industry. Above all, CSOs increasingly have their own firm policy stances and are interested in engaging multilateral institutions, such as UNDP, on the issues themselves.

The willingness of CSOs to engage with UNDP depends on a reciprocal commitment from the organization. At the national level, civil society organizations may solicit UNDP support in the form of finance, training opportunities, and facilitating interaction with government and other actors. Those engaged in human rights issues may particularly seek clear political stances by UNDP. Global coalitions and networks may require solidarity, flexible funding and access to UNDP policy-making processes. Different organizations within civil society have different lessons and experiences to offer UNDP. The multiplicity of demands calls for a clear understanding of purpose for engagement and a negotiated agenda for strategic partnership. It also calls for mechanisms and processes by which local realities can feed into global advocacy positions and vice versa (ISODEC/NSI 2000).

These are critical considerations as UNDP diversifies and deepens its relationships with civil

UNITED NATIONS MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

2. Achieve universal primary education

3. Promote gender equality and empower women

4. Reduce child mortality

5. Improve maternal health

6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases

7. Ensure environmental sustainability

8. Develop a global partnership for development

All 191 United Nations Member States have pledged to meet the goals by the year 2015.

Fundamental values underpinning the Millennuim Declaration are:

1. Freedom

2. Equality

3. Solidarity

4. Tolerance

5. Respect for Nature

6. Shared Responsibility

society, and particularly as it embarks on a global campaign to realize the Millennium Development Goals, endorsed by all heads of state and governments at the Millennium Summit of 2000. While welcoming time-bound targets on the eight goals, CSOs advocate a variety of approaches to achieving them. Enabling alternative policy choices and creating the space for country-owned and driven strategies are essential if UNDP is to secure the active engagement of CSOs, which in turn is pivotal to moving the goals from political rhetoric to the heart of national debates and development priorities. ■

CSOs challenge policies that counteract fundamental freedoms and rights, such as education, health and safe drinking water, essential to a life free from poverty.

CHAPTER 1 POVERTY REDUCTION

DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVE CHOICES

UNDP has longstanding experience in poverty reduction, especially in the formulation of national anti-poverty plans and strategies. In 1996, the organization launched the Poverty Strategies Initiative, a multi-donor programme to help countries to implement commitments made at the 1995 World Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen. The programme has since funded poverty-related activities in more than 100 countries. Developing capacity and building constituencies are central to these activities. Their key elements include qualitative assessments of poverty, household surveys, poverty reduction strategies and social sector expenditure reviews (UNDP 2002).

In innumerable ways, these global and national efforts have drawn from civil society organizations that bring a human rights impetus critical to the struggle against poverty. CSOs challenge policies that counteract fundamental freedoms and rights, such as education, health and safe drinking water, essential to a life free from poverty. In countries where governments are unresponsive, CSOs have found effective ways to emphasize the human dimensions of poverty. Civil society groups have also been key to unlocking the solutions that lie with communities and networks.

Empowering civil society by catalysing community organizations, training relevant actors in skills and leadership and, in many instances, helping the poor to help themselves, has been a consistent feature of UNDP efforts to reduce poverty. The strategic goal, as stated in the UNDP *Poverty Report 2000*, has been to forge an alliance between the state and civil society for poverty reduction. The South Asia Poverty Alleviation Programme and the Area Development Schemes in the Arab States are two examples of recent poverty programmes that have helped to develop the capacity of community organizations to articulate people's needs and priorities directly. The South Asia programme, launched in 1996, helped the poor in six countries to mobilize themselves into 3 500 community organizations. A distinctive feature of its strategy was empowering a community's poorer members, especially poor women (UNDP 2000).

To promote pro-poor outcomes from public budgets and macroeconomic policies, UNDP has facilitated citizens' participation in national budgetary processes by developing CSO institutions and their capacity. In Ghana, for example, the Integrated Social Development Centre has, with UNDP support, set up the Centre for Budget Advocacy to train civil society organizations to understand local and national budgets and engage in budget formulation in ways that promote democratic governance and accountability to the poor. The setting up of this centre followed the development of a people-centred budget training methodology in three workshops on pro-poor and gender-sensitive budgeting. To promote transparency and accountability in the budget process, UNDP has supported parliamentarians in Cambodia to hold public hearings and develop partnerships with civil society groups.

A UNDP workshop, organized with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) in 1999, brought together civil society organizations from a number of countries to examine ways in which they have influenced national budgets to reflect equity and gender and environmental concerns (UNDP 1999). UNDP has supported government and civil society attempts at making macroeconomic policies more participatory and gender-sensitive. Public policies and expenditures can be allocated in ways that promote or hinder gender equality, and 'gender budgets' can be important instruments for making governments accountable to women by prioritizing public spending towards ends that promote women's empowerment and enhance gender equality.

In partnership with CSOs, UNDP has undertaken research and helped to generate awareness and support for gender budgeting as a useful contribution to gender-sensitive macro-policies in different countries. It has also focused efforts on creating more gender-specific indicators and gender-disaggregated data as a priority for advocacy and policy-making purposes. UNDP support for participatory budget processes in the Philippines, Malaysia, Fiji and Nepal, for example, has promoted gender analysis of policy-making, including taxation and expenditures.

Reducing Poverty in Indigenous Communities

The ethnic concentration of poverty and inequality has been increasingly recognized in development circles over the years. Studies indicate that indigenous peoples and other ethnic, racial and linguistic minorities tend to occupy an inferior social and economic position vis-à-vis the mainstream population. The incidence of human poverty in most indigenous communities is probably the most visible evidence of exclusion (unequal access to productive resources and basic social services), if not of actual discrimination. UNDP has engaged in numerous initiatives aimed at reducing poverty among indigenous communities.

The Highland Peoples Programme (HPP) developed in response to the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (1995-2004) covered four different countries in the Mekong Sub-Region – Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Thailand and Viet Nam – where at least 11 million indigenous people live. This poverty reduction programme, implemented by the UNDP Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, worked closely with indigenous peoples' organizations and applied a participatory, decentralized and bottom-up approach to the development of an area inhabited by indigenous peoples. It established exchange mechanisms and procedures to encourage dialogue and the sharing of experiences and information on highland peoples' development at the regional, national, and local levels between the government and indigenous peoples' organizations. The programme substantially strengthened support structures and contributed to policy-making.

A second regional project, based on the lessons learned from the HPP, focuses renewed attention on poverty in most indigenous communities, with the specific objectives of strengthening policy dialogue on rights and sustainable development. By sharing experiences among the participating countries (Cambodia, China, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam) and promoting good practices, it intends to support indigenous peoples' full and effective participation in policy dialogue at all levels. The project tackles three general areas of concern: ownership, the use of land and

natural resources and environmental management, cultural autonomy (especially in language and education), the protection of cultural and intellectual property, and participation in the formal decision-making processes of the state.

Civil Society and the PRSP

Given the record of UNDP in national poverty reduction efforts, many governments have approached UNDP country offices for assistance in formulating the poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) process. This new policy instrument, endorsed by the Executive Boards of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank in December 1999, is intended to serve as a common framework for Bank and Fund interventions in low-income countries receiving concessional assistance.[2] Civil society participation, as a means of fostering national ownership and securing political support for the PRSP, is seen as essential to the PRSP process, a country-level consultation overseen by the Bank and Fund, with United Nations organizations and bilateral donors assigned the role of stakeholders.

Civil society policy advocates concerned about the content and ownership of national macroeconomic policy believe that UNDP has a crucial role to play, working with governments and CSOs to provide the space for alternative policies to be debated and to support capacity development in both sectors. "For civil society, there are three important goals," says Charles Abugre of the Integrated Social Development Centre in Ghana. "We must challenge some basic economic frameworks and ensure that policies are effectively pro-poor, create independent networks, and undertake more qualitative assessments integrating poverty monitoring with poverty analysis." It will be useful for UNDP to be part of civil society initiatives in developing alternative ways of thinking, he says.[3] For civil society organizations, which have long been persistent and effective advocates for poverty reduction, the PRSP is a critical opportunity for engagement at the level of policy formulation, over and aside from the role of service delivery that they are traditionally assigned. Much of civil society input is geared towards ensuring that the strategy explicitly links poverty reduction with debt-relief measures.

As the principal instrument of economic policy in very poor countries, the PRSP, in both content and process, has generated active debate and critiques at national and global levels, and is the focus of discussion in this chapter. Experience so far suggests that civil society participation in the PRSP process has been uneven. While there have been great efforts to open up consultations

> There is a critical need to develop the capacity of CSOs so that they have a greater impact in policy planning, monitoring, and evaluation.

to civil society, CSOs are keenly aware of the tensions in a process mandated by the international financial institutions but owned and managed by governments (NSI 2002). They also face the challenge of genuine participation that responds to the needs of their constituencies, as opposed to 'being participated' through symbolic consultation as a means of spreading acceptance of politically controversial policies. Southern CSOs have in particular pointed to the absence of women's voices in drawing up the papers (WDM 2001). Weak gender analysis in most PRSPs has resulted in a lack of concrete legislative and policy solutions for women, and few proposals that directly address the poverty consequences of gender inequalities.

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[2] Beginning with the 41 countries classified as heavily indebted poor countries, the PRSP will progressively be applied to all international development assistance (IDA) countries.

[3] Comments at the third meeting of the CSO Advisory Committee to the Administrator(New York, 16-17 January 2002).

Results Versus Participation

In Central and Eastern Africa, UNDP-CSO engagement has included fostering stakeholder awareness and inputs through poverty forums, seminars and workshops, strengthening capacity to monitor the PRSP, developing disaggregated indicators, data, training and poverty observatories, and conducting poverty surveys and assessments, especially at the grass-roots level.

A recent review of such engagement in the region, commissioned by the UNDP sub-regional resource facility in Central and East Africa, identified a "basic tension between government interest in rapid formulation of the PRSP to obtain rapid debt relief and civil society demand for participation in a broad process of dialogue with government and donors on poverty reduction issues" (Inter-Africa Group 2002).

The report made four other key observations. First, there is insufficient consensus among CSOs, governments and other stakeholders on effective participation, in terms of depth and breadth of the process, inclusiveness and information access. Second, government commitment is critical to meaningful consultation – this contributed to effective participation in Cameroon, Chad and Uganda. Third, where governments see the need for consultation with civil society, they often prefer to use their own structures with limited direct engagement of CSOs; in Burundi, Ethiopia and Rwanda, for example, PRSP consultations were largely based on government structures with varying levels and quality of civic participation. Fourth, there is a critical need to develop the capacity of CSOs so that they have a greater impact in policy planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

The two issues of civil society participation and capacity for monitoring are key elements of UNDP-CSO engagement in this arena. A number of CSOs engaging in the PRSP process believe that if participation is to be a determinant of ownership, two factors become critical: the willingness of states to allow space for civil society voices and the amount of information to which CSOs have access on a continuing basis. Many are

concerned that CSOs are still being excluded from real participation in the process, which is rarely open to poor people. Credible participation depends on who is invited from the public (for example, not only quasi-government NGOs but also independent organizations).

Some CSOs express concern over the lack of a mechanism to ensure that civil society priorities are given serious consideration. Even with extensive participation in the PRSP process, there is little assurance that civil society groups will be able to participate in regular national policy processes such as budget debates (NSI 2002). For their part, CSOs seeking participation face questions of representation, information and capacity. Many of those involved have been urban groups. In many countries, CSOs lack experience in economic planning processes and the ability to engage in detailed discussions in a short time frame (Panos 2002).

For UNDP, the challenge from the PRSP process is twofold. On the one hand, to fulfil its role of providing governments with alternative policy choices, the organization must engage in formulating the paper when requested.

Engagement means that UNDP uses its own traditional strengths to foster country ownership – such as providing support for civil society consultation and ensuring that poverty reduction goals are given maximum space in the macroeconomic envelope and that technical assistance is used to help developing countries to elaborate real choices as they seek to map out their own development strategies (UNDP 2001a).

At the same time, longstanding UNDP ties with civil society in poverty reduction efforts mean that it must find ways to ensure that the PRSP process respects both the rhetoric and the reality of national ownership. There is a window of opportunity in the fact that key fora such as consultative group meetings are now held in the countries concerned rather than in Paris. "This gives more weight to national views if only because many more national participants, including CSOs, can be present at them,"

BOX 1

GLOBALIZATION AND WOMEN'S WORK IN THE ARAB REGION

The Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR), based in Tunisia, has held a gender lens to the impact of globalization on women in the Arab region.

In an Arab women's development report, the first of its kind, the centre noted that there is a trend toward feminization of unemployment. The supply of job-seeking women is growing – but women are facing both structural as well as ideological barriers to work. In most Arab states, much of foreign direct investment goes to sectors such as petrochemicals, chemicals and building materials, where men predominate. Even in service sectors linked to global restructuring, such as information and communication technologies, trade and tourism, there are no significant benefits for women workers. Public sector retrenchment as part of economic restructuring has disproportionately affected Arab women because they prefer public sector employment, where they find conditions of service better than in the private sector.

When it comes to self-employment, the report pointed out that women seem to prefer wage work to being self-employed and taking loans, which means policy makers may need to rethink the best use of micro-credit for poverty alleviation among Arab women. Education does not endow women with the skills necessary in a globalizing market – women's access to information and communications technologies remains limited. Overall, the returns on female education do not fulfil expectations.

The centre was founded in 1993 with support from UNDP, UNFPA, and the Arab Gulf Fund for United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND). The report, *Globalization and Gender: Economic Participation of Arab Women*, published in 2001 by CAWTAR, UNDP and AGFUND, contains analysis, recommendations, and 100 tables and graphs describing the phenomenon of globalization and its gender dimensions in the region.

says Ngila Mwase in the UNDP country office in Uganda. UNDP seeks to improve policy implementation and coordination to meet determined goals (especially those related to human development) and increase the participation of civil society organizations and other stakeholders in policy discussions and in monitoring and evaluating the PRSP.

"As we revise the commitments made under national poverty-reduction strategies, we must continue to improve this process with greater participation of CSOs, better information systems and sounder policy analysis," says Diana Alarcón, senior economic advisor in the UNDP Bureau for Development Policy. "UNDP can make an important contribution by developing capacity and helping to set up systems for monitoring and evaluation."

By 2001, UNDP had been called on by governments in 85 countries to support national poverty reduction strategies. UNDP also supported civil society forums and helped to train CSOs to provide inputs into anti-poverty strategies in several of these countries, including Azerbaijan, Bolivia, Burundi, China, India, Kazakhstan, Surinam and Yemen. Sixty-eight out of 85 were PRSP countries, in many of which UNDP helped to mobilize civil society participation and advocacy. In Nicaragua, for example, UNDP focused on facilitating policy dialogue between civil society and the Government within the framework of the PRSP. The country office facilitated local-level consultations among CSOs, the private sector, municipal authorities and community based organizations. UNDP was also instrumental in introducing environmental and gender issues into the PRSP. Similarly, in Moldova, UNDP sought to provide CSOs with forums in which they could engage with other development partners in formulating national and local strategies (UNDP 2002a).

The challenge for the organization lies in linking the PRSP framework with other tools to support national poverty reduction efforts, such as the UNDP national human development reports, the new country reports specifically tracking progress on each of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the common country assessments and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. In particular, the MDG country reports, envisioned as statistically sound assessments, can inform key policy instruments such as the PRSP and national budgets.

UNDP partnerships with civil society in the poverty reduction strategy process have varied across countries. Clearly, the process itself cannot introduce meaningful civil society participation in countries where CSOs do not already have a strong base. For example, civic engagement in the PRSP process has been strikingly effective in Uganda, where CSOs are already recognized as partners in policy-making. Neither employment nor security issues had been taken up in the poverty reduction strategy until CSOs advocated their inclusion, in a process facilitated by UNDP (see Partnership Profile 1).

Building Bridges for Dialogue and Trust

In Zambia, UNDP is helping to develop capacity – and trust – for collaboration between civil society and the Government. It has forged a strong partnership with Civil Society for Poverty Reduction, a coalition of CSOs, churches, businesses, professional bodies, trade unions and academic institutions formed after a consultative group meeting in 2000.

An early UNDP contribution to the coalition's work was developing capacity in negotiating skills and conflict resolution, which proved useful in defusing the tensions that arose between civil society and the Government in the early stages of the process. UNDP also organized training sessions in participatory poverty monitoring and evaluation, says Vinetta Robinson in the UNDP country office in Zambia. The coalition held poverty hearings in the poorest provinces, which informed its contribution to the PRSP documentation, as did research and round-table discussions in Lusaka. It also had the opportunity to share experience in the PRSP process with Angola, Lesotho, Uganda, and the United Republic of Tanzania.

The coalition prepared a PRSP document from a civil society perspective and launched it at a forum in which the minister of finance participated. Much of the document was incorporated

into the national PRSP, approved by the cabinet in April 2002 and endorsed by the Executive Boards of the World Bank and IMF in June.

To promote nation-wide understanding of the policy directions of the PRSP, the coalition, with UNDP support, produced a simple version for broader readership and plans to translate it into local languages. It has held two training sessions with new members of parliament and the main political parties to sensitize them to PRSP issues. In June 2002, the Economics Association of Zambia, a coalition member, held the first of five scheduled development forums, supported by UNDP, to launch the finalized PRSP.

Holding Governments Accountable

In Ethiopia, where CSOs have extensive experience in monitoring and evaluating government budgetary processes as a way to put pressure on the Government to improve services and assess its poverty programmes, groups have found that the PRSP implies a new challenge for civil society. They note that to a great extent the PRSP is a vision paper rather than a detailed document for budget allocation, which means that there are few concrete promises to monitor. CSOs must therefore find innovative ways of engagement, including measurement of service delivery and design of indicators to measure poverty reduction.

The UNDP country office in Ethiopia is collaborating with CSOs and the Government on an interesting monitoring initiative. It is supporting the Ethiopian Economic and Policy Institute, an independent CSO, in the design of a report card to assess the performance of selected government services based on client experience. The card rates services by availability, quality, usage, satisfaction, effectiveness of grievance redress mechanisms on issues including corruption, and hidden costs to the user as a result of poor delivery. The overall aim of the card, says Nigist Mekonnen in the UNDP country office in Ethiopia, is to support the monitoring of the PRSP and other processes, including reporting against the MDGs to highlight gaps and needs for donor assistance.

The card is prepared in consultation with the Government, which is leading the effort, public services and the voluntary sector. To ensure the sustainability and implementation of the exercise, UNDP has established a working group comprised of representatives of the Government, United Nations organizations, other donors and CSOs to follow up and build consensus on the findings.

In Yemen, a UNDP-supported community programme for poverty reduction concluded that national poverty indicators were not useful for measuring progress at the community level; there was thus a need to design indicators at the earliest stages of such projects. The programme, spread across five Yemeni ecological zones, worked

> **"We must continue to improve the PRSP process with greater participation of CSOs, and better information systems and sounder policy analysis."**

directly with community organizations to integrate natural, human and social resources effectively. Communities matched donor funding to create 649 new jobs with 4395 beneficiaries. A study commissioned on the experience was used in the country's PRSP. Between 1998 and 2001, 24 community organizations were set up. Of a total of 8206 members, 1817 were women.

However imperfect, the PRSP process has in many countries led to a new understanding of poverty and its causes by governments and to better relations with civil society. Governments have allowed greater public scrutiny of budgeting and spending, while civil society organizations have learned to work together in new ways (Panos 2002). Even as they continue to challenge the scope of the PRSP and redefine the terms of their engagement, civil society organizations recognize that this policy space is too important to ignore.

On a flat, arid plateau near Ouahigouya in Burkina Faso, villagers build a reservior that will irrigate fields. The incidence of human poverty is the most visible evidence of exclusion.

Continued engagement is critical because the PRSP is a potential opportunity at multiple levels: for governments to negotiate poverty reduction strategies (rather than accepting prescriptions from outside); for CSOs to gain entry to policy-making; and for donors and United Nations organizations to reappraise their role and responsibility in national poverty reduction efforts. ■

Ruth Massey / UNDP

INFLUENCING THE POVERTY DEBATE IN UGANDA

Sean Southey / UNDP

In 1997, Uganda launched a Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), which received a boost when the country received debt relief under the heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) in 1998. The plan served as the basis for the PRSP, which enabled Uganda to reach completion point under the enhanced HIPC initiative in May 2000. The process was consultative and included participatory poverty assessments in 36 rural and urban communities to bring the perspectives of the poor to the fore in the planning process, says Ngila Mwase in the UNDP country office in Uganda. Security and water were greatly emphasized by the communities and as a result were given higher profile in the revised action plan as well as in the PRSP.

The Uganda Debt Network, an advocacy coalition of civil society groups, became the lead agency for civil society participation in the PEAP/PRSP process, following a meeting organized by civil society groups in January 2000 with World Bank staff, in which more than 45 CSOs participated.

One outcome of civil society engagement was a far greater emphasis on employment, which now ranks next to macroeconomic stability on the list of critical issues. The national human development report 2000 supported by UNDP focused on employment as its main theme. Debates around the report provided a forum for policy-makers to discuss

job creation and related aspects such as the removal of public monopoly of the National Social Security Fund (Inter-Africa Group 2002).

UNDP supported civil society participation in the May 2001 consultative group meeting (Uganda NGO Forum 2001). The organization was asked by donors to consolidate donor comments on the poverty status report of the Government. UNDP Resident Representative Daouda Toure saw this as an opportunity to invite civil society feedback on the report. This meant that concerned Ugandans would provide a critique of progress and obstacles.

Warren Nyamugasira of the Uganda NGO Forum presented civil society's assessment of the poverty status report at the May 2001 meeting. The forum acknowledged several government measures taken to reduce poverty, particularly the abolition of cost recovery in public health facilities and the drive to increase primary school enrolment, and commended it for encouraging partnership and participation by stakeholders. But official figures do not reflect real improvements in the quality of life of the poor – e.g., the effect of unemployment among women, young graduates and people with disabilities. Further, Nyamugasira noted that pupil attrition was high, domestic savings were meagre even in comparison with other sub-Saharan countries, and life expectancy was still low. He cautioned

against fully opening up the economy before it was ready – otherwise economic transformation would be suffocated.

The NGO Forum identified six key priority areas for action, which included:

→ The need to distribute resources more equitably: the north, with 67 per cent of the nation's poor, received only 19 per cent of the national budget;
→ The urgent need to tackle insecurity in the north;
→ The need to avoid vulnerability to external shocks through the careful sequencing of economic reforms;
→ Strengthening both official and independent anti-corruption agencies to fight persistent corruption at several levels;
→ Developing civil society capacity to monitor government performance and international goals so that CSOs can draw attention to crises like HIV/AIDS, and the fact that the funds Uganda needs to meet its goals are at least three times the resources available, at a time of declining official development assistance (ODA);
→ The need to speed up debt cancellation by donors to free resources for poverty alleviation.

Participation in the 2001 consultative group meeting was important for CSOs, recalls Nyamugasira: "The space had been provided before, but the quality of our input was higher this time around. It was clear to us as well as to the donors and the Government that we had reached a new level." The result was that issues of concern to the people were incorporated into the policy-making process.

After the consultative group meeting, UNDP was mandated to support civil society capacity in policy analysis and development, especially in poverty monitoring. Of the UNDP-CSO relationship, Nyamugasira says, "UNDP enabled us and pushed us to raise the quality of our input to the consultative group meeting. They provided a meeting place, and when we came to the point of putting our interventions together, they were able to pay a small fee for facilitation leaders so people could set aside time and prepare their interventions. UNDP

also helped us to review these and made suggestions – not that we always took these suggestions into account. Conceptually, we find that we are closer to the United Nations system than to the World Bank and IMF. We would be less comfortable receiving that degree of facilitation from those institutions, but we are very comfortable receiving it from UNDP."

The World Bank and IMF also followed up with the civil society organizations. Nyamugasira was invited to the January 2002 global PRSP review held by the World Bank and IMF in Washington. He was also elected to chair a special session of civil society representatives with the heads of the two institutions.

Although the experience of civil society participation had positive elements, the question remains as to what extent Ugandans "own" the PRSP, since the number of CSOs participating and people involved in consultations remained small. "Civil society and the poor were not engaged at the level where they can claim ownership," says Irungu Houghton of the Uganda Debt Network (Panos 2002).

Meanwhile, funds released through debt relief have gone into the Poverty Action Fund, with additional resources from donors. They have been earmarked for priority areas, including basic health, primary education, feeder roads and agricultural extension. One distinctive aspect of the Uganda Poverty Action Fund is that, if there is a shortfall in resources, the funds going to the weaker segments of the population cannot be cut. Furthermore, the money is allocated directly to the district so that it is neither held up nor depleted by other layers of government.

Another noteworthy feature of poverty reduction efforts in Uganda is that its Poverty Eradication Action Plan tackles the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS on households and communities in a systematic way. Poverty Action Fund resources at the district and village level go to support surviving members of households affected by the epidemic through income-generating activities, micro-credit, training and improved access to schooling for orphans. The revised plan will address employment creation, information technology and trade. ■

'Barefoot' solar engineers are being trained to fabricate, install and maintain fixed solar units and solar lanterns that will bring solar electricity to thousands of households in mountainous areas, deserts and plains in 13 regions in India.

COMMUNITIES

LEAD

PARTNERSHIPS

Barefoot College, India

The 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro was a watershed event for civil society organizations, marking their entry and unprecedented impact in the arena of international advocacy and intergovernmental negotiations. In the words of United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, "Civil society pulled off something of a revolution at Rio and the international community is far stronger for it" (United Nations 2002). Ten years later, at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, civil society organizations (CSOs) led the fight to preserve the principles of Agenda 21, the Rio Programme of Action. The challenge was enormous. In the intervening decade, trade and financial liberalization had proceeded at an accelerated pace, leading to a crisis in implementation of the goals upheld in Rio.

Through tireless campaigning, CSOs scored successes on two critical and contentious issues. First, they ensured that the summit preserved the core Rio principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities", which recognizes the role of developed countries in supporting sustainable development initiatives in the South. Second, on

the streets and in the negotiating rooms, CSOs championed the "rights of people, not of corporations", leading to a recognition, in the final summit declaration, of not just corporate social responsibility but the need to hold corporations accountable for the social and environmental impact of their activities. "This successful civil society campaign was one of the few bright spots in an otherwise disappointing summit," said Martin Khor of the Third World Network.

Of enormous importance to indigenous peoples worldwide was the reaffirmation in the summit's political declaration of the "vital role of indigenous peoples in sustainable development" – the first time that a United Nations document made unqualified reference to the term "indigenous peoples" (peoples with an 's'). "The United Nations has taken a vital step forward in defining the rights of indigenous peoples and according them the same respect as other peoples of the world," said Victoria Tauli-Corpuz of the Tebtebba Foundation. It was a major victory for indigenous peoples' organizations that had worked hard to further the indigenous rights agenda at the summit and beyond.

Against a backdrop of difficult negotiations and thorny discussions, the Johannesburg summit showcased invigorating "people-to-people" forums to share lessons and recognize successful sustainable development initiatives. These events showed that however complex the nature of the global challenges to environmentally sustainable growth, a fundamental principle of sustainable development remains as true today as it was two decades ago: communities hold the key. "Poverty is eradicated family by family, community by community. And communities are the vital driving force of sustainable development," UNDP Administrator Mark Malloch Brown said at the "Community Kraal", a community dialogue space created by UNDP at WSSD in a broad partnership with leading CSOs. Participants emphasized that communities must be seen as actors rather than just recipients, and said community based organizations are keen to enter into proactive partnerships with national governments. The measurement of progress on the MDGs, in particular, has the potential of generating national dialogues and improving relations with national governments (see Box 2).

UNDP has honed its approaches to sustainable development at the community level in over two decades of experience in 180 countries. Much of the work has been done through small grants programmes, an approach pioneered by UNDP in the 1980s to demonstrate that with small amounts of funding, local communities can be empowered to undertake activities that integrate economic, social and environment concerns. The Equator Initiative, the Local Initiative Facility for Urban Environment (LIFE) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme have all drawn on the dynamism and inherent strengths of community strategies for sustainable development. Several of these community-based initiatives to reduce poverty while conserving biodiversity have yielded extraordinary results. Similarly, engaging communities in urban planning and administration in major Asian cities has led to effective strategies to improve the quality of life of the poor.

At the same time, UNDP has worked to ensure a civil society voice in national environmental action plans so that community-based pilot efforts can be scaled up for greater impact and drive policy change (see Box 3).

Harnessing Renewable Energy

In India, UNDP is supporting trail-blazing efforts by grassroots organizations to scale up community approaches to harness renewable energy, one of the key priorities at WSSD. The Social Work Research Centre, also known as the Barefoot College, in Tilonia, Rajasthan, will enter into a collaborative partnership with UNDP and the Government of India in a programme to demonstrate the role of renewable energy as a vital entry point for poverty eradication and creation of sustainable livelihoods among low-income communities.

The $3 million programme, to be implemented over four years (2003-2007), will cover 250 villages from different eco-zones of hilly and mountainous desert areas and the plains across 13 regions in nine states. 'Barefoot' solar engineers – semi-literate rural men and women who have been trained to fabricate, install and maintain fixed solar units and solar lanterns – will bring solar electricity to 6000 households. A national training centre will be set up for women barefoot solar engineers. The project also envisages community driven projects to harvest rainwater in drought-prone regions. They include installing 100 rainwater-harvesting structures in 100 schools and deepening 100 village ponds to collect rainwater.

"This is a partnership with a difference," says Bunker Roy, Director of the Barefoot College. "Because the focus is on poverty reduction and sustaining livelihoods the project will concentrate on upgrading skills, generating employment and building confidence and self-esteem with a view to not only making the community self-sufficient but also tangibly improving the quality of life."

At a recent national workshop on village electrification through renewable energy, women barefoot solar engineers from several states, who had brought solar electricity to their own villages,

pointed out that the barefoot approach is the only low-cost way of replication on a large scale. Underpinning it is the community's belief that government policy must include the preparation of the community before any technology for solar or micro-hydel power is introduced in villages. The project will be implemented by the Barefoot College and village-level committees in an effort planned, managed and controlled by the community, with UNDP and the Government of India acting as facilitators.

Small Grants to Pilot Development Alternatives

A singular strength of UNDP small grant programmes is a decentralized management structure that delegates decision-making to broad-based national steering committees. Each committee typically consists of CSO representatives (the majority), the government, academia and the UNDP country office. Members serve on a voluntary basis, contributing their knowledge and networks and ensuring that operations meet agreed upon criteria and are environmentally, technically, socially, politically and economically feasible within the national context.

Under the Equator Initiative, community groups in countries as far flung as Brazil, India, Mexico and the United Republic of Tanzania are using their biological resources in a sustainable way to improve livelihoods, whether for food, medicine, or income generation. Building upon these local community initiatives, the Equator Initiative, a UNDP partnership programme, is working to create a global movement to reduce poverty by fostering community partnerships to conserve biodiversity in the equatorial belt, home to both the world's greatest concentration of biological wealth and its poorest people.[4]

In the United Republic of Tanzania, a LIFE-funded small project in Mwaloni to upgrade the infrastructure and services in its main market, led to partnerships between the local municipal council, small traders and a cooperative society of fish

dealers. More importantly, the initiative increased the social capital of community based organizations and their ability to influence local authorities and national initiatives and policies. Globally, LIFE projects aim to promote dialogue between community groups and galvanize local actors to work together in solving community problems, with the ultimate objective of broadening the participation of citizens in local governance.

The GEF Small Grants Programme was established at the time of the 1992 Earth Summit. It makes grants directly to community based and non-governmental organizations, recognizing their central role both as a resource and as a constituency in environment and development-related concerns. "We are convinced that with small amounts of funding, local communities can undertake activities – and not rely on top-down, expert interventions – that will make a significant difference in their lives and environments, with global benefits," says Sarah Timpson, Director the Small Grants Programme. More than 3,200 projects have been funded, covering the GEF thematic areas of biodiversity conservation, mitigation of climate change, primarily through promotion of renewable energy systems and energy efficiency, and protecting international waters. The programme is implemented by UNDP on behalf of GEF, and now includes 63 countries, all of which have ratified the environmental conventions for which GEF is the funding agent.

Calls for proposals and criteria are circulated as widely as possible to CSOs. The programme encourages partnerships between organizations to fill capacity gaps. For example, organizations engaged in environmental advocacy may be well qualified to deal with environmental issues but have little experience working in poor communities, while community based organizations may lack a full understanding of environmental implications of their activities. Collaborating on a project develops the capacity of each. In several countries, the programme works with international partners such as the World Conservation Union and the World Wildlife Fund, which provide technical

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[4] The Equator Initiative is a partnership initiative of UNDP with BrasilConnects, the Government of Canada, International Development Research Centre, World Conservation Union, The Nature Conservancy, the Television Trust for the Environment and the United Nations Foundation.

BOX 2

WHEN COMMUNITIES SHOW THE WAY

Despite the enormous contributions that civil society organizations have made to advancing the world's understanding of sustainable development, communities are generally the least well-positioned to have a voice in international summits. In Johannesburg, for the first time, their voices were heard in key policy forums. A central message to emerge from the World Summit on Sustainable Development was that communities play a vital role in sustainable development.

At the Community Kraal in Ubuntu Village, for example, community leaders interacted with policy-makers from governments and development agencies and with CSOs and the media. The kraal, a community space set up by UNDP and hosted by some 100 community representatives from developing countries, was designed and managed to facilitate such interaction and sharing of lessons and knowledge among local communities.

One learning event at the kraal was a Grassroots Academy on the Millennium Development Goals, co-sponsored with Grassroots Organizations Operating Together in Sisterhood (GROOTS). The academy brought together more than 70 representatives from poor communities in a five-hour workshop to exchange strategies on mobilizing local networks and community energy to realize the goals.

Communities have the creativity, the capacity, and the constituencies needed to build innovative partnerships that bridge bottom-up and top-down approaches, said GROOTS Global Facilitator Sandy Schilen. GROOTS is a global network of autonomous women's groups from the North and South, which works with the Global Environment Facility/Small Grants Programme to put broad-based community-driven policies into practice.

Sheela Patel, Director of the Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC),

said three elements were key to advancing the Millennium Development Goals. "The sustainable development agenda must be driven locally, poor people must be engaged in all levels of decision-making, and researchers and global agencies must listen to and incorporate what communities are saying." SPARC, a GROOTS member based in Mumbai, India, has organized networks of people living in informal settlements to provide sanitation for the urban poor with the active participation of women in policy and programmes.

Participants also argued forcefully for a central role for women in realizing the goals. "Women are uniquely positioned at the centre of the family and community; they take responsibility, and they take risks, and are open to learning from mistakes," said Solome Mukisa, Director of the Uganda Community Based Organization for Child Welfare, and a founding member of the Forum for Women in Democracy. Decision-makers must formalize opportunities for consultation with and implementation and evaluation by women. The South African Homeless People's Federation, with cash savings of more than 9 million rand, is building homes for the homeless, reducing poverty where the government cannot. "Poor people's organizations, and women's federations within them, are well qualified to be goal-keepers for the MDG campaign," said Rose, a federation member.

In efforts to combat poverty, "one size does not fit all," according to Marcial Arias, Director of the International Alliance of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forests. He urged UNDP to take into account indigenous peoples' visions of development – and their knowledge and sustainable practices that have been key to safeguarding the environment for centuries – when implementing the MDGs.

UNDP Administrator Mark Malloch Brown said UNDP must work at the government level to make governments more of an enabler of communities. "If we use the same tired old development prescriptions, we're not going to achieve the MDGs by 2015. We must recognize the remarkable successes worldwide at the community level and see how community actions can be replicated in other places."

Anna Tibaijuka, Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), said partnerships with community groups and women's networks such as the Huairou Commission are critical to advancing the MDGs in the next decade.

The Equator Initiative Awards ceremony was another invigorating people's event organized by UNDP to share lessons and recognize achievements in successful community-based sustainable development initiatives. Of 420 community groups nominated for the prize from 77 Equator Belt nations, 60 community members from 27 finalists were invited to Johannesburg to receive the Equator Prize 2002, sponsored by UNDP and other development partners. Seven prize-winning community initiatives from Belize, Brazil, Costa Rica, Fiji, Kenya, Malaysia and the United Republic of Tanzania won the $30,000 award. The remaining 20 finalists did not go home disappointed – The Nature Conservancy announced it would match the award for each of them.[5]

Among the winners was the Locally-Managed Marine Area Network in Fiji, which has tripled catches by protecting key marine nurseries. The network has grown to include communities in six districts, covering ten per cent of the inshore marine area, and is actively demonstrating to national governments that local approaches can inform national policy. The Association of Manambolo Natives In Madagascar has adopted an indigenous land-use system, called Dina, to creatively re-establish control over their resources and help preserve the species-rich forests and swamps of the Manambolo Valley.

"The lessons these communities identified during the summit will form the basis for our continuing work," said Sean Southey, UNDP Programme Manager of the Equator Initiative. "There are many ingenious and effective ways through which indigenous and other local communities rise to the challenges of acute poverty and threats to biodiversity."

The Grassroots Academy and the Equator Initiative awards were events that demonstrated, in the heart of a global summit, that people at grassroots levels in the poorest countries are meeting their basic needs today while preserving resources on which their survival – and everyone else's – depends. They reminded government delegates and CSOs that the summit was not only about difficult negotiations over intractable issues – it was also about what can be achieved with partnerships that work. ■

[5] For a full list of the finalists, see http://www.undp.org/equatorinitiative/secondary/awards.html

Francis Ole Sukuda of the Simba Maasai Outreach Organization in Kenya shows how indigenous peoples have documented plants used for medicinal purposes, including alleviating the effects of HIV/AIDS.

support to local grantees. The programme supports CSOs and academic institutions to train stakeholders in grant writing. It also provides small planning grants to groups that have presented promising draft concepts, and supports capacity development in the course of implementation.

Preserving Indigenous Knowledge

The recognition and promotion of indigenous peoples' assets and traditional knowledge (such as terrestrial and marine ecosystems, naturally occurring medicines from plants and insects, cultivated plant varieties, and animal husbandry) is a focus of UNDP sustainable development programmes. The Indigenous Knowledge Programme (1996-1999) aimed at protecting indigenous intellectual property by developing the capacity of indigenous peoples' organizations and supporting projects formulated and implemented by them.

In its country-level engagement with indigenous peoples, UNDP adopts a holistic approach, integrating initiatives on conflict prevention and resolution with poverty eradication, environmental conservation, and cultural revitalization. These partnerships – in Bolivia, Honduras and the Philippines, for example – seek to increase indigenous peoples' participation in policy-making, ensure the co-existence of their economic, cultural, and socio-political systems with others, and develop the capacity of governments to build more inclusive policies and programmes.

A key objective of the Small Grants Programme is to share the lessons of successful community-level strategies among community based organizations, host governments, development aid agencies and others working on a regional or

global scale. In Viet Nam, an appre-ciation of the benefits of traditional medicines led to a collaboration between community, scientific and government partners on a project for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Indigenous Medicinal Plants. Unfortunately, many of the over 3000 species of medicinal plants are endangered by deforestation and forest degradation, and traditional knowledge is being eroded by modernization. A small grant to the Association of Traditional Medicine of Tuyen Quang Province has brought traditional healers of the Cao Lan ethnic minority together with scientists from the Centre for Research and Development of Ethnomedicinal Plants and health staff of the Healthcare Centre of Doi Can Commune.

Teams consisting of traditional healers – all women, whose knowledge was passed on to them by their mothers and grandmothers – and botanists from the university conducted surveys of medicinal plants in the local forest, identifying and classifying about 400 species by local and scientific names and known properties. The centre is assisting members of the Traditional Medicine Association to establish home nurseries where endangered species will be cultivated. These species are also being raised in the medicinal plant garden at the local government health centre, under the aegis of the Doi Can Commune authorities and the government health department, which helps in marketing plant products and registering traditional knowledge.

Attempts to conserve biodiversity, particularly by establishing protected areas, frequently generate conflict with those who may be involved in using those resources. The Small Grants Programme attempts to resolve these conflicts by creating partnerships that result in mutual benefits. In Guatemala, for example, a small grant has enabled the Institute of Environmental Law and Sustainable Development to undertake a programme in Alternative Conflict Resolution and Environmental Mediation. Training introduced local community leaders, indigenous peoples' representatives, and national government and municipal authorities to alternative methods of resolving socio-environ-

mental conflicts. The project produced training materials in local Mayan languages and conducted collaborative workshops. Most importantly, it has trained and prepared a group of local organizations to establish a regional network for environmental conflict resolution that is now working independently.

In the experience of indigenous peoples, development has tended to be imposed upon their communities from outside, often damaging ancestral lands, water and natural resources, and impoverishing them in conventional income terms as well as from their own cultural perspectives. Not only are indigenous territories under growing pressure for the extraction of natural resources, but indigenous communities that continue living on their ancestral lands fight a losing battle with large-scale public and/or private industrial interests.

In the Philippines, the Biodiversity Programme for the Aytas of Zambales was a landmark project that marked the first award by the Government of a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Claim. Official acknowledgement of land rights is the most critical component of the livelihoods and identity of indigenous peoples. The project enabled the Aytas to pursue their ancestral domain claims while developing a cropland ecosystem and the ecology of an indigenous forest. Thanks to these efforts at reforestation, wildlife is now returning to the area. The project also established food security, enabling the Aytas to enter the market economy by introducing more advanced agricultural technology and increasing production.

To be of interest to grassroots communities, projects supported by the Small Grants Programme need to incorporate sustainable livelihood activities that are not eligible for GEF financing. Moreover, GEF requires that the programme mobilize matching funding, with at least half in cash. Co-financing partnerships are therefore vital. The programme has attracted more than 600 funding partners, including multilateral and bilateral donors, national and local governments, foundations, international CSOs, service clubs and the private sector.[6]

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[6] Donors include the European Commission, the Governments of the Netherlands, Denmark, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, and the United Nations Foundation.

FROM CONSENSUS TO POLICY: THE SIERRA GORDA STORY

The Sierra Gorda Reserve in eastern Mexico has well-preserved ecosystems covering 253000 hectares (66 per cent of the reserve). But its approximately 100000 inhabitants live in extreme poverty as a result of a combination of factors such as inappropriate agricultural practices, lack of employment and absence of industry.

The Sierra Gorda Ecological Group has for several years worked with teachers, students, parents, peasant women, small property owners, and federal, state and local authorities to preserve and regenerate this natural sanctuary. Nearly a quarter of the inhabitants have participated in at least one group activity and many of them have volunteered their time. The community identified the main socio-economic and environmental problems using official data, and proposed solutions. Discussions on this analysis became the basis for a joint report on local sustainable development.

In 1997, these efforts resulted in a decree establishing the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve. This was the first time that local consensus had served as the basis for a federal decree to establish a biosphere reserve, the highest category of protected natural areas in the country.

The next step was to design a programme to manage the reserve that would ensure a better standard of living. Capacity 21 financed and provided technical support for 18 workshops with the participation of local communities, as well as 64 meetings to build consensus and more than 120 community assemblies to assess threats and management needs. Multilateral funding institutions became interested in supporting the programme – funds of $6.7 million have been secured from the Global Environment Facility and other sources. Meanwhile, 40 CSOs have been trained in participatory methodology to adapt it in their regions. This augurs well for social conservation strategies in other protected areas in Mexico.

Implementing Agenda 21

As task manager for Chapter 37 of Agenda 21, UNDP established Capacity 21, a programme aimed at developing national capacity to implement Agenda 21 that has since drawn the support of 15 bilateral donors. The programme supports initiatives in more than 71 countries. The collaboration between CSOs and governments in these initiatives provides insights into some of the ways in which issues relating to poverty, people and the planet can be linked.

For example, in Burkina Faso in the late 1990s, some 47000 people took part in a nationwide campaign to spread information about ways of combating desertification. The campaign reached nearly everyone in the country, including its 8 535 rural villages. One aim was to correct widely held misconceptions that had led to the failure of past attempts to combat desertification. "There was no linkage in people's minds between planting trees and improving agricultural production, even though agriculture is the basis of our economy," said Djiri Dakar, Permanent Secretary of the National Council of Environmental Management. "People didn't understand that planting trees would protect and improve the soil. They thought trees were just for firewood. So tree-planting campaigns didn't produce the desired result: combating desertification through sustainable development."

A key player in the process was the Committee of NGOs Fighting Desertification (COPODE), which trained 114 CSOs in ways to promote dialogue on sustainable development at the village

> ## "People didn't understand that planting trees would protect and improve the soil. They thought trees were just for firewood."

level. COPODE produced thousands of copies of simplified, illustrated versions of the Convention to Combat Desertification in the four national languages of Burkina Faso. As a result, says COPODE President Salif Savadogo, the entire population has taken ownership of the convention.

"It doesn't just belong to educated people sitting in Ouagadougou. It belongs to everybody."

Delphine Ouédraogo, UNDP Programme Manager for Capacity 21, noted that people now want to preserve their resources, and are coming up with their own integrated development plans to make it happen. "People don't cut down trees to make new fields any more," she says, "and they don't burn brush any more. In almost every village, there's a compost heap."

Broad public debates are often essential to raise awareness that sustainability requires economic and environmental policies to complement each other. In Estonia, from 1997 to 2001, more than 1 000 people – from government officials and academics to punk poets – took part in 25 workshops and seminars held by the Sustainable Society Programme at the Estonian Institute for Sustainable Development. "A lot of people said this was the first time that sustainability had been looked at as more than an environmental issue," said Programme Director Ahto Oja.

Viik Linnar, Advisor to the Prime Minister on Information, Research and Development and Civil Society, described the workshops as "a mind-setting exercise." Said Linnar, "You have a long-term horizon, but you need to make short-term decisions. Capacity 21 contributed by working with Estonia to integrate long-term needs with short-term decision-making and planning. For example, a future energy policy in Estonia has influenced short-term planning for pricing in the electricity market." The programme also helped to develop indicators for sustainable levels of savings and investment on the part of individuals, the private sector and the state.

An outcome of the emphasis on integration and long-term planning was the creation of a de-centralized Centre for Strategic Planning consisting of the Estonian Bank, two leading universities, the Chamber of Commerce and Trade

and the Associations of Industry and Labour. One reason for establishing the centre outside government institutions is that its work will not be halted or reversed when governments change. Twenty out of 25 members of the country's Commission on Sustainable Development are from the economic and social sectors – most previous members were environmental experts.

In China, the provision of information on sustainable development fed into policy change, when the Government decided to put data on natural resources, environmental protection and natural disasters on the web. "This is the first time that we have released all this data on a web site," says Wang Qiming, Coordinator of the Information and Networking Division of Agenda 21 in China. "The Government had been collecting data for many years and storing it in books."

Access to all this information on the web is so new that some government departments are still getting used to the spirit of transparency it represents. Every month some four million people visit the Sustainable Development Information web site (www.sdinfo.net.cn), where they can find information that government agencies may be unwilling to release.

Two shifts in policy resulted during this process. The first was a decision to make macro-level data available free and to charge for technical or commercial data. The second was to publish the policies by which government departments determine what data will be shared and how. Wang says research by his division on quality levels and standards for sharing data has led to laws describing how data can be released.

These experiences show that UNDP achievements in sustainable development revolve around partnerships at various levels – from communities in rural areas and citizens' associations in major cities to policy advocates and planners. This multifaceted collaboration has given local initiatives the potential for global impact. A continuing challenge for UNDP is to deepen partnerships with CSOs and governments to create an enabling policy environment where community initiatives for sustainable development can be given the space and scale for real influence. ■

REPORT CARDS FOR BETTER CITIES: TUGI IN SRI LANKA

Sevanatha, Sri Lanka

Poverty and environmental degradation are to be found in most major cities. An estimated one-third of city-dwellers are poor and vulnerable to disease and crime, living in slums and having no tenure rights and limited access to services. Of the 19 mega-cities in the world – those with a population of more than 10 million – 11 are in the Asia-Pacific region. This number is likely to increase to 23 by the year 2005. The Urban Governance Initiative (TUGI) is a regional programme for Asia and the Pacific supported by UNDP that brings together local governments, CSOs and the private sector to improve capacity for urban management.[7]

An innovative tool developed by the programme is the Urban Governance Report Card. The card engages the community and other stakeholders in designing indicators to measure progress in eight areas: rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, consensus-building, equity, effectiveness, accountability, and strategic vision. Judged by these indicators, well-governed and sustainable cities are socially just, ecologically sustainable, politically participatory, economically productive and culturally vibrant.

From the vantage point of the TUGI regional base in Malaysia, UNDP Programme Specialist Saira Shameem said, "The key to the popularity of the report cards has been their versatility. They have been translated into seven languages and

adapted in 22 Asian cities by various target groups, including children, local government officials and community groups. Their simplicity belies their effectiveness." Central to their success, she says, is the process by which the community develops local indicators, instead of their being mapped out by an expert in the field.

Perhaps the most interesting and effective use of the report card was made by Sevanatha, a CSO set up as an urban resource centre in Sri Lanka. Sevanatha aims to meet the demand of urban low-income communities for the improvement of their living environment by searching for alternative and sustainable solutions. The organization found the report card methodology so useful that, according to its President, A. Jayaratne, they adapted it to formulate a poverty profile for the city of Colombo in a uniquely participatory manner, working with the municipality, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom and UNDP. Sevanatha surveyed 1,614 settlements in Colombo. It trained 60 municipality staff to use the report card methodology, focusing on health inspectors accustomed to working at the grassroots level.

[7] For more information on TUGI, see www.tugi.apdip.net, e-mail tugi@undp.org

"We identified 20 indicators relevant to poverty in Colombo and applied the methodology to each," said Jayaratne. They covered land ownership, water, sanitation, the presence of community based organizations, women-headed households and welfare recipients. "Take the indicator relating to land tenure, for example. There are several different systems of land tenure: freehold, leasehold, user permits, and, of course, no tenure at all, i.e., illegal settlements. We gave each of these different situations a score."

Until the poverty profile survey was conducted in May-August 2001, the popular assumption was that the poorest people in Colombo lived in slums or shantytowns. In fact, the survey showed that many projects had upgraded services in these areas and only 10 per cent of the settlements were very poor. The findings led the municipality, NGOs and donors such as the German aid agency, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), to reorient their programmes towards this segment of the population.

What was most useful in the report card methodology? Its greatest value was in getting people involved, said Jayaratne. "Previously, the approach was to develop a typology – for example, you define squatters and then go looking for them. By selecting the indicators and using the scoring system, we don't predetermine the situation of the community, and we have an objective tool to assess the extent of poverty. We also involve people in defining their situation. For example, people don't like to call their home a 'slum' or 'shantytown' – they want to get rid of that stigma as soon as the settlement is upgraded and becomes part of the city's property tax system."

As a result of the project, the municipality has a functioning database that is grounded in the realities of poor people and understood by municipality staff. It is now being used by other partners, such as the Asian Development Bank and the European Union, and has been made available to the World Bank. "Planners are now working with real data. We've been able to change their perception of the city," Jayaratne said. ■

Indigenous peoples tend to be the worst hit in times of conflict and most ignored in resolution and peace-building efforts, but are key to both preventing and resolving conflict.

TOWARDS INCLUSION AND RIGHTS

Tina Coêlho / Terra Imagem

National, international and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have had a longstanding role in crisis and post-conflict situations as providers of humanitarian relief and assistance. Their flexibility, capacity for rapid response and widespread outreach make them natural and valued partners in government and United Nations efforts to address the impact of wars and natural disasters. The strengths of non-state actors in post-conflict situations cannot be overstated given that civilians now account for almost 90 per cent of all war-related deaths. Refugees and internally displaced persons – symptoms of wars, communal violence motivated by ethnic or religious prejudice, persecution, and socio-economic crises – numbered about 50 million by the end of the 1990s (United Nations 2001). The presence of NGOs in local communities with an ability to draw on community resources is key to closing the gap between short-term humanitarian assistance and long-term development. In countries with strong and weak governments alike, community-based approaches involving civil society partners have determined the success of reintegration efforts.

Aside from their role in humanitarian relief, civil society organizations can be pivotal in preventing conflict and sustaining recovery. As articulators of the rights and interests of vulnerable groups, ethnic and racial minorities and indigenous peoples, civil society organizations present early warning signals of crises and serve as conduits to understanding their root causes. Civil society actors, particularly human rights groups and leaders of indigenous peoples, act as intermediaries between governments and insurgent groups, facilitating links and dialogue between warring parties and affected communities. In many instances, it is not the United Nations, but local NGOs and regional civil society organizations that are better placed to implement conflict-prevention strategies because they have already identified and developed informal working mechanisms (IPA 2002). In parts of Africa, women's networks have emerged as key players in fostering peace and recovery and in defending the interests of women and children, who are often the overwhelming majority of those affected in crisis and post-conflict situations.

"The civil society role is key, especially when it complements weak governments in post-conflict countries. It is not possible to envisage recovery without engaging CSOs in rebuilding trust and social structures," says Ameerah Haq, Deputy Director of the UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR). It is critical for UNDP to work with a wide range of partners to achieve quick impact and restore people's livelihoods.

The mobilizing, mediating and rebuilding roles of civil society organizations in conflict and crisis settings assume tremendous significance in conflict and efforts at resolution. More and more conflicts take place within rather than between states: in 1999, 25 out of 27 major conflicts were internal. Most result from a complex dynamic of political, ideological, ethnic, religious and economic factors that elude straight-forward classification. They include poverty, inequitable distribution of resources, lack of tolerance for religious, ethnic, cultural and linguistic differences, territorial claims and denial of rights to self-determination, and the absence of national institutions to resolve problems. There is increasing recognition that if rebuilding efforts are to bring about lasting peace and stability, these multiple causes, with their underlying issues of human rights, equity and inclusion, must receive as much attention as post-conflict measures of demobilization and rehabilitation.

The pursuit of democratic and inclusive governance – involving tolerance of minority and opposition groups, transparent political processes, and vibrant civil society institutions – lies at the heart of conflict-prevention policies in the United Nations today.

Achieving the Millennium Development Goals, in particular halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015, calls for proactive efforts to prevent conflict as well as to sustain lasting recovery. Of the 34 countries furthest from realizing the goals, 25 are suffering the impact of current or recent conflict. In the words of Secretary-General Kofi Annan, "For the United Nations, there is no higher goal, no deeper commitment and no greater ambition than to prevent armed conflict".

The strengths of UNDP programmes to help crisis countries make the transition to development can be summed up as country presence, acceptance as a United Nations organization with a broad-based development mandate and established relationships with governments and civil society (UNDP 2002b). A relationship of relative trust with governments gives UNDP a convening power. It can provide safe space in hostile terrain for dialogue and reconciliation between warring parties and between governments and marginalized populations. Its presence in a country before, during and after the moment of crisis ensures continuity of interventions. The 2000 report of the Panel on United Nations peace operations (also known as the Brahimi report) identified the organization as being best suited to take the lead in conflict prevention because of its knowledge of local conditions of countries in crisis and post-conflict situations.

As a global development network, UNDP also facilitates the exchange of knowledge, experience and good practice, and brings new as well as country-specific approaches to conflict prevention and recovery. It provides technical support to strengthen national mechanisms for broad-based consensus-building and institutions of governance and human rights. To strengthen collaboration with civil society in post-conflict environments, UNDP is currently pursuing active regional engagement with CSOs to develop operational mechanisms and policy guidelines that will help it to be a more responsive and agile partner in the aftermath of a crisis.

Three key UNDP instruments enable a human rights-based approach to conflict and crisis prevention. The 1998 policy integrating human rights with sustainable human development, coupled with the adoption of the Millennium Declaration by 189 heads of state, has strengthened engagement with vulnerable groups that are often most affected by conflict. The Human Rights Strengthening (HURIST) programme, a joint initiative of UNDP with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, launched in 1999, helps to implement the policy by applying human rights principles to development programming in 30

countries. In 2002, HURIST introduced a component focusing attention on indigenous peoples' rights and innovative capacity development.

The use of disaggregated data in the UNDP national human development reports highlights aspects of political and economic marginalization that could lead to strife if they are not addressed. The 2002 *Roma Human Development Report* presents the findings of the first comprehensive quantitative survey of the Roma minority in five central and eastern European States (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia), conducted by UNDP and the Inter-national Labour Organization. The report calls for policies in all five countries to address major shortcomings in employment opportunities, access to education and participation in government. Without early efforts at integration, it states, "the human security costs of exclusion will spiral, potentially resulting in political extremism and setbacks to the democratic process" (UNDP 2002c).

Strategic, creative partnerships with a range of civil society actors that actively involve communities now increasingly shape UNDP work on the ground in conflict and crisis countries. For example, in Côte d'Ivoire, the Civil Society Peace Group is an outcome of consultations, sponsored by UNDP and other development partners, between Search for Common Ground, an international CSO, and human rights advocates, religious and other community leaders. The importance of this multi-ethnic, multi-religious citizens' initiative aimed at reconstruction and reconciliation cannot be overemphasized. "The Civil Society Peace Group is a strategic initiative which will put in place mechanisms for communities themselves to address future threats of ethnic violence," says El-Mustafa Benlamlih, UNDP Resident Representative in Côte D'Ivoire. The diverse composition of its founding organizations ensures broad identification with Ivorians. Community follow-up committees will serve as forums for dialogue and bridge-building.

Multifaceted partnerships with CSOs in Mindanao in southern Philippines have strengthened ongoing United Nations efforts to restore

normalcy in a region convulsed by the violence of a protracted insurgency movement. Civil society engagement has been key to the difficult task of rebuilding trust between ex-combatants, Muslims, indigenous peoples and Christians, even as conflict continues (see Box 4).

In countries facing varying levels of internal tension between racial or ethnic groups, UNDP partnership with civil society has focused attention on the root causes of inequality. In Brazil, during the run-up to the 2001 World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (WCAR), advocacy by civil society organizations representing Afro-Brazilians, a group that fares consistently worse than whites in all basic indicators, propelled UNDP to engage in a data-based research and policy project on racial inequality (see Partnership Profile 3). Crucially, UNDP has sought to give voice to marginalized groups, such as indigenous peoples and poor women, who tend to be the worst hit in times of conflict and most ignored in resolution and peace-building efforts, but are key to both preventing and resolving conflict.

Indigenous Peoples As Partners In Building Sustainable Peace

Advocacy by indigenous peoples and their organizations has played no small role in the evolution of UNDP country-level partnerships and policy stances on indigenous peoples. The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, established in May 2001 as an advisory body to the Economic and Social Council, was a clear result of indigenous peoples' movements and advocacy. The International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (1995-2004) marked an important turning point in UNDP efforts to review its engagement with indigenous peoples at the country level and to analyse issues of rights and inclusion. Country experiences and global and regional consultations with indigenous peoples' organizations informed the UNDP policy of engagement with indigenous peoples, issued in 2001. It formally recognizes the rights of indigenous peoples, their critical contribution to development, and the organization's commitment to

partner with indigenous peoples in key priority areas of work, particularly in conflict prevention and peace-building.

Indigenous peoples tend to make up the non-dominant sectors of society. They usually live within (or maintain attachments to) geographically distinct ancestral territories, which they are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations. Within their territories, they tend to maintain distinct social, economic and political institutions. Their identity is often linked to their territories, which is the source of their culture, knowledge, spirituality and livelihoods. Denial of indigenous peoples' right to self-determination, the right to pursue their own economic, social and cultural development, the over-exploitation of natural resources in ancestral lands and use of indigenous knowledge without their free prior informed consent, disenfranchisement, forced assimilation, deportations, lack of political participation and widespread poverty have led indigenous communities in many countries on a course of conflict with governments (UNESCO 1998). Issues of control over natural resources in ancestral lands of indigenous communities and the use of indigenous knowledge, in particular, have often led to conflict with the private sector. There is gradual but growing recognition of the need to address legitimate claims of indigenous

> ## "The inclusion of indigenous peoples and their perspectives in development planning is integral to conflict prevention."

peoples as a means of redressing discrimination, preventing conflict, restoring dignity and economic security, and ultimately reconciling opposing claims. The inclusion of indigenous peoples – no matter how small the population – and the incorporation of their perspectives in development planning and decision-making are integral to democratic participation and conflict prevention. In countries where indigenous peoples make up the majority or a significant percentage of the total population, they are a critical constituency to realizing multi-stakeholder trust.

Participatory National Dialogue
For example, in Ecuador, indigenous peoples' organizations are one of the largest organized sectors in the country, representing about 30 percent of the population. When, in January 2001, they threatened a nationwide strike protesting against price increases on cooking gas and public transport, the Government declared a state of emergency and was forced into negotiations with the indigenous groups. At the invitation of the then President of Ecuador, UNDP coordinated a commission of observers – drawn from among others the Organization of American States, the Catholic Church, the Foundation Rigoberta Menchú Tum, the Council of Universities, the Association of Municipalities, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and UNDP – that made a critical contribution to the negotiations.

UNDP won the confidence of civil society and the Government following the broad acceptance of Dialogue 21, a UNDP project of 1999-2002 that helped to create a national platform for many sectors of society, including indigenous peoples and their organizations, to reach consensus on fundamental issues of development such as equality, poverty and human rights. The project helped to develop the capacity of civil society to propose solutions to commonly identified problems, strengthen sustainable human development initiatives through participatory means, open channels of communication to promote national debate, and establish follow-up mechanisms that respect national dialogue and agreements.

"Dialogue 21 also brought expertise and framed a working methodology which was adapted to the negotiations in 2001 to work directly with leaders of indigenous groups and with the Government at the highest political level," says Aase Smedler, Resident Coordinator of the UNDP country office in Ecuador. UNDP

provided technical support to develop the institutional capacity of the Government for negotiations and conflict resolution. Separately, it also helped to train the indigenous peoples' organizations in negotiating skills. The negotiations were saved from breaking down at several stages when the commission stepped in to offer technical evaluation of complicated aspects of the agreement and maintained an impartial stance throughout. Dialogue tables established over 11 months ensured that the process did not stall.

The commission was ultimately able to broker an agreement acceptable to the Government and the six indigenous peoples' organizations, namely the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador, the largest organization of indigenous peoples, the Federation of Small Farmers and Indigenous Community Organizations, National Confederation of Rural, Indigenous and Black Organizations, the Ecuadorian Federations of Indians, the Council of Evangelical Indigenous Peoples and Organizations, and the National Federation of Farmers' Social Security.

Customary Law and Human Rights
In Guatemala, UNDP partnerships with civil society organizations focus on legal education and knowledge to encourage implementation of the peace agreements signed between the Government and guerrilla leaders of the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union in 1996 and bring about changes that reduce possibilities for the recurrence of conflict.

The central role played by civil society groups and indigenous peoples and their organizations in brokering peace was given formal recognition by the creation of a national Civil Society Assembly with UNDP support in 1994. Composed of labour unions, women's organizations, indigenous peoples and their organizations, and human rights advocates, the assembly became a pivotal forum for the formulation of specific proposals and review of the peace agreements.

For example, in 2000, the Association of Mayan Guatemalan Development produced manuals for the application of the Penal Code in the Maya Q'eqchi' language, aimed at practitioners of justice and court interpreters. It also issued a popular version of the Penal Code in 2002. The Association Friends of Peace and Development offers legal advice in daily radio broadcasts aimed at Q'eqchi'-speaking Mayas, who lack access to formal justice systems and suffer repeated lynchings from non-indigenous populations.

Access to justice is, however, not only a question of securing the application of state law in indigenous communities, but also the acceptance of customary law in conflict resolution and normative settlements. Oxlajuj Ajpop (the Council of Maya Spirituality) works with the Maya K'iché population through the Councils of Elders, and in a 2001 publication presented the consensus among spiritual leaders on the philosophical, moral and spiritual basis of the judicial order of the Maya K'iche'. By the end of 2003, it aims to install 50 Maya authorities in 25 Maya K'iche' communities to systematize and determine the application of customary law according to the K'iche' tradition.

The Supreme Court has taken up the experience of Oxlajuj Ajpop for consideration locally as a valid application of conflict resolution. The Waxaqib' Noj legal defence group promotes the adaptation and acceptance of customary law as complementary to formal justice, also in Quiché. The application of customary law by Waxaqib' Noj saves the formal justice system more than 2000 cases annually, mostly cases that do not need to be solved in a formal court. The methods appeal to indigenous peoples who are in need of resolving disputes because they are cost-effective, carried out orally in their native language and entail swift procedures and prompt measures.

Women In Conflict Resolution and Recovery

Women and children are among those most affected in conflict and post-conflict situations, often making up the majority of refugees and internally displaced persons in crisis regions. But women also assume critical leadership roles in the family and community in times of crisis and often seize the initiative in resolving conflict and

BRINGING RACE TO THE SURFACE IN BRAZIL

Tina Coêlho / Terra Imagem

In Brazil, racial inequality is not just a problem. It is a problem that is becoming worse. Although the incidence of poverty dropped significantly for the population as a whole over the past decade, the poverty differential between whites and Afro-Brazilians grew steadily. In 1992, for every 100 poor whites, there were 159 poor blacks – a figure that was up to 177 in 1999. On a series of indicators such as education, health, labour, housing, the conditions of Afro-Brazilians are consistently worse than those of whites.

Today, the Brazilian Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA), a highly respected body attached to the federal Government, is collecting these data in a project supported by UNDP, and disseminating them to Congress, the judiciary, political parties, mayors and governors. "The reaction is one of surprise," says IPEA President Roberto Martins. "People don't realize the huge difference between blacks and whites." But when the figures come from the Government, they cannot be brushed aside and the image has to be recalibrated to take account of the reality.

Civil society organizations representing Afro-Brazilians catalysed this UNDP-IPEA project. In April 2000, during the run-up to WCAR, a delegation of black organizations had visited the UNDP country office and urged it to take on the issue of race. Walter Franco, then UNDP Resident Representative in Brazil, suggested to IPEA that it undertake a research and policy project on racial inequality as part of the preparations for the conference. Martins, a historian by training who had been researching the history of slavery in Brazil for three decades, welcomed the proposal.

"When UNDP came into the picture, it facilitated the engagement of the Government," notes Luiza Bairros, a longstanding advocate of the black and women's movement, who works with UNDP in Brazil. Moreover, UNDP and IPEA already shared a partnership of trust since their collaboration on the 1996 national human development report on Brazil, which disaggregated data to the level of municipalities. The partners disseminated the data so effectively that, among other things, the Government designed an $8 billion programme to target particularly disadvantaged municipalities.

Black CSOs and researchers had produced many documents analysing inequality. For example, the Federação de Associações de Órgãos de Assistência Social e Educação disaggregated the human development index by race. However, the involvement of IPEA in the process marked the first time that a government agency developed a project to study racial inequality. Says Bairros, "Previously, only academic centres and black organizations were doing this. When IPEA comes in, it makes it official."

Several government agencies will be represented in the new national programme for affirmative action, for which IPEA has been designated execu-

tive secretary. "Part of the work will not cost any money — for example, establishing quotas in the civil service," Martins points out. "One difficulty is that Brazil has never discussed affirmative action before because it has always denied the problem of race. So we don't have the experience."

Meanwhile, the IPEA data on race are already being used in many universities, which are also beginning to discuss the introduction of quotas as part of affirmative action policies. Once the data are consolidated into user-friendly software, UNDP plans to work with scholars and black intellectuals to enable analysis from different perspectives. UNDP is also supporting a study on businesses and entrepreneurship of Afro-Brazilians to facilitate a more economic approach to the inclusion of blacks.

UNDP was instrumental in conducting a workshop in December 2001 on the health of the Afro-Brazilian population, the results of which have been recently published with the support of other international agencies. Building on this initiative, UNDP will carry out a project, along with the United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), to collect data on the prevalence HIV/AIDS among blacks. It is collaborating with the Department for International Development (DFID), the British aid agency, in a proposal to raise the profile of race issues in the health policy agenda.

With DFID and the Government, UNDP is working on an innovative project to address institutional racism, both by piloting tools and methods for its prevention in policy-making and strengthening the participation of civil society organizations in policy dialogue. The project will target eight municipalities over a five-year period.

"White people feel very uncomfortable when confronted with the fact that they have, perhaps unwittingly, contributed to the perpetuation of racism in Brazil," says Bairros, adding that many policy-makers may have built their professional reputation without dealing with race at all. "When someone reminds them that racial inequalities cannot be separated from issues of socio-economic development, they tend to be very reluctant to re-evaluate their approach." ▪

Women remain resilient in the face of enormous diversity in conflict situations. They create effective coping strategies and help to build peace.

building durable peace. In a number of countries, women have participated in programmes to reintegrate demobilized populations, support processes of recovery and reconciliation and advocate the surrender of weapons and ammunition (UNDP 2001).

In Albania, for example, women played a critical role in mobilizing communities for the UNDP 'weapons for development' programme. In war-torn regions of Tajikistan, UNDP supported a credit initiative in a region where 87 percent of women lost their livelihoods as a result of conflict. During the signing of the peace accords in Guatemala, the National Women's Forum, with support from UNDP and UNIFEM, negotiated a place for women at the peace table. Their presence resulted in the institution of women's right to land ownership, access to credit and participation in the political process (UNDP 2002d).

"Paradoxically, women remain resilient in the face of enormous adversity in conflict situations," says Dasa Silovic, policy advisor on gender and development in the UNDP Bureau for Development Policy. "They create effective coping strategies, help to set up peace-building mechanisms and contribute to the overall rehabilitation and reintegration of the surviving population."

Yet, gender issues remain underestimated and marginalized in international peace operations and post-conflict integration programmes, which tend to ignore women's many strengths in creating an environment in which it is possible for previously hostile groups to live together. The UNDP contribution to the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 of 2000 on women, peace and security focuses on the integration of gender concerns in post-conflict and transition to recovery programmes. This includes addressing demographic shifts from rural to urban areas, massive displacement, significant increase in single-headed households, impact of demobilization, and violence and trauma issues (UNDP 2001).

"Women bring their sense of the practical into peace processes, discerning weaknesses and areas in which agreements can break down

because of practical constraints," says Sunila Abeysekera, Executive Director of Inform, a human rights documentation centre in Sri Lanka. "Their demands are to do with the daily life of communities, with the provision of basic needs – for example, to have a road opened up for safe civilian transport. And women are more likely than men to be natural allies in efforts against militarization and coercive resolutions of social tensions."

Networks for Peace in Africa
In Africa, women's networks and movements have fostered peace-building processes in Burundi, Ethiopia, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Uganda (UNDP 2000a). "African women have bridged shifting political frontiers, survived wars and brokered peace. Through networks of self-help and solidarity, they have helped their households, communities and societies survive over the centuries," says Viola Morgan, Gender Programme Advisor at the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa.

UNDP has supported the peace-building and post-conflict initiatives of a range of women's networks such as the Mano River Union Women's Peace Network (in the Mano River countries of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone), the Liberian Women's Initiative, the Women's Movements for Peace in Sierra Leone, and the Rwanda-based Federation of African Women's Peace Network and Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Women's organizations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo mobilized women's constituencies countrywide to ensure that women's voices were heard in the 2002 Inter-Congolese dialogue, the political component of the peace process. A women's delegation, drawn from the African Women Committee on Peace and Development and FAS, undertook a peace and solidarity mission in the country, with support from UNDP, UNIFEM, and other United Nations partners. The mission was a critical first step towards bringing women to the peace table. It helped to forge a common understanding of the conflict and a common agenda among various women's plat-

forms and initiated a forum for dialogue among women's organizations, political parties and religious groups.

Two follow-up workshops in Bukavu and Kinshasa in February 2002 helped to synchronize the agendas from the provinces and sensitize

> **"There were a lot of men talking peace but there was no progress. As women we decided that we wanted our voices heard."**

national opinion to the importance of women's participation in the peace process. A Nairobi conference later that month further consolidated these gains and agreed upon a three-year plan of action on the role of women in post-conflict resolution in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the creation of a women's caucus for the Inter-Congolese Dialogue.

As a result of this intense and concerted mobilization over a short period of time, the women's organizations were able to ensure women's participation of nearly 30 per cent in the dialogue from February to April. "This was a historic achievement," says Bineta Diop, Executive Director of FAS. "It was the first time that women have been present in such numbers in peace negotiations in the country." Early support from UNDP played a catalytic role, she says, generating other donor interest and momentum for the process.

The Congolese Women's Caucus (with representatives from the Government, civil society, armed groups and the political opposition) participated in the political negotiations at the dialogue and a women's delegation made a presentation at the plenary session. Their efforts focused attention on issues relating to women and minorities, women's participation in civil society and political parties, and the specific effects of war on women.

The Mano River women's network grew out of discussions among women of the sub-region, with the support of Femmes Africa Solidarité, to build a political constituency for

peace. It has evolved into a genuinely regional civil society initiative, with local membership in the three Mano River countries. The combined efforts of women's groups in the network and their persistent advocacy at high levels of government brought about meetings between the three governments in 2001-2002. "The foreign ministers of the three countries have met periodically in the three countries to find amicable solutions to the conflict in the Mano River Basin and a security network of the countries has been established," says Mary Brownell, Chairperson of the women's network.

Even if the women's efforts did not result in an end to hostilities, they helped to create a supportive environment for dialogue and negotiations at the Rabat peace initiative in 2002. "The women accomplished what diplomacy alone could not have done. They were instrumental at the time in jumpstarting a stalled peace process and getting the key actors to start talking to one another" says Dominic Sam, then Deputy Resident Representative in the UNDP country office in Liberia.

"There were a lot of men talking peace and signing agreements but there was no progress and the country was still divided among warring factions. Women and children were suffering and we decided that as women we wanted our voices heard," says Etweda Cooper, Secretary-General of the Liberian Women's Initiative, a founding member of the Mano River women's network and a strong advocate for disarmament and free and fair elections. A member of the Liberian Women's Initiative, Ruth Sando Perry, became the Chairperson of the Interim Council of State of the Liberian National Transitional Government in August 1996 and presided over a peace process that led to elections in 1997.

The women's peace initiatives have since continued: Women as Bridges to Peace, a community-level pilot project of the Liberian Women's Initiative from 1997-2000, has evolved into a

regional and national network. UNDP, in close collaboration with the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Liberia, provided resources for peace missions, convening space and forums for dialogue and supplied physical infrastructure. This support was key to advancing the path-breaking efforts of these women's peace networks and establishing their credibility and leverage with political leaders, says Cooper.

A Place at the Peace Table

In post-Taliban Afghanistan, women are the worst affected by the impact of 23 years of unremitting war, natural disasters, poverty and isolation. With community networks and traditional solidarity supports broken, women are trying to rebuild their lives in a precarious environment. More than two million women are war widows, even more are single heads of households, and women and children make up roughly 65 percent of internally displaced persons and refugees.

Against this background of daunting challenges, United Nations organizations have made conscious efforts to involve women in rebuilding the country, recognizing that they can be key players in reconstituting their communities. A national consultation organized in Kabul in March 2002 by UNIFEM and UNDP (with ILO, UNFPA, UNESCO, UN-Habitat and UNICEF), in collaboration with the Ministry of Women's Affairs, was a historic first step for Afghan women to strategize and develop an agenda that would reflect their concerns in the new Government.

Sixty Afghan women delegates in eight provinces, including Kabul, from the grassroots to the professional arena, assembled for a three-day consultation to articulate their priorities and discuss a mechanism to be active partners in peace-building. "Women must be recognized, supported and valued as critical players in re-building Afghanistan," UNIFEM Executive Director Noeleen Heyzer said. "The national consultation is the first step towards the full and equal involvement of Afghan women in shaping their country's future and their role in it."

The women discussed issues of security, women's rights, education, health, legal and

Afghan women are trying to rebuild their lives and communities as they play a role in building peace.

HEALING THE BREACH: CIVIL SOCIETY INITIATIVES IN MINDANAO

Civil society organizations have played catalytic roles in the ongoing post-conflict transformation in the Mindanao islands to the south of the Philippine archipelago, where Islamic movements such as the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front have fought drawn-out armed struggles with the Government. The experience and resources of a range of CSOs – from humanitarian relief organizations and community-based groups to policy institutes – contributed to the response of United Nations organizations supporting the peace and development programme of the Government that followed negotiations leading to the creation of the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao in 1989.

The United Nations is working with the Government and MNLF to implement the peace agreement signed with MNLF. Through the programme, the United Nations hopes to demonstrate to other Islamic liberation movements that are still at war and the Philippines military that peace works.

The involvement of CSOs with knowledge and experience of the area was critical to peace-building efforts given the complex ethnic, religious and political realities in Mindanao. The island and its neighbouring Sulu archipelago are home to Christian settlers and at least 31 ethno-linguistic groups, 13 of which adopted Islam (the Muslim or Moro peoples) while 18 are non-Muslim indigenous groups known as Lumads. No single ethnic group inhabits large or contiguous territorial areas (ADB 2002). The demands of indigenous peoples for recognition of ancestral domain and the political claims of self-determination resulted in conflicts between the Government, various Islamic liberation movements and the indigenous peoples.

One of the first tasks of the programme (Phases One and Two: 1997-2001) was to empower ex-combatants for political and civilian engagement, whether in formal government processes through the Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development,[8] or by transforming the military structures of MNLF into community-based cooperative organizations for livelihood activities. In formulating their strategies, programme managers drew on community development approaches of local CSOs such as the Cooperative Foundation Philippines, the Mindanao Coalition of Development NGO Frameworks and the Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas. MNLF leaders adapted the approaches of non-government cooperatives in their own communities. Christian, Muslim and indigenous residents also got involved in development projects initiated by former combatants – a clear sign that these efforts at reintegration were working.

CSOs did not limit their roles to partnerships in project implementation. Civil society organizations involved in peace advocacy and research, such as Kusog Mindanao, the Mindanao State University and the Institute for Popular Democracy, were a rich source of political analysis that sharpened the United Nations' understanding of the political context and strengthened its capacity to provide sound advice on strategies for peace and development. CSOs and universities also conducted independent evaluations of the programme, which provided advice to the United Nations on its future directions.

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[8] The Southern Philippines Council for Peace and Development is a body agreed upon by MNLF and the Government to coordinate activities designed to promote peace and development in areas affected by the conflict. The Government requested the United Nations to use the council as its national execution partner for the United Nations programme. The council is chaired by MNLF and includes an executive committee drawn from Muslims, Christians and indigenous peoples.

With access to information, independent opinion, analysis and policy advice through diverse sources in the Government, MNLF and CSOs in the field, United Nations organizations operating in Mindanao earned the trust of several donors. In three years, ten donors were sharing project costs of $8 million with UNDP, an eight-fold increase.

A critical contribution of CSOs to post-conflict transformation in Mindanao was their advocacy on sensitive issues. Ex-combatants from MNLF were suspicious of family planning (because of their implications for the reproductive health behaviour of women) and micro-finance (because of religious doctrine on usury and interest) programmes. These attitudes changed after women leaders of MNLF observed at first hand reproductive health programmes run by Muslim organizations with United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) support in Indonesia and Egypt and UNDP-supported micro-finance programmes run by Muslim communities in Pakistan and Bangladesh. The leaders from these study tours organized by UNDP and UNFPA became active advocates of new approaches in poor communities.

At the community level, civil society groups actively supported the United Nations in facilitating peace and development councils – local governance structures with representatives from local government, community organizations, business groups and political parties. These councils provided a forum for discussion on peace issues and served as the basis for building confidence among Muslims, Christians and indigenous peoples through development programmes.

CSOs specializing in participatory appraisal, such as the Education for Life Foundation and the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement, conducted assessments to gauge the community needs. These participatory exercises empowere

A critical contribution of CSOs to post-conflict transformation in Mindanao was their advocacy on sensitive issues, such as family planning and micro-credit finance.

women in particular to participate in planning and implementing community plans and projects. The results of these assessments formed the basis for programmes by United Nations organizations and subsequent government support.

When the conflict between the Government and other Islamic groups worsened, the United Nations worked with both MNLF and CSOs organized under Tabang Mindanao to provide humanitarian aid to fleeing villagers. Together, they set up peace zones that serve as communities of sanctuary for internal refugees, and campaigned for peace.

Civil society engagement with the United Nations thus advanced post-conflict initiatives in Mindanao by strengthening analysis, forging new partnerships, ensuring community participation of women and indigenous peoples, and building trust in situations where distrust was still rife and communities were still armed. ■

political rights, media and information, social and cultural values, governance, capacity development and economic security. The consultations provided the Ministry of Women's Affairs with a basis for a national agenda for gender and strengthened its support base among Afghan women within and outside the country. With UNIFEM (and United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan) support, the ministry trained a group of women to participate in the Loya Jirga (national governance council). These delegates have taken on the responsibility of expanding networks in their regions to increase women's political participation. In 2002, there were 160 women delegates to the Loya Jirga, accounting for an impressive 12.5 per cent of the total.

UNIFEM has taken the lead in promoting women's empowerment and participation in peace-building and reconstruction through its Afghan Women's Leadership Programme (2002-2004). The programme closely involves partners in civil society such as the Afghan Women's Network, the Government, United Nations organizations and bilateral donors. It seeks to address the concerns of Afghan women by building their capacity and that of key national institutions, supporting women's social and economic empowerment and improving women's security and protection from violence (UNIFEM 2002).

Community Development and Peace-Building

Civil society initiative has resulted in the goals of inclusion and conflict prevention underpinning much of UNDP partnerships for development. In the Middle Spis region in Eastern Slovakia, ETP Slovakia, an NGO, helped to implement 80 community-development projects planned by local community based organizations in ten pilot municipalities to integrate disadvantaged groups under a government programme launched in 2001. Several projects seek to foster interaction and cooperation between Roma and non-Roma inhabitants. One of them, known as Erika's Bridge (named after the woman who motivated local residents to action), brought communities together to build a bridge connecting the Roma and non-Roma parts of the village.

The projects helped to forge partnerships at multiple levels for the development of municipalities with settlements of ethnic minorities. Local partnerships focused on the livelihoods of rural and urban communities, and included the mayor, local authorities, community organizations and small businesses. Regional partnerships aimed to strengthen capacity and included district government offices, CSOs and businesses operating in the region. National partnerships addressed the policy framework, resource mobilization and monitoring, and involved the office of the Vice-Prime Minister on Human Rights, Minorities and Regional Development, ETP Slovakia, the Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma communities and UNDP.

In Nepal, a UNDP programme to support peace and development initiatives launched in March 2002 addresses the impact on the community of the escalating violence stemming from the Maoist insurgency that began in 1996. The violence has claimed more than 7000 lives, orphaned at least 10 000 children, and forced tens of thousands of people to leave their homes. The Maoists have also destroyed crucial infrastructure such as hydro-power stations, bridges and buildings. The decline in tourism, a mainstay of the economy of Nepal, and other economic activities has resulted in widespread unemployment. The violence and the climate of insecurity have led to the closing of many schools. Increasing numbers of women are taking on responsibilities for households in the absence of men who are killed or missing.

In a participatory process involving consultations with various concerned groups, the programme established a $2.6 million trust fund, financed by seven external donors and managed by UNDP, to support civil society initiatives on the ground. A primary purpose of the fund is to enable Nepali civil society to participate in rebuilding societies ravaged by violence. To this end, the programme seeks to strengthen the capacities of NGOs and community based organizations in developing a culture of peace and

addressing human rights issues. CSOs participate in key decisions through steering and project approval committees.

The programme encourages the participation of women and excluded, ethnic minority and indigenous communities in peace-building activities and the reactivation of traditional methods of dealing with confrontation. It facilitates dialogue on conflict and peace-building through grassroots groups and civil society organizations, seeks to improve the social and economic rehabilitation of victims of violence and internal displacement, and fosters networking and communication among core civil society groups engaged in promoting peace, human rights and development. By reaching out to those most affected by confrontation, the programme ultimately benefits the entire population and promotes national ownership of peace-building processes.

To date, managers of the trust fund have approved the peace initiatives of 40 CSOs and institutions such as the Human Rights Association of Nepal, Village Women's Welfare Society, Dalit Sewa Samaj and South Asia Partnership. In particular, organizations run for and by women and marginalized communities have received special support for their work in the rehabilitation of victims, research, street theatre, radio programmes to sensitize people on the consequences of conflict, and advocacy on peace-building and human rights. The empowerment of women has had salutary effects such as generating economic opportunities and resistance to violence at the community level.

An early finding is that these civil society initiatives, by creating and sustaining grassroots networks, can contribute to peace and resistance to violence in a post-conflict period. "Social cohesiveness, awareness of issues of peace and justice and genuine empowerment can positively influence post-conflict transformation," says Shantam Khadka, Legal Reform Officer in the UNDP country office in Nepal. The challenge is to develop

capacity and expertise to prevent and address the consequences of the eruption of conflict in a traditionally peaceful country.

In Somalia, where land and access to land is at the root of much of the conflict, UNDP is working with farming communities to address land ownership to build peace and consensus. The UNDP Cadastral Survey project, implemented with the Somaliland Ministry of Agriculture, involves farmers, their neighbours and municipal authorities. "What UNDP is doing here is helping to build peace, one farm at a time," says Maxwell Gaylard, UNDP Resident Representative in Somalia. Cadastral surveys – determining the extent, value and ownership of land for official registration – have been successful in conflict resolution in the northwest and could be expanded to the farming areas in the southwest (UNDP 2002e).

> **In Eastern Slovakia, Erika's Bridge brought communities together to buld a bridge connecting Roma and non-Roma parts of the village.**

Disaster Preparedness and Recovery

Large-scale natural disasters have taken approximately three million lives in the past two decades. An overwhelming majority of such disasters, whether floods, earthquakes or hurricanes, occur in developing countries, where already vulnerable communities bear the brunt of their enormous economic and social costs. In addition, frequently occurring small and medium-scale disasters, not registered in global databases, can cause up to twice as much accumulated damage as large-scale catastrophes. Poor physical infrastructure, environmental degradation and mismanagement, inappropriate territorial occupation and land use, and concentration of populations in disaster-prone zones are all factors that heighten vulnerability to natural disasters. These are in turn influenced by chronic poverty, social and economic exclusion, and situations of civil conflict and economic transition.

Losses from disasters are thus often synonymous with unresolved development problems.

The circular Kachchi house, the *bhoonga*, withstood the devastating earthquake of 2001 in Gujarat, India, while modern structures gave way.

Their grave human and economic consequences have impelled UNDP to make disaster reduction an integral component of its overall planning framework. Further, while natural disasters may not in themselves lead to violent conflict, they can severely undermine the capacity of an unprepared government to address key domestic issues. Governments faced with cascading crises may simply fold over or collapse, and the vacuum filled by violence and disorder. "The answer to the challenge lies in developing the capacity of governments to reduce the risks posed by unexpected disasters and manage their fall-out in a constructive and equitable manner," says Julia Taft, Director of the UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (UNDP 2002f).

From Goma in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Gujarat in India, UNDP has entered sites of natural disasters to pick up where humanitarian relief has left off and put in place early, sustainable recovery initiatives. The focus is not only on disaster reduction (through prevention, preparedness and mitigation) but also on recovery (through rehabilitation and reconstruction). In particular, programmes have aimed to reduce social and economic vulnerability and loss of livelihoods and protect broad-based development gains. UNDP believes that both reduction and recovery approaches are essential to promoting poverty eradication and sustainable livelihoods, gender equality and the advancement of women, environmental and natural resources sustainability, and democratic governance.

During the 1990s, UNDP has supported civil society involvement in exercises in local disaster and risk management in several countries. In Haiti, for example, CSOs participated actively in the preparation of the common country assessment and contributed to the national risk and disaster management plan, which sets out long-term objectives and challenges. National and international CSOs have also been active in implementing local programmes under the plan. Since the 1998 cyclone Georges, nearly 100 local participatory committees in risk and disaster management have been functioning out of the capital, Port au Prince. CSOs have been directly or indirectly involved in most of them.

After cyclone Mitch struck Nicaragua in 1998, UNDP strengthened the capacities of six municipalities and 36 communities to manage disaster risk and develop sustainable livelihoods. Municipal authorities and civil society organizations in Dipilto, Mozontle, Ocotal, San Isidro, Sébaco and Ciudad Darío have undergone training in managing local risk. Today they are incorporating risk considerations into development plans. The National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Attention has adopted these approaches and methodologies, and is promoting their application in other related projects.

Transition From Relief to Sustainable Recovery

When disaster risk considerations are not factored into recovery efforts following major catastrophes, countries tend to invest in "reconstructing risk" – rebuilding conditions for future and worse disasters. Civil society organizations with community networks and experience have a

potentially invaluable role in helping to reduce risk during recovery efforts. CSOs have been active in UNDP-supported recovery efforts in a number of countries, such as El Salvador, India, Malawi and Mozambique.

In the western Indian state of Gujarat, site of a devastating earthquake in 2001, UNDP pioneered its concept of transition from relief to recovery, working with a range of partners in other development agencies, the Government and civil society. The goals were manifold: to close the gap between relief and reconstruction; improve coordination between local, regional, national and international partners; enable a rapid recovery of livelihoods and development with relatively small financial inputs; build capacities and demonstrate approaches that can be applied on a large scale; and encourage community participation and empower women in the rebuilding process (UNDP 2001b).

"The Gujarat experience illustrates the importance of strategic intervention, using relatively small resources but following a knowledge-based approach, to close the gap between relief and long-term development in crisis and post-crisis countries," says Praveen Pardeshi, then UNDP Gujarat Programme Manager. "Properly applied, transition recovery can help to prevent countries afflicted with frequent crises – whether natural disasters, war, civil conflict or the breakdown of economic, political and social systems – from slipping into a downward spiral, where losses outweigh limited development gains, and risks of future crisis accumulate."

In Kachch, the district most affected by the earthquake, UNDP forged strategic partnerships with a number of civil society organizations to spearhead innovative approaches aimed at promoting community self-reliance, safeguarding against future risk, strengthening institutional capacity and empowering the most vulnerable groups. The partnership with the Kachch Nav Nirman Abhiyan, a 29-member district-wide network, is illustrative of the wide-ranging nature of CSO-UNDP collaboration.

In the area of shelter, for example, UNDP-supported demonstration houses in 25 villages are being replicated across the 300 villages covered by the Abhiyan network, in turn influencing the design and implementation of projects by other community based organizations, government agencies and the private sector. For Abhiyan, an invaluable aspect of the partnership was the deployment of UNDP funds in small but key demonstrative projects that can have a multiplier effect across the state. "As a local network, our strength is to push for and implement policy changes in our geographic area. It is very important for us to have UNDP as a partner that will advocate these issues nationally and internationally," says Sushma Iyengar, Convenor of Abhiyan.

The range of these experiences shows that UNDP efforts in conflict prevention and crisis recovery centre on building broader consensus and dialogue. Increasingly, they involve not only governments, but also diverse actors in civil society. These partnerships have shaped, enriched and in many cases ensured the durability of the organization's efforts in complex and challenging crisis and post-conflict environments. ■

NGOs are often the first points of contact for marginalized populations that are highly vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, such as migrants and migrant workers, who are usually reluctant to contact government agencies.

CSOs AS A

FIRST LINE

OF DEFENCE

HIV/AIDS poses one of the most serious threats to human development, draining societies of talent, resources and capacity, and impoverishing those who survive. The crisis has already caused incalculable damage — from loss of opportunities for growth and development to loss of rights, from loss of hope and self-confidence to loss of life. It has disrupted families and societies and caused far more suffering and socio-economic chaos than most famines, wars or natural disasters have done throughout history.

So far, more than 25 million people have died of AIDS worldwide. Nearly 42 million people are currently living with HIV/AIDS, and five million were infected with HIV in 2002 alone (UNAIDS/ WHO 2002). The virus is spreading fastest in Asia, Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. In Africa, where there has been an exponential rise in the numbers of infected people, HIV/AIDS is feeding into a cycle of impoverishment and vulnerability. The epidemic is spreading more silently in Asia and the Arab States, where denial, fear, stigmatization and

intense discrimination are weakening surveillance mechanisms and pushing the epidemic underground. India has an estimated 4.58 million people living with HIV/AIDS, the second largest number in the world after South Africa. It is feared that China, where approximately one million people live with HIV/AIDS, may be on the brink of a major epidemic.

While governments and donor institutions are becoming aware of the imperative need to conceptualize HIV/AIDS as not only a public health crisis but also a development concern, significant challenges remain. Accelerated debt relief is a priority concern for heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) that have high rates of HIV/AIDS (30 out of 42 HIPC countries). The few countries that have achieved measurable results in reversing the epidemic – Brazil, Cambodia, Senegal, Thailand and Uganda – are those that have made HIV/AIDS a priority in their development planning, resources allocation and poverty reduction strategies (UNDP 2002g).

The HIV/AIDS crisis has far-reaching policy implications for the UNDP core mandate of poverty reduction, particularly in connection with the realization of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Given the scale of devastation caused by the epidemic, fragmented or insufficient responses will undermine the sixth goal to halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015. Since AIDS increases household poverty, food insecurity, school dropout rates, especially among girls, and infant and child mortality, a setback to this goal will render impossible the achievement of all other MDGs.

For example, in Burkina Faso, Rwanda and Uganda, the proportion of people living in absolute poverty is estimated to rise from 45 per cent today to 51 per cent in 2015 as a result of HIV/AIDS. These human development setbacks, in turn, place people at even greater risk of contracting the virus (UNDP 2003). In Zimbabwe, an estimated 2.3 million people in the 15 to 49 age group (of a total population of 11.6 million) are infected with HIV. About 600 000 have developed AIDS, which has orphaned nearly 800 000 children. HIV/AIDS is seriously threatening to reverse development gains in Zimbabwe, reducing life expectancy, cutting productivity and incomes, and jeopardizing the country's ability to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Since the late 1980s, UNDP has consistently made the case for linking HIV and development policy. It has since mobilized its efforts well beyond the health sector, promoting decentralized responses and community-level action, and bringing sensitive issues of human rights, gender inequality, stigma and discrimination into national and global policy agendas (UNDP 2003). A critical challenge for UNDP in its work with development partners and governments is securing political commitment to scale up and calibrate poverty reduction strategies to keep pace with the widening impact of HIV/AIDS. Dynamic partnerships with CSOs – advocacy and campaign coalitions, nongovernmental service providers and, most importantly, networks of people living with HIV/AIDS – are vital to this task.

Civil society organizations have been in the vanguard of the movement to advance the mutually reinforcing agenda of development and AIDS prevention, consistently drawing attention to the need to link micro-level prevention and treatment efforts with broader issues of poverty, gender equality, governance, human rights and trading agreements. The clearest example of civil society's playing a powerful and formative role in shaping international policy responses to the HIV/AIDS crisis is in access to treatment. Unprecedented public pressure from the campaign launched by several national and international CSOs led to 39 multinational pharmaceutical companies' dropping their case against the Government of South Africa in April 2001, allowing the country to import anti-retroviral drugs (CPT 2001). The sustained campaign to provide affordable drugs to poor people paved the way for the Doha Declaration on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) and Public Health at the Fourth Ministerial Meeting of the World Trade Organization in November that year.

At the global level, such campaign coalitions have brought the multidimensional challenges of HIV/AIDS to the forefront of public consciousness. On the ground, NGOs have emerged as a first line of defence in containing HIV/AIDS. Their flexibility and proximity to marginalized communities make them the first points of contact. They also act as catalysts for social change through their involvement in empowering people who face various forms of socially sanctioned violations. They have done pioneering work in reaching marginalized and often criminalized vulnerable populations of drug users, sex workers and migrant communities that are usually reluctant to deal with government officials. Civil society initiatives are not a substitute for government efforts; rather, they complement them and help to ensure their sustainability through community outreach.

Together, CSOs in the HIV/AIDS arena have addressed four critical needs: outreach and networking to allow cross-fertilization of ideas across societies; monitoring denial and violations

of human rights and empowering those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, reaching out to marginalized communities, and providing mechanisms for care and support. In particular, the role of CSOs in care and support initiatives has become indispensable where there is a lack of concerted efforts by governments. Trans-border civil society initiatives have often provided the impetus for effective regional responses to the epidemic (see Box 5).

With their emphasis on empowerment and awareness-raising, civil society organizations bring a rights-based approach to the battle against HIV/AIDS – one that seeks to reduce vulnerability by addressing root causes such as social exclusion, economic deprivation and discrimination. The evolution of the epidemic has brought into sharp focus its legal, ethical and human rights dimensions, especially since many of those most vulnerable to the virus are already on the margins of society and lack access to basic human rights. It has reinforced existing social stereotypes and inequalities that define women as inferior to men, marginalize poor people and exclude young drug-users, sex workers, and people with different sexual preferences. Social mobilization must therefore be at the heart of any strategy to reduce the spread and impact of HIV/AIDS. Many of its essential but neglected tasks – changing public attitudes, increasing knowledge and tackling sensitivities that verge on moral, ethical and extremely personal aspects of people's lives – have fallen to civil society actors.

Catalysing Commitment and Change
In West Africa, where one in ten adults is already living with HIV, Burkina Faso is the second worst affected country after Côte d'Ivoire. Until 2000, the response to HIV/AIDS in Burkina Faso was typical of many countries: under-funded, fragmented, donor-driven and lacking in political commitment and leadership. Although many challenges remain, the country has since made a quantum leap in

addressing the crisis, says Håkan Björkman, a senior UNDP advisor on HIV/AIDS.

Today, Burkina Faso is an example of what can be done when political will is mustered, United Nations system organizations are coordinated, and CSOs are mobilized. The country is one of only eight in Africa that have effectively integrated HIV/AIDS priorities, targets and impact analysis into their poverty reduction strategy papers. This is testament to the commitment of the Government to place HIV/AIDS prevention and care at the centre of the national development agenda, as well as its understanding of the need to address

> **With their emphasis on empowerment and raising awareness, civil society actors bring a rights-based approach to the battle against HIV/AIDS.**

poverty in order to reduce vulnerability to infection.

Burkina Faso is one of only three countries in the world that have taken the formal decision to allocate part of the savings from its Enhanced HIPC debt relief to HIV/AIDS. Although the amount is still relatively small ($1.3 million per year, in addition to $0.7 million from the regular budget), the fact that domestic resources are allocated to HIV/AIDS promotes ownership and increases the likelihood of sustained results. Advocacy and policy dialogue have been backed up by rigorous analysis (the 2001 *National Human Development Report* focused on HIV/AIDS). In a move towards strengthening institutional framework and capacity, the Government established a National HIV/AIDS Commission, attached to the Office of the President, in 2001.

Civil society organizations have been key to bringing about this change in the national response to HIV/AIDS. They are working with the Government to ensure that communities are not only consulted but also play a leading role in prevention and scaling up care and support interventions for people affected by the epidemic. There are more than 200 CSOs in Burkina Faso tackling various challenges of HIV/AIDS. "Civil society organizations can be rightly considered

BOX 5

CROSSING BOUNDARIES: REACHING OUT IN SOUTH ASIA

The involvement of civil society organizations in South Asia has been critical to the ability of UNDP to work with governments in HIV/AIDS as well as in sensitive areas such as trafficking in women. After a participatory review highlighted the need for greater policy advocacy and capacity development for a sustained response, a UNDP-supported regional programme to address HIV and development was launched in 1998 and extended in 2002 for a second five-year phase.[9]

One of the key priorities of this programme was to link organizations of people living with HIV/AIDS. These groups, perhaps more than any other, have led the field in raising visibility and awareness of the epidemic and fighting stigma and discrimination. A baseline mapping of such groups in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka led to partnerships with 17 CSOs of people living with HIV/AIDS. The partnerships have raised the profile of these organizations, strengthened their networks and contributed to the development of their capacity for advocacy and for engagement with governments in the region.

A core focus area of the project is the mobility of people, particularly the most vulnerable groups such as trafficked people. The project also supports national and regional networks of CSOs, law-enforcement officials and the judiciary in destination and source countries, leading to the prosecution of many traffickers. It provides legal assistance, rehabilitation and counselling support to rescued and repatriated survivors.

UNDP strategic partnerships with CSOs, such as Maiti and the Women's Rehabilitation Centre in Nepal, STOP, the Durbar Mahila Samanway Committee in India, and CARE Bangladesh, were specifically aimed at addressing trans-border trafficking in children and women between these countries. The groups worked to sensitize local leaders, activists and law enforcement officials to initiate community-level strategies to prevent trafficking in source areas. They helped to bring about changes in policy and actively involve government officials. Lanka+, a national network of people living with HIV/AIDS in Sri Lanka, has taken the lead in challenging stigma in the country and giving the epidemic a human face.

An immensely valuable innovation of these civil society initiatives is the involvement of sex workers as partners in combating trafficking and containing HIV/AIDS while addressing the broader issues of gender empowerment, facilitation of agency and recognition of the rights of sex workers.

In an example of UNDP partnership with CSOs and the private sector, the South Asian Research and Development Initiative, the American Centre for International Labour Solidarity, and the Confederation of Indian Industry pooled efforts to facilitate a multi-country safe migration initiative. They supported activities in source, transit and destination areas, covering migrants in the hosiery, construction and small-scale sectors in India, women migrants in free trade zones in Sri Lanka and truckers and fishermen in Pakistan.

The initiative strengthened the capacity of CSOs to mainstream HIV/AIDS into their work, facilitated regional coalitions and networks and added HIV/AIDS to the agendas of trade unions. The partnerships were key to enhancing national strategies for addressing migrant populations and their vulnerability to HIV. Obstacles to such initiatives arise from the facts that most migrant workers are not unionized and employers do not perceive value in recognizing the vulnerability of their workers to HIV/AIDS.

A major hurdle to addressing HIV within a rights-based framework in South Asia relates to existing laws and practices that allow discriminatory practices against people living with HIV to continue. To improve understanding of the implications of these laws, UNDP formed partnerships with CSOs to map policies, social norms and laws relating to the issues. The results have been published in a regional human development report on HIV/AIDS and development in South Asia. The report includes indices on levels of stigma and discrimination and recommends strategies to address HIV-related stigma and discrimination in South Asia (UNDP 2003a). ∎

[9] Phase 2 of the Programme is titled Regional Empowerment and Action to Contain HIV/AIDS (REACH).
www.hivanddevelopment.org and www.youandaids.org

pioneers in the battle against AIDS," says Marc Saba in the UNDP country office in Burkina Faso. "Many came into being before the creation of state structures to coordinate the battle against AIDS and have had to pilot their course through uncharted territory, drawing on their courage and determination."

UNDP efforts with other partners to develop the capacity of these organizations include a mapping of CSOs engaged in combating HIV/AIDS, supporting those providing schooling for orphans, and facilitating voluntary counselling and testing and services such as access to treatment, referral to positive people's groups, legal aid and support mechanisms. In 2001, CSOs conducted 6 900 such tests, roughly three-fourths of the country total.

Community Leadership to Combat HIV/AIDS and Poverty

In South Africa, where more than one in five adults are living with HIV/AIDS, UNDP has launched an initiative to develop leadership and capacity to respond to the epidemic at all levels. Based on the premise that committed and capable leadership is needed for an effective response, the Leadership for Results initiative underscores the fact that everyone has a responsibility to address HIV/AIDS. It is a new partnership that is transforming the responses of communities and community based organizations (CBOs) to the epidemic. In 2002, 54 facilitators or 'change agents' from all over the country participated in training workshops organized as part of the initiative.

The workshops have had an extraordinary impact. Participants have become aware that their own behaviour, attitudes, beliefs, gender biases and some cultural practices could contribute to the spread of HIV/AIDS. A number of them have lost little time in drawing up action projects to implement in their work and personal spaces. For Thomas Mkhize, Chairperson of the KwaZulu-Natal CBO Network, the training has heightened his sense of empathy with those affected by HIV/AIDS. "I now understand the disease better and can relate to those infected and affected by it."

The Leadership for Results initiative is part of a programme that is a partnership between UNDP, the National Department of Health and three provinces most affected by HIV/AIDS and poverty – Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo.[10] The programme promotes dialogue on issues that contribute to the continued spread of the epidemic, supports the development of appropriate policy measures, and develops capacity to generate an extraordinary nationwide and multi-sectoral response to the epidemic. It also builds partnerships between the Government, civil society and other major actors to support communities and community based organizations to scale up their responses.

At the launch of the initiative in Limpopo province in April 2003, Minister of Health Manto Tshabalala-Msimang pledged the commitment of her Government at the highest level. "The focus is on building the skills of the individuals, and creating platforms for individuals to work together towards solutions for common problems," she said.

The strong presence of other provinces at the Limpopo launch indicated their willingness and eagerness to learn and apply lessons at home. Participants from communities, civil society, private sector, labour, the national and local government, academia and the media sent a powerful message that this was a new and unconventional movement to fight HIV/AIDS and poverty, and that they would go out and recruit other change agents. Civil society participants came from NGOs, CBOs and their networks and faith-based groups. Writing in the 15 April 2003 edition of *The Northern Review*, commentator Andre Buys said, "The initiative effectively moves the national debate on HIV/AIDS and poverty from purely bio-medical terms to contextualizing it in the wider social and economic forces in the country."

For UNDP, the response at Limpopo augurs well for a nationwide programme. "It is historic that all key decision-makers and actors in the province are present here together, to reinforce their commitment to fight the epidemic," said John Ohiorhenuan, Resident Representative in the

UNDP country office in South Africa. "It sends a strong message to the whole province – and indeed the country – that HIV/AIDS and poverty can be overcome if everyone works together."

As part of the Leadership for Results initiative, many leaders and change agents have helped to empower and develop the capacity of communities in Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal to deal with the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS. For example, the KwaZulu-Natal CBO Network and the Eastern Cape CBO Network launched a Community Capacity Enhancement process in 2002, with UNDP support, to help their provinces to address the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS at the community level. One especially innovative strategy involves "community conversations" to break the silence and address factors fuelling the spread of the epidemic.

Through story-telling, role-playing, drama and other techniques, community members – traditional leaders, chiefs, elders, children, men, women, youth, and CBOs and NGOs – are beginning to understand better the nature of the epidemic and develop ways to respond effectively. This approach is based on consultations with communities, which have shown that when existing HIV/AIDS knowledge is shared, extraordinary understanding and responses come from communities.

The conversations help to examine community perspectives on how to live with and respect people living with HIV/AIDS, and involve them in community responses to the epidemic. The community conversations approach contrasts sharply with processes where people are grouped together for awareness-raising lectures — often accompanied by the distribution of pamphlets or posters — but without the creation of interactive spaces for facilitated reflection and application, says Moustapha Gueye, UNDP Senior Policy Advisor. "Such methods leave communities with bleak, prescriptive one-way messages, denying them the benefits of dialogue on all aspects (direct and indirect) of the impact of HIV/AIDS. Communities can be overwhelmed and experience hopelessness with negative or un-integrated information campaigns."
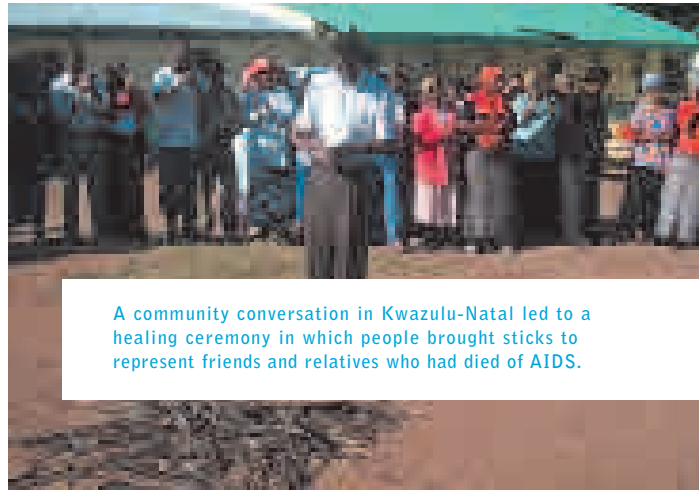
A community conversation in Kwazulu-Natal led to a healing ceremony in which people brought sticks to represent friends and relatives who had died of AIDS.

The aim of community conversations is not just to have people discuss a problem that they all know about, but instead to lead people to think through and discuss all the repercussions – the way their behaviour and values, and those of their families and neighbours, affect people's lives. This is done through a methodological framework with specific steps, matching skills and tools. "The conversations have led to communities developing a whole new way of looking at the epidemic," says Mpumi Mnconywa, Coordinator of the UNDP KwaZulu-Natal HIV/AIDS and Poverty Programme. "They have started recognizing and addressing issues of stigma, silence and denial." Adds Sheila Hokwana, Assistant Director of the Eastern Cape Provincial AIDS Action Unit, "A space has been opened for people to be ready to disclose [their HIV/AIDS status]. It has happened in small groups, around families and friends."

A powerful outcome of one community conversation was a "healing ceremony" led by Chief (Inkosi) Everseen Thobigunya Xolo of Xolo Village in the Hibiscus Coast District of KwaZulu-Natal. The community formed a large circle and each person brought sticks, representing friends and relatives who had died of AIDS, and placed it in a pile at the centre. Some people brought two or three sticks. Others brought handfuls. Soon the people around the circle were facing a huge pile of sticks. This was an emotional moment

when the community realized just how badly affected it was by the epidemic. They openly grieved for the departed, and then mapped out how they wanted to change their behaviour and address the epidemic in the future. An elderly woman admitted publicly for the first time that six of her children had died of HIV/AIDS, but no one in the village had acknowledged the cause because of the stigma and denial associated with HIV/AIDS. A group of community field workers performed a play dealing with issues of stigma and shame.

In KwaZulu-Natal, 76 community capacity enhancement facilitators have been trained so far in eight districts. They are expected to train hundreds more, helping to empower and develop the capacity of communities. As news of the initiative has spread to other districts not included as pilot sites under the programme, they have offered to fully fund the training and field activities from their own budgets if they receive technical support from UNDP. "The dream of generating an extraordinary nationwide and multifaceted response to the epidemic and strong partnerships to support communities and community based organizations may not be that far away," says Naheed Haque, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative in South Africa.

Supporting People's Networks

In the Caribbean, the United Nations Volunteers (UNV), in partnership with the UNAIDS office in the Caribbean has been executing a programme to implement the Greater Involvement of People Living with or Affected by HIV/AIDS (GIPA) since May 2000.

The GIPA approach to HIV/AIDS programmes is based on the principle that the participation of people living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA) is critical to ethical and effective national responses to the HIV epidemic. Many governments have officially endorsed the principle and reaffirmed it on several occasions, from the 1994 Paris AIDS Summit to the 2001 United Nations General Assembly Special Summit on HIV/AIDS.

Over the past seven years, UNV (which is administered by UNDP) has been at the forefront of the movement to promote GIPA, supporting it

with its experience over decades of a community-based, participatory approach to development. After encouraging results in South Africa, the Caribbean, with the world's second highest growth rate of HIV and AIDS, was selected for the application of this methodology. The GIPA approach has proven particularly effective in the region in ensuring conditions for the sustainability of the initiative.

GIPA means not only recognizing the importance of involving people living with HIV/AIDS in the response to the epidemic, but also creating space within society for such involvement. "It means setting up mechanisms through which PLWHA experiences can be used and a human face and voice given to the epidemic in the minds of those not directly touched by it," says Eva Otero, UNV Programme Officer in the UNDP country office in the Dominican Republic.

Since its launch in 2000, the Caribbean GIPA Initiative, supported by UNV and UNAIDS, has achieved remarkable results. It operates in seven pilot countries with five national networks and has 46 national UNV volunteers and one international UNV volunteer in place. The recruitment of people living with HIV/AIDs as national UNV volunteers is central to the success of the programme. This has increased the public's awareness of the Caribbean GIPA Initiative, ensured the active involvement and meaningful participation of PLWHA and helped to raise project funds and resources. In the Dominican Republic, where HIV prevalence is the second highest in the Caribbean, the National Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (REDOVIH) is the principal civil society partner in the initiative.

"All the national UNV volunteers in the seven countries are people living with HIV and AIDS. As such, they identify greatly with the target population, and as United Nations Volunteers they are able to open many doors in the ministries of health and education," says Cesar Castellanos, founder of REDOVIH and technical advisor to the Caribbean GIPA Initiative. Inclusion in the United Nations system is also a powerful source of legitimacy that can effectively counter stigma and discrimination, encouraging HIV-positive

people to be more open about their status. The national UNV volunteers bring their skills in promoting community based participation to create and/or strengthen national networks of people living with HIV and AIDS, transforming them into sustainable self-help groups. They identify PLWHA, support self-help groups, and facilitate the formation and oversight of new groups. The volunteers also identify potential leaders and partners to launch HIV/AIDS-related activities, mobilize human and material resources to help to establish a more enabling environment for PLWHA, bring HIV/AIDS issues to the highest political levels and coordinate actions with the public and private sectors.

"In short, the national UNV volunteers serve as catalysts of a network-building process and the focal points for PLWHA. We also encourage them to take the lead in reaching out to national networks of PLWHA – inside and outside the community of those affected by HIV and AIDS," says Otero.

UNDP support was instrumental in launching REDOVIH in 1998. Seed resources for the GIPA initiative from UNDP, though small, have had a multiplier effect and stimulated funding from other multilateral organizations, donor agencies and the private sector, says Castellanos.

Aside from REDOVIH, wide-ranging partnerships with other CSOs such as Jóvenes de la Frontera and the Centre for Human Solidarity (CEPROSH), Government institutions such as the Presidential Council for AIDS (COPRESIDA), regional health committees, the private sector, and the academia have characterized the response of the UNDP country office to the challenge posed by HIV/AIDS.

The national poverty reduction strategy provides a platform to link HIV/AIDS responses with administrative and judiciary reform, empowerment of women, and poverty. UNDP has introduced a multi-sector perspective into the national agenda, supporting the strengthening of COPRESIDA and REDOVIH as well as the national response towards protecting human rights of people living with HIV/AIDS. It has funded a national campaign and a series of workshops with academia and law schools.

I n Botswana, the efforts of positive people's networks in breaking the silence and stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS have been key in the uphill battle against the epidemic. Despite bold leadership from President Festus Mogae, Botswana remains among the countries hardest hit. More than 35 per cent of people in the 15 to 49 age group live with HIV, according to the Botswana 2002 Second Generation HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report.

A longstanding partnership between UNDP and the Botswana Network of People Living with AIDS (BONEPWA) has focused on advancing advocacy and networking for and by people living with HIV/AIDS. BONEPWA facilitates and promotes the formation of PLWHA care and support groups and community based organizations, and develops the capacity of existing ones. A national umbrella organization formed by and for PLWHA, the group serves as a forum for concerted advocacy among the public and with governments – a role that has assumed crucial importance with the spread of the epidemic.

UNDP helped to lay the ground for the formation of the network since 1993, says BONEPWA Coordinator David Ngele. "In the beginning, it was almost impossible to bring people living with HIV/AIDS together as a group because of the stigma of being identified publicly." UNDP support through those difficult years, especially in providing learning and educational opportunities in countries that had set up such networks, was instrumental in BONEPWA coming into being as a registered organization in 2000, says Ngele. It now has 30 support groups in urban areas. Women have come out strongly in favour of PLWHA networks – in one, says Ngele, 25 out of 29 members are women. BONEPWA is expanding into rural areas, although it still has a long way to go in increasing its network and capacity to continue effective advocacy with the Government and in providing income-generating opportunities for HIV-positive people.
"UNDP believes it is strategically important to support the establishment of and/or strengthen CSOs because they can act as catalysts in mobilizing community responses, supplement existing

government services, challenge government responses and respond more promptly than the Government," says Bjørn Førde, Resident Representative in Botswana. In addition to BONEPWA, the programme supported two other civil society networks that have been powerful advocates for the involve-ment of CSOs in the fight against HIV/AIDS. They all play critical but very different roles in the war being waged on the epidemic in Botswana, says Førde.

The Botswana Network of Ethics, Law and HIV/AIDS (BONELA) acts as an advocacy and resource organization to address legal and human rights issues. BONELA is a national network of concerned organizations and individuals, committed to promoting and protecting the rights of all persons affected by HIV and AIDS. Its primary focus is to respond to legal and ethical challenges posed by the epidemic.

With 40 members, the Botswana Network of AIDS Service Organizations (BONASO) focuses on coordinating sharing of information and exchange of lessons among members and other stakeholders. Some private sector organizations have become members, reflecting the growing interest in and need for a coordinated, multisectoral approach to service provision.

All three networks have gained wide recognition, including in the Government. They are represented in the National Aids Council, chaired by the President.

The collective efforts of CSOs and international organizations in Botswana through the 1990s have resulted in the epidemic no longer being seen as primarily a health issue. Two critical documents that helped to shape a change in response are Vision 2016: Towards Prosperity For All (1997), which provides the long-term vision of the Government for Botswana, and the 2000 national human development report, Towards an Aids-Free Generation. Both documents underscore the need for unified and cohesive efforts by the Government, CSOs, the private sector and bilateral and multilateral donors to combat the epidemic. As part of its stepped up response, the UNDP country office launched the Support to the National AIDS Control Programme in 1997. Its

three-pronged approach was to strengthen national coordinating structures, develop capacity to implement programmes at the district level, and strengthen civil society networks. UNDP has also in a few cases directly supported community initiatives to demonstrate that they are a useful and necessary element of the national response to the epidemic. In the small town of Palapye, communities experienced a high number of orphans whose parents died as a result of HIV/AIDS. One community in 1999 set up an orphanage called the House of Hope, which now houses and feeds about 50 children and conducts kindergarten classes. UNDP provided a seed grant to pay teachers and buy food supplies.

In cooperation with the South East District Multi-Sectoral Aids Committee, UNDP supported the community-based Nkaikela Youth Group. This is a group of young women involved in commercial sex, trying to establish income-generating activities like gardening and candle making. The goal is to help them to assist the group members to achieve economic sustainability and improve their quality of life.

Despite the achievements made, the Government and people of Botswana are still faced with tremendous challenges in making the national response to HIV/AIDS more effective. "A major challenge is to mobilize individuals and communities to ensure that the significant public and civil society awareness on HIV/AIDS prevention and consequences is translated into the kind of behaviour change that is needed to curb the spread of the epidemic. We believe that CSOs across the board are critical in realizing this," says Lydia Matebesi of the UNDP country office in Botswana. UNDP support to the CSO community will remain a critical part of the 2003-2007 Botswana HIV/AIDS response.

Early Prevention Strategies

Many countries in Asia and the Pacific, Arab States, Eastern Europe, Commonwealth of Independent States, and Latin America still have a window of opportunity to stop the epidemic before it becomes as prevalent as it is in Africa or the Caribbean. In Mongolia, a low-prevalence

country, CSOs took the initiative and called upon UNDP and other United Nations organizations to collaborate with the Government to tackle HIV/AIDS before it became a major threat. A note drafted by Mongolian NGOs stated that there had been only three officially reported cases of HIV/AIDS during the previous decade. "However," they added, "the regional HIV epidemic is currently raging on our northern border and approaching the other borders. Our unique situation has probably changed recently and we have become vulnerable. Now is our last opportunity to make a difference."

In Mongolia, a transitional economy, political instability, environmental degradation due to over-grazing and rapid urbanization have made the country more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. The CSOs also identified a number of specific factors that could potentially cause the epidemic to spread, including rising incidence of sexually transmitted diseases, low condom use, increasing numbers of women becoming sex workers, and the nomadic culture. A 1997 Memorandum of Understanding between the Government and United Nations organizations addressed support to policy reviews, programmes and capacity development. In the same year, a National AIDS Committee was established with all vice-ministers as members and the prime minister as chair.

In 1998, the Mongolian National AIDS Foundation was formed as an independent organization to support local NGOs, as recommended in the memorandum. The foundation began by addressing the needs and rights of marginalized and vulnerable groups such as sex workers and street children. CSOs, along with government and United Nations organizations, are working with adolescents, the military, and the private sector. Civil society efforts in Mongolia have received support from agencies such as the International AIDS Alliance.

These experiences show that the HIV/AIDS crisis has triggered original partnerships and dynamic networks between civil society and development agencies. Their collective resolve to fight the epidemic and their capacity to deal with its complexities are crucial in facing the multidimensional challenge of HIV/AIDS. ■

HIV/AIDS poses a threat to all generations, with growing numbers of children infected or orphaned by it. *Below:* Community members and peer workers enact a play on trafficking and HIV/AIDS at a migrants' resettlement colony in Delhi, India.

WAYS FORWARD

This report forms part of an ongoing inquiry into creative and strategic partnerships between UNDP and civil society organizations to advance sustainable human development. Its findings show that partnerships that maximized advantages on both sides have led to inventive and vibrant civic responses and resulted in demonstrable development impact.

A distinct comparative advantage of UNDP is its ability to act as catalyst and facilitator, bringing together various government and non-government actors. This political support from UNDP has time and again proven invaluable to civil society organizations (CSOs) in their efforts to be an alternative voice that is heard in the mainstream of public affairs. In most of the examples cited, UNDP has fulfilled roles of enabler, facilitator and disseminator committed to in its policy of engagement with CSOs. It has done so by creating the space for alternative views to influence policy at all levels, helping to set standards of good practice and human rights norms, serving as a platform for alternative policy stances, and facilitating linkages among CSOs.

Building Momentum for Responsive Partnerships

Four strategies for particularly effective civil society partnerships emerge from the findings of this report.

Promote national dialogue
In a range of settings, UNDP created space for dialogue among principal actors to further peace and development goals. Genuine consultation, dialogue and broad participation at national and regional levels laid the basis for synergistic and fruitful partnerships – between indigenous peoples and their organizations and the Government in Ecuador; former insurgents, communities and the Government in Mindanao in southern Philippines; community groups and local authorities in Mexico; or indigenous peoples' organizations and the Government in Guatemala.

Develop capacity to generate disaggregated data
Data disaggregated by gender, race and ethnicity and other categories are critical to identify disparities and pockets of deprivation and discrimination and formulate policies to address these challenges. UNDP support for data-based projects – to address racial inequality in Brazil, the gender dimensions of globalization in the Arab States region, and the status of the Roma five central and eastern European States, or report cards for poverty monitoring in Ethiopia and for community-based urban management in Sri Lanka – are an essential first step in empowering civil society organizations to advocate policy change.

Engage with wide range of actors
Partnerships with CSOs at multiple levels are key to ensuring ownership and impact of development initiatives. UNDP partnerships with community groups in small grant programmes in Viet Nam, national and regional networks of HIV/AIDS groups, law enforcement officials, the judiciary and trade unions in South Asia, policy research and poverty monitoring groups in Uganda and Zambia illustrate a sustained and multi-faceted engagement with civil society geared towards lasting impact.

Provide small grants for creative partnerships
Small-grant support to CSOs can strengthen local capacity, have enormous impact at the community level, and scale up a community initiative to influence policy. The GEF Small Grants Programme and LIFE projects have increased the social capital of community based organizations in Viet Nam and the United Republic of Tanzania, and enabled the indigenous Aytas of the Philippines to pursue their ancestral domain claims while developing a cropland ecosystem.

David Dudenhoefer/GEF/SGP

Some of these findings found reinforcement at the fourth meeting (April 2003) of the CSO Advisory Committee to the Administrator. The committee strongly urged UNDP to:

→ Lend its voice and support to alternative policy frameworks, despite powerful opposition;
→ Ensure structured and meaningful involvement of CSOs, especially reflecting the concerns of indigenous peoples, in the MDG reporting process;
→ Support efforts to generate data disaggregated by gender, ethnicity and race in the MDG reports and the Human Development Reports;
→ Link environmental challenges with poverty reduction and environmental management policies with community-based resource management;
→ Develop an operational framework to guide UNDP-CSO relations in conflict and post-conflict environments.

These are essential directions if UNDP is to engage with CSOs in ways that underscore the strategic value of partnerships to sustainable development. But first, a shift in approach is needed to overcome attitudinal and cultural obstacles to creative partnership with civil society. Some challenges identified in internal reviews and evaluations are:

→ A fear of risk taking. This results in part from lack of incentive, clear direction, and support to take bold stances on development issues. The pressure to show short-term results and outcomes often obscures the value of long-term partnerships to build constituencies for human development;
→ Rigid procedures. They lack the flexibility and simplicity needed for responsive partnership;
→ A tendency to adopt an instrumental approach to CSOs. This leads to viewing them primarily as sub-contractors and implementing agents for programmes, rather than as partners in changing policy, influencing public opinion and mobilizing constituencies;
→ Inadequate documentation. Systematic demonstration and analysis of concrete experiences and strategies is essential to facilitate learning and sharing what works in partnerships.

The establishment of the CSO Advisory Committee is testament to the organization's commitment to change at both structural and policy levels. Now in its fourth year, the committee provides the Administrator and senior UNDP management with unedited advice and guidance on policy directions. It is also a forum for informal exchange and genuine debate between senior management and CSOs, creating space for new initiatives and ideas to be launched or changed.

The committee has inspired regional CSO advisory committees on issues related to the Millennium Development Goals and conflict prevention and recovery, now in nascent stages in Africa and Asia. CSO advisory committees on conflict and peace-building networks in El Salvador and Egypt, and on poverty, structural adjustment, and human development in Zimbabwe, are examples of such consultative mechanisms at the national level. In the Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) region, an expert group of 20 professionals (CSOs and UNDP country office staff) is available to UNDP country offices and their partners in civil society and government to provide policy advice, training, research support and exchange of best practices and lessons in poverty reduction and democratic governance initiatives. The group has been set up by the sub-regional resource facility for Europe and the CIS, with support from the CSO Division. UNDP is committed to fostering these valuable policy advisory forums.

CSO advisors have been posted in sub-regional resource facilities in Africa, Asia and eastern Europe to provide policy support to country office civil society initiatives. Working with them and with civil society advisors in the regional bureaux, the CSO Division has set up a working group of CSO advisors to facilitate regular dialogue to help shape agendas and priorities for stronger and more effective UNDP-CSO partnerships.

In conclusion, the findings of this report underscore the fact that UNDP, by virtue of its mandate and its policy and advocacy work with the human development paradigm, UNDP is the preferred multilateral partner of a wide range of

CSOs. It is extremely important for CSOs to see a strong UNDP that provides the space for crucial alternative perspectives on issues of globalization, trade and poverty and takes a stand on a range of substantive and sensitive issues. It is also critical to work with more than just a known and familiar range of civil society actors and reach out to peoples' movements and grass-roots organizations, tapping into the energy, creativity, and rich diversity of civil society.

These messages, as relevant today as they have ever been, are predominantly those emerging from key civil society gatherings such as the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre. As UNDP seeks to engage civil society actors in national and global campaigns to realize the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, it can draw on the trust, confidence and goodwill of civil society by heeding these voices and fulfilling their expectations.

The country experiences in this report point to an emerging generation of responsive partnership that enables strong, civic responses to a range of complex development challenges. "The global challenges we face today are such that we can no longer afford a 'business as usual' approach to development," says UNDP Administrator Mark Malloch Brown. "Alone we can create sterling but isolated examples of what could be. Replicated, brought to scale and joined across boundaries, we create a gathering momentum, a coalescing wave of partnerships that will break the mould of what we thought possible for development." ■

ANNEX 1

MEMBERS OF THE CSO ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE ADMINISTRATOR

The CSO Advisory Committee to the Administrator, established in May 2000, is comprised of leading development practitioners who participate based on the expertise they can bring to bear on a set of mutually agreed issues. The committee has helped to forge more dynamic relationships between UNDP and civil society across a range of issues. Its priorities for engagement include globalization and poverty reduction, conflict prevention and peace-building, human rights and human development and private sector engagement.

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ANNEX 2

KEY POLICIES RELATING TO CSOs

UNDP and Civil Society Organizations: A Policy of Engagement (2001)
The updated policy on UNDP engagement with civil society organizations sets out a new set of principles and highlights the policy and programmatic implications.

UNDP and Indigenous Peoples: A Policy of Engagement (2001)
The policy provides UNDP staff with a framework to guide their work in building sustainable partnerships with indigenous peoples and their organizations. It sets out the critical issues for UNDP support; the priority areas of engagement; the principal objectives for an effective partner ship; and the main principles guiding the relationship with indigenous peoples.

UNDP Procedures for Project Execution by an NGO (1998)
The procedures provide the set of rules and regulations required of a non-governmental organization in charge of the overall management of an UNDP-supported project from start to finish. The procedures are being simplified to render them more accessible and useful to NGOs and UNDP country offices.

Public Information and Documentation Disclosure Policy (1997)
The policy is intended to ensure that information concerning UNDP operational activities will be made available to the public in the absence of a compelling reason for confidentiality. Results from a recent evaluation indicate the content of the policy is still pertinent and satisfactory, nevertheless a re-launching of the policy for greater dissemination and awareness is recommended. In the event that a request for a document is denied in whole or part, the requester may ask for reconsideration by the Oversight Panel for the policy, whose secretariat is in the Bureau for Resources and Strategic Partnerships.

For additional policies related to CSO partnerships including gender equality, trade and multilateral trade negotiations, HIV/AIDS, poverty reduction strategy papers, human rights, governance, and relations with business sector, please refer to http://www.undp.org/policy/policynotes.htm.

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