

**“Multidimensional and Integrated
Peace Operations: Trends and Challenges”
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PEACE - The Development Dividend: An Asian NGO Perspective¹
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Thank you Mr. Chair. Honorable Prime Ministers, representatives from UN System and Asian governments, fellow panelists, friends from development, ladies and gentlemen, a pleasant morning. My sincere thanks to the organizers for inviting my organization, the Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC) to be part of this important initiative and to share our views from the perspective of an Asian NGO on issues and challenges in building peace.

I am not an expert on the field of peace building nor humanitarian assistance. At the same time, this is one of the rare occasions I participated in a meeting with military generals and ministers of foreign affairs and defense. Nevertheless, I found this event enriching given the various perspectives put around the table. It is precisely this kind of sharing and confidence building measure that contributes to peace. Peace is not the absence of conflict; rather, peace is attained when there is willingness and capacity to recognize, understand, accept, transcend and celebrate our differences, regardless of race, faith, culture, gender, political belief, or economic status.

In order to understand my perspective as a development NGO worker, and contribute to the enrichment of the concept of integrated mission, I have outlined my presentation accordingly: i) brief overview of the Asian NGO sector and an introduction of my organization, ii) the policy environment of Asian NGOs, iii) peace as viewed by Asian NGOs and rural communities, and iv) some action agenda for your consideration. It should be note that much of the points I will present have emanated from the experiences and studies conducted by my organization.

Emergence of NGO Sector in Asia²

The voluntary sector has played a key role in the history and development of most Asian countries. But NGOs as we know them now are more recent origin, and have developed in their own unique cultural, political and economic contexts. A long history of nationalist

¹ Presented by ANGOC Executive Director Nathaniel Don E. Marquez during the panel “*Humanitarian Partnerships in UN Multidimensional and Integrated Peace Operations*” of the above-mentioned conference. ANGOC or the Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, is a regional NGO network of 21 organizations in 11 Asian countries involved in food security, agrarian reform, sustainable agriculture and rural development. ANGOC may be reached at:

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² Taken from the ANGOC publication “Fifth Asian Development Forum” (1996).

and socialist movements, agrarian struggles and religious influence played key roles in shaping the NGO sectors in India, Indonesia, the Philippines and Sri Lanka. In Nepal and Thailand, indigenous self-help village societies emerged in the context of the relative isolation of villages and the absence or weak control of an external colonial power. But it was entry of foreign-based NGOs that influenced the development of the NGO sectors in Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Cambodia.

NGOs have displayed their capacity to reach communities through informal, flexible, innovative and cost-effective approaches and have shown action-oriented results and new concepts that have found socio-political space at the micro and macro levels. For Asian NGOs, people's participation, people's empowerment, decentralized decision-making and direct linkage with the rural communities remain as key working principles. Asian NGOs see their role as creating the environment and conditions whereby people can regenerate not only their capacity for self-determination but also their self-respect.

In several Asian countries, NGOs have been able to make significant and visible contribution to national development in varying degrees and magnitude by shaping public policy, providing experiments that have been adopted successfully as national programs, and directly implementing programs at a significant or national scale as the table below will show:

Country	Significant NGO Impact Areas
Bangladesh	Health and family planning, passage of generic drugs law, microcredit and livelihood
India	Agrarian reform and resource rights, human rights, peace, formal and non-formal educational programs, local governance
Indonesia	Environmental protection, human right issues
Malaysia	Consumer awareness and protection
Nepal	Community forestry, non-formal education, health
Pakistan	Savings and credit operations, health care
Philippines	Agrarian reform, community organizing and coalition building, environment, local governance
Sri Lanka	Microcredit, health, cooperative formation
Thailand	Environment, human rights, rural and urban community development

A brief about ANGOC

Established in 1979, the Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC) is a regional NGO association of 22 national and regional NGO networks from 11 Asian countries actively engaged in food security, agrarian reform, sustainable agriculture, participatory governance and rural development activities. Its member-networks have an effective reach of some 3,000 NGOs throughout Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines and Sri Lanka. The network engages in constructive policy dialogues with UN agencies, international financial institutions and national governments while members implement various field programs. In fact, ANGOC has organized on numerous occasions the regional preparatory NGO processes vis-à-vis the international summits organized by UN and global conferences by international financial institutions.

Over the past 28 years, the ANGOC network has organized over 100 regional and national conferences, workshops and training courses and provided a continuing forum for exchange of experiences, ideas, knowledge and information. It has produced some 82 issues of various serials, at least 100 publications, and over 200 unpublished studies. ANGOC is making the most of its partnerships and alliances. It is involved either as convenor, focal point or member in a number of global, regional and national networks and coalitions in the program areas of the network.

ANGOC has an UN Consultative Status and has received the first ever Human Development Award given by UN ESCAP in 1990.

Policy Environment of Asian NGOs

Most Asian governments have official policy pronouncements which recognize the role of NGOs and the voluntary sector. But in many instances, actual government practices contradict with official declarations and commitments on participation and people empowerment. In the experience of Asian NGOs, there are three types of over-all policy environment for NGOs which determine the context for GO-NGO relations, to wit:

- *Highly Restrictive*: existing laws and regulations tend to censor NGO actions, and require prior government permission by NGOs for certain activities such as community organizing or receiving foreign grants. There is a lack of guarantees of freedom of expression, assembly against arbitrary arrest and detention.
- *Regulative*: laws and regulations on basic freedoms are present, and sets broad parameters for NGO activities.
- *Supportive*: fundamental laws actively promote government collaboration with NGOs and the voluntary sector.

For genuine partnership and participation to exist, the democratic space for which NGOs have to operate should be broadened. A critical and constructive engagement with the government and UN system though have to be maintained, as NGOs face the risk of being co-opted by government or UN and rendered ineffective.

Peace from the perspective of Asian NGOs

NGOs treat the matter of peacekeeping no differently from its development programs. Because at the heart of all conflict, regardless of the form it takes, regardless of the adversaries, and regardless of the cause which either party invokes in waging war, is a *failure of development*.

In Asia today, there are at least six areas of conflict: i) conflict among religions, ii) conflict within religions, iii) conflict arising from ethnic identity and self-determination; iv) conflict among ethnic groups, v) ideological conflict, and vi) conflict resulting from the negative effects of development programs, especially social displacement.³ The

³ Sabur, Abdus, Presentation at the “Regional Workshop on Peace and Development: Recognizing the Role of NGOs in Promoting Peace and Development in Rural Asia”, organized by Japan Foundation, ANGOC, and PDAP, 8-10 December 2004, Philippines.

origins of these conflicts are complex but they are all made worse by poverty and underdevelopment, injustice, human rights abuses, and insensitivity to different religions and cultures⁴, among others.

From this perspective, conflict is viewed beyond war, violence and terrorism. Conflict manifests itself as discrimination, inequitable access to resources such as land, exploitation, and non-representative democracy. The Naxalite Movement in India, which started in May 1967, when tribals in Naxalbari village led an attack against the landlords to claim the land, continues to spread mayhem in India today, 40 years later, because the old problems have never been resolved. Much of the land is still controlled by a few, while caste based inequalities are as flagrant as ever. The communist insurgency in the Philippines and the secessionist movement in Muslim Mindanao are rooted in rural poverty, unjust agrarian structures, and generations of government neglect. The Maoist rebellion in Nepal sprang from an oppressive socio-political system, social and economic inequalities and widespread discrimination. Pakistan is ridden with conflicts resulting from ideological differences and displacement. The secession of Timor Leste, the separatist movements in the Indonesian provinces of West Papua and Aceh, and demands for greater autonomy in the Moluccas, Madura, Kalimantan, North Sulawesi and Riau, are a backlash of decades of political repression under General Suharto as well as a sign of impatience with the slowness of social and political reforms under Indonesia's subsequent leaders. Meanwhile, corruption, bad governance, and land-related problems threaten Cambodia's fragile peace.

Neither socialism nor capitalism has provided an answer to these problems, and globalization has made matters worse. Unless another model for development emerges and takes hold in these countries: one that is just, inclusive, and prioritizes people over profit; one that aspires to redistribute political and economic power; one that is sustainable and does not entail the destruction of the natural environment, there can be no end to conflict in the Asian region.

Why? Because peace and development are two parts of the same cycle. One leads to the other; and the absence of one closes off all roads to the other. There can be no peace without development. Development cannot be sustained in the absence of peace.

Therefore, the task of building peace and keeping it should be part of the daily task of bringing development to the poor. It involves a variety of strategies and techniques that may not be perceived as part of peace-building but whose cumulative effects create the enabling environment for achieving peace. Thus, NGOs working in conflict zones would be seen engaging in organization development, capacity building, livelihood and employment generation, building partnerships with community stakeholders, and policy advocacy.

However, there are a number of elements which endow these outwardly mundane tasks with their peace-building potential.

⁴ Ibid.

Elements of Peace-Building from an NGO Perspective

1. A Human Security Framework

As discussed yesterday, society must ensure the survival, livelihood and dignity of the war-affected community to promote peace. *Survival* refers to measures to protect the integrity of the community's identity. *Livelihood* comprises efforts to promote the people's socio-economic well-being. *Dignity* consists of securing the community's individual and communal rights and freedoms, and rebuilding their self-respect. These three building blocks of peace cannot be secured separately or in isolation of the others. They must all be present because it is the dynamism that results from the interplay of these building blocks that leads to a sustainable peace.⁵ Hence, respect and the promotion of human rights should be an integral part of any conflict resolution initiative.

2. Grounding in Local Needs, Conditions and Specificities

This point has been elaborated in yesterday's discussion. Survival or dignity can mean widely different things to different groups of people. What may be essential to some might be superfluous to another. Livelihood provision itself would have to be tailor fit to the community's actual needs and capacities.

I realize of course that in times of emergency, when speed is of the essence, it may be impractical or impossible to get this kind of information. In such occasions it may be expedient to work with a local partner, if not the government, then a community based organization that has been working in the area for a considerable amount of time. An NGO that is doing its job as it should would have ready to hand basic data on the community, or else would have a way of obtaining such information quickly. Peacekeepers would do well to avoid the mistake often made by most relief agencies which, rather than partnering with a local group set up their own operation, or raid the local NGOs for their best people. In the process, they spend a lot of money doing what a competent local group could do in half the time and for a fraction of the cost.

Another offshoot of a participatory approach to conducting development interventions is a multi-stage programming of interventions based on the community's current needs and vulnerabilities. In 2001, the Mindanao Program for Peace and Development or PROPEACE was implemented in a number of provinces in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) by the Philippine Development Assistance Programme (PDAP)⁶, a CIDA-funded initiative. It was unique because of its framework: communities

⁵ Cagoco-Guiam, Rufa, "People-Centered Development Framework on Peace and Development: Some Lessons from Conflict-Affected Communities in Mindanao," Paper presented at the "Regional Workshop on Peace and Development: Recognizing the Role of NGOs in Promoting Peace and Development in Rural Asia", organized by Japan Foundation, ANGOC, and PDAP, 8-10 December 2004, Philippines.

⁶ In 1985, five Philippine NGOs, including ANGOC and a number of Canadian NGOs established, with the support of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Philippine Development Assistance Programme or PDAP.

in conflict areas go through six stages of development, with such development being based on the promotion of livelihood and community based enterprises.⁷

At the **Conflict** stage, the delivery of relief services, such as food and medicines, is paramount as most conflicts result in the displacement of communities. It is also important at this time to stabilize the situation to prevent the further dislocation of the communities. NGOs, the media, and peace advocates should work towards securing a ceasefire between the warring forces. Meanwhile, efforts must be made to help the affected communities to get over the trauma they have suffered. Dialogue and therapy sessions are recommended.

Post-Conflict Preparation pertains to the stage at which a formal ceasefire declaration has yet to be achieved, and the displaced people are assisted in their eventual return and rehabilitation in their communities. This strategy is called creating a “space for peace”, and necessitates effective facilitation by NGOs, government agencies, and donors. The displaced people are helped to undergo psycho-social education, to conduct planning for their communities, to undertake the rehabilitation of their villages, the reconstruction of their homes, damage assessment, and livelihood planning. Stakeholders must work together at this stage to generate the resources required for the return of the displaced people.

When hostilities have stopped, and the displaced communities have returned to their homes, the work of **Rehabilitation** begins. The communities are assisted in rebuilding their homes and community infrastructure, such as the village government office and their places of worship. Food-for-work programs are implemented to get the people back to the farms and to their old livelihoods.

When the communities have settled in, support is provided to improve their farm **productivity**. This includes the introduction of sustainable agriculture practices such as the use of non-chemical inputs, and crop diversification, among others, provision of soft loans for production, and securing their access to water for irrigation and household needs. To augment household incomes, the communities are trained to raise backyard crops, fish and livestock. At this stage, it is important to sustain the provision of basic social services, and to keep up the peace education initiatives as this is vital to rebuilding family, community and inter-faith relationships and thereby sustain what gains have been made thus far.

The **Micro-Enterprise** stage entails the implementation of community-based microfinance projects to help households to get both into on-farm and off-farm livelihood activities, such as food processing, agricultural trading, merchandising, operating common service facilities for agricultural production and processing, among others. The people are given training in entrepreneurship and the relevant technology, assistance in product improvement, and skills training in business management and marketing. They are also helped to build up savings and capital to finance their own enterprise projects. Peace education is sustained at this stage and moves up to a higher level, with community leaders being deployed to extend the same service to other

⁷ PDAP, Trailblazing Livelihood and Enterprise Approaches for Peace: The Role of PDAP in Advancing Human Security in Mindanao, PDAP, 2006.

conflict affected communities. Ideally, these leaders should participate in government and donor-initiated mechanisms that support peace and development efforts.

Finally, support is extended to add value to the products of community based enterprises, specifically through the provision of assistance in product quality improvement, and in costing and pricing, all towards enhancing the products' marketability. When communities have reached this last stage of **Market-Oriented Enterprises**, the PROPEACE program assumes that the communities would be well on their way to development.

3. Community-Based Conflict Resolution

In the Asian Region, many conflicts arise from land disputes. These usually take the form of boundary disputes between groups or tribes, simultaneous demands on a particular resource by different user groups, encroachment on land and water resources, privatization of what used to be a common resource, violation of tenancy contracts, etc. While these have the potential to erupt into violent confrontations, they can usually still be resolved at the local level, or without need for litigation.⁸

NGOs have pioneered approaches to mediating such conflicts. Indonesian NGOs have undertaken their own land surveys and other methods of delineating the boundaries of *adat* or indigenous peoples' land in order to facilitate the resolution of territorial disputes. In the Philippines, farmers trained by NGOs to assist fellow farmers in agrarian related cases have been able to secure out-of-court settlements through negotiation.⁹

The possibility of settling conflicts in this manner underlines the importance of strengthening local institutions and of building the capacity of local mediators. In particular, the role of women in mediation processes cannot be overemphasized. A recent Cambodia Land Study Project, which involved the training of mediators of land conflicts, recommended greater participation by the women. In short, women were found to be better conflict mediators than men.¹⁰

Women are also able to bring to the negotiating table such issues as the condition of children and other non-combatants, which are often neglected in male-dominated negotiations.¹¹

4. Building a Constituency for Peace

One of the basic axioms that NGOs live by in organizing communities is the principle of inclusiveness. All local stakeholders must be involved in the process because groups that have been excluded usually stir up trouble later on. So in peace, more so in war. Even

⁸ Quizon, Antonio, ANGOC Policy Discussion Paper: Asian NGO Perspectives on Agrarian Reform & Access to Land, ANGOC, 2005.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Quizon, Antonio, ANGOC Policy Discussion Paper: Asian NGO Perspectives on Agrarian Reform & Access to Land, ANGOC, 2005.

an iron-clad peace settlement would come apart unless all the stakeholders are committed to it.

NGOs advocate building multistakeholder partnerships to enhance the participation of different groups and thereby secure their input into a development effort. Generally, multistakeholder partnerships yield the following benefits: better information, a more representative perspective, an enhanced sense of ownership of the output of a process, and the strengthening of democratic processes.¹²

Peace-building efforts would be greatly improved by adopting such a multistakeholder approach. No longer should peace negotiations be limited to the major contending groups, for example, the government and the rebel group. In an Asian Regional Meeting of NGOs on Peace and Development that was organized by ANGOC in December 2004, participants identified clear roles for all sectors in conducting peace initiatives. Communities would be the main actors, while NGOs would assume the role of facilitator, social mobilizer, capability builder, peace educator, advocate, and monitor. Governments would be tasked with enacting policies that would facilitate the implementation of peace initiatives, providing relief and rehabilitation, basic services, and security. Donors would provide needed financial assistance as well as help monitor and evaluate the conduct of the initiatives. The peace efforts would also reach out to other non-state actors to ensure that local decisions and initiatives are respected and to secure their moral support.

However, the task of peace building based on justice is a complex and long-term process, requiring intensive and extensive collaboration, complementation and coordination between and among various actors. At this point I'd like to offer a number of general guidelines for facilitating multistakeholder consultations, which NGOs have found useful in our efforts to build multistakeholder partnerships.

1. **Identify the stakeholders.** It is important to know not only which sectors or groups should be involved in the particular peace initiative, but also the appropriate organizations for each sector: for instance, which NGOs or people's organizations among the voluntary sectors, or which agencies in government. Care should be taken against the tendency to exclude other potential stakeholders because (i) they are non-traditional partners or (ii) they represent conflicting interest. Ways must be found to incorporate the input of these non-traditional stakeholders to the process if the dialogue is to be truly inclusive and comprehensive. It is also crucial that one identifies which individuals would best represent all the identified groups or government units. It should be noted that the most important stakeholder are the communities and people directly by the conflict.
2. **Define the parameters for participation of all stakeholders.** This involves defining which roles and tasks would be taken on by the various stakeholders at each stage of the peace initiative, and the specific timeframe for each task. As we often time focus on integration with other stakeholders, I think we need to improve the coordination within our own institution. For instance, we have

¹² Liamzon, Cristina, "Building Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships" in *Enhancing Ownership and Participation: A Resource Book on Participation*,

- experience in a number of circumstances when the UN systems at the regional and country level are not aware of what is being done at the headquarters level. It is important to recognize that stakeholders have their respective interests, constituents, perspectives, commitments and levels of understanding. In the past, these differences have often led to incompatibility and wariness. However, these differences have also served to make stakeholders aware of different perspectives, sharpened their negotiating skills and promoted consensus building. The expected output should be clearly identified and progress towards its attainment should be regularly monitored.
3. **Define and establish mechanisms for involving the stakeholders.** A committee or other mechanism must be established or appointed to serve as the venue for regular consultations or meetings among the stakeholders.
 4. **Build stakeholder capacity.** This pertains especially to the conflict affected communities, which must be assisted or empowered to articulate and assert their demands and requirements, so that they are not marginalized especially in peace negotiations. This also involves ensuring access to all the information needed by each stakeholder group, but particularly the communities, to represent their sectoral interests adequately.

In promoting peace and development, Asian NGOs have identified as a starting point at least eight tools and approaches. The application of these tools varies, depending on the situation, timing and availability of resources. These tools are: i) conflict analysis, ii) conflict impact assessment, iii) community organizing, iv) relief and rehabilitation, v) livelihood and enterprise development, vi) establishment of peace zones, vii) policy advocacy and viii) sports and cultural events.

Solidarity for Peace: Finding Common Ground

When the peace effort comes to an impasse anyway, we in Asia can usually find common ground in our faith systems and cultural traditions, diverse as these are. This is our unique *framework for solidarity for peace*, and one hopefully which could inform the UN's efforts to design its peace missions. Asian traditions contain elements that promote solidarity, such as the communal practice of religion, the value of mutuality and reciprocity, spirituality and belief in a Transcendent Being. We believe that these elements are strong enough to get combatants to sit together and engage in an inter-faith dialogue whose aim is to achieve a solidarity for peace and development of people.

Some Thoughts on Moving Forward

Whereas peace is our right, building peace and keeping peace is also our collective responsibility. It is in this context that the Asian NGO participants in the regional workshop organized by ANGOC in December 2004 outlined the following action agenda:

- Work towards community-based peace building processes
- Actively participate in the peaceful prevention and resolution of conflicts such as in peace building missions
- Lobby for the allocation of resources for development programs

- Facilitate inter-faith and inter-cultural dialogues to promote culture of peace and to strengthen the bridging of leadership
- Facilitate, document and disseminate experiences and tools in peace education, advocacy and negotiations; and
- Using ANGO as a networking mechanism, consolidate organizational and national efforts and mainstream them with other regional peace efforts and processes such as those of UN agencies and multilateral institutions

To end, the absence of peace means violence on the human person and people who are continually living under the specter of violence cannot lead fully human lives. I am then reminded by a line from one of my favorite movies, "If might is right, then love has no place in this world." Attaining peace is a struggle. To be peaceful is to live responsibly. To accept responsibility for life implies restoring the social, spiritual and economic connections of the individual to the nature, place and community that present-day "development" has disrupted.

Thank you.