

cds communications development service

611 Boston Avenue
Takoma Park, Md. 20012
(301) 585-2388

40 Prospect Avenue
Ardsley, N.Y. 10502
(914) 693-8257

① Perry 10/7/82
② → file

J

UNDP WATER DECADE/NGO INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

SUPPORT PROJECT IN SOUTH ASIA

Mission Report
Chris Srinivasan ✓
March-April, 1982

cds communications development service

611 Boston Avenue
Takoma Park, Md. 20012 USA
(301) 585-2388

40 Prospect Avenue
Ardsley, N.Y. 10502 USA
(914) 693-8257

INTRODUCTION

SOME NEW PREMISES

This project, which provides "Information and Communication Support" for Water/Sanitation Decade activities, has grown from a realization that, to show success in the drive towards Decade goals, national NGOs must be involved more emphatically in the planning and carrying out of programmes. It has become clear that a premium must be placed on community-based decision-making and action if tangible results in water-related programmes are to be achieved; and that indigenous voluntary agencies are a vital force in this.

Using that as a backdrop, some other premises can be stated to introduce this project.

1. Regardless of whether or how it is acknowledged, national NGOs (NNGOs) and Government agencies often complement one another's work across the economic and social action spectrum. There is great potential for increasing overall development effectiveness if this complementarity is enhanced and reinforced.
2. The UN System, and UNDP particularly, has an appropriate and as yet unfilled role in numerous countries to act as facilitator of communications among NNGOs, Government, and other assistance bodies. UNICEF is an essential partner both in this process and through the programmes it assists in many such countries. Other UN System agencies, such as the WHO, can be equally involved.
3. Information and communications support form a necessary component of any UN System effort to bring about better planning and project coordination involving Government and voluntary agencies. Promoting useful information resources will augment the technical capacity of all indigenous action bodies - especially those working in remote areas. Helping to break new ground in Development Communications will provide the opportunities - and the methods and materials - to strengthen attempts in community planning and action, local adaptation of technical innovations, planner and practitioner training, and other critical areas.
4. At the outset, a workable strategy will build on existing opportunities for strengthening NNGO capacities vis a vis national goals, and for increasing Government-NNGO coordination. Though there is often caution displayed by NNGOs and Government when the idea of co-operation is mentioned, there are still many untapped opportunities that both would benefit from. Information and Communications Support projects are a logical means with which to identify opportunities, provide relevant support to all participants, and open the door for co-operation without forcing premature commitments.

CONSULTATIONS

An important feature of this project is the organisation of NNGO "consultations," in which issues embracing water, sanitation, related economic and social sectors, and community participation can be explored. Such consultations are to be held in five South Asian countries: Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. In each case there will be some Government participation, and possibly the presence of outside assistance agencies such as bi-laterals. However, the emphasis in each case will be on and for indigenous voluntary agency activities - outside agencies in particular may be invited in order that they observe and learn from the principal participants. The precise attendance formula for each consultation series will be determined through this project and the UNDP office (with UNICEF assistance) in each country. Regardless of who physically hosts the consultations, it will be UN System representatives or appointees that facilitate the sessions.

INDIA AND SRI LANKA

As two of the South Asian countries included in this project, India and Sri Lanka provide unique and contrasting contexts in which to work. In India, merely identifying a sample group of NNGOs active in community mobilisation and water-related activities is a formidable job. In-depth information on the work of the thousands of private agencies working in the country is scant; UN System contact with NNGOs is very new. Information networking and coordination will be an important aspect of the trial effort there. Initial consultations may have to concentrate on starting a communication process among a handful of agencies and Government representatives - and even so, the vastness of the country requires that at least two such consultations be held (e.g. one in the North and one in the South).

Sri Lanka is by comparison a compact area of work, which has had a good deal of spadework done in NNGO-Government-UN communication. It is likely that more immediate concrete action might be determined through the consultations here. Whereas the emphasis in India might initially be on the "Information" support side, the focus in Sri Lanka could easily be on the "Communications" support side. In both countries, though, it appears as if a UN-initiated or supported service to improve information flow and development communications would address some long-standing needs of both those in Government and in the voluntary community.

PROJECT PROFILE: INDIA

THE PROJECT AND UNDP COUNTRY OFFICE

In India (as in Sri Lanka), there is a UNDP focal person for Water and Sanitation-related activities, among others. In UNDP/Delhi the individual is Assistant Resident Representative Hans Heep, who organised this consultant's initial visit. And in both India and Sri Lanka, the focal person is already overloaded with responsibility. Fortunately, the project has the provision for a national consultant for Information/Communication Support in each of four countries (Pakistan consultations will be organised through UNICEF). Terms of reference are included in Appendix 1.

It is expected that the national consultant will in effect be the sub-project manager, receiving guidance and support from the UNDP office, and especially from the focal person - the ARR in India's case - with appropriate back-up from the Resident Representative. The consultant candidate in New Delhi, Ms. Anita Dighe, has worked with Government, private agencies, and as a consultant to the UN System. It is expected that after her contract has been finalised she may assist in the selection of another consultant to work in the Southern part of the country - though she would still be the main contact person for the project in India.

In addition to national consultants, a regional consultant, Mr. Jacob Pfohl, will assist in coordination and in the development of Information/Communication Support strategies for the consultations and beyond. Mr. Pfohl will be based in Bombay, which gives him direct access to Sri Lanka as well as to Delhi and countries in the North. In addition, he can assist in activities involving NGOs in the Southern half of India. Mr. Pfohl has worked with UNICEF, as a consultant to UNDP and International NGOs in Asia, and as manager of a UN-funded communications and training project in Bangladesh that has since become a registered national NGO.

It is expected that both national and regional consultant will confer with the UNDP ARR in India (and others in the office) to determine possible links with other UNDP-assisted activities. For example, the UNDP "Technical Advisory Group" project may have a future role as a link between Government, certain NGOs, and external funding sources. Or the UNDP Global project for low-cost water supply and sanitation could provide indigenous groups access to designs and test results of various systems as part of the consultations.

GOVERNMENT

The Government of India has an inter-ministerial "APEX" Committee set up to coordinate national-level activities related to the Decade. Targets for the Decade are ambitious: 100% urban coverage, with 140 litres per capita per day; and 100% rural coverage, with piped water going to 30% of the population (in towns and "spot sources" (tubewells, sanitary dug wells) servicing the rest.

Mr. Venugopalam of the Ministry of Works and Housing (which chairs the Apex Committee) emphasized the need to involve NNGOs in community education and sanitation efforts. At this time, State resources have been allocated for water supply primarily, with little groundwork planned in the area of sanitation. There are about 3200 towns in India, of which hardly 1000 have adequate sewerage facilities. Alarmed by the magnitude of the sanitation problem, the Government has called for adoption of low-cost designs of water-seal latrines in the rural areas, the mobilisation of external resources for sanitation, intensification of community participation efforts, and involvement of voluntary agencies in the sanitation and community organisation strategy. It has also suggested that an existing GOI-UNDP project of feasibility for Low Cost Sanitation should be followed up by State action wherever studies have been completed.

Central Government has gone further, through the Ministry of Works and Housing, to call for community involvement "at all stages - from planning to operation and maintenance - as far as possible," for both water supply and sanitation. It has also highlighted the need for community health education, affirming that without it no impact will result, and has affirmed the use of communications aids in education schemes.

These points reflect a potentially large field for co-operation in community participation/education and sanitation - and at least a concern that Government at all levels is unable to make the kind of progress in those areas as it expects to make in water supply. The preparation for consultations, then, might involve two initiatives: A) to set up means by which technical information, particularly on low-cost designs and local adaptations, can be collected and made available both during and after consultations; and B) to identify certain NNGOs, large and small, that have experience in community participation, education, and if possible community-based learning aids. This of course assumes that though Government has accented education and sanitation the field is also open for NNGO action in water supply-related endeavours.

Actually, experience with Third World voluntary agencies will reveal that few of the successful ones begin with a single sector of entry - and expand from there. That is rather characteristic of many International NGOs, UN specialised agencies and ministerial bodies. Charged with responsibility in limited sectors, and often over large territory, these groups find themselves often expanding their activities to new sectors in order to make programmes more relevant to the least-advantaged. Conversely, many NGOs begin with a philosophy and an approach flexible enough to embrace a multitude of economic and social development sectors. Certainly some of the better-known agencies-cum-movements do - such as Gandhigram (India), Sarvodaya (Sri Lanka), and Swarnirvar (Bangladesh). Though there has recently been a spate of new agencies concerning themselves with adaptable indigenous technology, many co-operating NGOs will offer a methodology or community approach to development, into which technical and other sectoral inputs can be fit. Thus when Government emphasizes sanitation, it can be assumed that NGO efforts will tend to automatically link that with water and health-related activities.

Another factor to be considered is that while Central Government provides an overview, there is State and Local planning and action that is in many ways more pertinent to voluntary agency roles. There is often an information rift between these levels, one to which UN System agencies relating primarily to Central Government often fall victim: Whereas news of large schemes carried out in the States may reach Delhi, reports of various intermediate and small endeavours may not. This not only complicates an initial NGO search, but indicates that a long-term objective of this project could be to assist in the gathering of up-to-date information on NGOs not accessible to New Delhi.

Of the NGOs with wide rural reach, Mr. Venugopalam cited Gandhigram for its community-based work in Madurai, and Telonia for its work in Rajasthan state and in Jaipur. It is possible that State-level people can identify lesser-known groups active locally.

UNICEF AND OTHER UN SYSTEM AGENCIES

Mr. Subramanyam of the WHO discussed his agency's interest in NGO co-operation, particularly since it deals frequently with State Government, and often with professional societies. It seems unlikely at this time, however, given levels of staffing and responsibility, that WHO/India can expend much energy in the early stages of this project. Mr. Subramanyam did strongly indicate, though, that WHO could provide funds and contacts when actual project possibilities involving NGOs did emerge. In India's case, that implies a more active role for WHO after the first consultations.

The strongest potential co-operator in the System at this time is UNICEF. Key contacts there are Bill Cousins in Community Development and Ken Gray in Water. They met with this consultant and UNDP ARR Heep in a late but highly substantive meeting around the national NGO/India situation, possible strategies for providing such agencies with relevant information and for holding consultations that would be considered useful, and the diverging yet possibly complementary roles of UNICEF and UNDP in the country. The latter topic is in itself fascinating in that UNDP-UNICEF complementarity has suffered from the same sort of non-exploration (from both sides) as Government-NNGO co-operation, generally. Yet when the surface is sufficiently scratched, and organisational egos shelved in their rightful places, the match of flexibility and credibility with Government between the organisations is impressive. UNICEF programme flexibility and potential for national outreach, for example, often corresponds in strength to UNDP's cross-ministerial relationships and coordination ability. In India, the fact that UNICEF has experienced people in both Community Development and Water is a strong asset to the NGO effort. Unfortunately, time did not allow for meetings with Project Support Communications people, who in each country could contribute to this project in various ways - but it is expected the regional consultant will make those contacts shortly.

In both India and Sri Lanka, water-related activities form a strong component of UNICEF's "Area Development Projects." In India, for example, often 40-50% of proposals from such projects relate to water supply, management, and/or sanitation. UNICEF has, in recent years, embarked on limited strategies to train handpump "caretakers" in maintenance and occasionally in health education. Some of this training has occurred in communities and some in State-level extension departments. This is a step forward from the "supply-first" development approaches of UN System/World Bank/Bi-lateral agencies in the 60's and 70's - where the provision of technology was the driving force behind water-related programming. And the next logical step for agencies like UNICEF, which have made advances in regions like South Asia, is to forge stronger links with NNGOs locally where possible, and so assist State and Local Government to intensify efforts in not only water supply but in health education and a new dimension of community development as well.

INFORMATION/COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

A workable India strategy should include three related elements initially:

1. The identification of prominent and lesser-known NNGOs with experience

in community-based development, health/water/sanitation facilitation (including adaptive technology), or both. These would constitute an initial group of ten to twelve agencies to attend NGO "consultations" that would be first held in Delhi and then with a different group of NGOs in the South - probably in/near Madras or Bombay.

2. The encouragement of efforts to collect in-depth profiles of what NNGOs are doing around the country. This is a lengthy but badly-needed realm of activity if a true, up-to-date picture of community-oriented action is to be available...especially since what little funding there is for NNGOs has generally been concentrated in a few better-known agencies, which has shown promising results but has necessarily limited their reach.
3. The support for information collection, synthesis, and dissemination projects - especially those that give NNGOs and local Government greater access to relevant technical designs and exemplary community approaches. At present there is, for example, no dearth of material on simple water-related technologies; but there is no attempt to synthesize it and make it digestible. UNDP representatives in India strongly urged that this sort of information service be encouraged.

In terms of this project, both elements "2." and "3." above fall on the "Information" rather than on the "Communications" Support side. But in a country as large as India, this seems to be a logical bias to begin with. This is in effect a long-range, "extensive" strategy.

The organisation of the consultations mentioned in "1." is a chance for initial work on a more "intensive" basis. The national consultant will play a central role in contacting and compiling a list of participating agencies for New Delhi-based consultations. Preparations for these discussions will draw upon information resources involved in "2." or "3." above; e.g. a limited synthesis of low-cost technical innovations might be provided to participants as part of a consultation agenda item. National and International agencies specialising in this area could be present as resources during consideration of that topic. Similarly, several participating NNGOs could jointly chair sessions on "Water and Community Education Approaches." It should be emphasized that participating agencies would not be selected as the "best" in or "most representative" of their field. Those kinds of distinctions will be deliberately downplayed in favor of an approach that views this as the first of possibly many such NGO groups to seek information from and provide data to. What should emerge from these consultations is the beginning of an information network, some new NGO access to technical/other information and possible funding sources, and a better concept of how the UN System can proceed to strengthen NNGO contributions to national goals through Information/Communications and direct Programme strategies.

Among the NGOs contacted in Delhi, "CENDIT," the Centre for Development of Instructional Technology, has a potential role in the gathering of information on

NGO activities around the country. The agency, which is small but has developed its Information and Media-based capacity, is already using correspondence and field visits to compile profiles on NGOs large and small. It may be that this project could support such efforts as they pertain to water and sanitation. "Action for Food Production" or AFPRO is a large agency that has provided technical assistance both to Government and voluntary agencies in water provision and management. It has apparently linked international assistance bodies with rural social action groups in land/water use projects. "AVARD," or the Association of Voluntary Agencies for Rural Development, often acts in a consortium capacity in Delhi and could assist in the arrangement of consultations there.

It is essential in this first consultation round, though, that no one NGO be singled out as the "coordinating" group. It is precisely that kind of distinction, along with impressions that the first participating groups are necessarily the "best," that will detract from any attempt to promote useful information exchange and open the door for Government and International support for a wide range of agencies.

It is expected that New Delhi-based consultations could be held toward the end of 1982 or shortly thereafter. Participants could benefit from connections with funding sources and Government agencies made during and just after the meetings through UNDP/UNICEF. Government could benefit from exposure to a range of community approaches currently in practice. Both could gain insight into various technical designs available for adaptation, if this project could supply such a synthesis. And the UN System could emerge with a clearer concept of an appropriate role in Information coordination and in NGO Programme collaboration.

If a second consultant can be brought on board soon enough, Southern consultations could be held shortly after the Delhi round. The regional consultant would play an important part in organising both rounds with the national advisors.

SPECIAL NOTE ON FOLLOW-UP

One special possibility that may materialize involves the UNDP-assisted "DWSSD Decade Advisory Services" project (IND/81/023/A/01/42), which will also be carried out by WHO and IBRD assistance. Mr. Hans Heep is the UNDP Programme contact for that project, which is not operational now but may dovetail with post-consultation work. The general terms of the project will be to improve water/sanitation-related programming through the following means:

- a) Advice to Government on programme designs to generally upgrade their quality.
- b) Assistance in preparation of specific implementation plans
- c) Identification of indigenous expertise for implementation
- d) Communication with prospective donors for programmes and projects

- e) Establishment of a Decade information system to match resources with programmes.

Though Mr. Heep stressed that this project is in a very early stage, a brief discussion was held that affirmed the need to see where the two projects could link up - particularly in view of the Assistant Res. Rep.'s role as programme officer for both.

PROJECT PROFILE: SRI LANKA

THE PROJECT AND UNDP COUNTRY OFFICE

The UNDP Country Office in Sri Lanka has been quite active in bringing voluntary groups closer into the national programming and funding mainstream. Currently Resident Representative Y.Y.Kim expects the go-ahead for a UNDP-assisted NGO Secretariat to help coordinate national agency action and put groups in better touch with sources of funding and other assistance.

This is a critical year for Sri Lanka, as elections are expected in 1983. The UNDP office here works very closely with other UN System agencies, providing, in Government's view, a cohesion that is not so apparent in other countries. But here again UNDP staff are overstretched. The Programme person most concerned with Water and NGO-related issues is Lakshman Fernando, who acted as this consultant's contact during the recent mission, and is expected to continue as chief contact for this project - assisted, of course, by the Res. Rep., Deputy Res. Rep. Bradshaw, and UNIC head Neil Kulatunge.

Perhaps it is best to begin with a look at the status of the NGO Project already in development.

NGO COORDINATION PROJECT

"Work-Frame for the Promotion of NGO Participation in Development" envisages the creation of an NGO Secretariat affiliated with Government and headed by an individual acceptable to NGOs and Government alike. The effort reflects an attempt by UNDP to assert a catalytic role very new in its agency-wide experience, but one that is fully within its mandate to promote the best possible technical and general development co-operation at national level. But even given that, there are obviously hurdles to be bounded. There are sensitivities in the NGO community and on the Government side that will have to be transcended; this despite the fact that Sri Lanka already has an unusual history of Government-NGO co-operation in certain areas. There are also other convening bodies such as the Freedom from Hunger Campaign, the National NGO Coordinating Committee (part of the the Agricultural Dept.), and the Central Council of Social Services...each of which may harbor strong opinions about its role as an umbrella group. The UNDP view is that the NGO Project, and upcoming Secretariat, will not attempt to duplicate efforts of those groups - and it has a corresponding view that none of those bodies covers the full range of NNGOs and the sectors they work in.

Without trying to reconcile all the perspectives, it is clear that the UNDP Project can play a role that is unique, as a conduit for communication among NNGOs, Government across Ministries, the UN System and other external funding sources. It is equally clear that so much discussion has been held under so many auspices about NNGO coordination that any more talk will be a liability rather than an asset unless accompanied by action.

This then, implies a special role for this Information and Communications Support Project in Sri Lanka. If positioned within the overall NGO Project's framework, the Info/Comm Project can stimulate the first concrete action, under the aegis of the Secretariat. And the NGO Project can provide an administrative base from which to organise consultations and follow-up. Thus each Project would support the other.

GOVERNMENT

Discussions with Mr. Harold Fernando of Local Government revealed new mechanisms being tested to involve NGOs locally. In the past, there have been numerous types of municipal and village councils used to organise local development action. In 1981 the Government began, on a limited basis, a system of multi-village councils ("village awakening" councils) that would have representation at District level. These councils ideally are the voices of local initiatives at upper levels, and provide the basis on which such initiatives can be planned, arranged and realised. National NGOs participate in this decision-making process, and can be designated as "lead NGOs" in certain communities for programmes such as water supply/sanitation. Government resources, for instance, can be channeled through such NGOs for local implementation of well-digging programmes - as can guidelines for maintenance and technical standards. A lead NGO is not, it was stressed, a sole executing agency - but is an organiser of groups to implement what has been determined in the village and district councils. Thus "Community Centre" or "Sarvodaya" could be the focal group for implementation of water-related plans in communities it assists.

These experiments began recently, but reflect Government recognition of the capabilities of the voluntary community. Whether Government will expand this approach, or further strengthen it, remains to be seen. But there is certainly scope for UN System agencies to build on such endeavours.

One UN System role stressed by Mr. Fernando involved its promotion of field worker training and what could be termed "action research." The training of community workers in both Government and non-governmental agencies could range from motivation/social action techniques to technical training (e.g. to be in turn

passed on to village handpump caretakers). In addition, it was suggested that assistance be provided to obtain results of water-related programmes. Such research, involving community members, would gauge popular reaction to new inputs and the extent to which practices have changed. Such social profiles are an important new dimension to epidemiological and other health-related surveys often employed to evaluate programmes.

These ideas, and particularly those about training, provide clues to post-consultation functions that a UNDP-assisted Info/Comm Support Project might assume.

UNICEF AND OTHER UN SYSTEM AGENCIES

Talks were held with several persons at UNICEF, including the Programme Co-ordinator Mrs. Sarojani Abraham, Water Section chief Jack Sell, and Programme Officers. There was a discussion with UNICEF Rep. Dr. Badran at an inter-agency meeting organised by the UNDP Res. Rep., at which the interest of both UNICEF and WHO in NNGO activities was confirmed.

Though there is interest in this project on the part of many international agencies, such as the IBRD and FAO, the ones most immediately interested are UNICEF, UNV/DDS and WHO. UNICEF/Sri Lanka has been working through groups like Sarvodaya on an ad hoc basis recently, and has also begun to encourage more participatory approaches among local government field officers it trains and works with. Both such efforts, combined with the promotion of more appropriate kinds of water/sanitation technology, signal a trend in UNICEF programming that could be formalised in the near future. In fact, UNICEF staff mentioned the probability of giving micro-level action and NNGO co-operation new prominence in the 1984-88 Country Programme. The preparations for that could dovetail with the initial activities of this project.

As in India, UNICEF Area Development Projects incorporate many water-related sub-projects. In the Mahaveli area, community-based irrigation is an entree to other sectors. The Kaloothra Integrated Project involves NGOs, community meetings and local organisation around water, sanitation, and health needs. There are also urban slum and shanty initiatives that include water and waste disposal.

UNICEF has of course been promoting village caretaker training, and has co-operated with NNGOs such as Sarvodaya largely on a case-by-case basis. Most of its joint NGO efforts have been organised through the IYC Children's Secretariat. In the future, the Sri Lanka office would like to further build NNGO capacity, encourage wider experimentation of new, participative approaches, and strengthen its own role as facilitator and/or information disseminator - including acting as

a contact-maker with bi-laterals interested in voluntary agencies, such as DANIDA and CIDA. It is clear in the agency's overall analysis that Government will never be able to finance or train a field worker in each village - and just as clear that non-governmental agencies possess strong worker capabilities. They have also been the creators, in some cases, of innovations such as low-cost latrines. Making better use of the NGO infrastructure thus figures logically into UNICEF's response to Government needs.

The UNV Domestic Development Service Project is another potentially strong actor. Its volunteers have generally had community development experience, and are attached both to government and non-governmental organisations throughout the country, in order to strengthen those agencies' capacities. As part of a regional programme, the UNV/DDS also affords access to village projects in other South Asia contexts, and is a channel for exchange among South Asian volunteers. For example, one of its Bangladeshi volunteers is working with the National Youth Service, trying to improve the real outreach of its vocational training scheme. In terms of NNGO support, volunteers are placed not only to extend the organisation's services, but to provide it with training in new skills and even new avenues for funding. One possibility discussed with Project Manager Kuriakose and Programme Advisor John Jackson was the recruitment of a South Asian volunteer to, among other responsibilities, assist NNGOs in Communications Support and Training connection with this project. Other, more immediate possibilities included the tapping of the DDS Sri Lanka network to prepare for and organise NNGO consultations.

WHO representative Notaney mentioned Gov't-WHO-NNGO co-operation as an explicit feature of the agency's policy. He appeared more concerned with the element of suspicion between the two sides than confident in the UNDP NGO Coordination Project's ability to develop a harmonious working situation among them. He stressed instead the need for tangible project work as the way to dispell existing doubts, saying that the Secretariat would have to spark activity there and in the funding area to maintain credibility. Regardless of how urgent such results are to the NGO Project's perceived relevance, the Info/Communications Support effort can assist in their progress in the important early stages.

WHO has been on its own exploring ways to better utilize NNGOs. It has forged one agreement with Government to work through a private agency and include an anti-malarial campaign as part of that agency's overall community problem-solving approach. It has also recently asked the Marga Institute to conduct research on the health-related activities of such agencies. As in India, it appears as if WHO will be a ready co-operator once concrete opportunities emerge from consultations.

NNGOs AND OTHERS

UNDP has, in preparation for its NGO Project, convened informal NGO meetings to air their views and seek advice. The minutes of these discussions, combined with direct interviews with Government/UN/NNGO representatives, suggest that the immediate road ahead will have to be a cautious one - and yet a productive one at the same time. Some NNGO representatives, like Dr. Ariyaratne of Sarvodaya, are particularly sensitive to actions that might compromise existing NNGO autonomy. Government officials are equally concerned about compromising the overall integrity of national plans by moving too quickly into multiple agreements with private groups. Interestingly, Sarvodaya is mentioned most frequently in Government, among UN staff, and others when NNGO co-operation in Sri Lanka is discussed. To its credit, it has become involved in the outreach efforts of a diverse number of groups. But there is the question of how much additional potential could be realised if donors and other assistance bodies made a more concerted try at identifying less prominent agencies as well.

The Sri Lanka Women's Conference is an independent consortium with about 35 associate agencies that could provide access to "new" NNGOs as well as the more-"established" ones. The SLWC brings members together regularly through an Executive Committee, and has also succeeded in setting up a Women's Bureau in Government to which it can press certain issues. On its own, the organisation has supplemented its umbrella functions with development action in urban slums: Income-generating projects for young women are complemented by programmes in environmental sanitation, nutrition, food preparation, and general family life education. Ms. M. Candiah, the current (and outgoing) President, urged that contacts be made with the Muslim Women's Conference, which also conducts economic-social development activities with women, and the Mahila Samity (Women's Society), which is also active around the country and has a center to train animators from villages in multiple sectors. Given the front-line role of women in all aspects of water, sanitation and community development, such contacts should be actively sought out in the coming months. The relatively new Community Development Services also attempts to link issues pertaining to water, population and health with economic initiatives in communities, and its Director, Dennis Hapugalle, offered its co-operation as needed.

It is expected that other NGO contacts can be made through the UNV/DDS network. One other possibly fruitful effort might involve the Marga Institute collecting in-depth information on the water-related activities of various agencies. UNDP has, over the past several years, made use of Marga for information collection and

for help in preparing NGO meetings. As mentioned earlier, WHO has on its own asked Marga to survey NNGO health-related activities in the country. It could be useful to attach a rider to that request for water/sanitation-related research also. This information-gathering exercise parallels the "extensive" India strategy of NNGO profiles that CENDIT may be asked to collect.

Finally, a meeting was held with the Worldview International Media Centres director, Mr. Bjorn Bye, with whom this consultant had been acquainted in Bangladesh. Worldview, Norwegian-funded but registered as an NGO in Sri Lanka, has specialised in video production for information, development education, and more recently project support in South Asia. The organisation has already worked with UN System agencies such as UNICEF, and could assist in documentation possibly during consultations and in certain aspects of follow-up. And if it proved desirable to institute a more permanent Information/Communications Support function in the NGO Secretariat later, Worldview - along with UNICEF PSC - could be a key co-operator.

INFORMATION/COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

UNDP/Sri Lanka is optimistic about the establishment of an NGO Secretariat before August 1982. The Country Office has a candidate for director on line - someone that staff feel is dynamic and will have widespread approval. It is normal that this Coordination effort is currently subject to a good deal of skepticism, within the System as well as without. Any such effort, in possibly any country, would be - especially if UNDP is the initiator, given its poor global record on mere attention to NNGOs. Therefore, what is now required is an appropriate and built-in process for action in the NGO Project's early months. In terms of the Information/Communications Support Project, it is highly desirable that NNGO Consultations be held before the end of calendar 1982. Both needs match well in terms of an Info/Comm strategy.

In India, two of the opening strategy's three points dealt with Information Support - in collection, synthesis and dissemination. The Sri Lanka plan of action will be balanced differently, with the emphasis on Communications Support in the preparations for, and the work at, the consultations. Appendix 2 contains a memorandum from this consultant to Resident Representative Kim, entitled "Preliminary Recommendations for NGO Info/Comm. Project". It proposes that the UN organise consultations before the end of the year, and be prepared to facili-

tate them also. It suggests a representative "synthesis" of what is happening in the country on the NNGO side in community-based development, focussing on or including (as one component) water/sanitation; It also includes in that synthesis areas of parallel or complementary action between NNGOs and Government agencies that would reinforce one another if linked; approaches of one side or the other that are exemplary and could be further enhanced by joint Gov't-NNGO work; and some examples of actual Government-NNGO co-operation, with or without UN System assistance.

Three to four day consultations can be organised to use such examples as the practical groundwork for agenda items such as "Community organisation and water/sanitation," "Linking water/sanitation with other social and economic activities," "Adapting Technology Locally," etc. The final one-quarter to one-third of this consultation period must be devoted to specific conclusions and concrete follow-up action. That would be the point at which UN-Gov't-NNGO (and other) relationships should be discussed as a distinct agenda block of issues. Prior to that, the examples provided as the underpinnings for community-related agenda subjects will reveal places where mutually supporting relationships, or the promise of such relationships, exist. But it is better not to delve into such relationships as a main subject until participants have grown accustomed to looking at points of commonality rather than divergence. In fact, one way to give participants practice in using such a perspective is to feature, where applicable, joint Gov't-NNGO resource teams for topics backed by Gov't-NNGO project examples.

The examples themselves should be reality-based first - with broader implications left to participants. This is where the preparations play the major role: Several projects need to be identified; materials for field worker training, community planning/mobilisation must be collected - or methods for same must be somehow recorded. Short of any ambitious audio-visual representation of each case, communications support for preparations could include photos, printing up of effective training or community action exercises, etc. Designs of relevant technologies could be produced. These methods and materials would have to be tied together by an outline of how the agenda topic(s) they pertain to will be considered. Experience has shown that the dynamism of projects - even if enhanced by good materials - is often lost when they are presented straight in "show/tell" fashion. Other means of blending examples and subjects will have to be determined. But such preparations have the decided advantage of involving many participants in consultation issues before the consultations themselves; and in fact getting them to think creatively in advance about how to make this endeavour a success.

The overall Information/Communications Support strategy will thus contain the following elements:

1. Identification and hiring of a national consultant; followed by preparations for consultations, including outline of tentative agenda, identification of a few project / programme examples, and collection/production of communications supports.
2. Support for/initiation of efforts to portray a comprehensive nation-wide view of NNGO action in community-based, water/sanitation-related development.

Ideally, both these elements, and the Information/Communications project itself, will exist within the framework of the UNDP-assisted NGO Project. If in fact there are delays in that project, this strategy can be mounted on its own until the time when it can be appropriately "housed."

It is strongly recommended that at least one project example be prepared with the active assistance of UNICEF, and possibly one more if (UNICEF New York) funds and local manpower can be mobilised. This idea has been discussed with UNICEF Sri Lanka staff, specifically with Ms. Abraham and Mr. Sell. Their reactions were positive, particularly if the preparations would aid the project as well as the consultations. But the shortage of local funds and staff was emphasized as an obstacle to UNICEF involvement, even though Jack Sell had at least one project possibility (with UNICEF-NNGO-Gov't input) in mind. Therefore, it seems that UNICEF New York could be brought into the picture not only generally but in specific relation to support for consultation preparations in Sri Lanka and elsewhere.

Another project example could be prepared with the help of the UNV Domestic Development Service. With volunteers placed in some forty government and non-governmental organisations, working in community-oriented programmes, the UNV/DDS is an ideal co-operator. As mentioned earlier, it is even possible that later a South Asian volunteer could be recruited, primarily to provide communications support to UNV/DDS-assisted organisations - and, as a related function to assist in the follow-up to consultations where it overlaps with UNV/DDS activities. But even before that, the DDS network can be tapped to locate at least one exemplary project. Both Mr. Kuriakose and Mr. Jackson expressed high interest in working with the project in this. Again, resources in funding, and to an extent on manpower, would have to be provided. An open question is whether UNV/Geneva could be brought into this picture for such support.

There are other possibilities in Sri Lanka for the preparations, but first a suitable consultant must be identified. His/her terms of reference are included.

in Appendix 1. A version of those TOR has been drafted in Colombo and left with UNIC chief Kulatunge, who will be responsible for the initial search in consultation with Mr. Lakshman Fernando.

It is hoped that a consultant can be identified by July, at which time the NGO Secretariat may be operational. It would be most desirable if the consultant could be put on a six month (or longer) contract, since short-term qualified people are difficult to find. If the Secretariat were on line by then, the consultant could be given responsibilities for this project amounting to three months' to four months' work, and other duties related to the NGO Project itself. Ideally, the consultant would be conversant with Info/Comm. Support practicum, participative community development, and water/sanitation-related programming - including technology. Since such a person would be about impossible to find, it is strongly urged that the search emphasize the area of participative development, and particularly experience with NNGO programmes and ideally Government activities as well. UN-related experience is also desirable. The rationale for this bias acknowledges the importance of the other two areas, but also perceives that A) There are accessible communications support resource people such as the regional consultant Mr. Pfohl, UNIC chief Kulatunge and UNICEF PSC people, New York-based consultant Srinivasan, and others in Sri Lanka ... they could provide assistance once solid project cases were selected; and B) Resource persons for water (e.g. Jack Sell of UNICEF, NGO people) and especially for relevant technology abound in Asia generally and in Sri Lanka particularly.

When the field of candidates is narrowed to a few (or one), Mr. Pfohl could, if desired, assist in the final selection. The consultant could be on board by August. Consultations could be scheduled for late November or shortly thereafter.



CF Item Barcode Sign

Page

3

Date

9/6/2007

Time

6:33:21 PM

Login Name Saroja Douglas



CF-RAI-USAA-PD-GEN-2007-000254

Expanded Number **CF-RAI-USAA-PD-GEN-2007-000254**

External ID

Title

"UNDP Water Decade/NGO information and communications support project in South Asia" Mission report by Chris Srinivasan, March-April 1982

Date Created / From Date

3/1/1982

Date Registered

8/10/2007 at 2:21 PM

Date Closed / To Date

Primary Contact

Home Location **CF-RAF-USAA-DB01-2007-09549 (In Container)**

F12: Status Certain? **No**

Owner Location **Programme Division, UNICEF NYHQ (3003)**

Current Location/Assignee **In Container 'CF-RAF-USAA-DB01-2007-09549 (Upasana Young)' since 9/6/2007 at :**

Container **CF/RA/BX/PD/CW/1985/T035: Programme Support Communications, 1975-1983. Pa**

F13: Record Copy? **No**

d01: In, Out, Internal Rec or Rec Copy

Contained Records

Document Details **Record has no document attached.**

Date Published

Fd3: Doc Type - Format

Da1:Date First Published

Priority

Record Type **A01 PD-GEN ITEM**

Notes

Consultancy report done by CDS (Communications Development Service), Takoma Park, MD and Ardsley, New York. The projects reviewed were in India and Sri Lanka. The report shows the increasing importance given in development assistance to NGO involvement, community participation, and communications strategies.

Print Name of Person Submit Image

Signature of Person Submit

Number of images without cover

SAROJA DOUGLAS

Saroja-Douglas

18