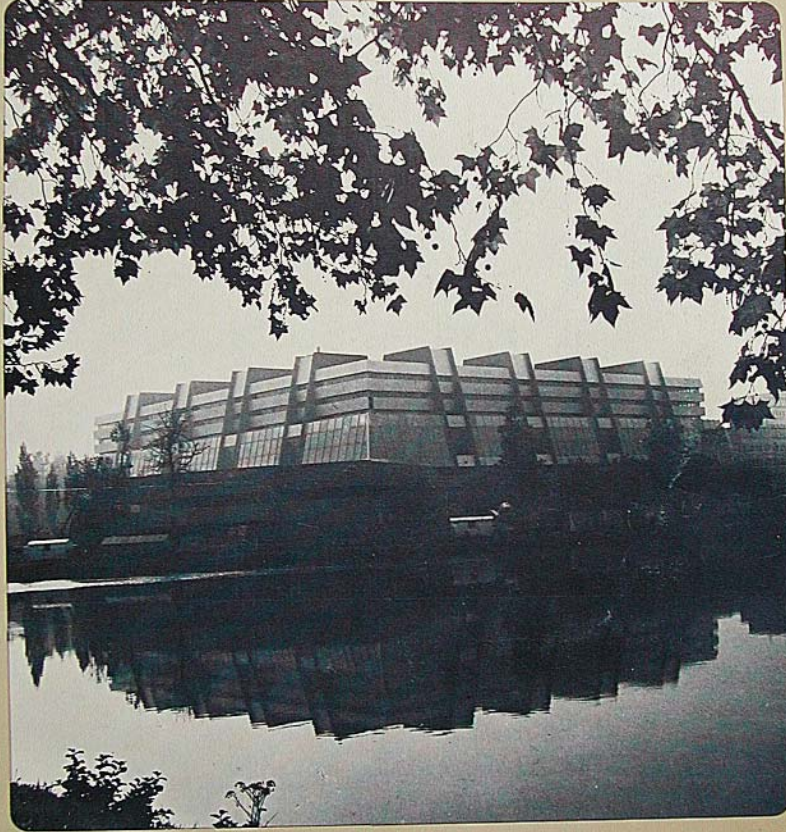


INTERNATIONAL
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ASSOCIATIONS



ASSOCIATIONS
TRANSNATIONALES
INTERNATIONALES

1977

TRANSNATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS TRANSNATIONALES

The 29th year of our periodical begins with a bold change to a new title « Transnational Associations » in harmony with the diminishing relevance of the old one « International Associations ».

The transnational nature of nonprofit associations demands recognition and our informed readers will not be surprised that we want to give a good example of conceptual clarity. The purpose of « Transnational Associations » is to present significant contributions to understanding about the structure and functioning of the complex network of international organizations. The main concern is to focus attention on the roles and problems of the wide variety of transnational associations (NGOs : international nongovernmental, nonprofit organizations) in the international community. In this sense « Transnational Associations » is the periodical of transnational associations and those interested in them. It therefore includes news, views, studies, statistics, activity and meeting information, as well as articles. The articles range from descriptions of individual organizations to academic investigation of groups of organizations and their problems. The focus of the selected articles is less on the substantive world problems on which they may act (which are extensively examined in other periodicals) and more on the present methods of international action and future alternatives which can usefully be envisaged and discussed. Related themes regularly treated are: relationship of NGOs to intergovernmental organizations, techniques of meeting organization, international information systems, multinational enterprises. The readership therefore includes : international association executives, intergovernmental organization executives, scholars of the sociology of international action, organizers of international meetings, commercial organizations offering services to international bodies, and others interested in the activities of the whole range of international organizations.

« Transnational Associations » is the organ of the nonprofit Union of International Associations, although the views expressed are not necessarily those of the UIA.

Cette 29^{ème} année de notre Revue apporte un nouveau titre « Associations Transnationales » au Heu d' « Associations Internationales ».

Le fait transnational des associations non lucratives (OING) le veut ainsi et nos lecteurs ne seront pas surpris que nous donnions le bon exemple d'un langage clair.

La raison principale d'« Associations Transnationales » est d'apporter sa contribution à la vie et au développement du réseau complexe des associations, dans ses structures comme dans son fonctionnement.

Le premier souci d'« Associations Transnationales » est de fixer l'attention sur les tâches et les problèmes d'un large éventail d'associations transnationales sans but lucratif — les organisations dites non-gouvernementales dans la terminologie des Nations Unies. En ce sens « Associations Transnationales » est la tribune des associations transnationales de tous ceux qui s'y intéressent.

Cette revue mensuelle contient des nouvelles, des études, des statistiques, des informations spécifiques sur les activités des associations, leurs congrès, leurs réunions. Aussi des articles, des chroniques ayant trait aux problèmes et aux intérêts communs aux associations.

Le sujet des articles choisis s'attache surtout à la méthode de l'organisation internationale considérée, notamment dans ses rapports avec le secteur privé des associations et dans la perspective des adaptations nécessaires aux temps nouveaux, plutôt qu'au fond des problèmes, qui sont le propre de chaque groupement et traités ailleurs dans des revues générales ou spécialisées.

Nos thèmes habituels sont les relations des ONG avec les organisations intergouvernementales, les techniques de l'organisation internationale, les systèmes d'information internationale, outre les entreprises multinationales.

« Associations Transnationales » est l'organe de l'UAI, association sans but lucratif, bien que les opinions qu'il exprime ne soient pas nécessairement celles de cet Institut.

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Editorial	118
Complexity, by A.J.N. Judge, 1 : Introduction	120
Complexity, by A.J.N. Judge, 2: Information	124
Strasbourg :	
— L'Europe des Peuples depuis 1976, par Claude-Laurent Genty	126
— Réunion générale des ONG	127
— Discours du Secrétaire Général du Conseil de l'Europe	123
— Allocution du Président de la Commission de Liaison	130
— Le point de vue d'une association féminine, par Maryvonne Stephan	131
— Commission de Liaison des ONG : membres	131
Le CLOING : naissance à Paris	133
The term « NGO »; provisional comments by the NGO Environment Liaison Centre, Nairobi	136
L'Opinion publique dans la politique mondiale; Introduction, par Grigori Morozov	143
Limits to human potential : 2	147
IAPCO news	153
Congressalia	153
Third supplement to International Congress Calendar 17th Edition	157

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Extract from the first version of a draft report circulated by the NGO Environment Liaison Centre, Nairobi. Information from the full report will be reproduced in future issues.

There is considerable terminological confusion about the term « Non-Governmental Organisation ». The primary aim of this report is not to lead a movement for linguistic regeneration, which would be much more than simply a matter of words. That a need exists for such clarification is evidenced by the large literature and by a letter from the International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhood Centres who encouraged us to seek a more - adequate definition of NGO ». This section argues that NGO is part of « a private language of phrases and slogans which often have little meaning to the public and may even lose their meaning for us if we overuse them ». (K. Waldheim, UN Secretary-General, 1976).

The term has an historical dimension. The United Nations, faced with the diversity of actors who demanded attention and recognition, introduced a negative definition of « NGO » in Article 71 of the UN Charter (Judge /Skjelsbaek, 1974, p. 199). The actual compromise definition is « Any international organisation which is not established by intergovernmental agreement shall be considered as a non-governmental organization » (UN ECOSOC Resolution 1296 (XLIV) June 19 8). The term then is essentially one concerned with a relation; the relation between - governmental - and everything other than « governmental » activity. This problematic term is used by UN agencies and more recently by other intergovernmental bodies. The term is also perceived in various ways. IIED state in a 1975 report that : « Each division and specialised agency of the United Nations maintains its own set of relationships with non-governmental organisations (NGOs). This unwieldy term is used to describe organisations that are international in character and not attached to any format governmental bodies. Recognized

in the Charter itself, these organisations have played an increasingly important and vocal role in the work of the UN system. Moreover, the growing concern in the UN system with environmental and developmental problems has given rise to interest in the UN from groups not normally associated with it». (I.I.E.D., 1975, p. 13). Friends of the Earth refer to the NGOs as « A particularly inelegant and negative term for someone who is simply not an official ». (D. Gancher, 1976, p. 1).

Rosalind Harris, president of the UN Conference of NGOs states that NGOs « are generally international and of some recognised stature in their field... I think NGOs are simply peoples' associations for whatever reason they choose to get together. And there are all kinds because there are all kinds of people ». (R. Harris, *Jericho Habitat Forum Newspaper*, Jyne 1976). Political scientists have called attention to - contacts, coalitions and interactions across state boundaries that are not controlled by the central foreign policy organs of governments » (Nye and Keohane, quoted in A. Lijphart, 1974, p. 17). Some see themselves as NGOs on the basis of their freedom to criticise government openly and without fear of repression (conversation with Rangoolam Kashore Chandra, Mauritian Environment Council, 29.9.76). Some positively assert that they are an NGO. Thus, the International Working Group on Soilless Culture « Statutes and Rules of Procedure » declares that it « is an International Non-Governmental Organization (INGO) with the name International Working Group on Soilless Culture, WOSC » (P. 1, Profile 00249).

Henrik Beer, advisor to UNEP Executive Director on NGOs has stated that : « There is no NGO community as such. The NGO world is composed of many different elements - some are purely technically NGOs - they are composed of communities, for instance, or specific parts of the community, and are therefore more governmental than non-governmental. Others are specialist, scientific or professional organisations, others major popular organisations of

different kinds with the environmental issue as a side line. One should therefore beware of speaking of NGOs' opinions, NGOs' possibilities as unified factors, they are as varied as humanity itself ». (H. Beer, 1976, p. 5). Some organisations of great relevance to UNEP's work find the description difficult to understand, especially as applying to them. Some social scientists have arrived at a consensus as to what is meant by NGO. It is :

- 1) privately (rather than publicly) established
- 2) not-for-profit,
- 3) voluntary membership participation.

The Union of International Associations *Yearbook of International Organizations* (UAI, Brussels, 1974) has it that according to existing convention, an INGO must draw its aims, membership and finance from at least three countries. Excluded from the NGO category are : social clubs, secret societies, religious missions, schools and universities and profit-making bodies. Even the last criterion is problematic unless strictly defined as dividend-paying, for most organizations aim to realize an incremental surplus on investment in current activity. It is a fragile distinction. Functions : « NGOs » are seen as functional in various ways : The *Yearbook of International Organizations* notes four types of INGOs which are very different in structure and function :

« Type A : Groupings in which independent international NGOs collaborate to promote common interests

Type B : As for Type A, except that a major concern is with the relationship with an intergovernmental body.

Type C : NGOs whose membership is open to both national and international NGOs.

Type D : NGOs who function as a parent body for dependent regional or specialized NGOs ».

Another view of the types and roles of NGOs, identified by the United Nations is :

- (a) NGOs providing public information and public support
- (b) NGOs playing an advisory role to governments on unmet needs that should be given higher priority
- (c) National NGOs involved in group action for the social and economic advancement of their countries. For example - church groups, national social welfare organizations, teachers' associations, etc.
- (d) National and international NGOs engaged directly in technical assistance and development work. (NGO Subcommittee on Filed Level Relations. 1975, p. 227).

NGOs may exist because governments have defaulted upon their responsibilities. As the concept and the social phenomena which led to the formulation of the term is culturally and historically Western-bound, it has led to speculation that the existence or non-existence of NGOs is an indicator of social and economic development. Thus, Judge and Skjelsbaek note that : « One consequence of focussing on conventional organizations only is that functional equivalents, particularly in non-Western cultures, are excluded from the analysis thus introducing cultural bias and jeopardising comparative studies ». (A. Judge, K. Skjelsbaek, 1974, p. 191).

and further that : • More or less successful imitations exist as functional equivalents in non-Western societies, but frequently with a strong governmental component making them « mixed », or « intersect » organisations ». (ibid, 1974, p. 194).

Still others have made risky assertions, such as : « In Eastern Europe, it is questionable whether the concept of an activist nongovernmental organization is meaningful ». (T. Stoel, 1975, p. 21).

To complete the confusion, Scobie and Wiseberg contradict much of the above by stating : « Being nongovernmental, all such organizations lack the sufficient monopoly of force over their own members - in matters such as taxation, criminal justice and military-national service - which conceptually distinguishes all governmental institutions. Even so, the term nongovernmental has multiple meanings - that is, the public versus private dichotomy is less than absolute. Nongovernmental groups, in fact, range from : (1) those which have been created by government initiative - for example, the United States Department of Commerce organized the creation of the United States Chamber of Commerce - through (2) those which are encouraged by government - for example, via tax-exempt status in the case of religious, educational and charitable organizations - (3) those which are permitted by government - that is, those which are private and legal, -

to (4) those which are private, secret and illegal - for example, the Minutemen, the post-1968 Weathermen or the Black Liberation Army ». (H.M. Scobie, L.S. Wiseberg, 1974, p. 12).

Fundamental problems

Finally, we call UNEP's attention to the fact that there are three fundamental problems with the term which should, lead to its demise.

The first is a linguistic problem. In many cultures « non » may mean something very close to « anti », which is plainly not UNEP's descriptive intent. That is, « non-government » translated connotes « anti-government », (Union of International Associations, 1974, p. 555; A. Judge, 1974, p. 153). The second is the following logical problem with the term. To not be something (e.g. non-governmental) can mean :

- (1) A is not B, or they are different
- (2) A is not B, or A lacks attributes of B, the implication being not only is it different but it is deficient in contrast to B (akin to defining Canada as not-United States).
- (3) A is not B legitimizes B, as A cannot be conceived independently of B.

Out of these three logical implications as to what A might be, only (2) permits

Table 1 Is « NGO » ADEQUATE FOR UNEP'S WORKING RELATIONS ?

Possible Interactions using 10 actor typology											
ACTOR	TNLO	TNLO	TNC	IGNG	IGO	INGO	NG	LO	NO	L	I
Transnationally Interlinked Local Organizations											
Transnations Corporations	TNC		*								
Intergovernmental Government /Non-Governmental Organizations	IGNG	*		*							
Intergovernmental Organizations	IGO		*	*							
International Non-Governmental Organizations	INGO	*			*	*					
National Governments	NG		«								
National Organizations	LO										
Local Organizations	NO				*	*	*				
Individual	L				*	*	*	*	*	*	**
individual	I					*	*	*	*	*	**

A to have unique and independent characteristics, reflecting the positive aspects of the reality of A. The following question should be answerable if non-governmental is not a logical absurdity: What is it to not be the entity which is itself defined as not being something other than itself? That is, what is it to not be an NGO? Unless it can be answered with certitude to mean » to be government », it cannot be ascertained what the term means. The third reason for progressing beyond the term NGO is that the distinction is based on an invidious dichotomy between government and society. It is based on corporatism, « ... the conception of society in which government freely delegates many of its functions, and much of its largesse, to private groups which enjoy both normative and functional legitimacy in the political system. In this appreciation, collective goals are usually seen as prior to those of any discrete individual or interest. Government is not regarded as some alien apparatus requiring constant surveillance by outsiders, but instead the usual expectation is that political elites will generally act in the larger community interest ». (R. Presthus, 1974, p. 44). This is the heart of the matter. From the point of view of international law, transnational « non-governmental » activity has no basis in international law. Its legitimacy (as argued below) rests on its relationship to values and goals which are numerous and conflicting. Thus Spiegel and Mittenhal observe that « citizen participation can occur in partnership with a governmental unit as well as against it. Its nature can be cooperative and integrative or conflicting and oppositional ». (in J. Carroll, 1973, p. 219).

Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN).

The object of IUCN is to « encourage and facilitate cooperation between governments, national and international organizations and persons concerned with and interested in the protection of nature and conservation of natural resources » (IUCN Statutes, 1972). IUCN describes itself as: « a Union of members - sovereign states, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations - banded together to promote the conservation of nature and natural resources throughout the world. The Union is committed to ensuring that conservation will be recognized as a vital ingredient in international and national development programmes and that it receives a much higher priority than hitherto ». (IUCN, 1972, « Services available », etc., p. 1).

NGO as It is the individual. « NGO » it seems, cannot accommodate reality. Once community environment action in all its manifestations is taken as the positively defined category, the way is clear for UNEP to remove a thorn in the UN-body-politic which has resulted in near paralysis of working relations elsewhere in the UN system. Organized environment action is the coherent functional integration of social units to realise legitimate values and to achieve defined goals. The guidelines to the Profile Survey Area Coordinators prefigured this by stating: - We are concerned with NGOs as they exist in fact, and not as they are often narrowly defined. This point is most important. We are not seeking to set boundaries within which organizations are rigidly confined. We are trying to locate foci of environmental activities by all varieties of NGO. This includes some, like ad hoc campaigns,

Table 2

Member type	No.	No. votes per member	Total	%
A. 1 State	46	3	138	26.5
A. 2 Agency extra to state	38	1	38	7.3
B. 1 National NGO	330	1	303.6	58.2
B.2 International NGO	21	2	42	8
In 102 countries*	435		521.6	100%

2. Each NGO under B. 2 has one vote until its national strength reaches 10% of the total B. 2 bloc

to the NGOs of that state who each receive an equal decimal fraction which sums to 10% of the bloc vote. As there are 54 US NGOs and 330 NGOs in total, the total bloc vote is reduced to: $330 - 54 = 276 - 10 = 27.6 + 276 = 303.6$

This leaves each US NGO with 0.51 of a vote.

3. This total does not include governmental agencies and international agencies subsumed under A. 1.

A new conception

The new conception is based on recognising the positive attributes of the diverse and uneven activity we have identified as contributing to values and goals which are the substance of UNEP's mandate. It is the transition from regarding non-governmental organizations as entities to considering the positive aspects of the various types of organized activity (or organization in the sense of coordination, continuity and effectiveness). That this has de facto occurred is evidenced by the fact that in a survey of « NGOs » we were requested to include individuals. Individuals are not and by definition cannot be considered in organization. They can indulge in useful and organized action. At the other end of the scale there are organizations to which States and « non-governmental organizations » belong and enjoy equal status as members. An example is the International

Cognisant of international political realities, IUCN's membership is based on national states and organizations, intergovernmental agencies, (Category A), non-governmental organizations and international non-governmental organizations (Category B). The present distribution of votes at IUCN General Assembly based on its membership figures is shown in table 2.

The IUCN Statutes admit that category B is « non-governmental ». But all that is said by way of definition of a national NGO is that they « shall be organizations, institutions and associations organized within a state », and of INGOs that they « shall be organizations, institutions and associations organized internationally » (emphasis added, IUCN Statutes, 1972, Article II).

It seems as difficult to subsume an organization like IUCN under the term

which have been ignored in the past because of the difficulty of classification, despite the political importance and real impact of these « ephemeral » phenomena ».

We believe it to be essential to move beyond negative entity to positive activity in talking about working relations. This change is necessary because we are concerned about realizing the values and goals which inspired the creation of UNEP. As Barbara Ward stated after the Habitat Conference: « Can we not make sure that we begin to act round problems rather than around how we're organized. Then I think we could be effective as groups because we would be working for common objectives, we would not be working for the sake of appearing and talking, we would be working because we want to get something done » (*Jericho* No. 11, Post Conference Issue, June 1976, p. 2).