

59th Annual DPI/NGO Conference – UNITED NATIONS, New York
Friday, September 8, 2006

Morning Roundtable Session: Roundtable #4

CIVIL SOCIETY and GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS for DEVELOPMENT

<< GOOD THINGS COME IN THREES >>

Thank you for the opportunity to bring NGO voices from around the world into this particular space once again. In the last three years we have helped to create and participate in expanding the deliberate working relations of civil society with the UN and Member States through our relationships with the presidents of the General Assembly, from Ambassador Ping to Ambassador Eliasson and now to Ambassador Al Khalifa.

While we all seek so much more for the good of our sisters and brothers in every corner of the world, we are grateful for the opening which has come with the expansion of this very necessary dialogue, here in this house and in every country where humanity dwells. For partnership to be genuine, to be real, to be practical – it must be mutual and participatory. We all agree that every voice counts. We also know that true partnership must go well beyond the mere words we use to describe, explain, advocate what we seek. One side, one party can not “own” the partnership. Either we are in this together, for the greater good of all, or we are clamoring, competitive voices creating a convoluted noise.

We are much more than we seem to be. We are many more than we see here today. WE THE PEOPLES – with our distinguished colleagues and partners, we are the world. We are the United Nations together with each other, not separately. TO build and sustain this goal, we too must each be the partners we seek. Following on Gandhi’s wisdom and challenge, we must be the peace we seek. In larger freedom for all – we must water the way so that both seen and unseen potentials for greater partnership and sustainable development can indeed grow.

In preparation for these remarks and subsequent roundtable discussion this morning, I sent about 100 messages around the world to colleagues, friends, partners and organizations explaining the focus of the annual conference and this roundtable. I asked people to comment, recommend or pose the question/insight they would share with us if seated “around” this table this Friday morning at UN/HQ in the company of our partners from the Office of the President of the General Assembly. As I had several opportunities to speak last year, and am here around the UN Monday thru Friday, sometimes seeming like 24/7, it’s far more vital to echo other voices right now –while welcoming yours too

As we enter into the substance of this meeting during the Questions & Answers period, which should be the essential thing we do today. Here's a summary of the responses I received from every continent and most regions of the world:

HIV/AIDS, the facts, the efforts the recent summit(noted numerous times), imports/exports assistances, border issues, families caught in conflicts, crises, financing for development/recognizing strengths of existing partnerships, WHO and UNICEF, government rejection/resistance to NGOs, coordinating NGOs, relying on strengths of local and faith-based NGOs to get cost efficient development work done, access/proximity to Member States & decision making processes, not just peripheral/polite hearings, substantive/partnering dialogue, human security, eradicating poverty, MDGs, arms control and disarmament issues vs. military solutions, ethnic/religious conflicts & bridge-building, environmental issues, UN Panel on Coherence, Commission on Sustainable Development, roles of women in peacemaking and development, post/crises/post elections support & development, UN Trust Fund for Human Security, youth as partners not guests, talking to local communities to do development, build partnerships.....

These serious concerns came from Ann, Pakisa, Pablo, Mary Therese, Vincent, Susan, Gimena, Abu Issa, Ari, Michael, Rosa, Kathleen, Robert, Carol, Hans, Jamie and several more. They came as messages from big cities and small villages. They came from many who know the UN and its system – and from others who know the name UN or know the blue helmets of the UN, the UN and NGO staff in particular places. I offer their collective voices this morning so together we can consider what's on the daily table in lives of women, children, men of all ages in vastly different circumstances. I offer their concerns as they echo our own plus many more. For this partnership with all of us to be real, this dialogue absolutely absolutely absolutely must go beyond the walls of this noble house. It must go beyond one GA president's openness and vision to another and another...so that who we are and what we are together is both normative and substantive.

We need a place WITHIN US – as much as a place(like this) AROUND US where we can do our work together. It does not matter where this Conference is, as long as it is where we are authentically welcomed as constituent partners in peace, development and human security for a truly people-centered century as the Deputy Foreign Minister of Japan challenged everyone a few days ago. We need our place at the Peacebuilding Commission, with the Human Rights Council, at the High Level Dialogue on International Migration and development which will take place in these halls next week. And – most importantly, we need our place, our seats with microphones, working headsets and translators in place, everywhere we've already been received and demonstrated with extraordinary resourcefulness the kinds of longterm partners we are. The faces and voices necessarily change. We are here as much for all that needs to be done tomorrow as we are here & now for the human family seeking, suffering, celebrating, struggling in myriad and diverse ways all over this precious reality we call

OUR WORLD. As partners for peace, development and human security, we need to be responsible stewards for all the living waters of life passing through us, around us and with our neighbors everywhere. The **UNFINISHED BUSINESS** calls each of us and all of us to **BE PRESENT** and **PAY RESPECTFUL ATTENTION**. We must do so as Secretary General Kofi Annan strongly recommended to us last year: **BE BOLD** and **DON'T APOLOGIZE!**

Respectfully submitted: Joseph Cornelius Donnelly – Friday, September 8, 2006
International Delegate to the United Nations
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