This issue of *Development Dialogue* starts with Sir Brian Urquhart’s Dag Hammarskjöld Lecture entitled ‘Sovereignty and Globalisation: Where does the United Nations Fit in?’ The Lecture was the second in a series, given at Uppsala University, the first being Mary Robinson’s Lecture on ‘Human Rights: Challenges for the 21st Century’. Only a few weeks before the time of writing, Sir Joseph Rotblat, the founder of the Pugwash movement and Nobel Prize Laureate, gave the third Dag Hammarskjöld Lecture – in May 2001 – on the subject ‘The Nuclear Age: A Curse and a Challenge. The Role of Scientists’, and it has been confirmed that the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, will give the next Lecture, in early September 2001.

It is clear that the Dag Hammarskjöld Lectures have already – in the first four years – made important contributions to international discussion on several high-priority issues. The Lecture has been well established as a yearly event by eminent speakers of world-wide repute. Maybe, it would now be appropriate to include – in the time-honoured tradition of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation – younger and less established speakers among those who are invited to Uppsala.

When the Dag Hammarskjöld Lecture was instituted in 1998 the reasons were several. One was the general feeling that Dag Hammarskjöld’s name and international work, though held in high esteem by the older generation, was not as familiar to the Swedish youth as it used to be, and that it was time to increase knowledge and appreciation of him among the younger generation. This was considered even more important here in the university city of Uppsala, where Dag Hammarskjöld grew up, went to school and took his first university degrees. It was also felt that students at Uppsala University and other institutions in Uppsala should be given opportunities to meet with and be inspired by great international personalities and leaders and – it was hoped – devote more time and energy to international studies and issues. A third reason was that the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, with its independent position and its well-developed publications and networks, could provide a unique platform for speakers who wish to reach out to a wide audience with new and challenging ideas.

In the guidelines for the Lecture, it is stated that ‘the privilege of delivering the Lecture is offered to a person who has promoted, in action and spirit, the values that inspired Dag Hammarskjöld as Secretary-General of the United Nations and generally in his life: compassion, humanism and commitment to international solidarity and cooperation’. So far, the selec-
The topic of the Lecture by Brian Urquhart, printed here, is one that is extensively discussed in international meetings and seminars as well as in books and journals. He argues that globalisation is no panacea for worldwide development – and, perhaps, has more limitations than were at first recognised – and points to a number of areas where it has raised more questions than it has provided answers. He also argues that the United Nations should not be considered passé when these issues are debated, but that it can and should play a much larger role than it is doing right now. The record of the UN shows that the organisation has been able to adapt to new situations and, through its democratic structures and its institutional knowledge and experience, provide unique opportunities for global governance as well as advanced expertise in many fields.

It may also be interesting for our readers to know that the Foundation has jointly organised a seminar with the United Nations Intellectual History Project (UNIHP) and will do so again in June 2002. The UNIHP is doing what Brian Urquhart implicitly reminds us is important – that is, going back and systematically describing and analysing the United Nations contribution to the setting of past, present and future international agendas and demonstrating comprehensively the UN’s historical record of bringing about development in the economic and social fields. The project, which stretches over several years, includes 14 studies and a series of between 60 and 75 in-depth oral history interviews with leading contributors of crucial ideas and concepts within the UN system. The first book resulting from the project is called *Ahead of the Curve? UN Ideas and Global Challenges*.

As already mentioned, Joseph Rotblat visited the Foundation in May 2001 and gave a very spirited Dag Hammarskjöld Lecture on ‘The Nuclear Age’
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– a topic which, contrary to what many people think, is as important as ever. In his concluding comments he emphasises in particular the role and responsibility of scientists in today’s and tomorrow’s world.

Joseph Rotblat’s Lecture formed part of a theme that has frequently been discussed in Foundation activities over the past few years – namely, disarmament. As is evident from the main section of this issue of Development Dialogue the latest example is the seminar on ‘Nuclear Weapon-Free Zones: Crucial Steps towards a Nuclear-Free World’ which was held in September 2000.

Nuclear weapon-free zones have not been in the headlines in recent years. Still, a steady growth of the area of such zones has been noted during the past two decades with the signing of the Treaty of Rarotonga (1985) covering the South Pacific, the Southeast Asian zone (1997) and the Treaty of Pelindaba (1996, but awaiting full ratification) embracing Africa. More than half of the globe is now covered by nuclear weapon-free zones and a closer cooperation within a nuclear weapon-free southern hemisphere is being discussed. It was the objective of the seminar to explore how this area may be extended.

The sub-regions that were particularly studied by the seminar were Northeast Asia, South Asia, the Middle East, and Central and Eastern Europe and the list of participants included both scholars and activists from these areas. It is also interesting to note that among the groups and individuals responsible for planning and organising the seminar were two Japanese movements, Gensuikin and Peace Depot, and two leading Indian scholar-activists. The problems of moving towards negotiations on the establishment of zones in these areas should, of course, not be underestimated. It would need, as a prerequisite, a transformation of the concept of zones from a non-proliferation measure to a pro-active means of nuclear disarmament, i.e. involving the reduction, removal and actual dismantling of nuclear weapons where they already exist. This sounds as an enormous task, but there are signs that it may not be impossible.

In the section on nuclear weapon-free zones are contributions by Jayantha Dhanapala, the UN Under Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Henrik Salander, Swedish Ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, a state-of-the-art paper on zones, which has been slightly revised since the seminar in order to incorporate recent developments, and the Uppsala Declaration, which is the final document of the seminar.
The remaining three contributions in this issue of Development Dialogue take up themes that are familiar to readers of the journal. One of them is a comprehensive report on the Writers–Publishers Seminar, held in February 1998. This was the third meeting in a series of seminars with African indigenous publishing as their theme. The seminar was the first meeting of its kind between African writers and publishers and resulted in a ‘New Deal’ between the two groups. The report, which until now has only been circulated among people with a special interest in African publishing, is made available to the readers of this journal.

Another area that has been carefully scrutinised in Development Dialogue is the whole field of medicinal drugs. Charles Medawar identifies the issue of ‘Direct-to-Consumer Advertising’ as a new feature which may change the face of medicine and health care world-wide. Not least for the developing world, the consequences could be catastrophic.

This issue of the journal ends with the ‘Summary Proposals of the Global Governance Reform Project’, which was developed and carried through by Joseph A Camilleri of the Department of Politics at La Trobe University, Melbourne, Kamal Malhotra of Focus of the Global South, and Majid Tehranian of the Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research. The Project, in which the Foundation participated, links up with the work on UN Reform that the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation initiated in the early 1990s – and was carried out by Brian Urquhart and Erskine Childers – but the perspective is even more visionary and long-term.
Between Sovereignty and Globalisation
Where Does the United Nations Fit in?

By Brian Urquhart

The role of the United Nations in steering a course between sovereignty and globalisation was the very challenging theme of Sir Brian Urquhart's Dag Hammarskjöld Lecture, given in the Main Hall of Uppsala University to a capacity audience in late February 2000.

Reflecting on the recent statement by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, that 'State sovereignty, in its most basic sense, is being redefined by the forces of globalisation and international cooperation', Brian Urquhart argues that 'wider rules of conduct, and new ways of governance and management' needed to be evolved: changes that would be bound to encounter considerable opposition from nation states.

Brian Urquhart also points out that the concept of globalisation, so popular with the Western media, was already encountering much opposition from a variety of groups and interests throughout the world. There remain many unanswered questions: as to whether, for example, the Internet brings people together or isolates them, or whether global consumerism is destroying diversity and identity or reviving national and ethnic feelings; overall, it is clear, however, that 'globalisation in its present form deepens already serious existing inequalities'. In Brian Urquhart's view, it is essential to find a way of distributing the benefits of globalisation much more fairly, and such a task is a very appropriate one for the United Nations to fulfil. 'If globalisation is not to have an ultimately destabilising, even explosive, effect', he argues, 'it must be shared worldwide to a much greater extent than at present.' To come to grips with the enormous challenges that globalisation poses, new and enterprising initiatives and arrangements are necessary, indeed indispensable. 'The UN has taken the lead in many of the great historic issues of our time', Brian Urquhart concludes, 'and its record is far more impressive than is generally appreciated. With the surging phenomenon of globalisation and the shrinking of the powers of the nation state, it should take the lead again.'

Few people could have been better suited to speak about the United Nations than Brian Urquhart for the simple reason that few people have been more closely associated with the organisation than he has. For 41 years, between 1945 and 1986, he worked with each of the first five Secretaries-General and, in 1974, succeeded Ralph Bunche as Under Secretary-General for Special Political Affairs, a post he held for 12 years. He has been a central figure behind UN peace-keeping and peace-making activities. Since retiring from the organisation, he has, perhaps with more knowledge and authority than anybody else, continued to argue passionately for the future of the United Nations as a vigorous organisation able to promote global peace and justice. This Dag Hammarskjöld Lecture provides a splendid example of that. It is also published as a separate booklet.
This is a moving occasion for me. It is a great honour to give the second Dag Hammarskjöld Lecture here in Uppsala. I have long been associated with the Foundation, which bears Hammarskjöld’s name and which, with the University of Uppsala, sponsors this lecture. Dag Hammarskjöld would have been delighted with the very effective and innovative work the Foundation does, especially in two areas that greatly concerned him – international organisation and the problems of developing countries. Last year the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation lost a much-loved, founder member of its Board, Torgny Segerstedt. His great wisdom, his incisive mind, and his humour were, to me at any rate, one of the glories of Uppsala.

Dag Hammarskjöld’s closest colleague at the United Nations, the Nobel Peace Laureate, Ralph Bunche, did not give praise often or easily. Bunche wrote of Dag Hammarskjöld: ‘He was the most remarkable man I have ever seen or worked with. I learned more from him than from any other man.’ Hammarskjöld was a true son of Uppsala, a man, as Hammarskjöld wrote of the great naturalist Linnaeus, ‘whose disciples were sent to the four corners of the earth’. He was an intellectual in action, a brilliant leader of unique far-sightedness, integrity and courage. Hammarskjöld would certainly have had much to say about the present conjuncture of national sovereignty and globalisation, and what the United Nations ought to be doing about it.

Human life and society are not, thank God, precise or predictable. They abound in advances and withdrawals, ups and downs, contradictions and frustrations, checks and balances. In the same way, political, social and economic trends often give rise to their opposites – capitalism gave birth to communism, conservatives stimulate socialists and vice versa, free trade spawns protectionism. The United Nations, the original global organisation, seems to bring out the forces of nationalism in many of its member states. Indeed the organisation is almost the last bastion of a concept of national sovereignty that is in retreat almost everywhere else. National sovereignty is frequently invoked at the UN as a reason for not taking actions that would otherwise be regarded as desirable.

In Washington, as in many other capitals, nationalists oppose, with great success, essential elements of a more effective UN – a rapid reaction force under the Security Council, the strengthening of the Secretary-General’s powers of initiative, or alternative sources of financing. The United States has even, for many years, failed to pay its Charter-based assessments to the organisation’s budget. In the developing world there is also strong resist-
ance to strengthening the UN in some areas – humanitarian intervention, for example, or some environmental measures. None of this, of course, prevents governments from making urgent calls for UN action when disaster strikes.

A dynamic Secretary-General also tends to arouse the guardians of national sovereignty. Dag Hammarskjöld made the UN a force in its own right in critical international situations – emergencies such as the 17 American airmen imprisoned by China in 1954; the 1956 Suez crisis; or chaos in the Congo in 1960. More recently, the United Nations has played a key transitional role in many places – Cambodia, Namibia, Haiti or Mozambique, for example, and most recently in Kosovo and East Timor. Hammarskjöld’s dynamism made many powerful governments nervous at various times, and in the end it was altogether too much for hard-core nationalists like Charles de Gaulle and Nikita Khrushchev, who both refused to deal with him.

Forty years later, another dynamic and forthright Secretary-General – with close personal ties to Sweden, incidentally – is facing the barricades thrown up by the guardians of national sovereignty. Kofi Annan is not afraid to speak out on delicate political issues or human rights, or to lead, regardless of the consequences, when others hesitate. All the same, this is a puzzling and murky period at the UN.

Last September, doubtless with the tragedy of Rwanda in mind, Annan made an impassioned plea to the UN General Assembly for UN intervention in cases of gross abuses of human rights. ‘From Sierra Leone’, he said, ‘to the Sudan, to Angola, to the Balkans, to Cambodia and to Afghanistan, there are a great number of peoples who need more than just words of sympathy from the international community. They need a real and sustained commitment to help end their cycles of violence, and launch them on a safe passage to prosperity.’ The general reaction was extremely cautious and largely negative and reasserted respect of national sovereignty as the paramount consideration. Only a small minority rallied to the Swedish position – supporting the Secretary-General’s statement – that the collective conscience of mankind requires us to act in such cases.

In January, Senator Jesse Helms, the chairman of the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, told the UN Security Council that ‘the American people will not accept the authority of any supranational institution as being greater than the sovereign right of Americans to decide how to act in their own interest both at home and abroad....’, and that any other idea
would lead to the withdrawal of the United States from the UN. Helms did not say whether this doctrine should apply to other sovereign states – Iraq or Serbia, for example. Evidently some states are more sovereign than others. The reaction at the UN to Helms, who wields an extraordinary influence on United States foreign policy, was civil and restrained, but his words were a formidable re-assertion of the paramountcy of national sovereignty from a spokesman of the UN’s most powerful member.

In the same month the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Richard Holbrooke of the United States, announced that during his presidency the problems of Africa would take precedence on the Council’s agenda. As a starter he had the Council discuss the epidemic of AIDS in Africa as a threat to the continent’s stability. This was a remarkable innovation. Many African heads of state attended this series of meetings of the Security Council. They blamed the UN for not saving Rwanda from genocide and for ‘footdragging’ on other African problems, especially in the Congo. This episode highlights, among other things, one of the most poignant dilemmas of the UN. Admittedly the failure of the Security Council to take action when the genocide in Rwanda started was deplorable. But suppose the UN had decided to intervene when the first hint of the genocide plan reached New York, three months before the event itself. Would Rwanda, and its African neighbours, have welcomed UN preventive intervention at that time? Would the Security Council, mindful of the precedent it would create, have voted for such a preventive intervention? It seems extremely unlikely. The UN is usually able to take action only after disaster has struck.

Although, in the optimistic days of ‘assertive multilateralism’ in the early 1990s, it was quite a popular notion, very few governments now support the idea of a UN rapid reaction force which would be trained, ready, and prepared to take the necessary risks to carry out effective and immediate UN intervention. Such a spearhead force might have been invaluable in emergencies like Rwanda, but it is further than ever from becoming a reality. Instead the only substantial preparation for peace-keeping emergencies is the ‘standby arrangements’ with governments for the provision of peace-keeping contingents. These arrangements have neither the reliability – not a single one could be activated for Rwanda – nor the immediate availability that are necessary to prevent an emergency situation from getting out of hand. Nor do they provide a coherent force at the outset. Thus it seems that for the moment the UN is condemned to amateur and improvised reactions – almost always too little and too late. Such self-imposed ineffectiveness progressively saps the world’s confidence in the organisation.
The concept of national sovereignty, which Vaclav Havel recently called a ‘dangerous anachronism’, is itself relatively recent. Like globalisation, it was a result partly of technological advance – the printing press, moveable type and the spread of literacy; and, also like globalisation, because expanding commerce demanded larger trading areas than the cities and principalities of feudal Europe afforded. Unfortunately, the concept of national sovereignty, in the guise of extreme nationalism, led to many wars, and finally to the two world wars.

The United Nations is supposed to enshrine the lessons learned from this catastrophic evolution. It was clear long ago, except to a small Stone Age and Flat Earth minority, that full national independence and isolation are no longer possible for any state. As Kofi Annan told the General Assembly: ‘State sovereignty, in its most basic sense, is being redefined by the forces of globalisation and international cooperation.’ It follows that wider rules of conduct, and new ways of governance and management have to be evolved. This evolution will certainly encounter much opposition. It is enough to remember that in the past 12 months international action on East Timor and Chechnya – or, in the case of Chechnya, inaction – were made dependent on the consent of the government most concerned. The United Nations is still fundamentally a power-oriented organisation.

Globalisation is now a favourite topic in the media, and it is already arousing anxiety, suspicion, and opposition, especially in the developing world. Preoccupation with the political, economic and social effects of globalisation was a major theme of the 1999 general debate in the UN General Assembly. The demonstrations in Seattle against the World Trade Organization were partly an expression of this mood. In some places, young people are beginning to see the global economy as the new enemy – faceless, ruthless, enormously powerful, not accountable, and non-transparent. Recently the 250,000 students of the Autonomous National University in Mexico went on strike, partly in protest against the global economy and free trade. These events may well be the beginning of a more general and organised opposition.

Of course globalisation is not a new concept. The United Nations, the only global political organisation, has been concerned with global problems for more than 30 years. The first of the great UN conferences on global problems – on the environment – took place here in Sweden in 1972. But the current wave of economic globalisation is changing how we live and how we shall have to manage our affairs. It needs special and urgent attention.
In our current preoccupation with financial and market globalisation, it is well to remember that global problems are precisely what the UN was set up to deal with. International peace and security has been a global concern since 1945, and there is an international order of sorts, based on the UN Charter and the Security Council. It is not always effective, but it is established and recognised. At present, the controversy is over the internationalisation of human rights, that is to say, human security. In spite of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and all the conventions, and although there is now a strong and growing worldwide popular movement for human rights, there is still no solid legal or political basis for international human rights intervention, and, as I noted earlier, there is much resistance to the idea. Even so, the detention in England of General Pinochet, or NATO’s war on Serbia over Kosovo, would have been inconceivable only a few years ago. There are War Crimes Tribunals for former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, an effort to have international participation in the tribunal in Cambodia that will judge the Khmer Rouge, and plans to set up an International Criminal Court. So there is considerable, if haphazard, progress on a global framework for human security.

A vast and growing body of international law, most of it promulgated through the United Nations system, puts restraints on sovereign states in many areas of human activity – environment, communications, nuclear proliferation, drugs, use of the oceans, aviation and shipping, health, to name only a few. This framework is largely taken for granted. There is, however, no paramount international authority to enforce international law, except when, very occasionally, the Security Council deals with acts of aggression under Chapter VII of the Charter, as in the overturning of Iraq’s conquest of Kuwait.

If globalisation comes to be perceived as a largely economic phenomenon, it could create a serious hazard for the future stability and peace of the world. Market forces, especially on the present global scale, create vast and rapid changes, not always for the better, in the lives of hundreds of millions of people who have no say whatever in what is happening. At present, the development of an equitable social and political context for economic globalisation lags far behind the growth of the global market. In fact, governments sometimes seem to have fallen so far behind economic forces as to be only peripheral players in the great global circus.

However, it is possible that the obvious need for international action to regulate the effects of economic globalisation on the future of life on our planet may actually extend the influence of governments. If these effects
are to be beneficial, governments, often working through international organisations, will have a literally vital role to play. There are already many areas apart from human rights, such as global warming and climate change, the preservation of the oceans – including the fish supply, the husbanding of water resources and the problems of island states – or the campaign against desertification or against land mines, where intergovernmental cooperation is absolutely essential to success. As the Canadian writer and public servant Gordon Smith has recently put it: ‘Sovereignty is not what it used to be. It is more. It is also less.’

Of course, no one knows the ultimate consequences of globalisation any more than they knew the consequences of the Industrial Revolution at the beginning of the 19th Century. Does the Internet bring people together, or does it isolate them? Is consumerism destroying identity and diversity, or is it reviving national and ethnic feeling? One thing, however, is certain. Globalisation in its present form deepens already serious existing inequalities. It is essential therefore to find ways better to distribute its benefits. This is where governments in the United Nations system come in, or should do. If globalisation is not to have an ultimately destabilising, even explosive, effect, it must be shared worldwide to a much greater extent than at present. This means creating a political and social as well as an economic context for it. This may well require a new arrangement in which the private sector, the great transnational corporations that are now the main actors and beneficiaries of globalisation, and governments in international organisations share responsibility for developing the rules and institutions that ensure that globalisation will be a global blessing, not a curse.

It is often said that computers, telecommunications, and the Internet are the beginning of a single global nervous system. The trouble, as Sir Jeremy Greenstock, the British ambassador to the UN, pointed out in a recent lecture at Yale, is that the vast majority are excluded from this revolutionary change. Ninety per cent of the world’s people have no access to computers. More than half have never even made or received a telephone call.

The recent millennium and Y2K extravaganza was a striking example of the elite quality of technological globalisation. Christians constitute slightly less than one third of the world’s people.

Nonetheless, our predominant technological society was able to impose the 2000th birthday of the founder of Christianity as a planetary turning point, and the Y2K problem as a potential global disaster. The large majority of the world’s people worship different gods with different calen-
dars. Most of them also have different, and more mundane, priorities than Y2K – such as where the next meal is coming from, or how to find safe water to drink.

In present conditions the gap between rich and poor seems doomed to increase faster because of globalisation. Microsoft’s capitalisation is larger than the combined Gross Domestic Product of the one hundred smallest nations, over half the nations of the world. We know all too well how politically explosive such glaring contrasts can become, especially in the age of instant global communication.

Like capitalism and colonialism before it, globalisation at present means great prosperity for the few and continuing inequality and poverty for the many. Many people, including Kofi Annan and a number of non-governmental organisations, have pointed this out, and there is already a widespread awareness of this aspect of globalisation. If we pride ourselves on a higher sense of international responsibility than our forefathers, it should be possible to mount a great effort to mitigate the potentially destructive aspects of globalisation by ensuring that its potentially enormous benefits can be shared. Such an effort would require new combinations of actors – the private sector, governments, international organisations, intellectuals, non-governmental organisations and the media. In the 1998 Davos meeting Kofi Annan proposed a Global Compact between business and the United Nations. He asked the private sector to act, within its different spheres of influence, according to internationally accepted standards in the areas of human rights, labour standards and the environment, and offered the services of the relevant parts of the UN system to help them to do so. It should be possible to build on this kind of initiative.

The communications revolution, which made economic globalisation possible, also provides, through the Internet, a new, quick and inexpensive way for concerned people and organisations to form worldwide coalitions and make themselves heard. Let us hope that both the private sector and governments will listen. If they do, the UN system could provide both a catalyst and meeting place for dealing with a problem with huge potential consequences for the human race.

Our worst problems are now shared, and often global, problems. They can only be solved by international cooperation and better international management. Sound solutions require accountability, transparency and representation of all the groups of people affected. Of course, these requirements will complicate the process, just as democracy complicates the
process of government. Tyranny or oligarchy are much simpler, but com-
mon sense and good governance demand that people be represented in the
discussion of the great changes that will dominate their lives.

Six years ago, in a publication of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, the
late Erskine Childers and I urged the importance of greater transparency in
various international dealings, including the selection of UN leaders. It
was, predictably, not a very popular suggestion, not least because it was
believed that it would complicate life for the member governments. We
also suggested that the time would come when the actual peoples of the
world, who at present have no direct representation at the United Nations,
should be represented, as the European Community’s people are represent-
ed, in a directly elected people’s assembly or parliament, parallel to the
intergovernmental UN General Assembly. This idea was even less popular.

All political development is a result of the need for rules to govern human
interactions. The UN has already provided many elements of a rule-based
international system. It was tackling global problems decades before the
word ‘globalisation’ was coined. The benign development of globalisation
may be its greatest challenge yet.

In 1960 Dag Hammarskjöld wrote: ‘Working at the edge of the develop-
ment of human society is to work on the brink of the unknown. Much of
what is done will one day prove to be of little avail. That is no excuse for
the failure to act in accordance with our best understanding, in recognition
of its limits, but with faith in the ultimate result of the creative evolution in
which it is our privilege to cooperate.’ There is always a challenge ahead,
an historic opportunity to be grasped. There is also the certainty that our
children will pay the price if we fail to grasp it. There is a disastrous human
tendency to be lulled by peaceful and prosperous times into doing nothing
about great problems that still seem comfortably far off. It would be a fatal
mistake to evade or ignore the potential problems of globalisation just be-
cause they seem so vast and complex and are still largely in the future.

It is not a matter of knowing all the answers. Lunatic asylums are full of
people who know all the answers. It is a matter of asking the right ques-
tions and then working together, no matter how long it takes, to find and
agree on the best answers. The UN has taken the lead in many of the great
historic issues of our time, and its record is far more impressive than is
generally appreciated. With the surging phenomenon of globalisation and
the shrinking of the powers of the nation state, it should take the lead again.
This international seminar, attended by more than 50 scholars, experts, activists and diplomats from six continents, called for Nuclear Weapon-Free Zones (NWFZs) to be established all over the world as a transitional step towards the complete abolition of nuclear weapons. It underscored the urgency of such zones, particularly in South Asia, Northeast Asia, the Middle East and Central Europe.

The Seminar, held between 1 and 4 September at the Dag Hammarskjöld Centre in Uppsala, was inaugurated by United Nations Under Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr Jayantha Dhanapala, who delivered the keynote address. In this he deliberated on the moral, political, legal and security imperative of nuclear weapons abolition, highlighting the need for both comprehensive and incremental measures of disarmament. ‘At a time when some 30,000 nuclear weapons remain, NWFZs offer one of the few activities open to non-nuclear weapon states not just to quarantine themselves from the nuclear contagion, but to pool their efforts to resist it,’ said Mr Dhanapala.

The Seminar participants were unanimous that a decade after the Cold War, the world faces a stark choice: achieve complete nuclear weapons abolition, or face a second Nuclear Age with new generations of even more horrifying nuclear and other high-tech weapons. NWFZs, which ban the manufacture, deployment and transit of nuclear weapons in specific regions, and make them safe from nuclear attacks and threats from the nuclear weapons states, are an important step towards the elimination of such weapons.

Treaties to establish NWFZs have so far been reached in respect of Latin America (1967), South Pacific (1985), Africa (1996) and Southeast Asia (1997). Seminar participants considered it crucial that the concept of NWFZs be radically transformed: from a measure of non-proliferation to a pro-active means of nuclear disarmament, i.e. the thinning out, removal and actual dismantling of nuclear weapons where they already exist.

NWFZs have an advantage over other transitional measures towards disarmament. They involve a concerted effort by a whole region towards a common security structure. They carry the potential to include non-signatories to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Seminar participants also emphasised the tremendous public education potential of NWFZs and welcomed declarations of nuclear weapon-free cities and local authorities.

The Seminar was planned and organised by five civil society organisations: Gensuikin (Japan Congress Against A- and H-bombs), the Peace Depot (Japan), the Transnational Institute (the Netherlands), the International Network of Engineers and Scientists Against Proliferation (INESAP) and the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation (Sweden). A monograph on NWFZs is being edited.
In his Keynote Address, given at the Seminar on Nuclear Weapon-Free Zones: Crucial Steps towards a Nuclear-Free World in September 2000, Mr Jayantha Dhanapala states that such zones are ‘a sophisticated means whereby the world can advance in common cause against the production, possession or deployment of a weapon that is inherently incapable of distinguishing between civilian and military targets. … They have also progressively shrunk the area of the world’s surface where nuclear weapons can be stationed, thereby placing restrictions on the strategic plans of nuclear weapon states.’ In his address, Mr Dhanapala defines and discusses five major obstacles to the growth of the number of Nuclear Weapon-Free Zones and how these may be tackled over time. He also lists six concrete ‘next steps’ on the road to the establishment of new zones and outlines how these steps may be taken.

Mr Dhanapala has served as Under Secretary-General of Disarmament Affairs since 1998. In addition to several important diplomatic assignments for his country Sri Lanka, he was also a member of the Canberra Commission on nuclear disarmament and, in 1987–92, Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research in Geneva.

Introduction

It is a truth universally acknowledged that nuclear weapons are the most destructive weapons invented and that their use can imperil all human civilization and the planet on which we live. Faced with this awful reality some non-nuclear weapon states, which have legally renounced the nuclear option, have huddled under the nuclear umbrella of nuclear powers. Others remain without any protection or legally binding assurances, relying on the campaign for nuclear disarmament leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons – a goal that sometimes appears to be a mirage. Still others in a collective act of self-reliance have sought protection in nuclear weapon-free zones. Interestingly, such zones are mainly in the southern hemisphere further widening the gulf between the North and the South in today’s global political realities.

This international seminar is an opportune moment to examine the impressive record of historical achievements of existing zones and to explore how this can be a basis for future progress. In these days when so many other issues are competing for public attention – on both the domestic and international political agendas – it is all the more important to recall some of the inspirational heritage that brings us all together.
I am reminded in particular of the preamble of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America signed in 1967— the first nuclear weapon-free zone in an inhabited region. It explains both eloquently and succinctly why such zones are so vital. The text, in particularly acute terms, refers to the existence of nuclear weapons as ‘an attack on the integrity of the human species’ and recognises that the use of such weapons ‘may even render the whole earth uninhabitable’.

Yet what makes the history of nuclear weapon-free zones so impressive is not the terror of nuclear war evoked in the preambles of their respective treaties but the hope they inspire – hope based on both ideals and self-interests. The ideal is clear: these zones are stepping stones to a world free of all nuclear weapons. They are a sophisticated means whereby the world can advance in common cause against the production, possession or deployment of a weapon that is inherently incapable of distinguishing between civilian and military targets – a weapon whose use would unquestionably violate international humanitarian legal principles as it destroys millions of innocent civilian lives and property. They have also progressively shrunk the area of the world’s surface where nuclear weapons can be stationed, thereby placing restrictions on the strategic plans of nuclear weapon states.

The ideal of global nuclear disarmament is already reason enough for action, but when this ideal is combined with concrete benefits that are responsive to practical concerns of even the most cynical of realists, the case for nuclear weapon-free zones becomes formidable. This is the reason why nuclear weapon-free zones have grown both in variety and in popularity since their inception so many years ago.

Nuclear weapon-free zones do not exist as ends in themselves. They exist because they serve genuine security interests, promote international peace and security and inspire collective action for the good of each and the good of all. At a time when some 30,000 nuclear weapons reportedly remain in the hands of a few states, these zones offer one of the few sustained activities open to non-nuclear weapon states not just to quarantine themselves from the nuclear contagion around them, but to pool their efforts to resist it.

Some people say that countries that do not possess nuclear weapons have no business seeking to encourage the nuclear weapon states to change their nuclear policies. Indeed, that is the thinking of those who resist nuclear disarmament being negotiated in the world’s only negotiating forum for
disarmament – the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. Some even object fervently to proposals – including, most recently, one from the Secretary-General of the United Nations – for international conferences to consider measures to eliminate nuclear dangers.3 Yet as a matter of conscience, policy and law, global nuclear disarmament is in no way the exclusive domain of those states that have chosen to possess such weapons. Though Article VII of the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) acknowledges the right of any group of States to create nuclear weapon-free zones, Article VI of that treaty commits all of its 187 states parties to ‘pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament’. Nuclear weapon-free zones are one of the most important of such measures.

The legacy of unity in diversity

I will not describe the history of all nuclear weapon-free zones. Analysing this historical record, I would like instead to point out two interesting features of the growth of these zones.

First, since the creation of the first zone by the Antarctic Treaty in 1959, one cannot help but note the sheer growth in the numbers of these regimes. We have witnessed an extraordinary case of the proliferation of such zones – reaching across whole continents covering more than 50 per cent of the earth’s land mass, encompassing the ocean floor, and extending even into the heavens. The expansion of the concept to the Outer Space and Tlatelolco Treaties in 1967, the Seabed Treaty in 1971, the Rarotonga Treaty of 1985, the Pelindaba Treaty of 1996, and the Bangkok Treaty in 1997, in each instance pushed the frontier a bit closer to a nuclear weapon-free planet.4 While the growth of these zones has not eliminated all conflict or achieved general and complete disarmament in their areas, it has accomplished much in laying the foundation for the proliferation of peace and asserted the rights of humanity to live in a nuclear weapon-free world.

There is, of course, no ‘one size fits all’ model of such zones that is equally suitable for each region. Each zone reflects the perceived security needs as well as the hopes and aspirations of its participating countries. As the UN Disarmament Commission noted last year in unanimously approving guidelines for the creation of such zones, they are the product of the specific circumstances of the region concerned, and are to be established on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the states of the region.
concerned. The establishment, growth, and maintenance of such zones is thus an inherently dynamic process – to this extent, all the zones are still in the process of fully realising their potential.

The Pelindaba Treaty needs additional states parties for it to come into force. The nuclear weapon states have not yet acceded to the protocol of the Bangkok Treaty. The Central Asian nuclear weapon-free zone has been under negotiation for many years but remains nonetheless only an aspiration. Establishing and maintaining such zones are highly political processes, highly dependent upon – and hence vulnerable to – the forces of political reality. Proposals to establish such zones in the Nordic, Mediterranean, Balkan, Middle Eastern, South Asian, South Atlantic, and East Asian regions – as well as the entire Southern Hemisphere – have encountered their respective difficulties. A similar fate has faced the proposals to denuclearise the Korean Peninsula, and the efforts to establish a zone in Central Europe, including the proposal by the Palme Commission in 1982 for a nuclear-free corridor in the region. And the elusive Zone of Peace in the Indian Ocean appears today as a fading dream even in my country, Sri Lanka, which first sponsored the proposal in the United Nations in 1971.

Sometimes individual countries take actions into their own hands. In diverse ways, Austria, Japan, Germany and Mongolia have all chosen an alternative route, by undertaking national legal obligations to abjure the acquisition or possession of nuclear weapons. In South America, the MERCOSUR countries have joined to create a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, echoing a similar proposal made by Egyptian President Mubarak for such a zone in the Middle East. And though they are not legally binding, we also must not forget the numerous local initiatives to establish municipal nuclear weapon-free zones around the world.

**Obstacles ahead**

Nuclear weapon-free zones face numerous and formidable obstacles, yet they not only persist, but grow.

The first obstacle they face is that the world remains divided into exclusive spheres of security, despite the more universalistic concept in the UN Charter of ‘international peace and security’ which tacitly denies the divisibility of peace. During the Cold War period the world was divided up in arrangements where some gathered under what they believed to be the protection of impermeable nuclear umbrellas, while the rest were presumably left to suffer the vicissitudes of world affairs on their own – while facing nuclear threats. A decade after the Cold War ended one of these alliances
continues and a queue forms at its entry door. Thousands of nuclear weapons remain on alert, first-use nuclear doctrines have been reaffirmed and more states have tested nuclear devices. It is not a world that is very hospitable to the creation or expansion of nuclear weapon-free zones.

Some countries take great comfort in the knowledge that any nuclear strike against any aggressor would unleash unthinkable horrors – horrors that could inevitably affect their own territory and their own citizens. That is the basic premise of nuclear deterrence theory: mutual – assured – destruction. Though over 100 countries have rejected such reasoning in favour of the security that comes from keeping such unconscionable weapons out of their neighbourhoods, the umbrella continues to cast a long shadow, perpetuating the myth that the ultimate peace is found only in the ultimate terror.

The second obstacle facing countries that are either in such zones or are considering establishing one, is the persistence of first-use doctrines on the part of some countries that possess nuclear weapons. Such doctrines, when combined with conditional language – described euphemistically as ‘calculated ambiguity’ – appear to leave open the option of launching nuclear strikes under some circumstances, even against non-nuclear weapon states. How can the nuclear weapon states offer negative security assurances to members of these regimes while simultaneously reserving the right to threaten to use – or actually to use – nuclear weapons against regime members? This amounts to a policy of erecting disincentives to establish such zones.

A third obstacle – one that may well grow in future years – is the rise of a new form of proliferation in the world. Let us call it the rise of ‘managed proliferation’ or the policy of actively encouraging the establishment of what might be termed, ‘nuclear weapon-safe zones’. Such concepts suggest that the possession of nuclear weapons, while perhaps regrettable, need not be catastrophic, and may, if subject to some careful stewardship, actually contribute to both regional and global stability. So leave existing nuclear weapons stockpiles alone, its proponents proclaim, even let them spread – but husband them wisely, and their possessors will earn a golden peace while sanctions are dismantled to satisfy powerful commercial interests.

This vision of managed proliferation rejects entirely the very concept of disarmament, though not arms control. In fact, it glorifies arms control. Instead of the genuine peace and security that arises from instruments such
as the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Pelindaba and Bangkok, the new approach offers ersatz security through the provision of palliatives such as assistance in improving command-and-control over nuclear weapon systems, nuclear confidence-building measures, intelligence and early warning capabilities, and controls over the safety and security of devices in existing arsenals.

The new approach denies the existence of the possibility of accidents, mistakes or miscalculations, ignoring the facts of the 1962 Cuban missile crisis or the near miss here in Scandinavia, when the launch of a scientific rocket in Norway in 1995 led to a nuclear alert. Instead, it assumes that measures taken to address such threats will be completely effective in getting the job done. This is, quite frankly, the fantasy virus that has recently spread to South Asia from its hosts in other regions, and is manifest in all discussions about the need for the world to adjust to the so-called ‘new realities’ in that region.

Yet the rise of new states with nuclear capabilities and the spectre of nuclear terrorism creates a fourth major obstacle for members of nuclear weapon-free zones, a problem related to the definition of what constitutes a nuclear weapon state and the sources of nuclear weapon threats today in view of the threat of nuclear terrorism. Which countries are appropriate to sign the various protocols in existing treaties reserved for nuclear weapon states? If the list is limited to the nuclear weapon states defined in the NPT, as it must, without according new status and legitimacy to new nuclear states, positive security assurances are also necessary in the event of dangers arising from other sources. The security assurances issue is thus complicated by another conundrum – who gives what and to whom?

The fifth obstacle arises from the assertion that security must come first and that once security is achieved, only then can disarmament be seriously entertained. This view, of course, ignores entirely both the security benefits that are obtained from the process of disarmament itself, and the insecurities that are aggravated by the failure to pursue disarmament strategies in earnest.

When the UN Disarmament Commission agreed in 1999 on guidelines to establish nuclear weapon-free zones, it not only reaffirmed the goal of ‘freeing the entire world from all nuclear weapons as well as other weapons of mass destruction, and more broadly speaking, of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control’, but
stated that such a goal was necessary ‘so that future generations can live in a more stable and peaceful atmosphere’ (emphasis added). In other words, security can be served well by disarmament.

There are, to be sure, other obstacles facing the consolidation of these zones. There are problems of entry into force, ambiguities in some Treaty provisions, problems of verification, financing, day-to-day administration, and achieving universal regional memberships. There are various problems associated with security arrangements, transits and overflights of nuclear weapons through such zones. There are challenges of educating the public about the enormous benefits each citizen enjoys from not having to live under a cloud of nuclear terror.

It is interesting that at least two of these zones were formed following great controversies over nuclear testing. The initial efforts to set up a nuclear weapon-free zone in Africa no doubt reflected a reaction against French nuclear testing in Algeria, and an alleged South African test; similarly, the Rarotonga Treaty was given an impetus by French nuclear testing in the South Pacific. It is surely true that the negotiation of the Partial Test Ban Treaty in 1963 was strongly influenced by the public reaction to the health and environmental effects from atmospheric nuclear tests up to that date. And it is probably true that efforts to ban nuclear weapons from South America were strongly influenced by the sober reflections of leaders and citizens in the aftermath of the Cuban missile crisis.

Yet the creation of new zones simply cannot await any new shocks of this order of magnitude. Must a nuclear weapon-free zone in the Middle East, South Asia, Europe or East Asia await a tragic nuclear accident or nuclear attack? The shock therapy of actual nuclear detonations is not what is needed. Terror, death, and environmental catastrophes are not the path to achieve freedom from fear. The creation of nuclear weapon-free zones is preventive action.

Next steps

The UNDC Guidelines on the establishment of new zones helps us to identify some future steps, which might include the following:

First, all existing zones should come into force as soon as possible – new efforts are needed within incomplete zones, with appropriate encouragement as needed from without, to achieve universal regional membership and full international recognition.
Second, new efforts are needed to encourage the creation of new zones, even in the most difficult areas, including the Middle East and South Asia. The Central Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone is closest to realisation and needs renewed efforts by the five countries concerned and positive encouragement by the nuclear weapon states. In other areas one could even begin with transitional measures: prohibiting certain categories of nuclear weapons, de-alerting nuclear weapons on the territory of countries in the region and other confidence-building initiatives.

Third, new initiatives could be directed both at encouraging new forms of cooperation within existing zones as well as exchanges of experiences between parties of different zones. Members within such zones should be encouraged to cooperate in sharing information about the status of global nuclear disarmament efforts and in mobilising diplomatic efforts to encourage greater progress at all available opportunities, especially where they have secretariats to service them. This could take the form of joint studies, resolutions at international conferences, published speeches and editorials, and other such efforts.

Fourth, the requirement for arrangements between the countries in a certain region to be freely arrived at is of course essential, though this should be interpreted less as an obstacle to the creation of such zones than as a political and diplomatic challenge. A multi-front effort may, in certain circumstances, be required to encourage the leaders of some states to see reason. A great deal of this effort must be diplomatic. But it can also be promoted by citizen efforts, cultural exchanges, congresses, symposia, coordination among and between professional associations, the intelligent use of the media, activities by religious groups, and a host of other political initiatives. This meeting is an excellent beginning.

Fifth, the zones can be strengthened by additional protocols, such as those providing mutual commitments not to engage in attacks on peaceful nuclear facilities. Another useful confidence-building measure would address delivery systems for nuclear weapons. In his lecture upon receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in 1982, Alfonso Garcia Robles traced the origins of the Tlatelolco Treaty to a Joint Declaration on 29 April 1963 by five South American presidents expressing their joint willingness to enter into a commitment not ‘to manufacture, store, or test nuclear weapons or devices for launching nuclear weapons’ (emphasis added). The preamble to the NPT similarly calls for the ‘liquidation’ not just of nuclear weapons but also of ‘the means of their delivery’. Yet today we hear only about missile defence and deterrence – not global missile disarmament – despite a state-
ment in April 1999 by the UN Secretary-General calling upon countries to consider the establishment of multilateral norms governing both missiles and missile defence systems.11

Another useful protocol to consider would be to expand existing nuclear weapon-free zones into ‘fissile material-free zones’. This would by no means require the abandonment of peaceful uses of nuclear energy, but it would require binding mutual commitments not to produce and stockpile materials required for use in nuclear weapons manufacture. It does not take great imagination to recognise the additional security benefits that members of nuclear weapon-free zones would gain by repudiating critical bomb-making materials along with the delivery systems needed to launch nuclear strikes. And both initiatives could – indeed should – be framed and pursued as a global goal.

The sixth and last step I will mention today concerns the UNDC’s explicit identification and recognition of the goal of establishing a Southern Hemisphere nuclear weapon-free zone. This too should be pursued vigorously. Its achievement would mark a stunning advance in the nuclear quarantine I mentioned earlier, and a grand new achievement on the road to a nuclear weapon-free world.

In conclusion, let me extend my enthusiastic support for all your efforts to advance the potential of nuclear weapon-free zones to serve international peace and security and to wish your deliberations all success. The zonal concept in nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation has been developed within the United Nations and an international consensus has been built around it. We need now to consolidate and strengthen this.

Notes

4. The full texts of these treaties are accessible at the web site of the UN Department for Disarmament Affairs, http://www.un.org/Depts/dda/DDAHome.htm. The site also describes treaty memberships of individual states.


The New Agenda Initiative
A Short Introduction

By Henrik Salander

In June 1998, shortly after the Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests, the New Agenda Initiative was launched by the Foreign Ministers of Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden in order to give weight to their common position that the premise that nuclear weapons can be retained indefinitely is unacceptable and that the only guarantee against the use, or threat of use, of nuclear weapons is the total elimination of such weapons. Since then, the New Agenda Initiative – or Coalition as it is often called – has had considerable success in making its views heard, accepted and acted upon. In this way it has given new direction and content to an area where international negotiations are usually very slow-moving.

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This seminar on Nuclear Weapon-Free Zones is, indeed, very timely and I would like to thank the organisers for this important initiative. I have been asked to concentrate on the ‘New Agenda Initiative’ in my short contribution. I may say ‘Initiative’ at some times and the ‘New Agenda Coalition’ at other times. It is the same thing, but in fact we called our effort an ‘Initiative’ from the beginning. ‘Coalition’ is somewhat more exclusive, and, in fact, it was other delegations and groups who started to call us a Coalition after a while, not ourselves.

I will start by quoting from Rebecca Johnson of the Acronym Institute. I apologise if I haven’t quite got her exact words. But roughly, she said in a recent article that ‘the scope of achievable progress when it comes to nuclear disarmament is easy both to overstate and to underplay’. It might be recalled that in 1991, at the amendment conference of the partial test-ban treaty, a comprehensive test ban was regarded by most of the nuclear weapon states as premature and unrealistic. By 1994 they were negotiating it! Similarly, much of the New Agenda Initiative in 1998 was written off as overambitious, only to be substantially adopted by the nuclear weapon states and the non-nuclear countries less than two years later in the Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

I believe we all know the overall context of where we are at present. It is excellently described in the seminar concept paper, and by Under Secretary-General Dhanapala in his key-note address. What I especially want to
point out is not only that the overall context is very complex, but also that
the lack of progress in the implementation of already agreed measures, I
repeat already agreed measures, is depressing.

I am thinking, first, of the fact that it may still be a long time before the Com-
prehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) enters into force. Second, the implemen-
tation of the enhanced safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency
(IAEA) is proceeding slowly. Third, negotiations on a ban on production of
fissile materials for nuclear weapons have yet to begin in the Conference on
Disarmament (CD). Fourth, an international legally binding instrument of
negative security assurances is not in prospect. And fifth, there is still no
agreement to establish an appropriate subsidiary body in the CD to debate
nuclear issues. It is not credible for governments repeatedly to endorse the
need for nuclear disarmament and then not pursue it in the CD, the body
charged with negotiations on multilateral disarmament and arms control.

In addition to these developments, or rather lack of developments, there is
the fact that the START process is more or less at a standstill, and that India
and Pakistan have gone against the strong international norm of a ban on
nuclear testing. The serious disagreement between the United States and
Russia on the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty also adds an element of
risk and uncertainty.

It was with a sense of concern and frustration that Foreign Ministers of the
New Agenda countries concluded that a new political initiative should be
launched. They did so in a declaration in June 1998. The starting point for
the Ministers was their common position that they rejected the premise
that nuclear weapons can be retained indefinitely and not used, whether by
accident or intentionally. The only real guarantee against the use or threat
of use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination.

In their view, what was lacking was first and foremost a clear commitment
by the nuclear weapon states to the elimination of all nuclear weapons. An
undertaking to accomplish this goal would provide direction and a frame-
work for measures towards the total elimination of such weapons.

In the declaration of June 1998, the Ministers recognised that the end of
the Cold War had provided a unique opportunity to eradicate and prohibit
nuclear weapons for all time. They urged the five nuclear weapon states
and the three nuclear weapon-capable states to make a clear commitment
to the speedy, final and total elimination of their nuclear weapons and their
nuclear weapons capability. The declaration proposed a number of meas-
ures to bring forward the nuclear disarmament agenda, notably the entry-
into-force of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty and the start of negotia-
tions on a fissile material cut-off treaty. The two states with the largest nu-
clear arsenals were called upon to assume their special responsibility and
proceed with further arms reduction talks.

Referring to the nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan, the Minis-
ters also called for continued efforts to establish nuclear weapon-free
zones in regions of tension such as South Asia and the Middle East.
Furthermore, they proposed legally binding instruments with respect to a
joint no-first-use undertaking between the nuclear weapon states and re-
garding non-use, or threat of use, of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear
weapon states – so-called negative security assurances.

The Ministers concluded that the continuing threat represented by the
prospect of the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons had to be con-
fronted. They proposed a programme of action that did not exempt any
country from its responsibilities towards others. That is one of the most im-
portant points. The measures would be incumbent on, respectively, the five
nuclear weapon states, the three states not yet party to the NPT, which op-
erate unsafeguarded facilities and have not renounced the nuclear weapons
option (that is, India, Israel and Pakistan), and the international community
as a whole. These multilateral, unilateral and/or bilateral measures would
not be taken in succession; they would be mutually reinforcing and pur-
sued in parallel.

It has been pointed out that the New Agenda’s ideas are not in themselves
novel. Some of them have been on the table for decades. So what is new
about the New Agenda?

First its composition. Its proponents come from different groupings and re-
gions of the world and have been actively working to promote nuclear dis-
armament for a long time. I think it is true to say that its members have a
certain credibility, having actively renounced the nuclear weapons option,
 despite, in many cases, having the technical capacity to build them.

Second, the timing of the Initiative. As the post-Cold War window of op-
portunity was being wasted – which the Ministers really felt it was – deci-
sive action was required to preserve the integrity and relevance of the NPT.

And third, the comprehensive, balanced and achievable nature of the New
Agenda’s programme of action, which would be underpinned, we hoped,
by an unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear weapon states to accomplish the elimination of their arsenals in the longer term.

These points all explain the increasingly broad support the New Agenda Initiative has been receiving from governments, parliaments, NGOs and civil society.

What are the legal underpinnings driving the Initiative? First of all, the so-called NPT ‘bargain’, to which the Ministers pointed in their declaration. The vast majority of the membership of the United Nations has entered into legally binding commitments not to receive, manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons. These undertakings have been made in the context of the corresponding legally binding commitments by the nuclear weapon states to the pursuit of nuclear disarmament.

That is the bargain, and the Ministers were therefore deeply concerned at the persistent reluctance of the nuclear weapon states to view their treaty obligations as an urgent commitment to the elimination of their arsenals.

Second, the explicit obligation in Article VI of the NPT, requiring States Parties to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament. Notably, the treaty also calls for the cooperation of all states – this is often forgotten – in pursuing and attaining this objective. It follows that non-nuclear states have the right and the responsibility to pursue this objective. It cannot be argued that they should be excluded from contributing to the process.

Moreover, when the NPT was extended indefinitely in 1995, that agreement did not sanction the indefinite retention of nuclear weapons – on the contrary. This is a very important distinction. And the NPT makes another important distinction, also often forgotten. Progress on nuclear disarmament is not contingent upon progress in the field of conventional disarmament. Claims that it is – and such claims are quite often made by some countries – must be dismissed.

Finally, and not the least important of the legal underpinnings: it is inherent in a treaty based on mutual obligations that no single state or group of states can determine independently the pace at which the elements of that treaty are implemented.
The United States and the Russian Federation continue to reject categorically any multilateralisation of the START process, for example. We do not directly dispute that from the New Agenda side, nor are we calling for a multilateralisation of this ongoing process. Rather, we see this process evolving as soon as possible into plurilateral engagement by the other three weapon states, and that process in turn eventually becoming multilateral and universal. The fact remains that nuclear weapons are multilateral in their reach and in their impact, whether we like it or not.

I would say that, increasingly, nuclear weapons will become an even greater liability, as inventories age and exceed their designed life. What will happen then? Will we see a new race for technology replacement? The New Agenda Coalition considers that nuclear weapons must not become an inevitable feature of our society. The fact that they have not been used for 50 years does not mean that the risks are decreasing.

Equally important, the longer they are retained, the greater the temptation for others to acquire them. We all know this. But the rationale is evaporating. We feel now that we have weapons chasing targets, rather than targets requiring weapons.

Let me now just briefly comment on the question of nuclear weapon-free zones. Because of the New Agenda Coalition’s focus on disarmament, proposals in the area of zones were not among the main parts of our General Assembly resolutions in 1998 and 1999. For the Review Conference in 2000, the Coalition presented, in what we called a ‘Working Document on Nuclear Disarmament’, a consensus-based proposal on zones for the Conference to adopt. The response to this was rather well reflected in Chapter VII, paragraphs 5 and 6, of the final document.

Paragraph 5 discusses zones and their relation to negative security assurances; and paragraph 6 states (and this is a consensus formulation, as is the whole of the final document): ‘The Conference welcomes and supports the steps taken to conclude further nuclear weapon-free-zone treaties since 1995, and reaffirms the conviction that the establishment of internationally recognised nuclear weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned enhances global and regional peace and security, strengthens the nuclear non-proliferation regime and contributes towards realising the objectives of nuclear disarmament.’

There we have a good summary of the threefold and far-reaching potential of the zones – existing and prospective. The conclusion of the treaties of
Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba, establishing nuclear weapon-free zones, as well as the Antarctic Treaty, has resulted in the steady exclusion of nuclear weapons from entire regions of the world. The further pursuit, extension and establishment of such zones represent a significant contribution to the goal of a nuclear weapon-free world.

As I have said, zones were not a dominant feature of the first Ministerial declaration from the New Agenda group, and also not included in the two first General Assembly resolutions in 1998 and 1999, because of the disarmament focus of these statements. But it is possible that we will give nuclear weapon-free zones a more prominent role in our future work – not least when we start preparation for the next NPT cycle between 2002 and 2005, starting with the first preparatory committee in April 2002.

The New Agenda Coalition tried to move the nuclear disarmament debate into the moderate middle ground. This was a deliberate decision but difficult to bring into effect. Since the success of the NPT Review Conference, it has tended to be forgotten that the Initiative was originally not well received. It was attacked for being confrontational – which was, and is, simply not true. It was never intended to be anything else than productive. The member governments of the New Agenda demonstrated this later, in the run-up to the Review Conference, by trimming the proposals to the Conference and making them even more pragmatic, in order to prepare the ground for a serious dialogue. That strategy – which was in fact attacked from the other side for being too soft! – succeeded, as the outcome of the Review Conference demonstrates.

Towards the end of the conference, the nuclear weapon states approached the New Agenda delegations to try to reach agreement on the basis of the draft forward-looking document, prepared in the second subsidiary body of the Conference, under the chairmanship of New Zealand’s ambassador for disarmament. This document borrowed heavily from the New Agenda Coalition Working Paper. And in order to reach a final consensus document, the nuclear weapon states agreed to many of our demands. For the first time they also undertook unequivocally to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, a pledge which in fact goes beyond the most narrow interpretation of the commitments under Article VI of the NPT.

To this end, they committed themselves to a number of important practical steps, described as ‘systematic and progressive efforts’ (a reference to the commitment to disarmament made at the NPT Extension Conference in
1995), to implement Article VI of the NPT. Among these steps are the early entry-into-force and the full implementation of START II and the conclusion of START III as soon as possible, the eventual engagement of all nuclear weapon states in arms reductions, and the start of negotiations on fissile material, with a view to concluding them within five years. Some of the steps are more like processes than steps, as for example:

- the entry-into-force of the test ban and a moratorium on tests meanwhile;
- the creation of a subsidiary body in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, dealing with nuclear disarmament;
- the completion and implementation of the Trilateral Initiative between the United States, Russia and the IAEA;
- further reduction of tactical (shorter-range) nuclear weapons;
- measures to diminish the role of nuclear weapons in security policies, and also to reduce their operational status (i.e. to de-alert them, remove warheads from delivery vehicles, etc.); and
- the further development of the verification capabilities that will be required to provide assurance of compliance with nuclear disarmament agreements.

The most important step of all was, of course, the unequivocal undertaking. This part of the agreement, like many of the others, was negotiated directly between the five nuclear weapon states and the seven New Agenda delegations, who effectively came to represent all non-nuclear parties to the NPT.

Also very important was the recognition of the principle of transparency by the nuclear weapon states with regard to their nuclear weapon capabilities (which was hotly contested by the Chinese delegation to the conference), and the principle of irreversibility.

There are already signs, just three months after the Review Conference, that some of the nuclear weapon states might try to retreat from the commitments given at the Conference. They seem to be, as we in fact were, a bit taken aback by the enormity of the pledges made at the Conference.

Sweden is, in the second half of 2000, the coordinator of the New Agenda Coalition. We are at present analysing how our initiative can best secure what was agreed in May in the Review Conference, and whether the General Assembly might give the outcome of the review what might be called a confirming universalisation. We hope that important countries will
change their vote from an abstention in last year’s General Assembly, or a no vote, to a yes vote this year. Such a ‘universalisation’ will, if the voting pattern is forceful, increase the importance of the pledges and transform them into a strong political norm which is relevant also for the few countries that are not party to the NPT.

I will conclude by saying that the decision as to how the pledge from the Review Conference will be advanced and implemented will, strategically and tactically, be multifaceted and complex. In this we all have important roles: civil society and NGOs, civil servants such as myself, UN officials such as Jayantha Dhanapala, politicians, researchers, writers. And therefore this seminar is extremely timely and well conceived, as is the entire project. I wish you the best of luck.

Thank you very much, Mr Chairman.
This Concept Paper has two basic purposes – and audiences. It was originally developed as a background document to the Seminar on Nuclear Weapon-Free Zones. It became evident, however, during the comparatively long time over which the paper was developed, that it would also serve the much broader purpose of being a general introduction to the subject for a much wider group of people. It is for the latter reason that the paper is published here. It is divided into three parts. The first describes the situation in the field of disarmament since the end of the Cold War and lists and discusses both positive developments and significant setbacks. The second part deals with the existing nuclear weapon-free zones and what lessons can be learned from their different patterns of development. The third part, finally, discusses prospective nuclear weapon-free zones and the chances of implementing them within a shorter or longer time-frame. A very important point made in this section is that in order to create new zones the concept will have to be transformed to become much more of an active measure of nuclear arms reduction and abolition and not just a means of non-proliferation.

Background

The world stands at a historic crossroads today. A decade after the end of the Cold War, there is a real and growing danger that the momentum in favour of nuclear restraint and disarmament will be lost and reversed. This momentum has been weak, hesitant and uneven, although it is real, new and significant. But it has suffered major setbacks in the past two years. Unless it is defended and strengthened, the world could yet again drift into a new, high technology-driven, ruinous arms race.

Put starkly, the choice today may be between the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and a Second Nuclear Age.

Positive developments

The enormous nuclear arms build-up that characterised the first four decades of the Nuclear Age has shown a downward trend, especially since 1987. Since the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty signed that year, thousands of nuclear weapons have been decommissioned or de-alerted, although too many still remain in the global arsenal.

Apart from unilateral arms cuts by four of the recognised five nuclear weapon states (NWSs), the most important contribution to the reduction
process has come from the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaties (START) between the US and the USSR/Russia. When fully implemented, START-I and -II will have reduced the number of deployed strategic warheads in the US and Russia from over 20,000 in total to around 3,500 each. Sub-strategic or tactical nuclear weapons held by the US and Russia have been effectively withdrawn.

Three states that inherited nuclear weapons – Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan – have given up their nuclear arsenals. Three countries – South Africa, Brazil and Argentina – have renounced their threshold status by retrenching their nuclear weapons programmes. Two new nuclear weapon-free zones (NWFZs) have emerged since the end of the Cold War – the Southeast Asian nuclear weapon-free zone (Bangkok Treaty) and the African nuclear weapon-free zone (Treaty of Pelindaba). A third zone seems imminent in Central Asia.

In 1996, the Conference on Disarmament finally concluded the long delayed and repeatedly aborted negotiations on a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), which will significantly restrain further nuclear weapons refinement. A majority of the world’s states have signed (although not ratified) the CTBT.

A series of initiatives by non-nuclear weapon states and civil society actors and organisations have emerged in the post-Cold War era, particularly in the 1990s. These support or articulate the demand for rapid step-by-step nuclear disarmament as a goal that is both feasible and desirable. They include initiatives by the Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), the International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms (IALANA), the International Network of Engineers and Scientists Against Proliferation (INESAP), the Canberra Commission Report, the Statement of 61 Generals and Admirals, the July 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the illegality of nuclear weapons, the statements of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC) and the Middle Powers Initiative (both 1998), and so on. The NAC, comprised of Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden, has emerged as an influential state-level grouping that persistently advocates nuclear restraint and arms reduction.

The common thread in all these initiatives is the powerful argument that nuclear weapons create insecurity, not security, and must be abolished. Nuclear deterrence is deeply flawed, being unreliable, highly fallible and
strategically irrational. It makes no sense to seek security through the use or threat of use of these weapons of mass destruction. Indeed, according to the ICJ, nuclear weapons abolition is a moral imperative as well as a legal obligation imposed upon all states without exception.

Furthermore, there is now an evident shift in international public opinion in favour of nuclear weapons abolition, including several states closely allied with the United States. For the first time, serious differences have emerged within the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) alliance over its nuclear policy and strategic doctrine. In many countries, and in many international fora, there is growing pressure to institutionalise a multilateral body with a mandate to negotiate total nuclear disarmament. For example, an international group of NGOs has drafted a model Nuclear Weapons Abolition Convention and called for negotiations within a multilateral framework. Different countries are also demanding talks on global nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

The prolonged uncertainty over START-II has ended with its ratification by the Russian Duma. Russia’s offer to reduce its nuclear arsenal further to 1,000–1,500 warheads under START-III, if the US also does so, is a welcome development as well.

Last but not least, the first full review conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), five years after it was indefinitely extended, has produced (May 2000) a unanimous resolution that underscores the vital importance of an ‘unequivocal’ commitment on the part of the nuclear weapon states to total nuclear weapons abolition, without ifs or buts, and not only as an ‘ultimate’ goal. The resolution represents a victory for voices of restraint such as the NAC and a gain for the cause of nuclear disarmament.

Significant setbacks

The generally positive pro-disarmament momentum has, however, recently suffered some major setbacks. Indeed, it may be in jeopardy.

In 1998, India and Pakistan jolted the world by conducting nuclear tests and declaring themselves nuclear powers. The damage done by these tests to global disarmament efforts is basically twofold. First, it has increased the likelihood that other nuclear-capable states might become de facto or declared nuclear weapon states. Second, and more important, it has strengthened the tendencies in the existing NWSs in favour of the continued retention and further development of nuclear weapons. This has de-
bilitating consequences on the prospect of capping arms development, rap-
didly reducing stockpiles of nuclear weapons everywhere and eventually
achieving a nuclear weapon-free world.

There have been other disturbing recent developments since 1998. The
most notable of these are: the US Senate’s rejection of the ratification of
the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty; the expansion and enlargement of
NATO; the adoption of an offensive nuclear doctrine despite the end of the
Cold War and the disappearance of the Warsaw Pact; and the US attempt to
weaken, if not scuttle, the treaty on the limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile
systems (ABM Treaty) of 1972.

Perhaps the most menacing development is the United States’ move to-
wards a National Missile Defence system (NMD), as well as Theatre Mis-
sile Defence (TMD) in East Asia. If this comes to pass under the pressure
of strong lobbies in the military-industrial complex and both major politi-
cal parties, it is liable to wreck existing arms control arrangements, create
profound suspicions, imbalances and uncertainties, and probably ignite an
entirely new arms race at the global level. This spells the real danger that
the post-Cold War momentum in favour of nuclear restraint and disarm-
ament will be reversed. The world could witness a Second Nuclear Age just
when there are compelling reasons, and a historic opportunity, to eradicate
the scourge of nuclear weapons altogether.

Strengthening the
momentum

Defending, preserving, nurturing and strengthening the post-Cold War dis-
armament momentum in the face of these negative trends has now become
vitally important. This can only be done through the pursuit of comprehen-
sive agendas for total disarmament as well as incremental/transitional
measures. Without a comprehensive agenda, step-by-step approaches risk
inordinately delaying the achievement of complete nuclear disarmament.
On the other hand, advocating schemes for total disarmament risks being
seen as a utopian effort which, in the absence of the visible successes as-
associated with step-by-step efforts, may lead to frustration, disillusionment,
declining interest and weakened capacity to mobilise public concerns
about nuclear disarmament. Clearly, both strategies need to be pursued
simultaneously.

Nuclear Weapon-
Free Zones

In regard to crucial transitional steps towards global disarmament, the time
has assuredly come for one particular initiative, which corresponds to a
deeply felt need by the peoples and governments of many countries, in-
cluding the peoples of some NWSs and some nuclear-capable states. This
is the implementation of new nuclear weapon-free zones in regions where nuclear weapons currently play a role as a security concept, to be progressively extended from the Southern to the Northern Hemisphere eventually to cover the entire world. Indeed, NWFZs already cover almost the entire Southern Hemisphere, and serious discussions are in progress on several prospective zones.

NWFZs effectively ban the manufacture and deployment of nuclear weapons throughout a specific region and prohibit the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons by the NWSs against countries in the zone. With the establishment of each zone, the concept of NWFZs has itself continuously evolved. Each NWFZ treaty has been a little stricter and more effective than the preceding one. Future nuclear weapon-free zones would thus be likely also to prevent the transit of nuclear weapons through their territorial waters via legally binding agreements and protocols to be signed by the NWSs.

NWFZs have the advantage of offering a concerted effort by a whole region towards a common security structure. Through this, they carry the potential to include both NPT and CTBT hold-out states as well as recognised NWSs. In many ways, NWFZs would create a region-specific thrust towards nuclear weapons withdrawal and abolition, to supplement the vertical thrust that the extensive cuts in nuclear arms and prevention of their future refinement has developed so far. This latter thrust is most clearly reflected in the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, signed in 1996 – the first significant multilateral nuclear arms control measure in 30 years since the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Now that the CTBT has already been signed by 155 states, establishing new NWFZs would be among the most important measures to promote nuclear restraint and disarmament. Such a step would be on a par with step-by-step, class-by-class weapons reductions, de-alerting, separating nuclear warheads from delivery vehicles, and elimination of tactical weapons.

This is not an exaggeration. In regions where all states are parties to the NPT, NWFZs can strengthen and go beyond the NPT. Under the NPT, non-nuclear weapons signatories promised not to produce or possess nuclear weapons in exchange for the commitment made by the NWSs under Article VI to eliminate all of their nuclear weapons. In effect, the NPT represented a bargain: non-proliferation in return for a commitment by the NWSs to negotiate total global disarmament in good faith. In regions
where not all states are parties to the NPT, an NWFZ could be seen as a first step towards integrating additional countries within the global non-proliferation regime, as demonstrated by the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

The failure of the NWSs to abide by the spirit and letter of Article VI of the NPT has created a gap or hiatus between non-proliferation and disarmament objectives. NWFZs are one of the most important ways of consolidating non-proliferation (indeed, the NPT encourages the establishment of NWFZs) and, at the same time, of bridging this gap.

Existing zones: consolidating non-proliferation

As a non-proliferation measure, NWFZs supplement the NPT by banning the deployment of nuclear weapons on the territory of non-nuclear weapon states. They can also bring territorial waters under such a ban. Furthermore, such independent zonal treaties have the flexibility to incorporate other restrictions and bans not envisaged in the NPT. For example, the Treaty of Pelindaba bans nuclear weapons-related research. The existing NWFZs have all in their own ways reflected this reinforcement and consolidation of the global non-proliferation regime.

So far, five agreements have been signed to bring about NWFZs in different parts of the world: Antarctica, Latin America, the South Pacific, Southeast Asia and Africa, in that order. In 1959, the Antarctic Treaty effectively made Antarctica a nuclear-free zone. The 1967 Treaty of Tlatelolco prohibited testing, manufacture, storage and direct or indirect acquisition of nuclear weapons or vehicles for launching them. Argentina, Brazil and finally Cuba have now joined the treaty, making Latin America the first continent to be fully nuclear-free.

In 1985, the Treaty of Rarotonga creating a South Pacific NWFZ was signed. The impetus behind this was provided not merely by Australia and New Zealand, but by many South Pacific island states and ‘territories’, where human lives and ecological systems were adversely affected by nuclear testing. The Treaty is seen by peoples of this region as a major political and moral gain.

The Southeast Asian NWFZ, including all ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) states, entered into force on 27 March 1997, while the Treaty of Pelindaba, comprising the whole of the African continent, was agreed in 1996 but awaits full ratification and entry into force. Furthermore, a Central Asian NWFZ is close to being established. Negotiations for its treaty-level formulation have reached a critical stage. And there is strong domestic political support for the proposal in the states of the region.
While it took almost 20 years for the South Pacific NWFZ to emerge after the zone created by the Tlatelolco Treaty, the lag between the former treaty and successive treaties has diminished significantly. Even more encouraging, each NWFZ treaty has been a little stricter and a little more effective as a restraint measure than the preceding one. The Latin American NWFZ did not ban ‘peaceful’ nuclear explosions, but the South Pacific NWFZ did that, as well as banning the dumping of radioactive wastes. The African NWFZ has banned nuclear weapon-related research as well. And the Southeast Asian NWFZ is the first to touch upon the issue of ‘freedom of transit’ for ships and submarines bearing nuclear weapons through Exclusive Economic Zones and continental shelf waters. The vision of this project is that future NWFZs may be as strict on curbing current deployments or preventing the overt deployment of nuclear weapons.

In addition to the existing five NWFZs, there exist numerous cities and municipalities that have declared themselves nuclear weapon-free or nuclear-free. These are not examples of formally acknowledged Nuclear Weapon-Free Zones as they lack international legal status. They are, however, important as expressions of public sympathy and committed support for disarmament in general and the establishment of NWFZs in particular.

Thousands of cities, towns and municipalities in different parts of the world have declared themselves nuclear weapon-free. In Japan, for instance, 2,300 municipalities are nuclear weapon-free, and three-fourths of New Zealand has also been declared free of nuclear weapons. Even in the US, such nuclear-free areas cover some 10 million people.

The significant public opinion generated through this process played an important role in impelling successive governments in the South Pacific to promote the Treaty of Rarotonga and ensure that US ships carrying nuclear weapons are not to come into their territorial waters.

Prospective zones: bridging the gap between non-proliferation and disarmament

At least four prospective NWFZs – Northeast Asia, South Asia, Middle East and Central Europe – are currently being proposed. All these prospective zones differ from existing zones in certain crucial ways. First, they either include or border de facto or declared NWSs. In one important case, namely South Asia, there have been two recent breakouts from the non-proliferation regime. Second, in two of the mentioned four regions, non-nuclear countries still believe that sharing a nuclear umbrella plays an essential role in their security.
Undoubtedly, all this adds a new quality to NWFZs, though it poses serious obstacles to the establishment of such zones. However, the urgency and seriousness of the security situation in these regions require precisely these efforts. Establishing these prospective NWFZs would represent a historic shift in the concept, scope and function of NWFZs because they would require pro-active, even radical measures, as distinct from passive steps, including the actual withdrawal, dismantling and destruction of nuclear weapons.

It is hard to conceive of a practical transitional alternative to such a transformed and radicalised notion of NWFZs as an active measure of nuclear arms reduction and abolition (and not just of non-proliferation) in many regions of the world that are menaced by nuclear weapons. Such a concept of NWFZs applies with particular force to all significant geographical regions of the world in which nuclear weapons play a major role in security policy. It is hard to conceive of such regions, as distinct from single states, where a prospective NWFZ does not make eminent sense.

Such prospective NWFZs have a transformed function. They must challenge the concept of a ‘nuclear umbrella’. And they must bridge the gap between non-proliferation and disarmament in ways that the NWFZs set up hitherto did not do.

Northeast Asian zone

Many proposals have been made for an NWFZ in this region, including some that cut deep into Chinese, Russian and US territories. Under a relatively modest proposal, three non-nuclear states in this region, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), the Republic of Korea (ROK) and Japan, can become the core of a Northeast Asian NWFZ, with three declared NWSs surrounding them, the People’s Republic of China, the Russian Federation and the United States. (This proposal does not end with such a geographical limitation, but envisages the gradual expansion of the nuclear weapons-free area into a larger landmass.)

However, even this modest proposal has its own difficulties. One non-nuclear state, DPRK, once declared its withdrawal from the NPT, but now appears ambivalent about its commitment to the treaty. Another state, Japan, is under the nuclear umbrella of the US and has an ambitious plutonium stockpile programme, which raises concerns about its possible future military use. Another persisting concern is the possibility of redeployment of US nuclear weapons in the ROK and Okinawa, Japan.
Establishing an NWFZ in Northeast Asia is crucial to preventing a potential escalation of distrust among the nations involved, especially between Japan and the two Koreas, or a reunified Korea. And there are favourable current circumstances for the establishment of such an NWFZ. The three key non-nuclear states have already openly declared policies that they will not cross the nuclear threshold. The 1992 Joint Declaration on Denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula does not yet have a legal status, but there are good prospects of this being achieved.

Also in progress is the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organisation (KEDO) process under which North Korea agrees to full-scope IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) safeguards in return for civilian nuclear reactors. In order to form an NWFZ, this process can be combined with Japan’s three non-nuclear principles, which state that Japan will not manufacture, possess or allow the ‘bringing-in’ (stationing or transit) of nuclear weapons. Insofar as North Korea has been deemed a ‘rouge state’ by the US or, more recently, as one of the ‘states of concern’, and this has in turn been used to legitimise plans for establishing an NMD and a TMD, a Northeast Asian NWFZ will be a powerful political mechanism for undermining the plans for NMD and an East Asian TMD.

South Asian zone

The possibility of a nuclear exchange or outbreak either by accident, miscalculation or design anywhere in the world is at its greatest in South Asia. Nuclear weapons are most likely to be used in conditions of wartime or war-like hostility. South Asia is now the only part of the world where there has been a continuous ‘hot-cold war’ between the same two rivals (now nuclear-armed) for over 50 years. These tensions show no signs of diminishing, making the issue of establishing a South Asian NWFZ particularly pertinent. If, as is clearly conceivable, India and Pakistan move towards overt deployment in the near future, regional security will dramatically worsen.

In such a situation, in the name of ‘realism’, there will be considerable pressure to shift the focus to risk reduction, safety and confidence-building, diverting attention from the agenda of disarmament. However, the problems with endorsing such a shift should be clearly understood. The lessons of the Cold War era clearly confirm that it is unrealistic to believe that significant safety and risk reduction measures have a serious chance of successful implementation without a prior transformation of political relations between rivals. The increased likelihood of a nuclear outbreak makes a continuing focus on regional nuclear disarmament all the more urgent and important.
As long as overt deployment is avoided, the South Asian status quo might seem close to a de facto nuclear weapon-free zone. The situation is, however, unstable. Though the strategy has to be carefully conceived, the proposal for an NWFZ in South Asia would be an appropriate lever to shift the nuclear policy process in the region away from the frightening scenario of overt deployment.

Moreover, of the now seven self-declared NWSs, only one, Pakistan, is officially amenable to the idea of renouncing its own arsenal in the context of a regional NWFZ. This gives a distinctive practical relevance to the proposal for setting up a South Asian NWFZ even though India currently remains opposed to it. All other South Asian states, except Bhutan, have repeatedly supported UN resolutions calling for a South Asian NWFZ. There is growing discomfort in them, and among their peoples, at the nuclearisation of the region, and their vulnerability to India–Pakistan rivalry.

**Middle Eastern zone**

The political case for a Middle Eastern Zone Free of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) has never been stronger than it is today. Unlike the other three regions, all countries, including Israel, have endorsed the general principle of establishing such a zone. This is a major gain. But the prospects for such a zone are critically dependent on the short and medium term fall-out of the regional process for the just settlement of the question of Palestine, the chances of which have receded with the coming to power of a right-dominated government in Israel.

Nevertheless, whenever negotiations between Israel, on the one hand, and the Palestine Liberation Organisation and Syria, on the other, are resumed, it would be necessary to return to and build on the proposals that already exist for a zone free of all WMDs.

Here, it is not enough to speak of a Middle Eastern zone that abolishes nuclear weapons alone by Israel. For true security and peace to emerge, all weapons of mass destruction, including chemical and biological arms, must also be abolished. Given recent developments related to the Biological and Chemical Weapons Conventions, especially the former, this does not seem any longer like a mirage. The BWC has been signed by all states in the region besides Israel, while the CWC is gaining momentum.

At the same time, a second, crucial condition for denuclearising the Middle East, and one important for the Arab States, remains unfulfilled. This is peace and reconciliation between them and Israel, itself linked to
the Palestine question. The prospect for a zone free of all WMDs in the Middle East still hinges on this key issue.

Central European zone

The end of the Cold War, as well as the emergence of various Social Democratic governments in Europe, may have created a new, positive situation for the establishment of an NWFZ in the central region of the continent. With the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the rationale for the US nuclear weapons deployed in Europe’s NATO countries has disappeared. For the first time, there are fissures in NATO with member-states such as Canada and Germany pressing for a re-evaluation of the organisation’s traditional nuclear doctrine, including questioning, for example, its first-use doctrine (possible first use of nuclear weapons against a non-nuclear attack). There is also growing criticism of nuclear sharing arrangements under NATO as violative of commitments given by these non-nuclear allies as members of the NPT. These existing concerns, and initiatives around them, feed naturally into the struggle to mobilise wider support for a regional NWFZ.

Progress may come from unexpected initiatives. In July 1999, Austria passed a law that bans the deployment, transportation, testing and use of nuclear weapons on Austrian territory. The law even makes sure that Austria is not allowed to take part in nuclear sharing should it join NATO. As in the case of Mongolia, Austria is not considered as an NWFZ by the United Nations. However, if a second state joined Austria, a nucleus for a European NWFZ would be formed that could obtain official UN status.

NATO enlargement, and US retreats on the CTBT and the ABM Treaty, have greatly alarmed Russia. Contrariwise, the establishment of a Central European NWFZ would very significantly allay Russian fears, improve regional security and strengthen the disarmament momentum. Russia has endorsed such a zone in principle.

Conclusion

Today, the demand for NWFZs in the Northern Hemisphere involving states with close affinity to nuclear weapons is no longer abstract and cannot be dismissed as mere propaganda. There have, for example, been serious, well-conceived proposals for NWFZs in the Nordic states, in the Iberian peninsula, in the Mediterranean region, in the Baltic states. Some of these have a long history and enjoy a measure of popular support. These proposals need to be pursued.

Two NWFZs have come into existence since the end of the Cold War, and a third, the Central Asian NWFZ, is starting to take practical shape. Every
new NWFZ has been stricter than the preceding one and this tendency is believed to continue. Today, more than half of the world’s landmass and 99 per cent of the Southern Hemisphere land areas are under the coverage of NWFZs.

Apart from their direct contribution to non-proliferation and disarmament, existing and prospective NWFZs could play an important symbolic role by continuously expanding the nuclear weapon-free areas of the world and gradually isolating the nuclear weapon states. The moral and political impact of more and more parts of the world becoming nuclear-free will significantly strengthen the existing momentum towards complete global nuclear disarmament.
The Uppsala Declaration on Nuclear Weapon-Free Zones

A decade after the end of the Cold War, the world faces a stark choice: achieve the complete abolition of nuclear weapons, or face a second Nuclear Age with new generations of even more horrifying nuclear and other high-tech weapons.

We believe it is imperative on moral, political and legal grounds, and for reasons of security to abolish these weapons, and build a strong momentum towards complete global nuclear disarmament. This is a precondition for human and environmental security.

Therefore, more than 50 scholars, peace activists, diplomats and experts from six continents met 1–4 September 2000 at Uppsala in Sweden. The conference, convened by the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, the Transnational Institute, Peace Depot, Gensuikin (Japan Congress Against A- & H-Bombs) and INESAP (International Network of Engineers & Scientists Against Proliferation), discussed the feasibility of establishing Nuclear Weapon-Free Zones (NWFZs) across the world.

The dramatic threat of a new Nuclear Age highlights the urgent need for comprehensive nuclear disarmament and rapid destruction of the arsenals of all nuclear weapon states. It also calls for incremental measures towards these goals. These include a nuclear test ban, a missile flight test ban, separation of warheads from missiles, a ban on the production of fissile materials used for making nuclear weapons and appropriate disposal or safeguarding of the accumulated stockpiles of such material.

Crucial among these transitional measures are Nuclear Weapon-Free Zones. These would ban the manufacture, deployment and transit of nuclear weapons in specific regions, and demand of nuclear armed states that the zones not be threatened or attacked with nuclear weapons. This would help make it possible to permanently fold the nuclear umbrella, the so-called nuclear protection that nuclear weapon states offer non-nuclear allies.

Such zones already exist in Latin America, the South Pacific, Africa and Southeast Asia. They have prevented nuclear proliferation in those areas. A new zone is currently being negotiated in Central Asia. Several regions continue to face severe nuclear dangers, a challenge exacerbated by menacing attempts to build both National and Theatre Missile Defence systems. These regions include Northeast Asia, South Asia, the Middle East and Central Europe. The creation of NWFZs here would not only limit proliferation but support active nuclear disarmament with the dismantling of overt and clandestine nuclear weapons and fissile stocks and rolling
back existing nuclear programmes. Such extension of NWFZs to the Northern hemisphere will enhance collective security and strengthen efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons completely.

An NWFZ treaty in Northeast Asia would effectively address security concerns in Japan and the Korean peninsula. A South Asian NWFZ would prevent India and Pakistan from making or deploying nuclear weapons in this volatile region, where the danger of a nuclear exchange is today the greatest anywhere in the world. In the Middle East, the establishment of a zone free of Israel’s nuclear weapons, and all other weapons of mass destruction in the region, represents a key component of regional security. In Central and Eastern Europe an NWFZ would defend the post-Cold War peace gains now threatened by NATO expansion as well as facilitate withdrawal of remaining tactical nuclear weapons.

There are no technological obstacles to effective verification of NWFZ agreements. Establishing such zones requires political will, organisation and mobilisation.

We hereby commit ourselves to:

- Creating a Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone Network to coordinate efforts in support of new and existing zones, including actively advocating the creation of NWFZs in Central Asia, Northeast Asia, South Asia, the Middle East and Central Europe.
- Public education on the horrors of nuclear weapons, the urgency of nuclear disarmament and the value of NWFZs.
- Supporting the Latin American proposal to the United Nations General Assembly for an international conference of all parties to the Nuclear Weapon-Free Zones.
- Strengthening the existing zones and demanding strict adherence to the treaty provisions by the nuclear weapon states.
- Engaging policy-makers and parliamentarians worldwide in support of NWFZs.
- Supporting single-country Nuclear Weapon-Free Zones.
- Supporting nuclear-free cities, provinces and other areas governed by local authorities.
- Opposing Theatre and National Missile Defence systems as an integral part of our opposition to nuclear weapons.
- Working to defend nuclear whistle-blowers, such as Mordechai Vanunu, now entering his 15th year of imprisonment for having revealed Israel’s nuclear arsenal; we demand his immediate release.
Peoples and governments everywhere, as well as the United Nations, have a contribution to make to the creation and expansion of nuclear weapon-free zones. We urge others to join us in mobilising energies and resources towards achieving the noble goal of global nuclear disarmament.

* * *

Participants included: Karamat Ali (Pakistan Peace Coalition, Pakistan), Phyllis Bennis (Transnational Institute – TNI, and Institute for Policy Studies – IPS, USA), Praful Bidwai (TNI, India), John Burroughs (Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy, USA), Jackie Cabasso (Western State Legal Foundation, USA), Cheong Wook-sik (Civil Network for a Peaceful Korea, South Korea), Merav Datan (International Physicians for Prevention of Nuclear War – IPPNW, and Physicians for Social Responsibility – PSR, USA), Fiona Dove (TNI, Netherlands), Fawzy Hussein Hammad (Atomic Energy Authority, Egypt), Michael Hamel-Green (Pacific Concerns Resource Centre – PCRC, Suva, Fiji, and Victoria University, Australia), Niclas Hällström (Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, Sweden), Masako Ikegami-Andersson (Stockholm University, Sweden), Thomas Johansson (The Swedish Pugwash group, Sweden), Rebecca Johnson (Acronym Institute, UK), Harsh Kapoor (South Asians Against Nukes, France), Akira Kawasaki (Peace Depot, Japan), David Knight (Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament – CND, UK), Lee Sam-sung (The Catholic University of Korea, South Korea), Issam Makhoul (Member of Knesset, Israel), Ron McCoy (IPPNW, Malaysia), Bahig Nassar (Arab NGO Co-ordinating Committee, Egypt), Otfried Nassauer (Berlin Informationcentre for Transatlantic Security – BITS, Germany), Abdul Nayyar (Pakistan Peace Coalition, Pakistan), Agneta Norberg (Swedish Peace Council, Sweden), Olle Nordberg (Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, Sweden), Sara Olsson (Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society, Sweden), Sandeep Pandey (National Alliance of People’s Movements – NAPM, India), Charles Parker (Uppsala University, Sweden), Scott Parrish (USA), Jan Prawitz (Swedish Institute for International Affairs, Sweden), Curt Riberdahl (Swedish Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms, Sweden), Enrique Román-Moray (The Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Carribean – OPANAL, Mexico), Virginia Rosa (USA), Satya Sivaraman (Journalist and environmental activist, Thailand), Alice Slater (Global Resource Action Center for the Environment – GRACE, USA), Gideon Spiro (Israel Committee for Mordechai Vanunu and for a Middle East Free of Atomic, Biological and Chemical Weaponry, Israel), Masa Takubo (Japan Congress Against A- and H-Bombs – Gensuikin, Japan), Hiro Umebayashi (Peace Depot and Pacific Campaign for Disarmament and Security – PCDS, Japan), Lars van Dassen (Uppsala University, Sweden), Achin Vanaik (TNI, India), Leonore Wide (Swedish Physicians Against Nuclear Arms, Sweden), Christer Åkesson (Church of Sweden Aid).
African Writers–Publishers Seminar
A Report
By Wendy Davies

The African Writers–Publishers seminar (Arusha III) was held at Tarangire Sopa Lodge, Arusha, Tanzania, in February 1998. It was part of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation’s long-term involvement in indigenous publishing in Africa which began with the seminar on ‘The Development of Autonomous Capacity in Publishing in Africa’ in 1984 (Arusha I) and continued with the seminar on ‘The Future of Indigenous Publishing in Africa’ in 1996 (Arusha II). The aim of the Arusha III seminar was to facilitate not only a better understanding of the publishing process – and, indeed, to ‘demystify’ it – but to establish a spirit of mutual confidence between writers and publishers which would benefit the whole society. Twenty leading African writers and publishers and 10 resource persons with a background in African writing and publishing met at the seminar, which was directed by Walter Bgoya (publisher) and Niyi Osundare (writer) and organised by the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation and the African Books Collective (ABC). Another outcome of the seminar was the publication in September 1999 of The African Writers’ Handbook, edited by James Gibbs and Jack Mapanje and published by ABC in association with the Foundation.

Wendy Davies is a writer and editor with extensive knowledge of African cultural developments. Since 1986 she has been sub-editor of Development Dialogue.

Our discussions should produce a few sparks that will illumine the dark spots in writer–publisher relations. Let us not be afraid of disagreeing, so as to reach a more fruitful understanding.

Niyi Osundare

It’s OK to raise issues with an emotional charge.... But we can’t have a seminar of fireworks only. We have to concretise ideas.

Walter Bgoya

Introduction

An African Writers–Publishers Seminar organised by the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation and the African Books Collective (ABC) was held at Tarangire Sopa Lodge, Arusha, Tanzania, from 23 to 26 February 1998. Directed by Walter Bgoya (publisher) and Niyi Osundare (writer), it was attended by 20 African writers and publishers and ten resource persons with a background in publishing (see page 83).
Two previous seminars on indigenous African publishing* had been organised by the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation and held in Arusha, Tanzania. The African Writers–Publishers Seminar (Arusha III) revisited some of the concerns of the earlier two seminars (Arusha I and II); it also represented a new development since its focus was literary publishing, rather than publishing in general, and since it brought creative writers into the dialogue with publishers.

The specific impetus for the seminar was a recommendation made in March 1996 by participants at Arusha II that a group of writers and publishers should come together with the aim of working out a ‘New Deal’ which would result in a more united approach to the problems and challenges of strengthening African literature and culture.

From Statements about Writer–Publisher Relations:

I could not really regard myself as a publisher unless I was publishing other [creative] writers. And so I went in search of manuscripts. Nigeria has a host of would-be writers who complain endlessly of the absence of publishing outlets. The charge is well founded. The older houses are not publishing as much fiction as they ought to. In some cases their editorial departments are ill-staffed. But the other side of the coin is that good manuscripts are not pouring in.

* Ken Saro-Wiwa (1992)

The planning group for the African Writers–Publishers Seminar began the process of promoting debate by circulating three documents in advance: Statements about Writer–Publisher Relations, consisting of extracts from published articles by writers and publishers; an Analysis of Writers’ Questionnaires (following circulation of a questionnaire); and Writer–Publisher Relations: The Publishing Perspective, a collation/analysis of publishers’ responses to writers’ views, together with articles and information on publishing and marketing, especially in the African context. A specially commissioned background paper by Hans Zell, The Production & Marketing of African Books: a Msungu perspective, was also circulated.

* The first seminar (Arusha I) was entitled ‘The Development of Autonomous Publishing Capacity in Africa’ and was held in April 1984; the edited papers are published in Development Dialogue 1984:1–2. The second (Arusha II), on ‘The Future of Indigenous Publishing in Africa’, was held more than a decade later, in March 1996, during which time a number of developments and changes had begun to give African publishing a much more significant presence; a seminar report was issued in May 1996 and the revised and edited papers were published in Development Dialogue 1997:1–2.
From *Statements about Writer–Publisher Relations*:

Today that’s what I say to publishers: we must plant trees in our own country. Don’t worry how others do it in their countries; what we call power today, is the fruit of their trees. Our tree should comprise the writers, the publishers and the state structures. Around it, the consumers are waiting for the fruit to drop. ... Of course, the writers, publishers and state structures cannot function together without plans and agreements, and they form the trunk of our tree. Hence we say that the agreements are important. We need a contract [a new minimum terms contract] to ensure minimum standards of ethics within the publishing industry and to help conscientise our writers.

*Cont Mhlanga (1994)*

The seminar programme incorporated two main elements in order to reach a better understanding and lead to an agreed strategy for the future. It was designed to enable the sharing of information, particularly on aspects of the publishing business, and also to allow the expression of frustrations, hopes and aspirations by both writers and publishers. No formal papers were delivered, and presentations were generally short and practical in focus.

On the second and third days the seminar was attended by Professor Juma Kapuya, Minister of Education and Culture for the United Republic of Tanzania, who gave an address on the subject of government, publishing and culture.

The framework for the opening session was set by the seminar directors, Walter Bgoya and Niyi Osundare, addressing the question ‘What is a publisher?’ and ‘What is a writer?’ respectively.

Beginning with Immanuel Kant’s statement that ‘the nature of the species is the thing in its most perfect form’, Walter Bgoya described the ideal publisher as active, productive and successful. To achieve success the publisher needs to treat authors with ‘respect, love and care’, and to be an all-round person truly engaged in his or her work. In practice, he suggested, various types of publishers can be identified: the visionary, who is committed to publishing and treats authors well but is not necessarily successful; the professional, efficient publisher who is concerned with making the business profitable but is not necessarily a ‘nice person’; and the publisher who combines vision and professionalism. The latter combination of qualities is rare in one individual but may some-
times be found within one publishing house, with different individuals contributing their different strengths (also probably resulting in creative tension).

In Africa, the same range of types of publishers is to be found as elsewhere. But in the African context, Walter Bgoya argued, the ideal combination of qualities that results in good publishing can be achieved only by professionals working together. There is a need for writers to understand the practical realities and costs involved in printing, warehousing, distribution and other processes. For their part, publishers need to consider what they can do to serve writers better. With the large growth in the number of publishing houses in Africa, the chances of there being more enterprises that are both visionary and professional has also increased.

Niyi Osundare emphasised that the writer is first and foremost a human being, ‘a feeling, thinking person’: sensitivity is the source of the writer’s strength but it is also the source of his or her vulnerability, of the tendency to be hurt by things that ‘merely glide over the consciousness of others’. However, to dwell only on this capacity for intensity of feeling is, he admitted, to idealise the writer, who is also capable of pettiness, meanness and greed, and is prey to ‘the age-old green-eyed monsters’ of jealousy and envy.

[The writer’s sensibility] enhances that ability to have or respond to the proverbial kick in the stomach, to pursue a sensation to its dark, obscure limit. A writer is a space filled with echoes louder and lasting longer than the voices that inaugurated them.

Writing comes from that part of human consciousness that is hard to define. It hardly permits other activities to take place.  

_Niyi Osundare_

Equally important is that writing be regarded as work. It is an occupation that consumes mental energy and emotion, is ‘life-taking’ as well as life-sustaining, and as such deserves appropriate reward. Niyi Osundare argued that the writer has the right to remuneration commensurate with his/her work; ‘a decent life’ free from poverty and degradation, and ‘a keen interest’ on the publishers’ part in the personal welfare of their authors. Other entitlements are adequate information about such issues as publishing schedules and sales, high-quality production, and adequate promotion. Appealing to publishers to appreciate that ‘the book is to the author what a baby is to a mother’, Niyi Osundare asked them to think
about how the mother feels if, for example, her baby is denied a proper
outdooring or isomoloruko (naming).

[Publishing should be based on] respect for the book as an indispensable
part of the world’s cultural and intellectual heritage.

*Niyi Osundare*

Some participants felt there were characteristics common to both writer
and publisher that had been overlooked in the two presentations. Cont
Mhlanga pointed out that it is not only the publisher who is involved in
business, describing the writer as ‘a businessman who sells stories’. Nor is
intensity of feeling the monopoly of the writer: in Irene Staunton’s view
everything that Niyi Osundare had said about writing could also be said
about publishing, which called for the same degree of ‘passion and belief’.
Per Gedin, among others, endorsed the view that the publisher, like the
writer, makes an emotional investment in the enterprise, and Akoss Ofori-
Mensah spoke of a commitment to making literature available in Africa,
especially since African writers were often better known outside their own
countries.

*We are the beginning. The publishers are just an afterthought. In the
beginning was the Word.*

*Atukwei Okai*

*Writers in Africa are truth-tellers. The publisher must have the same
commitment to the truth.*

*Irene Staunton*

In response to Niyi Osundare’s statement about the rights of the writer,
Victor Nwankwo said that the expectation of reward for labour; a decent
life and freedom from poverty was reasonable only in so far as these could
be paid for by the writer’s royalties; likewise, the publisher would take a
personal interest in the author if they became friends, but there was no ob-
ligation to do so. The stereotypes of ‘struggling writer and sumptuously-
living publisher’ also need to be challenged, he suggested; although a
small minority is interested only in profiteering, most African publishers
are themselves struggling to do a professional job in very difficult circum-
stances.

*Speaking as a saboteur [among writers], I would say it is important to be
realistic and objective about the problems that African publishers have to
deal with.*

*Tess Onwueme*
I am touched by the emotional way in which Niyi Osundare describes writers. But he didn't present the whole picture. Publishers have to establish a relationship with many others – booksellers, the rest of the book chain, not just authors.

*James Tumusiime*

Some writers cited bad personal experiences of publishers. Niyi Osundare spoke of having had eight publishers, of whom only ‘two or three’ sent royalty statements on a regular basis; from one publisher, with whom he had published in 1983, he had received no royalties to date. Kole Omotoso was highly critical of one of his publishers who had provided no information on reprints of a book of his in the ten years since its publication and who had charged him 50 per cent (£451) of the cost of freighting books from Nigeria to the African Books Collective in the UK, deducting this sum from his royalties. Shimmer Chinodya pointed out that problems could arise with foreign as well as African publishers and cited his own experience when a novel of his had been translated into German, the publisher had subsequently died and he had received no financial statement or information for two years. Chukwuemeka Ike remarked that large publishers could ‘die’ too and that when his publisher, Fontana, had folded he had not been informed.

It should be acknowledged that among the key professions in the book industry, the author/writer is the most vulnerable.

*Juma Kapuya*

Taban lo Liyong referred to two of Africa’s most celebrated writers, both now dead, who in his view had suffered unscrupulous treatment at the hands of publishers: Okot p’Bitek had sold the manuscript of *Song of Lawino* for 200 Kenyan shillings outright, and it was not until the third edition was published that any renegotiation between publisher and author had taken place; similarly, Amos Tutuola had been ill-equipped because of his traditional, rural background and limited formal education to understand his contracts, which were distinctly unfavourable to him, and after his death his son had likewise been unaware of the monetary value of Tutuola’s original manuscripts or the case for retaining the manuscripts in Nigeria.

Femi Osofisan mentioned the experience of a friend working in a publishing house who had been sacked after complaining about the treatment of a particular author (non-payment of royalties and an attempt by the publisher to trick the author into a reprint after putting his books out in the rain).
What can be done to enhance the quality of writers’ work? ... Writers don’t want to be patronised but they need economic support.

Chukwuemeka Ike

A recurrent theme from the opening session onwards was the need for an enabling environment for writers and writing, an issue that has implications not only for writer–publisher relations but also for government policy and for writers’ self-help initiatives.

There was general agreement that the publisher can play a crucial part in nurturing the writer. Simple courtesies such as acknowledging the receipt of manuscripts should be a matter of course and, when a manuscript is rejected, it is helpful if publishers are able to offer some constructive criticism along with a clear explanation of why it is being returned. However, writers have to be realistic in this respect; Irene Staunton said that Baobab receives approximately 20 unsolicited manuscripts a week and Robert Sulley reported that Heinemann employs someone full-time just to deal with unsolicited manuscripts submitted to the African Writers Series, Caribbean Writers Series and Junior Caribbean Writers Series. The question of how long a writer should be expected to wait for a response from a publisher after submission of a manuscript was raised by several participants. Akoss Ofori-Mensah urged that publishers institute systems and not keep manuscripts beyond a certain length of time.

In Walter Bgoya’s view, the situation in Africa is such that the publisher often has to be ‘an educator as well as a publisher’ in order to nurture creative writing. Abel Mwanga referred to the usefulness of the reports he had received from Tanzania Publishing House and several writers said that careful, thorough and perceptive readers’ reports were invaluable in helping them improve and develop their writing. Equally, excessively critical and negative reports could be very discouraging. Reports also need to be written in an accessible way. Cont Mhlanga observed that new writers may not understand the readers’ reports they receive, and in some cases it may be important for the publisher to visit the writer and explain the problems; he himself had been prepared to wait for publication for eight years, without complaining, since the publisher had explained that the climate for bringing out a particular book was wrong and why this was so.

Some participants argued that good writing depends on developing good writer–publisher relationships. Particularly when redrafting or rewriting by the writer is thought desirable, the editor needs to act with great sensitivity and tact and to encourage the writer’s belief in his or her capacity to
improve the quality of the manuscript. The indigenous African publisher can have the edge over the transnational here as he or she is likely to identify more closely with what the writer is trying to do.

Writers’ associations

Writers also need to develop stronger and more supportive relationships with each other and to organise themselves into more effective associations, which can represent their interests and help create an environment more conducive to writing. At present, writers’ associations tend to be weak compared with publishers’ associations, if they exist at all. Juma Kapuya, who before becoming a politician was an academic and a writer, urged writers to take this issue seriously, arguing that problems arising from their ignorance of contractual and legal issues can be detrimental to creativity. Writers’ associations also represent an obvious channel through which publishers can investigate and nurture creative talent; the Nigerian Association of Writers, Dafe Otobo reported, had been the first port of call for Malthouse in its quest for ‘good storytellers in this part of the world’.

The importance of vitalising writers’ associations was strongly endorsed by Chukwuemeka Ike, among other writer participants. Katherine Salahi said she would be glad to approach donor-members of the Bellagio Publishing Network with a view to exploring the possibilities of financial support for writers’ associations; this idea received support from Olle Nordberg.

Atukwei Okai, the Secretary-General of the Pan African Writers Association (PAWA), said that PAWA had been established to respond to writers’ needs across the continent and that for it to be strong and effective, writers needed to give it a share of their time and energy. Femi Ososfan, the association’s Vice-President, pointed out that as an organisation enjoying observer status in the OAU, PAWA was officially supposed to be maintained and funded by the OAU members, and asked Juma Kapuya whether governments were prepared to act on this commitment. The Minister’s view was that obtaining OAU funding would depend on the amount of lobbying that writers undertook. The Chairman of the Sports Council of Africa, he said, had travelled round all the countries of Africa asking governments to pay their dues; could writers be equally tenacious?

Institutional and government support

Literary competitions can act as a spur to writers to raise the standard of their creative work, yet the only continental literary prize existing today is the Noma Award, financed by a Japanese publishing company. Taban Lo Liyong appealed to ministries of culture and education to consider organising national literary competitions and, more generally, to see the poten-
tial for writers to represent their countries internationally. Taking up this point, Kole Omotoso argued that African governments should learn from institutions such as the British Council and the Goethe Institute about the economic benefits of sponsorship of cultural activities, including writers’ tours overseas.

We are being represented by our feet rather than our heads. African footballers rather than writers are representing Africa. Ministries of culture and education should find means of encouraging and promoting our literature.

Taban lo Liyong

The question of government support for literary publishing was raised by several participants. Moyez Vassanji asked Juma Kapuya whether he foresaw a day when the Tanzanian government would assist indigenous publishers to produce culturally important books; Femi Osofisan proposed that African governments consider establishing a national endowment for the arts; and Walter Bgoya said that although liberalisation in Tanzania meant that independent publishers were now invited to participate in decisions about textbook provision, the government had yet to recognise fiction publishing as fundamental to African cultural development.

The economies of publishing in the African context

James Tumusiime briefly outlined the economics of publishing in Africa, prefacing his remarks by referring participants to the pre-seminar booklet, Writer–Publisher Relations: The Publishing Perspective, which includes examples of publishing viability calculations. His presentation focused on the practical realities of African publishing and marketing in the context of two sets of factors: those operating at the macro level and those at the micro level.

At the macro level the African publisher faces formidable obstacles. Prominent among these are: low literacy rates; a poor reading culture (declining in many African countries); poor infrastructure and communication facilities; the legacy of a poor business ethic, which is associated with political instability; an unfavourable economic environment, including high and fluctuating interest rates; and unfair government policies.

The road from opportunity to eminence in Africa is so short that people don’t want to waste their time in the costly business of writing and production.

James Tumusiime
Among the more favourable macro factors now operating in Africa are, according to James Tumusiime: the liberalisation of economies, which is helping private-sector publishing; the liberalisation of politics, resulting in a greater public interest in national events and less fear on the part of writers about addressing the issues that concern them; the advent of the new technology with its potential for placing Africa on a comparable level to the rest of the world; the beginnings of a new business ethic of discipline and seriousness; and changes and realignments in the publishing sector, with transnational companies coming back on different terms from before, offering co-publishing opportunities, investment in local publishing and skills-sharing.

At the micro level the feasibility of undertaking a new publishing project has to be considered in the light of several factors: initiation costs, including those involved in investigating a new idea with a writer; production costs and levels of royalty advances; pricing (whereas in Europe the formula for setting the retail price of a book is generally four times the manufacturing price, and in the US five or six times, in Africa it is normally no more than two or three times the cost of manufacturing); extent of print run; discount rates to booksellers, which in Uganda, for example, are currently 25 per cent for cash and 20 per cent for credit; costs of promotion; overhead costs; and interest on credit, if this available. All these factors determine whether or not the break-even point can be reached or exceeded. In the case of fiction this is often difficult, so it is not surprising that most African publishers opt for textbook publishing, where the returns on fixed costs are the most reliable.

Export initiatives and selling subsidiary rights overseas, James Tumusiime observed, offer two means by which the African publisher can attempt to compensate for the restrictions of an unfavourable micro environment. However, selling rights abroad is difficult and returns are generally small; when a deal is struck with a multinational it is almost invariably to the advantage of the foreign company.

Irene Staunton suggested that through flexible royalty arrangements the risks involved in publishing fiction might be better shared between author and publisher and that the former might thereby be better rewarded for success; for example, the royalty contractually agreed might be 7.5 per cent for the first 3,000 copies sold, 10 per cent on sales of 3,000–7,000 and 12 per cent thereafter. The publisher would normally expect the main development costs to be covered in the first print run; however, in situations of high inflation (with, for example, soaring costs of paper) the publisher’s
costs incurred over both the first and subsequent print runs may put the project in jeopardy, no matter how flexible the royalty arrangements with the author.

Whereas the standard royalty arrangement in the UK is 10 per cent of net receipts, in Zimbabwe, as in most of Anglophone Africa, it is 10 per cent of the retail price, which reduces the publisher’s room for manoeuvre. In Africa, where profit margins are tight (so as to try to cater to the needs of the market), this arrangement may mean that the publisher who receives a request for an extra 10 per cent discount on a small bulk order (on top of the usual 25 per cent), or even an extra 20 per cent discount on a larger order, may have to let the order go. A royalty arrangement of 10 per cent of net receipts, Irene Staunton argued, might well be more favourable to the author in the long term since the publisher would be more willing to sell bulk orders at a larger discount.

There is a common illusion that if the author receives a royalty of 10 per cent, the remaining 90 per cent goes to the publisher as profit. The reality is that from the moment the first copy is sold the author receives the royalty due to them, whereas the publisher usually has to sell a minimum of half the print run, and sometimes two-thirds on a first printing, before they break even.

Irene Staunton

From the perspective of a Northern publisher, Per Gedin said that fiction publishing was always a high-risk venture. The publisher has to rely on a very small number of books paying for the rest of the publishing operation; the ratio might be 20:80, 10:90 or even 1:99. Dafe Otobo said that sales of Malthouse’s management and economics titles have to carry the losses on fiction. Although a work of fiction may occasionally be a money-spinner – Femi Osofsan remarked, for example, that the first novel published by Focus (Serah Mwangi’s publishing house) had been a bestseller – Walter Bgoya pointed out that the exception does not make the rule.

If you want to publish a novel you must start with the knowledge that you won’t make money on it.

Walter Bgoya

You have to assume from the beginning that you’re not going to make money on literature.

Dafe Otobo


Femi Osofsan
The precarious nature of literary publishing

The precarious economic situation of most African publishers means they are often faced with an insoluble dilemma over the question of quality of production vis-à-vis selling price. Akoss Ofori-Mensah had recently brought out a book written and illustrated by Meshack Asare, who had not published in Africa since winning the Noma Award in 1982; the book was very beautiful but much too expensive for Ghanaian readers. She was reluctant to sacrifice quality, however. Her first Ghanaian edition of Ama Ata Aidoo’s Changes was so badly printed, she said, that for six months she had been too ashamed to distribute it; she had then produced a second edition, an improvement on the first but still inferior to the European and American editions.

Lack of access to credit remains a severe problem for the African publisher. Even beneficiaries of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation’s loan guarantee scheme, who had demonstrated their reliability in servicing loans, had been unable to obtain credit independently. Nor did orders for books from education ministries help in this regard; Serah Mwangi had failed to persuade Barclays (Kenya) to lend her money even though she had a letter from the ministry with a commitment to buying a title in a month’s time as a set text. Mugyabuso Mulokozi questioned James Tumusiime’s statement that the return of transnational publishers was a good thing for African publishing and expressed the view that such companies were interested ‘not in developing our literature but in making profits out of educational publishing’. Robert Sulley acknowledged that transnationals’ major interest is in textbook sales and that since there is no level playing field they will always win in international competitive bidding. There is therefore a serious danger of undermining literary publishing since African publishers require textbook sales to subsidise their fiction. In his view there should be a limit to the liberalisation of tenders.

If the textbook market is not open to local publishers, that kills literature too. And that is bad news for Heinemann as the African Writers Series will collapse.

Robert Sulley

Government support for publishing

The need for government intervention to assist indigenous publishers in winning textbook tenders is evident. Walter Bgoya spoke of the ‘long and painful dialogue’ between Tanzanian publishers and government, which was just beginning to pay off: Tanzania has now introduced local competitive bidding and SIDA is contributing to the purchase of textbooks. Gillian Nyambura (echoing the argument articulated by Walter Bgoya at Arusha II) spoke of the need for African governments to emulate Southeast Asian governments in finding the political will to protect and support their own
'cultural industries’, including publishing, and emphasised the role of national publishers associations (NPAs) in presenting a strong case to government on behalf of the publishing industry. The Tanzanian Publishers Association, she said, was – despite the problems it faced – one of the model NPAs in its persistent lobbying of government.

Atukwei Okai reported that PAWA had recently been invited to a pan-African consultation in Togo on cultural policies for development and had argued that ministers of culture and education should invite writers to participate in the planning of educational curricula. The association had also urged governments to guarantee to buy a certain number of books from indigenous publishers for libraries, a move that would be particularly valuable for general literature publishing.

Seminar participants called for more documentation on the contribution of African-published books, and more generally of writers and literary culture, to the economies of African countries. Also important were comparative statistics on educational textbook provision in different African countries.

Marketing and creating markets

Marketing is a crucial area of activity that requires imagination and commitment on the part of all the actors involved in the book world – publishers, booksellers, writers and ministries of culture and education. In Africa, where the reading culture is weak and literacy levels are still low, the two-fold challenge is to build a stronger reading culture and to find effective means of reaching the reading public that already exists.

The creation of a more vibrant reading culture clearly relates to the question of African governments’ support for literacy and education and, in particular, their awareness of the role that indigenous writers and publishers can and should play in the cultural development of the continent. It also calls for publishers to be sensitive to the needs of the newly literate, as Juma Kapuya pointed out, and to take proper account of these in their publishing programmes.

With the wider market in mind, publishers’ choice of assessors of manuscripts could often be more imaginative. Chukwuemeka Ike remarked that it is often academics who are invited to read manuscripts, and their criteria as to what constitutes literature can be rather rigid. In Nigeria, Onitsha market literature provides a good example of fiction initially rejected by academic assessors but which proved hugely popular and is also valuable in treating of moral and social issues.
Illiteracy cannot be eradicated if there are no suitable and relevant books to read by the neo-literates. Similarly, the reading culture cannot be cultivated if there are no varieties of books to meet the different reader needs.

Juma Kapuya

University critics would have thrown out Onitsha market literature as unworthy of attention. We need to think again. Not all fiction is meant to win the Nobel Prize. In fact it could win the Nobel Prize – it depends on what services it sets out to provide.

Chukwuemeka Ike

There are readers out there. One of the manifestations of this is the proliferation of newspapers and journals.

Femi Osofisan

In South Africa, where the entire book industry has traditionally been an Afrikaner and British monopoly, the government is trying to increase the provision of books to the majority population. Kole Omotoso reported on two new initiatives to distribute books more widely: libraries are in some cases committing themselves to buying books dealing with specific topics; and certain corporations and organisations are underwriting the distribution of books to schools (for example the Red Cross had guaranteed to purchase and distribute the first 7,000 copies of one of his own books, thus enabling the publisher to print 12,000 copies).

Marketing in Nigeria

Dafe Otobo spoke about marketing tertiary titles in Nigeria in all academic disciplines, including literature. In marketing (as in commissioning) academic books, Malthouse has adopted the approach of liaising direct with university and polytechnic faculties and departments, bypassing the bookstores because of the problems of corruption and inefficient management that these suffer from – in 1996, Malthouse calculated that university bookstores had an outstanding debt to them of nearly 1 million naira. By going straight to departments, which undertook monthly stocktaking, the publishing house could gauge print-runs accurately and was assured of quick returns. This close contact with tertiary institutions also enables them to target relevant seminars and workshops in the various disciplines.

Nigerians are specialists in seminars and workshops. They are never-ending.

Dafe Otobo

In the marketing of literary titles in Nigeria, Dafe Otobo reported, it is difficult to operate outside the educational system. Authors in Africa are very
often academics too and the adoption of a literary work as a set text by departments of literature often follows from the fact that the author is known and liked by other lecturers.

Malthouse, in common with some other Nigerian publishers, has also created bookstores in its regional branches. The publishing house sends advance information about new publications to branches, and the branches themselves deal with media promotion locally as well as taking care of storage; although the problem of pilfering of stock has not been eliminated, losses have been reduced to less that 1 per cent. Each branch has its own transport provision and a list of agents for the area in which it operates.

Other outlets for literary titles exploited by Malthouse are reading clubs (for example through the provision of complimentary copies of books), meetings and readings organised by the Association of Nigerian Authors, and selected public places such as hotel foyers and airport lounges frequented by the middle class. Authors’ reading tours are occasionally organised although this is not a major promotional channel for Malthouse. In Dafe Otobo’s view, ‘the average reader doesn’t visit bookshops’.

Akoss Ofori-Mensah said that the creative approach to marketing shown by Malthouse was impressive, providing a model for other publishers to emulate. Victor Nwankwo confirmed from his own experience that going direct to universities could increase sales considerably but said it was also important to distinguish between good and bad bookshops in Nigeria. Other participants had reservations about the bypassing of bookstores. Chukwuemeka Ike had attended the 1997 annual conference of the recently revived Nigerian Booksellers Association at which the manager of the University of Lagos bookshop had been ‘up in arms’ about publishers going direct to faculties.

Strengthening the book trade

The focus of attention, according to Kole Omotoso, should not be on marketing books that have a captive readership (texts adopted by university faculties) but on marketing creative writing generally. Bypassing bookshops was evidence of opting for an inadequate, short-term solution. Publishers should not be ‘trying to create an area of sanity in a total situation of insanity’ but should be relating to the wider environment and doing their best to encourage the book trade, libraries and book clubs.

This business of bypassing booksellers is like the story of the coffin-maker who became a murderer because not enough people were dying.

Kole Omotoso
James Tumusiime pointed out that booksellers are often sidelined by governments, who themselves go direct to institutions, and publishers thus have little option but to do as Malthouse does and create their own bookshops.

Gillian Nyambura reported on APNET’s efforts to foster the book trade in Africa. In conjunction with the Association for the Development of Education in Africa it is making a study of customs and excise regulations and fiscal barriers to the book trade in eight African countries, doing trial shipments using different forms of transport. The information collected will be shared at the 1998 Zimbabwe Book Fair, and APNET deputations will go to appropriate units of the OAU, ECOWAS and other regional organisations to lobby for the removing of barriers. APNET is also in dialogue with ministries of education; in East Africa, for example, it has supported the ‘harmonisation’ of curricula, which should help promote inter-country trade.

Other outlets

Participants discussed a range of possible sales outlets and promotional strategies. Femi Osofisan agreed with Dafe Otobo that people do not go to bookstores and said it was important to think about taking books to supermarkets, petrol stations and even ‘go-slow’ (traffic jams). Tess Onwueme suggested that books could be sold along with magazines by newspaper vendors; Kole Omotoso pointed out that this practice was not new and said he remembered buying Fourth Dimension publications from street vendors in Nigeria.

We’ve tried many of these things before. I have taken books to the marketplace and set up stalls among people bringing potatoes and maize.

Walter Bgoya

The new technology I would like to see is when the ordinary reader can go to the supermarket, put in coins and the book comes out. This is about distribution. It’s about taking the book to the reader.

Cont Mhlanga

Shimmer Chinodya argued that literary publishers should be trying to infiltrate and subvert textbook publishing, working together with those devising curricula and with educational publishing to ensure that African writers are better represented in text books; he stressed that he was not talking about short extracts but about extracts of 10–20 pages. Moreover, the media, in his view, could be better exploited: publishers could go to radio stations to propose serialisations (one of his own novels had been
read on Zimbabwean radio for five minutes a day over several months); similarly, magazines and newspapers could be encouraged to publish extracts; and television offers opportunities for animation, especially of children’s books. Another important means of promotion was the writer him/herself giving readings and performances in schools and elsewhere.

Tess Onwueme felt that publishers and NPAs needed to work more closely with newspaper and magazine editors. Femi Osofsan agreed that such avenues represent a large potential readership but warned that newspapers may not serialise books ‘for free’; the publisher may have to place ads in a newspaper, which can then ‘respond’ by reviewing or serialising the book.

In Cont Mhlanga’s view, people do go to bookshops too but are often put off once they get there because books are promoted in the wrong way. Posters featuring new books and writers may be too dull to arouse curiosity, and the cover ‘blurb’ is often not directed to the ordinary reader but to the scholastic mainstream.

Walter Bgoya said he welcomed writers coming to him with new ideas about promotion but that the problem of limited resources was a real one. There was also the question of areas of responsibility and the fact that the publisher should not have to do the bookseller’s job. Cont Mhlanga said he failed to understand what publishers mean when they say marketing is not their responsibility: even in the North, he pointed out, some of the biggest book clubs belong to a collective of book publishers.

For most publishers most of the time it is ‘Can I get the book out with the limited means that I have? Some of these ideas cost a hell of a lot. And I’m not a bookseller. This is not my profession. I want to see these other institutions and mechanisms developed.

   Walter Bgoya

All these methods have been tried. I have hired people to hawk books along traffic jams. The problem is the administrative cost and the risk of loss.

   Victor Nwankwo

I think we should thank the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation for bringing us [writers] here to suggest new ways, for putting ideas into the publishers’ heads so that more money can go into the publishers’ pockets and they can pass some of it to us.

   Taban lo Liyong
Are publishers saying that market development is none of their business?

Cont Mhlanga

Irene Staunton said it was important to distinguish between marketing and sales and observed that the constraints on marketing will vary between countries. In some African countries a Book Development Council may be able to handle a big promotional campaign, with donor funding, involving writers, publishers and booksellers, so that everyone benefits; this would entail a concerted approach on a very specific idea. In her view, Shimmer Chinodya had also suggested some very good ideas that she would want to explore; however, on the proposal for giving extracts to the media free, caution should be exercised since the author might well expect payment.

Book fairs can be a major promotional channel and an important way of strengthening relations between publisher and bookseller. The Kenyan Publishers Association, according to Serah Mwangi, is putting energy into resuscitating the Nairobi Book Fair, involving rural as well as urban booksellers and authors and running a variety of workshops relevant to different constituencies. On the other hand, Cont Mhlanga complained that book fairs were often ‘not well thought out for serving a certain market’, that of ordinary readers. There had been no sales of his plays – which are written in Ndebele – at the Zimbabwe Book Fair, whereas at a new book fair in Bulawayo, called Scholastica, which was ‘more focused and [where] everything had to do with supporting education’, all the schools in the region had booked a performance of one of the plays (which in turn had led to sales of the text).

Book launches

A lengthy debate took place (in the context of a general discussion of the forthcoming African Writers’ Handbook, see page 71) on the pros and cons of book launches. It emerged that book launches can be very different things in different parts of Africa, or even within the same country. There is the kind of occasion, familiar in the North, where the publisher invites selected friends of the author as well as journalists and media people, and usually a guest speaker to launch the book, and the author is there to sign copies, on sale usually at a small discount; this is a closed party where refreshments and any other costs are paid for by the publisher. In Nigeria, in addition to the traditional book parties, there are big money-making launches where a public figure ostentatiously buys one copy of a book for a large sum of money. Chukwuemeka Ike, who had told Malthouse he did not want a launch of this kind, characterised such occasions – which had only started happening under military rule – as corrupt and opportunistic and pointed out that they often involved misuse of public money. Kole Omotoso had
also resisted this kind of launch and had tried to get his publisher to agree to an alternative procedure whereby the person launching the book (a businessman friend of his) would buy multiple copies for a school, rather than one copy for a large sum to be split between author and publisher.

It [refusing a book launch] was a futile gesture on my part to reject the most vulgar aspects of a society. It wasn’t to do with not liking money or not wanting the publisher to recover his costs. It’s just that the whole ambiance of it was so nauseating.... There is no society in which someone can be permitted to display so much money without the tax man coming after them except a place like Nigeria. This is one of the points that Ken Saro-Wiwa used to make.

_Kole Omotoso_

The publication of books in Nigeria has become another avenue for the looting of the state. If you’re concerned about the value of the books you write you can’t but be worried by that.

_Femi Osofisan_

Dafe Otobo said Malthouse used both kinds of launches and refuted Kole Omotoso’s claim that the second type did nothing for future sales of the book; he had conducted a survey on books launched compared with those not launched in this way and had found that the number of enquiries emanating from book launches was about 1000 per cent higher. He explained that two months after the launch his practice was to follow up all the pledges and IOUs made at the time of the launch; after deductions for costs, the sum collected was split 50:50 with the author.

Walter Bgoya compared this kind of launch with charity functions in Tanzania at which the president’s picture or the president’s tie were auctioned. Some people were disgusted by this kind of event but, in his view, the important point was to establish the objective of the exercise; it seemed worth putting up with the ‘tomfoolery’ if the money raised helped solve people’s problems, for example through the provision of a clinic.

In Femi Osofisan’s opinion, ostentatious book launches had become a pernicious way of devaluing books, encouraging certain publishers to exploit the book industry as a method simply of making money. These publishers were no longer interested in promoting the work of younger writers; instead they ‘zeroed in on retired generals and wealthy public figures’.

Participants agreed that traditional book launches could be very valuable. Akoss Ofori-Mensah, for example, had launched the Ghanaian publication
of Ama Ata Aidoo’s Changes at the Ghana Book Fair, inviting friends of the author as well as people from the Book Development Council and others in the book world, including some from other African countries who were at the Book Fair. The launch was particularly important as many people had forgotten about Ama Ata Aidoo, most of her books having been published outside Ghana.

Marketing literary titles outside Africa

Mary Jay spoke about marketing books outside Africa and, in particular, the work of the African Books Collective. The major problem in marketing African fiction is that of ‘mainstreaming’; unlike Latin American, Caribbean or Japanese fiction, for example, publications from African publishing houses tend to be stocked only by specialist bookshops. Low production standards constitute one of the reasons why buyers for mainstream bookshops turn down African-published books. The titles that sell best are those that are adopted on university literature courses.

An analysis of ABC’s 1997 sales by category of book showed that ‘folklore and oral tradition’ was in first place; second was ‘African studies’, including scholarly books; third, ‘environment’; fourth, ‘religion’; and fifth, all types of literature (other than folklore), including fiction, drama and criticism. Fifth place is relatively high in the ranking order but the actual volume of sales is not high. The UK is, surprisingly, now ABC’s biggest market for fiction (26 per cent, compared with 24.3 per cent for the US, 2.7 per cent for Germany and 2.4 per cent for South Africa).

Huge library cuts in the UK and the US have reduced sales. In 1990, two major libraries took all ABC publications but now buy just £2,000 worth of publications per year. It is also significant that the fiction market in the UK is shrinking every year; of the 102,000 titles published in the UK in 1996, only 9,000 were fiction titles.

ABC’s turnover in 1997 was £215,000, up by 3–4 per cent on 1995’s figure of £206,000; 1996 had seen a downturn, with a turnover of £166,000, mainly because of a fall in new titles from Africa for a variety of reasons, and a rise in the number of publishers failing to supply stocks. In June 1998 the membership of unproductive publishers is to become dormant. Because of the slow rate of growth, ABC has expanded the Intra-African Book Scheme which it runs jointly with Book Aid International; this is an important source of finance for the collective but it is not ABC’s main brief.

It is the publisher’s responsibility to pay for freighting to the UK (ABC then covers customs handling and onward transport to the warehouse); in
the case of Nigeria, freighting has become ‘semi-prohibitive’. Victor Nwankwo explained that the Nigerian government had insisted that the Post Office must ‘commercialise’, which had led to an 800 per cent increase in the cost of mail. Fourth Dimension was now obliged to freight books to the UK in batches every three–four months; although this system reduced unit costs, the operation was still extremely expensive.

Per Gedin outlined what he saw as the enormous advantages to African publishers of the new techniques in printing; he also referred participants to his article on the same subject in *Development Dialogue* 1997:1–2, an edited and revised version of his presentation at Arusha II.

The traditional method of producing books has changed little since the invention of printing by Gutenberg over 500 years ago although all the elements involved – typesetting, proofreading, deciding on print-runs, distributing and warehousing stock, dealing with returns from booksellers, deciding whether or not to reprint, etc. – make it ‘just about the most awkward way to produce books that you can think of’, according to Per Gedin.

> Using traditional methods of production is like using horsedrawn carriages in the age of the motor car.
> 
> *Per Gedin*

Electronic printing overcomes all the infrastructural and economic problems associated with traditional book production. The publisher receives the manuscript on diskette (all writers should be able to have access to a computer, according to Per Gedin, or if necessary use a typewriter and then scan the typescript) or the manuscript is sent on line direct to the publisher’s computer, which can then run off as few or as many copies as required, the unit price being the same for one copy as for a thousand. The method facilitates national and global distribution, obviates the dangers of over-printing or of running out of stock, and allows new, revised editions to be produced easily. This is good news for the writer as well as the publisher since capital is not tied up in stock but available for new books. Among the cultural implications are the fact that, in principle, the literature of a country can for ever be available.

Per Gedin described the machine (brand name Docutech) used for this print-on-demand method as ‘basically a computer with a laser-writer and a binder’; all production processes can be done on the spot, with the exception of the cover if a superior quality is required. He predicted that as costs
are coming down all the time Docutechs would be found all over Africa within five years. ABC is investigating use of Docutech in the UK for its member publishers.

Walter Bgoya said that at Arusha II many seminar participants had been very skeptical about Per Ged-in’s claims that the new technology would revolutionise African publishing. However, ‘something had rung a bell’ with him, he had done some research and had finally – just the previous week – produced a book on a Docutech machine in Oxford, sending the diskette via ABC. Participants were shown a copy of the book. Mary Jay said the total cost, including covers, had been £1,298 for 250 copies (unit cost approximately £5).

Several participants expressed enthusiasm for producing books on Docutech. Irene Staunton said that the snag for African publishers of having books printed in the UK would be having to pay in foreign exchange; Docutech machines therefore needed to be available locally. Serah Mwangi reported that in Kenya, publishers were trying to convince Xerox to donate a machine to the Kenyan Publishers Association; an alternative plan was to try and buy one jointly with a Kenyan printer.

In Victor Nwankwo’s view, Docutech was useful in enabling books to be sent to Europe, but in Africa the idea that it could allow publishers to ‘leapfrog’ and catch up with publishers in the North was invalid because telephone lines were frequently non-existent or erratic. Other facets of the new technology were valuable, however; desktop publishing allowed easy production of promotional material and control over the production process; international data bases were useful for research purposes and market surveys and as means of exposing new titles.

Femi Osofisan agreed that Docutech was good for marketing books outside Africa. In his opinion, it would not be much use in Nigeria, where few writers owned computers. James Tumusiime also questioned how much the new technology could help ordinary communities in Africa; Walter Bgoya argued that it could assist African-language publishing.

This Docutech method is mouthwatering, but it’s going to remain like that for a long time.

Femi Osofisan

The new technology can take you to the village. For example, you can afford to publish in a very small minority language.

Walter Bgoya
In response to a question about Heinemann’s use of Docutech, Robert Sulley said they used it a fair amount (for educational books, not for fiction), especially in South Africa where the ministry of education requires a bound copy of a book before considering placing an order.

In Juma Kapuya’s view it was easier to see how the new technology was influencing the publisher–bookseller–market relationship than to see in what way it would influence the publisher–writer relationship. He remarked that as a consumer he was certainly interested in the new, cheaper method of producing books and that in a situation of limited resources this could go a long way towards alleviating the shortage of learning materials.

From the look of it, it seems at the end of the line we are going to see a cheaper book being produced. Now, will some of the cost savings be passed over to the writer?

_Juma Kapuya_

Participants expressed concerns about piracy and about the increased danger of infringement of copyright that the new technology represented (see page 74). More generally, as Juma Kapuya pointed out, there was the danger that it could further undermine reading skills; preliminary research findings in the US and the UK tended to indicate a link between the growth of new technology and a lowering of standards in the three cognitive skills.

The African Writers’ Handbook

As co-editor (with Jack Mapanje) of the forthcoming _African Writers’ Handbook_, to be published by ABC in cooperation with the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, James Gibbs outlined the contents of the handbook and invited participants to make comments and suggestions for improvements.

The first edition of the handbook, also compiled and edited by James Gibbs, had been published in 1986 by Hans Zell; in addition to hardback copies for sale in the North, funding had been raised for paperback copies to be distributed free to African libraries.

The new edition will be in two parts and, like the first edition, will include contributions by African writers and publishers as well as address lists and factual information. Among the writers contributing ‘statements’ about personal experiences of publishing were several seminar participants: Kole Omotoso, Taban Lo Liyong, Tess Onwueme, Niyi Osundare and Femi Osofisan. There will also be examples of contracts and codes of conduct.
Other topics covered include: writers’ prizes; the language issue; writers’ associations; addresses of publishers; magazines and newspapers; vanity publishers; windfall profits; self-publishing; agents; adaptations and translation; plagiarism; libel; book launches; book fairs; booksellers; production issues; account-keeping; literary estates.

Various participants felt that the handbook would help writers become better informed about publishing and publishers. Some thought that it could usefully provide information about publishers’ professional conduct and standards, such as whether or not they paid royalties regularly. Mary Jay opposed the inclusion of any annotations that amounted to value judgments.

Kole Omotoso expressed concern about the danger of ‘truncated stories’. In his view there was a much fuller and more worrying story to be told, for example, about Amos Tutuola’s literary estate; similarly, the subject of book launches was too complex to be dealt with adequately in a truncated form. These concerns were endorsed by Atukwei Okai.

Cont Mhlanga said the project made him ‘a bit nervous’. Statements could be taken out of context, and there was the danger of treating the continent of Africa like a small village; in reality, situations varied enormously. He commented that the material on Zimbabwe was outdated. James Gibbs responded that a forum such as the seminar was very useful for updating information and soliciting views from the constituency for which the handbook was intended. Robert Sulley agreed to supply Heinemann’s list of literary agents.

As with the first edition of the handbook, funding has been obtained for several hundred free copies to be sent to African book communities. James Tumusiime proposed that publishers should buy their own copies and make these available to their authors.

**How to choose the right publisher**

The problem of finding the right publisher is linked with the problem of widespread ignorance on the part of writers about publishers and publishing. Kole Omotoso spoke of the ‘innocence’ of African writers, resulting in a failure to monetise their resources and a generally unrealistic, unbusinesslike attitude, which may mean they assume they have to pay for publication or, by contrast, that they can make a fortune from their writing. This problem is compounded by the ambiguity that exists today over where Africans stand in relation to the transition between traditional, oral
culture and a cryptographic culture. Walter Bgoya said that the transitional nature of society means that publishers and writers find themselves ‘negotiating between two cultures, two civilisations’, for example in the area of whether cash payments or royalties are appropriate.

Tess Onwueme queried the notion of the writer’s innocence and said that the onus should be on writers to look after their own interests.

> Writers are not innocent and we should not assume that the problem is always that of the publisher. Every writer should keep a duplicate [manuscript]. You don’t send your only egg out. It can get cracked in the process. It happened to me.

*Tess Onwueme*

Good communication was identified as a key quality that writers look for in a publisher. Cont Mhlanga said his first publisher had brought all his writers together once a year with other people from the book trade; these meetings had resulted in a tremendous cross-fertilisation of ideas, especially about marketing. Niyi Osundare called for publishers to institute a ‘multi-pronged communication system’ and to keep files of reviews as well as assessors’ reports; in his view, the publisher also needed to be prepared on occasions to stand up to assessors ‘rather than treating them as gods or goddesses’. Walter Bgoya agreed that the publisher should have ‘very strict rules’ of conduct; on the subject of assessors failing to send in their reports, he said he had sometimes had to threaten them with police action.

Mugyabuso Mulokozi said that the publisher should be ‘sympathetic and interested’ and that writers should not be afraid to change publishers if these qualities are lacking. However, African writers – especially new ones – often know nothing about publishers but their names, and it was essential that they made every effort to inform themselves, to check out the character of the publisher and get to know their list. Catherine Salahi advised writers to use word of mouth and to consult with other writers.

For Chukwuemeka Ike the two important considerations were, first, the specialisation of the publisher (and handbooks and directories that helped the writer identify this were to be welcomed) and, second, human qualities. Handbooks should also include information about the nature of proprietorship as this was often an indicator of the way that publishers behaved. Victor Nwankwo pointed out that most African publishers were first-generation proprietors; James Tumusiime called on writers to under-
stand and support the new, ‘promising’ situation in which the single proprietor was becoming more common (with the demise of parastatals and the changing role of transnational publishing houses).

Serah Mwangi complained that there was often a prejudicial attitude towards new, small publishers; when the first novel published by Focus had won a national award, one reviewer, for example, had referred to its having been brought out by ‘a nebulous publisher’. Small publishing houses are in fact often more accessible than bigger institutions and, she argued, generally take good care of their writers. In Irene Staunton’s view the indigenous publisher is often able to offer more than the transnational as he or she is identified with Africa.

Niyi Osundare remarked that many new writers were reluctant to take their work to a new publisher for fear that the publisher will fold. In Tess Onwueme’s view, writers need regularly to reassess where they are in their career since what may be appropriate at one stage may not be so at another.

The question of looking for a foreign publisher was also raised. Niyi Osundare told the story of a fellow Nigerian writer who was told that his work was too ‘Nigerian’ and ‘wouldn’t travel’. Kole Omotoso had had a similar experience.

Rights and agreements, codes of good practice and arbitration of disputes

Minimum terms agreements and codes of good practice represent two means by which the rights of writers and publishers may be better protected. Participants debated the value or otherwise of both.

Mary Jay said that in theory APNET could adopt a code of practice as a yardstick for African publishers. Gillian Nyambura reported that APNET had discussed this as well as a minimum terms agreement and considered both to be important. Several participants (James Tumusiime, Walter Bgoya, Femi Osofisan, Mugyabuso Mulokozi) spoke in favour of a code of conduct, arguing that in Africa where the publishing industry is still very new this could provide both guidance and psychological comfort. A dissenting position was held by Per Gedin who dismissed codes of conduct as ‘not worth the paper they’re written on’; it was much more important, in his view, to have ‘very good agreements’ between the two parties.

Can any code of conduct make a crook a better person?

Taban Lo Liyong
People are concerned about their names and reputations. A code and supervisory body could bring some moral weight to bear.

_Femi Osofisan_

A minimum terms agreement was unhelpful, according to Chukwuemeka Ike, as it might well encourage publishers to go for the minimum and add nothing more.

James Gibbs explained that the minimum terms agreement and the code of conduct included at the back of the _African Writers’ Handbook_ would need amendment and adaptation to the African context. Chukwuemeka Ike suggested that the code and model agreement used by the Nigerian Publishers Association would be more relevant; Mugyabuso Mulokozi favoured including codes from a number of African countries as well as the British one as a reference point.

Most participants thought that a supervisory body, with members drawn from both publishers’ and writers’ associations, should be set up in each African country to help ensure that the code of good practice is observed and to arbitrate in cases of disputes between writers and publishers. In his address, Juma Kapuya had also advocated a ‘super association’ or umbrella organisation that could act on behalf of all the key actors in the book industry.

Tess Onwueme recommended that writers’ and publishers’ associations should identify legal affiliates who would represent the membership in times of conflict.

**The ‘New Deal’ and beyond**

A wide-ranging debate took place on what publishers and writers could and should expect of each other, how their rights could be defended and what their roles should be in African society. This discussion revisited many of the points raised in earlier sessions and provided the basis for the ‘New Deal’ statement (see page 80) adopted by participants on the final afternoon.

The writer’s first responsibility is to submit a clean, neat manuscript, preferably on diskette, and to keep a copy of the manuscript. He or she should be expected to contribute ideas on design and presentation, to read and return proofs within an agreed time frame and normally without the addition of new material (the latter point, though, was contested by some writers) and to help promote the book by being prepared to give interviews.
There should be no new inspiration from the writer at the proof stage.

*Victor Nwankwo*

Creative work is never finished. If they add something the writer should pay but they shouldn’t be censored from making changes.

*Tess Onwueme*

It is fair that the writer should submit his or her manuscript to one publisher at a time and if it is a sequel (but not otherwise) to offer the subsequent manuscript to the same publisher. As Taban Lo Liyong pointed out, a publisher cannot expect to have a life-long relationship with the author. Robert Sulley said that Heinemann used to have an option clause in its contracts but found it unworkable; it was probably also unenforceable.

The writer can also reasonably be expected to inform him/herself about what is involved in the publishing process, to take care over the reading of contracts, and to be sympathetic and responsive to the requirements of editing and production.

We as writers should not expect to get what we deserve. We get what we negotiate.

*Tess Onwueme*

Authors must read their contracts. If they can write, they can read.... We find in our education a certain degree of laziness.

*Victor Nwankwo*

On the publisher’s part, communicativeness and transparency are essential. The writer has a right to expect written acknowledgement of the receipt of his/her manuscript, honest communication about schedules, print runs and reprints, regular royalty payments and statements, and the keeping and filing of reviews. The author also has the right to be consulted on details of design and presentation of the book and on possible promotional approaches.

What constitutes adequate promotion by the publisher was hotly debated. Kole Omotoso argued that publishers should be prepared to cooperate with other publishers of the same author and undertake joint promotion. Dafe Otobo and Robert Sulley both said this was impracticable in a context of competitive private enterprise. There was a lengthy discussion about whether the author had the right to expect a full list of previous publications to be included in a new publication. In Per Gedin’s view it was unreasonable for one publisher to do the job of another; some publishers felt
the issue revolved round where in the book such information appeared; writers, and some publishers, thought that listing titles in the preliminary pages should be uncontentious.

Why should the publisher give false information and not mention the writer’s other publications? Why give only half the information?

Cont Mhlanga

Some publishers fail to engage the author in promoting a book and then complain that the book isn’t selling.

Taban lo Liyong

Publishers should be expected to explore the possibilities of promotion through such channels as book launches, readings, book fairs, the print and broadcast media and the Internet, to keep a review file and to keep in touch with the author about reviews. Finally, the publisher should seek to nurture and support new writers, should be aware that new writers may well be unfamiliar with the publishing world and should help writers understand what is involved at the various stages of the publishing process.

Juma Kapuya had emphasised in his address the importance of the principle of collective bargaining. Publishers’ and writers’ associations are the obvious channels through which agreements between the professions can be hammered out; they can also play an important role in canvassing support for a code of good practice, establishing an adjudication panel and identifying legal affiliates to invite onto such a body. Participants discussed the possibility of APNET taking a lead in these developments and consulting with its member associations on the way forward.

Among the issues that contracts can cover are subsidiary rights and the exploitation of new technology. Infringement of copyright via the Internet and also through photocopying are growing problems, and publishers need to inform themselves about means of protecting intellectual property. Per Gedin explained the functioning of ‘collecting societies’ in Sweden, which trace use of copyright material on the Internet and collect fees on behalf of their members. Victor Nwankwo and Serah Mwangi described the work of CopyKen, an organisation in Kenya (modelled on CopyNor in Norway) which performs a similar service in relation to photocopying. Writers, too, can help with efforts to protect intellectual property. PAWA is an associate member of the European Writers’ Congress and is working with this body on the issue of protection of copyright in a digital, electronic age.
Underscoring any ‘New Deal’ between writers and publishers should be an awareness of their potential for contributing to the complex and challenging cultural development of the continent.

The production of books in indigenous African languages is one of the significant challenges, which, as Tess Onwueme argued, requires the commitment of both writers and publishers and a symbiotic relationship between the two professions. Equally important, according to Dafe Otobo, is a realisation on the part of African governments that publishing in African languages – along with literary publishing generally – will not flourish without the bedrock of indigenous educational publishing.

Most African governments have an incomplete view of the part of educational publishing in African publishing generally. Unless the publishing of textbooks and educational books takes root on the continent it will be very, very difficult to promote African writing and local-language publishing.

Taban lo Liyong remarked on the significance of ‘folklore’ being ABC’s top-selling category and suggested that greater emphasis on ‘writing in the vernaculars’ and a renewal of the values of negritude, coupled with initiatives in African universities to translate books into European languages, could assist both African-language publishing and the wider dissemination of knowledge about African culture. Kole Omotoso countered that although there was a place for books deriving from oral culture, this could be ‘a dangerous, two-sided instrument’: foreign readers too often refused to take on the issues of contemporary Africa, preferring outdated visions of Africa that suit their vested interests. The term ‘vernacular’, he argued, belonged to 19th-century anthropology, and ‘negritude’ was equally inappropriate: literary publishing in Africa must be guided by a serious commitment to Africa’s place in the modern world.

Are we to promote the notion, ‘I dance therefore I am’? This is still the image of Africa, at a period when Africa is producing scientists, physicists, people who can measure a thousandth of a second....

There was a danger, in Dafe Otobo’s view, of overstating this argument: the fact that ‘folklore’ was selling reasonably well overseas did not mean that interest in other aspects of contemporary Africa was lacking; there were ‘different types of writers’ and it was important to maintain a broad perspective on African publishing and writing.
Walter Bgoya said that at the time of the first Arusha seminar organised by the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation there was lively debate about African writing, the role of the writer in society and the issues that needed to be addressed. In his view, much of that urgency had been lost in the prevailing ethos of the 1990s and it was time for a renewed commitment to social responsibility on the part of both publishers and writers.

Gillian Nyambura said that a recent (1997) APNET meeting, where it was recognised that Africa was ‘less valued and less able to determine its own agenda than ever before’, had led to the adoption of a new mission statement: publishers had pledged themselves to being ‘part of Africa’s transformation rather than part of its problem’, and clearly writers were essential partners in this endeavour.

These debates [about writers’ and publishers’ social responsibility] were very interesting and necessary. But of late, all of a sudden, we’re into this ‘post’-something, some kind of ‘post-post’... in which you are not supposed to say something that makes any kind of sense, but just put all kinds of words together into a ‘post’-package. Yet the same problems are still there, the same suffering, the same brutality.... You look at human values and you might say that kindness is a value – and then you look at what has happened in Rwanda, in Burundi.... We have to write about these things and take our places in the struggle.... This is what we thought to bring back into the discussion – there are eternal values we must defend, must promote.... Writers and publishers have a responsibility to re-evaluate what is important.

Walter Bgoya

People look to African publishers and expect something different from [what they expect of] the multinationals. Otherwise why are you African publishers – not Heinemann or Macmillan?

Gillian Nyambura

It is essential that writers and publishers respond to the needs of a society in transition where, as Dafe Otobo put it, ‘there are no values that are peculiar to the village any more’. Chukwuemeka Ike argued that there are values as well as skills and knowledge in traditional society that are fast being destroyed; in his opinion, writing and publishing can play a vital role, along with the judicious use of new technology, in not just attempting to preserve but in developing and adapting traditional skills and wisdom to the benefit of African people. This view received general support.
A ‘New Deal’ between African Writers and Publishers
Statement issued by participants at the African Writers–Publishers Seminar, Arusha, Tanzania, 23–26 February 1998

Preamble

Twenty African writers and publishers from nine countries and ten resource persons with background in publishing met at Tarangire Sopa Lodge, Arusha, 23–26 February 1998, for an ‘African Writers–Publishers Seminar’ (Arusha III). The seminar was directed by Walter Bgoya (publisher) and Niyi Osundare (writer) and organised by the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation and the African Books Collective (ABC). The main objective of the Seminar was to respond to the call for a ‘New Deal’ between writers and publishers in Africa in their struggle to strengthen African literature and culture.*

Statement

The starting-point for discussions on a new relationship between African writers and publishers was the following paragraph from the Summary Conclusions of the Seminar on the Future of Indigenous Publishing in Africa (Arusha II), organised by the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation in Arusha, Tanzania, March 25–28, 1996:

Seminar participants were unanimous that the time has come for a ‘New Deal’ between writers and publishers in Africa. Both groups now understand enough about publishing to be able to place their relationship on ethical and professional grounds where they can fulfil their respective responsibilities and see themselves as inseparable partners in the process of creation of African literature. Towards that end, a conference of African writers and publishers should be organised as soon as practicable with the aim of drawing up a charter to guide relations between the two professions.

It is in this spirit that we now provide some details for this ‘New Deal’ under the following headings:

• The role of the writer and the publisher’s expectations.
• The role of the publisher and the writer’s expectations.
• Contractual issues and writer–publisher relations.
• African values and African writing.

We recognise that the context in which both writers and publishers will apply these principles varies considerably from one African country to another.

* The document represents the broad consensus of the participants although some of them may not necessarily agree with all the points made in the statement.
The role of the writer and the publisher’s expectations

Publishers have a right to expect:
1. a well-produced, original manuscript (i.e. cleanly typed, preferably on diskette, but if handwritten it must be legible; the writer must keep a copy of the manuscript);
2. ideas and suggestions for cover design, illustrations and presentation of the book;
3. sympathetic acceptance of the process of editing and preparation of the work for publication;
4. submission of the manuscript to one publisher at a time with a limited period of response before submission to another publisher;
5. the reading and returning of proofs within a specified time and with minimum alterations and additions, unless the writer is prepared to pay the extra costs incurred;
6. first option on the writer’s subsequent work for sequels only.

Furthermore the writer should inform him/herself about:
7. details of the publishing process;
8. the basic economics of book publishing and book distribution;
9. the content of his/her contract, especially covering territorial, translation and publishing rights, and time limits relating to such rights.

The role of the publisher and the writer’s expectations

Writers have a right to expect:
1. written acknowledgement of the receipt of the manuscript;
2. communication and transparency about publication schedule and print run/reprints, and provision of regular and accurate royalty statements and payments;
3. consultation on details of book production such as cover design, illustrations and the general presentation of the book;
4. effective promotion of the publication and the writer him/herself, and consultation on possible promotional approaches;
5. exploration of the possibilities of effective promotion through book launches, readings, book fairs, print media, television, radio and the Internet;
6. exploration of the possibilities of ‘parallel products’ such as cassette recordings and videos;
7. a record of reviews on each title and regular communication about these.
Furthermore, the publisher should:

8. assist the writer in gaining a clear understanding of the publishing process;
9. seek to nurture and support new writers;
10. distinguish between new and established writers in terms of familiarity with the publishing process and not have unrealistic expectations of new writers in this regard.

**Contractual issues and writer–publisher relations**

There is a need for a code of conduct as a guide to humane relationships between writers and publishers. Such a code should provide for an adjudication panel to arbitrate in cases of disagreement between the two parties. The panel should be made up of representatives of writers’ associations and publishers’ associations along with representatives of legal affiliates of the associations, representatives of printers’ and booksellers’ associations as appropriate in each African country and of copyright tribunals or commissions where these exist.

The publisher, in consultation with the writer, needs to find means of exploiting and harnessing the new technologies, including print-on-demand and the Internet, to the advantage of both parties. The publisher should also seek to inform himself/herself about measures being developed to protect intellectual property against violation due to modern technology.

Publishers and writers need to express a commitment to encouraging and sustaining associations of writers, publishers, printers and booksellers as an element in the creation of an enabling environment for the book industry and a reading culture in African society.

**African values and African writing**

The involvement of writers in discussions on all aspects of book issues in Africa should be encouraged and efforts made to vitalise and support writers’ associations. Likewise, we welcome and support the African Publishers Network mission statement, which reads: ‘APNET’s mission is to strengthen African publishers’ associations through networking, training and trade promotion to fully meet Africa’s need for quality books relevant to African social, political, economic and cultural reality.’

There is a need to strengthen indigenous textbook production so that it can subsidise creative writing. There is also a need to encourage authors to
write in indigenous African languages, to promote positive African values, and for publishers to find the means to publish such works and make them profitable and affordable in Africa.

Strengthening African literature and culture through cooperation between writers and publishers should provide the guiding principle and aspiration for the two professions.

Participants

Walter Bgoya (Tanzania); Shimmer Chinodya (Zimbabwe); Wendy Davies (United Kingdom); Per Gedin (Sweden); James Gibbs (United Kingdom); Sven Hamrell (Sweden); Chukwuemeka Ike (Nigeria); Mary Jay (United Kingdom); Taban lo Liyong (Sudan/South Africa); Flora Lucas (United Kingdom); Cont Mhlanga (Zimbabwe); Muyabuso Mulokozi (Tanzania); Abel Mwanga (Tanzania); Serah Mwangi (Kenya); N.G. Mwita (Tanzania); Olle Nordberg (Sweden); Victor Nwankwo (Nigeria); Gillian Nyambura (Kenya/Zimbabwe); Akoss Ofori-Mensah (Ghana); Atukwei Okai (Ghana); Kole Omotoso (Nigeria/South Africa); Tess Onwueme (Nigeria/USA); Femi Osofisan (Nigeria); Niyi Osundare (Nigeria/USA); Dafe Otobo (Nigeria); Katherine Salahi (United Kingdom); Irene Staunton (Zimbabwe); Robert Sulley (United Kingdom); James Tumusiime (Uganda); Moyez Vassanji (Tanzania/Canada).
**DTCA – the Unhealthy Pursuit of Health?**

*By Charles Medawar*

DTCA or Direct-To-Consumer Advertising is a relatively new feature that the pharmaceutical industry has introduced and been permitted to operate in two countries, so far: the US and New Zealand. In this article Charles Medawar of Social Audit argues that the legalisation of DTCA may not be far away in the European Union, which, in turn, would probably mean that it becomes established world-wide, including in developing countries, which usually have little legislation concerning the regulation of medicinal drugs. He also presents the main arguments for and against DTCA and introduces, at the end of the article, the DTCA Manifesto, whose essential proposition is that health impact assessments should be done and that DTCA should remain prohibited ‘in the absence of good evidence of both health benefits and lack of risks’. To do otherwise, says the Manifesto, ‘would be to undermine the core values of medicine, science and democracy’.

Charles Medawar is a specialist on drug safety, policy and regulation. Since 1971 he has been the Director of Social Audit Ltd, a small non-profit, London-based consumer research and lobby unit. It is part of the Health Action International (HAI) network.

Should prescription-only medicines be promoted to the general public? At present, this is permitted only in the US and New Zealand, but there are now proposals to legalise Direct-To-Consumer Advertising (DTCA) in the European Union. If that were to happen, how long would it take for DTCA to become established as a global phenomenon – even in developing countries, where basic health needs are generally unmet and where there is often no enforcement of prescription drug laws?

Clearly, the benefits and risks of DTCA would tend to differ in different communities, but the overall picture gives rise to serious concerns. Whatever the benefits of DTCA might be for some, the risks for others might be immense – and it would seem folly to permit any change in the law until the nature, extent and distribution of benefits/risks are properly understood.

United by such concerns, an international group of health, consumer and public interest advocates has been formed, to promote the *DTCA Manifesto*. The underlying concern is that, in most countries, DTCA might
bring fewer benefits than risks, and that indeed ‘it presents a major threat to global public health’. The Manifesto group is therefore seeking support for a general moratorium on the introduction of DTCA.

The precautionary principle should apply: until satisfactory health impact assessments have been published and properly assessed, which give good evidence of both health benefits and lack of risk, we are committed to maintain the legal status quo – prohibiting the promotion of prescription-only medicines to the general public.

This article briefly explains what pressures there now are to introduce Direct-To-Consumer Advertising. It discusses the main arguments advanced in favour of DTCA in relation to those against.

### In support of DTCA

The pressure to promote Direct-To-Consumer Advertising (DTCA) in the European Union (EU) and elsewhere dates from the mid-1990s. Several factors explain it. One has been the rise of ‘evidence-based medicine’ and increased pressure on drug budgets. Both threaten drug sales, and DTCA is seen as an opportunity to expand markets even more. One way or another, the pressure to legalise DTCA has come overwhelmingly from the pharmaceutical industry – though much of the orchestration appears to come from elsewhere. The following report – from the March 2000 meeting of the Pharmaceutical Marketing Society – explains how this is done:

Direct-To-Patient communication has become a prime objective for the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI).… Now the ABPI has announced that it is launching the final stages of a campaign before it tackles the Government and the EU head on…. It is the spearhead of a carefully thought-out campaign. The ABPI battle plan is to employ ground troops in the form of patient support groups, sympathetic medical opinion and healthcare professionals – known as ‘stakeholders’ – which will lead the debate on the informed patient issue. This will have the effect of weakening political, ideological and professional defences…. Then the ABPI will follow through with high-level precision strikes on specific regulatory enclaves in both Whitehall and Brussels…

The general trend to extend patient rights and to inform patients more about the medicines they use has also encouraged the industry’s plans to expand. The rapid growth of the Internet has helped too – partly because it has become an important source of drug information, also because it has suddenly made law enforcement extremely complicated. How would individual nation states be able to control DTCA when billions of messages now fly across national borders – and when the boundaries between drug advertising and drug information have become so blurred?
The watershed for DTCA came in August 1997 when, after a 15-year moratorium, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) relaxed its rules on prescription drug advertising on TV. Within a few months, the amount spent on direct appeals to the public exceeded what the industry spent on advertising in medical journals. DTCA has become an integral part of drug marketing: an estimated US$2.3bn will be spent on it in 2000.

In the US, few if any doubt that DTCA is there to stay. But whether and how the DTCA market grows in future will depend ultimately on the perceived return on investment (ROI), i.e. strength of ‘patient pull’ measured as sales growth against competing products, and the ability to maintain a strong price. Apart from this, market size is limited mainly by ability to pay (of consumers and health systems alike) and by the numbers who may be suffering from a ‘DTC-marketable disease’. Not all therapeutic market sectors are appropriate for DTC advertising. These are said to be the ‘major impacting factors which together define how suitable a disease is to DTC marketing’ – and this is the kind of thinking that goes on behind the scenes:

The more chronic the disease, the more suitable it is to DTC marketing…. The high public awareness of drugs such as Prozac has caused a concomitant increase in awareness of depression … where there may be mental harm associated with the sufferer’s perception of the condition, they may be more inclined to take a lead in the prescription choice … DTC is believed to be most useful for brands where broad awareness is the objective and a big patient population is the target….2

The effectiveness of direct-to-consumer advertising, or marketing pay-back, deals with determining the influence of physician inquiries and ultimate prescriptions written that can be attributed to patient ‘pull’…. At Rothstein-Tauber, we have the right tools and the right people to provide well-designed and thoroughly analysed research programmes relating to Direct-To-Consumer campaigns.3

CGI Healthcare is uniquely positioned to help its clients establish and protect the value of their products or corporate image because we … understand how to seamlessly integrate PR into a marketing mix, including PR campaigns that enhance the return on investment for direct-to-consumer advertising….4

The titles of speeches at a large US industry conference on DTC advertising, held in June 1999, are also rescaling (speaker affiliation indicated): ‘Techniques for analysing ROI on Direct-to-Consumer Investment’ (Parke-Davis, a division of Warner-Lambert); ‘The latest wrinkles in DTC regulatory and legal issues’ (Eli Lilly & Company); and ‘When in a prod-
uct’s life-cycle do you consider DTC as part of overall brand development?’ (Astra Pharmaceuticals). There was also a workshop on ‘Applied Segmentation & Targeting techniques in DTC marketing’.5

Patient support for DTCA

Publicly, the pharmaceutical industry emphasises that its interest in promoting DTCA has more to do with promoting patients’ interests than its own. And it should not seem surprising that the industry has been getting some important support from consumer/patient organisations, especially in these days of ‘postcode prescribing’ (as a result of local and regional restrictions on the availability of expensive drugs).

Many patient groups struggle for survival, and DTC advertising campaigns can empower them. Directly and indirectly, these campaigns draw attention to the needs of people with special and deserving interests and the disadvantages they face. For the groups that represent them, DTCA can bring in more members, and perhaps more column-inches and sound-bites, greater prominence and sense of achievement – and sometimes big ‘unrestricted grants’ from companies too.

Some of these factors may have influenced the UK Patients Association to join forces with Pharmacia & Upjohn (P&U) in a prototype DTCA television campaign (1999–2000) aimed at ‘raising awareness’ about urinary incontinence. The adverts advised people to go to their doctor ‘for medical help for a condition that could easily be treated’. Generally regarded as a foot in the door for DTCA, these TV-commercials seemed helpful and tasteful and they mentioned no brand name – though patients who then went to the doctor would stand a good chance of being prescribed the leading (and heavily promoted) brand, Detrusitol (the drug, tolterodine, made by P&U).

Indeed, most people do need and want much better information about medicines and health than they now get. So it seems not unreasonable when proponents argue that the benefits of DTCA can include the provision of useful and helpful information to patients, greater awareness of health problems and treatment options, and a lessening of the stigma of illness and disease.

These are indeed potential advantages, but there are also risks – including some risks for the patient groups concerned. The main risk would be loss of independence and, if DTCA does take hold, that risk extends to the press and media too. With huge advertising budgets on offer, there is obviously some risk of editorial bias as well.
Certainly the Patients Association lost some credibility. The underlying problem in this case was that tolterodine is, in fact, a relatively ineffective drug. Non-drug treatments would often be preferable and Detrusitol would for most users be little more than a placebo. But far from acknowledging this, or tempering their promotion to match the reality, Pharmacia & Upjohn went into overdrive – and repeatedly attracted criticism for misleading advertising, notably in the US.

In 1998–99, P&U received four separate warning letters from the US Food and Drug Administration. In the most recent, the company was taken to task for making headline claims about the ‘selectively’ of its product – suggesting that it acted on the bladder, with less drying-up effects in the mouth. P&U had omitted to say that its evidence was based not on clinical trials, but on studies with cats.

Presumably the Patients Association was unaware of all this until it was too late. They supported the TV promotion and accepted a large donation from P&U – and then gave the company one of their ‘Platinum Awards’. Indeed, the industry appears to have found it relatively easy to get patient organisations on-side:

The first phase of aligning the Industry with the Informed Patient Initiative campaign began in 1998 and was now largely completed, said Professor Jones (Director-General of the ABPI).… Focus groups with patient groups appear to have surprised the ABPI by their open-minded attitude to the idea. It had been expecting much more mistrust of the industry’s motives, which earlier research had thrown up…. Phase two of the campaign is now involved in seeking alliances with patient groups, the BMA (British Medical Association), Royal Colleges (of health professionals), media and others. A recent publication by the ABPI, The Expert Patient, is part of a softening-up assault to be mounted through those interested parties and opinion leaders by stimulating public debate.6

**Opposition to DTCA**

Not all consumer groups have welcomed the prospect of DTCA, and there has been significant opposition in both the US and New Zealand. Much of the criticism has focused on the poor quality of information provided – not only on the basis of published enforcement findings, but also from surveys of advertising.

In November 2000, the New Zealand Ministry of Health began a second review of DTCA. An earlier enquiry ordered by the Minister in 1998 established that most doctors wanted DTCA stopped or reduced, believing
it was of no benefit to patients. Surveys suggested that two-thirds of DTC advertisements did not comply with the industry’s voluntary code of practice.

A probationary period ensued, and a more recent survey (1999/2000) reported improvement: one in three DTC advertisements failed to comply. This led to proposals from the industry (adopted in November 2000) for pre-vetting of advertisements at the companies’ expense.

But there is also worrying evidence of the impact of DTCA on drug spending, notably from the US. For example:

The 25 drugs that contributed most to the increase in retail sales of pharmaceuticals in 1999 accounted for 40.7 per cent of the overall $17.7 billion rise in spending. Most of these drugs were heavily advertised to the public and experienced a sharp growth in sales – an aggregate 43 per cent in a single year. In contrast, the growth in sales for all other prescription drugs from 1998 to 1999 was 13.3 per cent.7

For these and other reasons, neither health professionals nor governments have welcomed proposals for DTCA, without reservation. Perhaps the dominant concern for professionals has been the prospect of badgering from patients for brand-name products, and erosion of doctor–patient relationships. Still, it may be only a matter of time before the main professional associations give in, taking into account the extent of sponsorship from the industry that they and their members enjoy.

Governments, meanwhile, also tend to be torn. On the one hand, most major nations are, in economic terms, highly dependent on pharmaceutical companies. On the other hand, many governments support public health systems and all of them are short of funds. The governments of the main industrialised nations are only now waking up to the prospect of DTCA bringing increased demand for health services and a substantial increase in the national drug bill.

This dilemma is paramount in the UK, where the pharmaceutical industry contributes hugely to national output and export earnings – but where the government is also under huge pressure to improve its stewardship of the National Health Service and anxious to reduce the national drug bill (about £6 billion a year). The obsession with secrecy in medicine regulation has made it hard to establish exactly where the government stands, but the evidence very much suggests it has not yet given the matter much thought.
In early 2000, the UK’s Medicines Control Agency claimed to have ‘an ongoing interest’ in the subject, but refused to identify what it was. At the same time, the Treasury confirmed it has not undertaken any analysis of the financial implications, though it appeared to recognise the problems there could be. Inertia is probably all it will take for the legalisation of DTCA to follow.

Meanwhile, the European Commission (EC) has begun its own enquiries. In March 2000, the EC convened a working group on information and advertising and on electronic commerce. They followed up this meeting by agreeing to send out a ‘questionnaire asking concrete questions and proposing concrete options on possible ways forward’. The 14 questions that materialised seem notable mainly for their obliqueness and painful use of the English language. For example:

Do you think that it could be useful to give possibilities for the Marketing Authorisation Holder to give more information? Do you think it would have a public interest as far as certain classes of medicinal products are concerned? If yes, on which classes of medicinal products could it be possible to start?

Not one of the 14 questions mentioned DTCA.

If Direct-To-Consumer Advertising were to be legalised in Europe, there would inevitably be a ‘domino effect’, and DTCA would spread to developing countries too. Little thought has been given to the consequences of this – the World Health Organization (WHO) has yet to demonstrate any leadership on the issue. The presumption must be that the main losers will be the dispossessed.

It is very hard to imagine that DTCA would benefit the more than half the people in the world unable to afford even rudimentary health care – and ironic that they should include over 40 million US citizens without any health insurance at all. Indeed, it is not easy to imagine why any country would want to embrace DTCA, such a distinctively American phenomenon, when that country has a relatively poor record on health care. True, the best of American medicine is superb – but the average standard is not impressive at all. Data from the WHO suggests a system that offers outstandingly poor value for money, overall.

The US ranks No 27 in the latest (May 2000) WHO tabulations of national life expectancy. Table 1 provides some measure of the cost of national health attainment. It lists major countries with higher life expectancies
than the US national average (70.0 years) in approximate order of annual national health expenditure per head of population.

**Table 1** Health expenditure and life expectancy in a selection of Northern countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Total per capita health expenditure in international dollars</th>
<th>Disability-adjusted life-expectancy (overall years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>964</td>
<td>72.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>1,193</td>
<td>71.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>1,211</td>
<td>72.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>1,402</td>
<td>70.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>1,539</td>
<td>70.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>1,601</td>
<td>73.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>1,708</td>
<td>71.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>1,738</td>
<td>71.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>1,757</td>
<td>70.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>1,759</td>
<td>74.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>1,824</td>
<td>72.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>1,836</td>
<td>72.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>1,911</td>
<td>72.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>1,943</td>
<td>73.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>1,960</td>
<td>71.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>1,985</td>
<td>71.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>2,125</td>
<td>73.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>2,365</td>
<td>70.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>2,644</td>
<td>72.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>3,724</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistical Annex, Tables 5, 8, The World Health Report 2000, World Health Organization, Geneva, May 2000, pp. 176–82, 192–95. Omitted: Malta (70.5 years – $755/head), Andorra (72.3 – $1,216), San Marino (72.3 – $1,301), Monaco (72.4 – $1,799). These WHO data refer to Disability Adjusted Life Expectancy (DALE). To calculate DALE, the years of ill-health are weighted according to severity and subtracted from the expected overall life expectancy to give the equivalent years of healthy life. Thus DALE summarises the expected number of years to be lived (for babies born in 1999) in what might be termed the equivalent of “full health”: 

**Quality and volume of information**

All this underlines that the major risks of DTCA are not really to do with the quality of information in individual advertisements. Many critics would probably even agree there is likely to be some nourishing information in most individual Direct-To-Consumer promotions. The main concern is about the macro-impacts of DTCA. What happens when predomi-
nantly commercial messages become the dominant feature of the overall information diet?

The following gentle risk assessment by Lewis Thomas exemplifies the problems there might be. Alas, he also conveys how very difficult it might be to quantify the harm:

If people are educated to believe they are fundamentally fragile, always on the verge of mortal disease, perpetually in need of health-care professionals at every side, always dependent on an imagined discipline of 'preventive' medicine, there can be no limit to the numbers of doctors’ offices, clinics, and hospitals required to meet the demand.... We are, in real life, a reasonably healthy people. Far from being ineptly put together, we are amazingly tough, durable organisms, full of health, ready for most contingencies. The new danger to our well-being, if we continue to listen to all the talk, is in becoming a nation of healthy hypochondriacs, living gingerly, worrying ourselves half to death.⁸

Thomas wrote this before the days of DTCA, and what we see today in the US seems more like health hysteria. Given the state of world health, is it reasonable that US citizens should be so lacking in confidence in the capacity of the reasonably well-cared-for human organism to thrive? Does it seem appropriate that the richest nation on earth should be the most concerned about unhealthy environments (human and physical)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2 US health observances September 2000</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baby Safety Month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Eye Health and Safety Month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cholesterol Education Month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold and Flu Campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gynecologic Cancer Awareness Month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Aging Month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leukemia Awareness Month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Cholesterol Education Month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Food Safety Education Month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Sickle Cell Month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childhood Injury Prevention Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sobriety Checkpoint Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisted Living Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National 5-a-Day Week</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
It seems reasonable at least to ask if DTCA would not in some way contribute to increased levels of hypochondria – accelerating what may already seem an unhealthy tendency in the US to the obsession with the pursuit of health. The point is hard to prove – but should we just take for granted that more ‘disease awareness’ leads to improved levels of health? Do we really want to emulate the US experience, searching relentlessly for evidence of lack of health perfection, marking almost every day of the calendar as a ‘Health Observance’ day? (See Table 2.)

**DTCA Manifesto**

Against this background, an international coalition is forming to promote, from 2001, a *DTCA Manifesto*. The Manifesto group is raising a number of concerns about DTCA – not only about the substantive issue, but also about how policies are made and decisions taken.

Our concern relates not only to the possible adverse effects of promoting prescription-only medicines to the public, but also to the way in which decisions relating to legalisation are being taken. In particular, we are concerned about:

- the imminence of proposals to legalise DTCA and the effective irreversibility of any decision to do so;
- the operation of a domino effect, whereby legalisation in EU member countries would lead inexorably to the development of DTCA as a global phenomenon;
- the lack of reliable evidence on the benefits, risks and costs of DTCA – notwithstanding the major impacts it might be expected to have; and
- the lack of quality of debate and the undue influence of the international pharmaceutical industry in informing it.

On the subject of DTCA itself, the essential proposition in the Manifesto is that health impact assessments should be done and that DTCA should remain prohibited ‘in the absence of good evidence of both health benefits and lack of risk’. To do otherwise, says the Manifesto, ‘would be to undermine the core values of medicine, science and democracy’.

Then the Manifesto lists some of the questions that, in any adequate assessment, would need to be addressed. They include the following:

1. To what extent would health care systems be able to meet the increased demand likely to result from increased volumes and frequency of product and ‘disease awareness’ advertising on target and non-target audiences?
2. Would DTCA be likely to promote more rational and effective drug use – and how would it compare in this respect with drug advertising to health professionals?
3. To what extent might DTCA promote use of drug therapies over possibly better alternatives (including non-intervention), and/or less effective and cost-effective medical treatments?
4. How would DTCA affect different people’s health – taking into account also their perception of health and health needs and their dependence on providers?
5. Does DTCA tend to give an unfair competitive advantage to major multinationals, over smaller companies and local producers?
6. Would DTCA provide, in effect, a greatly extended patent life for promoted brands – and what would be the likely impact on production and use of generics?
7. What would be the likely overall effect of DTCA on product prices and national drug budgets?
8. What would be the indirect effects of DTCA on health – including its influence on the editorial independence of the press and media, and their coverage of health issues?
9. To what extent would experience in the USA be relevant to its impact elsewhere – especially in developing countries – given the US commitment to private rather than public health?
10. Would other countries be disadvantaged by DTCA, to the extent that they lacked the protections available in the USA – e.g. rigorous enforcement by the FDA, freedom of information laws, consumer rights?

The DTCA Manifesto is planned as the centrepiece of an international campaign. Its purpose is ‘to raise awareness of the significance of these questions and seek answers to them, and to promote an intelligent appreciation of the evidence relating to the health benefits, risks and costs of DTCA’. This campaign needs and would welcome your support – including any thoughts you might have about answers to the above, and about other questions that matter.

Notes
9. The planned website address of the campaign is http://www.dtca.org
The Role of NGOs as Agents for Change

By Barbara Klugman

This article by Barbara Klugman takes a thorough look at the possibilities and limitations of NGO activism in Southern Africa and, particularly, in South Africa during a time which was very special and saw rapid political developments. The author has since 1991 been the Director of the Women’s Health Project at the Department of Community Health of the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg and has in this central position been involved in many important NGO campaigns and activities in the field of women and health. The article was originally presented as a paper to the Dag Hammarskjöld Seminar on Equity in Health: Policies for Survival in Southern Africa, held at Kasane in northern Botswana in March 1997. It has since been revised and updated. It presents and deliberates on two case studies of NGO activism, one national and one international. It ends by discussing at a general level as well as at the Southern African sub-regional level the factors that facilitate – and those that constrain – NGO involvement in the policy-making process. The article enriches in a convincing way the discussion of a subject whose importance seems to grow steadily by the month.

Introduction

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have become fashionable in the world of policy. The view that NGO participation is essential to good policy-making and implementation is widely accepted and has been institutionalised in international agreements.\(^1\) In some cases this view is framed by anti-statist policies that support NGOs as part of an overall strategy towards non-state delivery of development; in others it is framed by those concerned with facilitating access of the poor and powerless.\(^2\) The recognition of the importance of NGOs does not, however, always extend into national acceptance of NGO influence in policy and implementation, nor to the existence of NGOs that are able to play this role effectively.

In this article I will consider the conditions under which NGOs can influence policy in the direction of equity; the skills required by NGOs in order to play this role; and the strategies required to influence the policy process. I will also reflect briefly on related philosophical questions such as the legitimacy of NGOs as role-players in the policy process. Having developed a framework for analysing the role of NGOs in facilitating policy change, and used a number of case studies for illustration, I shall then draw some conclusions about the challenges facing all those concerned with health and equity, regarding the role of NGOs in Southern Africa.
In presenting a position on the role of NGOs in influencing policy, I should make a number of premises explicit. I am writing from the perspective of an activist and academic who has been engaged in policy struggles under the auspices of an NGO, the Women’s Health Project (WHP), based at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, in a very particular moment in one country’s history. This experience, and the perspective from which this article is written, is based on a commitment to work for the achievement of citizenship for all people in our country, and internationally. By this I mean a context in which people have access to those conditions that are essential for their health, and for them to be able to express themselves as human beings. This requires on the one hand facilities such as clean water, health services, education, safe housing and communications services. On the other hand, it requires social conditions such as the rights to free association, freedom of expression and freedom from fear, whether in the home or in public life, which can be characterised as a culture of human rights. The overall goal is centrally concerned with the achievement of equity in a global context in which economic growth is understood as the means to reduce poverty, yet is associated with increased inequity. The promotion of citizenship in its fullest sense encompasses the goal of equity.

This article engages with the possible role of NGOs in achieving this project. It looks specifically at NGOs with an intermediary or facilitative role rather than those that are taking over the roles of either government or the private sector, or are actually the institutionalised form of mass-based organisations.

What are NGOs?

Non-governmental organisations come in many shapes and forms, with differing goals and activities. Some concern themselves directly or indirectly with policy; others do not. The concept of NGO is here applied specifically to non-profit organisations rather than civil society in general. In addition, it does not include popular movements or community-based organisations. Rather, it describes that grouping of organisations that function between state and community – some at local level, some at regional or national levels. Many NGOs are primarily concerned with poverty or disaster alleviation, while others focus on local-level development projects, usually filling gaps government services have not met. A third type of NGO strategy can be described as ‘sustainable systems development’. It is this type of NGO that is most likely to facilitate change at the level of policy or implementation and is therefore the focus of this paper.*

* Unless otherwise indicated, the use of ‘NGOs’ in this paper refers to indigenous organisations, rather than local branches of international NGOs, or donor NGOs.
It is not, however, the existence of certain types of NGOs, alone, that facilitates policy change. NGOs operate within a political, economic and social context that may be more or less favourable to change. This context substantially influences NGO goals and activities. For this reason, it is appropriate to begin by asking how policy change occurs.

How do policies change?

The conventional wisdom in many sectors is that policy changes are decided on the basis of a rational assessment of possible options, given existing human and economic resources. This perspective is particularly espoused by those most directly responsible for policy development, that is government technocrats, who define themselves as those with the technical expertise to advise government. Likewise many transnationals put money into research for policy, and argue policy perspectives on the basis of research or international experience. This approach, described by policy analysts as a ‘rational’ approach, formed the basis for early frameworks for understanding the policy process. Initially articulated by Laswell in the 1950s, it presents a chronological set of decision-making stages or phases that usually include identification of the policy problem, agenda-setting, formulation of policy proposals, adoption of policies, implementation and, lastly, evaluation.5

This approach of course defies the conventional public perception that policies reflect the party-political aims, at best, and the personal ambitions, at worst, of politicians. Moreover, as policy analysts now recognise, there is a wide range of forces that influence the process of decision-making around policy, in which the rationality of research findings may carry little weight. For this reason, today it is accepted by policy analysts that while all the various ‘stages’ must occur, the phases may occur simultaneously. Walt and Gilson suggest that policy is a product of the interaction of the possible policy content with the overall policy context, the process of policy-making, and the actors in each phase.6 Ham and Hill refer to the environment of the political system in which policies are made, noting that there is an interaction between the social, economic and political contexts that must be analysed in order to understand the way in which problems are addressed (or not addressed).7 Thus policy context can be further broken down to include the situational or transient context; structural aspects of the political and economic system; the cultural context or values of groups or the community as a whole; and exogenous or international factors. The process includes all the phases of decision-making described above. The actors can be identified in terms of their relationship to the policy-making process.8 Reich and Cooper’s method of political mapping, for example, proposes that actors should be analysed
by – among other factors – position (support or non-support of policy), strength of position, power and concentration of power, type of organisation, and type of sector.9

This view challenges the idea that content alone – that is, the technical factors influencing policy development – is the primary determinant of policy outcomes.

Taking this even further, Kingdon argues that three streams of processes – namely, problem identification, solution identification and the political process – occur independently.10 The factors influencing each stream differ. In order to bring about policy change, there needs to be an interaction between all three streams. HIV/AIDS provides a good example. While first the threat and then the reality of HIV/AIDS epidemics have been with many African countries for years, the extent of the illness and the means with which different countries have responded to the crisis have differed. In the ‘problem-identification stream’, the issue was identified to a lesser or greater degree in different countries by different sources, in particular: health services, those with HIV and their families, the media, researchers, and donors.

A number of different solutions have been developed in response to the perceived problems, including:

• welfare responses to support those with HIV/AIDS or their families, in some cases from NGOs, in some cases within communities;
• efforts by researchers, in some cases supported by the pharmaceutical industry in search of new products and markets, and by service-provision or advocacy NGOs to understand the virus and how it spreads in order to develop technical means of prevention, such as vaccinations, female condoms or microbicides, means of treatment, or means of preventing spread through social interventions, such as providing information and promoting changes in social behaviour;
• efforts at containment such as prison policies to separate those who are HIV-positive from other prisoners, or immigration policies denying entrance to people who are HIV-positive.

How the processes of problem identification and solution development have interfaced with the political process has also differed from country to country. In some cases mobilisation of organisations in civil society has forced government to respond, if only by supporting the direction of multinational and bilateral aid towards NGOs addressing the problem. In some cases, such as in Zambia, a past president’s personal experience of loss of a family member to AIDS has led to the recognition of HIV/AIDS as an is-
sue to be addressed by government. In Other cases multinational or bilateral agencies have made HIV/AIDS an area of financial support, thus influencing national policy towards provision of services, social marketing or health promotion activities that were not previously on the agenda.

As the HIV/AIDS example illustrates, there are indeed separate streams of problems, solutions and politics in society. Their interaction is the critical process for policy development and implementation. Kingdon talks of the need for ‘policy entrepreneurs’ who make connections across streams. By identifying the forces required to bring about an interface between all three streams, and developing strategies to strengthen these forces, such entrepreneurs can play a key role in facilitating policy change. This is therefore the major site for NGOs’ interventions in the policy process although their non-profit motive leads me to describe them as ‘policy activists’ rather than entrepreneurs. Moreover, it is their role as non-profit organisations that makes them particularly able to foster both policies and processes to promote equity.

Policy activism can engage with the political process or the bureaucratic process, so that policy activists can help not only to get an issue onto the policy agenda, and influence its content, but to advocate for implementation as well as influencing the nature of implementation through advocacy, operational research or other interventions that influence the bureaucracy.

Case studies of NGO activism – a national policy process

In order to illustrate this role, I will present two case studies of successful policy interventions by NGOs. I will then reflect on these in order to explore whether there are generalisable factors that facilitate or constrain this role, and that could inform Southern African NGOs in their efforts to influence policy.

When the Women’s Health Project (WHP), a university-based NGO in South Africa began its intervention, there was no national policy on cervical screening. Some provincial health departments had attempted to develop policy, without achieving any impact at the level of implementation. Even within cities, the strategies of different health authorities differed. As a result, some women in the public service were having pap smears; most were not. Moreover, where pap smears were offered, this was mostly at family-planning clinics, to women younger than the optimal age for screening to impact on mortality. Thus the resource of pap smears was being wasted.
Cervical cancer is the biggest cancer killer of women in South Africa.\textsuperscript{15} About one in 30 women will develop this cancer in their lifetime.\textsuperscript{16} From the perspective of WHP, this raised key questions of health and equity: health, because such cancer is preventable; and equity, because those with access to private-sector health services were subject to too many interventions (usually pap smears once a year), whereas those in the public sector were being virtually ignored in a context where the health system probably had the resources to manage cervical screening. This is also an equity issue because of the need to address those factors that contribute to the low status of women and the fact that women themselves expressed concern about cervical cancer. WHP decided to take up this issue with a view to persuading government to develop and implement a cervical-screening policy.

Identification of actors and strategies

In order to do this, the key stakeholders and their positions in relation to this issue had to be identified. A specific strategy for each stakeholder had to be developed.

Women

Since WHP was established with the aim of involving women in the policy process, ordinary women were the first target. Workshops were run with women’s groups, to find out about their experiences and views in relation to cervical cancer. From these, two key points became clear. First, while participants were very aware that women die of cervical cancer, they had little or no information about the role of pap smears in its prevention. Second, not only were women given no explanation when pap smears were taken, but they felt abused by the generally hostile attitude of health workers and considered the health-service environment unsupportive. This process of problem identification directed WHP towards two policy requirements: the need for a major information strategy as part of any screening policy; and the need to identify means of changing the health-worker culture in order to promote women’s right to dignity, privacy, information and choice within the health services.

At the same time as developing a strategy to achieve the first goal – an appropriate cervical screening programme – WHP undertook two projects to begin to tackle the identified problems. It developed a workshop manual on cervical cancer,\textsuperscript{17} and a ‘Woman to women’ training programme to train lay women in how to facilitate information workshops with women, using this manual. The aim was to begin the process of building women’s capacity to protect their own health and to demand appropriate services.
Health workers

The aim of the second project was to develop an intervention to improve health-worker responsiveness to their clients – whether women, men or young people. This intervention began through participatory workshops in a rural clinic, and was ultimately tested in two multi-centre studies in Africa through the World Health Organization. The finalised manual, entitled *Health Workers for Change: A Manual to Improve Quality of Care*, is currently being used in a range of provinces in South Africa as a means of managing change and building awareness of gender inequality and how to address this at clinic level.

Health-system managers

In WHP’s assessment, one of the likely impediments to a cervical-screening programme was that health-system managers would view the costs as prohibitive and therefore not justifiable in relation to the impact of the intervention. In anticipation of this perspective, WHP undertook research into the costs of cervical screening and the availability of facilities. It also did a literature review and consulted with international experts in the field so as to gain a full understanding of experience in cervical-screening programmes and their impact, and to present the findings to health-system managers. The findings were then published.

Private practitioners and academics

The costing research had concluded that it would not be financially viable to propose a screening strategy that requires frequent pap smears; the international literature showed that a screening interval of one or two years made no difference in outcome, and that even with an interval of up to five years no substantial improvement in outcome was likely. These findings challenged the practice amongst gynaecologists and even general practitioners in the private sector of undertaking yearly, or even six-monthly pap smears. From a public-health perspective, coverage rather than frequency was the challenge. The WHO proposal of three smears a lifetime, at 10-year intervals, seemed most appropriate – to aim to cover all targeted women, rather than reaching a few women frequently. This proposal would, however, need public support, and if influential practitioners argued against it, this could lead to a sense among the public that the proposed cervical screening policy was inadequate and, worse, showed lack of concern for the poor, since the rich already had a good service. For this reason, WHP identified the need for a meeting between key players in this field, notably influential practitioners, academics and service providers. It organised such a meeting, where the research findings and perspectives of women could be assessed in relation to available resources, and a consen-
sus was established supporting the ‘three smears a lifetime’ proposal.\textsuperscript{21} The legitimacy of this policy proposal was thereby strengthened, since it now came from a broader range of stakeholders.

\textit{Bringing together the actors}

At this stage, the basics of a policy had been developed: we had begun with problem identification and moved into and through solution development. What was required was a process of refining and building support for the policy. To this end, the policy was incorporated into the process of consultations taking place in the country under the auspices of the 1994 Women’s Health Conference run by a coalition of NGOs and managed by the Women’s Health Project. This process involved discussing 13 draft policies on women’s health with regional networks of women’s groups, NGOs, academics and health workers, and bringing them all together at a major policy conference. At this conference, the policy proposals were finalised. They were then published and popularised through simplified pamphlets translated into a number of local languages, press briefings, and organisational report-backs from the conference.\textsuperscript{22}

Strategies such as those described thus far have been characterised as diffuse or enlightenment strategies,\textsuperscript{23} since they aim to influence the overall policy environment, in this case by influencing the views of the public. That the strategies are directed towards equity is reflected in the incorporation of those most affected by the problem, and provision of the necessary technical expertise to define how available resources can be used to this end. The role of WHP as policy activists can also be seen – implementing processes to identify and link the problem and potential solutions. From here, the question was now to get the proposed policy formalised and implemented by government. Again WHP’s strategies facilitated this linkage.

\textit{Politicians}

Some of those who would become key management figures in the Department of Health (since posts were changing subsequent to the 1994 elections) participated in the conference process, as part of the diffusion strategy. It was nevertheless necessary to develop specific and direct strategies to persuade politicians of the need to accept the national cervical screening policy. To this end, WHP as part of the African National Congress’s (ANC) Women’s Health Commission conceptualised the cervical screening strategy which was ultimately included in the ANC’s health plan.\textsuperscript{24} WHP also presented the findings of the costing research and the group discussions with women, as well as the finalised proposal from the Women’s Health Conference to the
Parliamentary Select Committee on Health, both to win its support for the specific policy content, and to mobilise it to put pressure on the Department of Health actually to formulate policy.

At this stage, there was broad agreement about the need for a cervical screening policy. A number of steps were required in order to consolidate this at a political level, that is, to bring the third stream on board. The first was the development of a formalised government policy. The second was operational research to inform implementation.

Policy activism for policy-making
The government took up the challenge, and established a National Cancer Control Advisory Committee, with cervical screening as one of the issues on its agenda. As a result of the reputation its cervical cancer screening advocate had won, WHP was invited onto this committee on the basis of its expertise and, indeed, the committee elected the WHP staff member as its Chairperson. This participation shifted WHP’s policy-activist role from the diffuse interventions described thus far to a direct intervention at the policy level. In effect, WHP was now working not only ‘from the outside’, but also ‘from the inside’.

In early 1997 the full proposal for a National Cancer Control Strategy was presented to the Department of Health. It included the proposal for a national cervical screening policy, including those aspects identified by the differing stakeholders who were involved in the process of problem identification and solution development. The first of the basic components was that the public health service must prepare itself, ensuring it has the necessary equipment and the capacity to refer slides to a laboratory and feed back results. Second, health workers have to be educated about the reasons for screening, how to treat patients and how to refer. Then an education programme for the public will have to be introduced so that people know there is a service, who should use it and why. Women aged 30 years or older will be screened three times in succession (at least three years apart) utilising pap smears. These will be free at the point of service. 25

In mid-1999, the Department of Health finally accepted the National Cancer Control Programme. The intervening two years saw the complex processes of internal debate to which outsiders had little access. NGOs such as WHP and the Cancer Association, among others, did, however, continually prod the government for a decision, at the same time maintaining media awareness of the issues and building women’s knowledge of the importance of pap smears and their right to demand services.
Policy activists were aware that given the burden of health-system restructuring, nothing might happen to implement the policy. WHP engaged with the national Department of Health and helped prepare a meeting to get provinces implementing the new policy. In some provinces, policy activists within government bureaucracies took steps towards implementation. For example, the Gauteng Department of Health (GDH) developed its provincial policy on cervical cancer screening at primary health care level in 1999. This was followed by the introduction of a free screening programme at five pilot sites in the province, targeting women over the age of 35, on 1 July 1999. The WHP was commissioned to evaluate the pilot screening programme in order to inform the GDH about the problems and potential of extending the screening services to the entire province. A major finding of the evaluation was that the information generated by the pilot was insufficient to support recommendations for implementation of a province-wide cervical cancer screening programme.

Policy activism through research
In parallel with the above policy process, researchers at a leading hospital, in collaboration with the National Cancer Association, were wanting to explore means of extending pap smear services, drawing on their existing experience of mobile services. They approached WHP because of its reputation for substantive and technical expertise on the issue. WHP’s participation led to an acceptance of a public-health and therefore systematic approach, rather than, for example, the establishment of mobile clinics in a number of provinces as a stop-gap measure, which was the initial intention of this collaboration. As a result a national protocol was developed, with academics in each province undertaking provincial assessments: to define the age-specific prevalence of cervical cancer and its precursors, to pilot screening, to determine the referral capacity of the health system, and to involve academics in primary health-care-based research and service provision. More than 20,000 pap smears were taken. This shift from offering a mobile service to assessing the possibilities of a national intervention is a clear example of the impact of policy activism. Whereas many NGOs go for the local service provision model, thus remaining within the ‘welfarist’ approach, policy activists will look for options that promote equity and sustainability, in this case seeking the evidence to promote access for the entire affected population, within the public health system, so that it becomes part of the ongoing provision of government services. The findings of this research were used in persuading government of the need for a cervical screening policy.
However, it rapidly became clear to WHP that the policy was not enough – and this was later reinforced by the evaluation of the Gauteng pilot study described above. WHP had already conceptualised a broader implementation intervention, thus continuing with its policy activist role, but now to support government in taking the range of steps necessary to make it possible actually to implement the policy. It established an alliance between the Department of Health, the Women’s Health Research Unit at the University of Cape Town, and an international reproductive health grouping, EngenderHealth, to set up an operational research intervention to develop cervical screening services including processes, protocols, and systems that will be able to inform national implementation. This project is underway as of early 2001.

The intervention reflects WHP’s growing recognition that winning the policy argument is not enough. Implementation is complex and requires careful preparation. NGOs can support this process, although it means learning how to engage with a bureaucracy and identifying how the process of implementation itself will shape the nature and effectiveness of policy.

An international policy process

In order to explore the extent to which the style of policy activism described above is generalisable, an example of NGOs’ policy activism around health and equity in the international terrain can be considered.

In anticipation of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo in 1994, women’s rights and women’s health NGOs throughout the world mobilised at national and international levels in order to influence the Programme of Action that would be prepared in advance of the ICPD and finalised in Cairo. They did so because they were concerned to promote women’s rights in the context of globalisation and increasing inequities, and because women’s participation in development and, indeed, women’s bodies, are both sites for international and national project implementation. They understood the ICPD’s Programme would form the mandate for the programmes of the United Nations Population Fund, and would have a profound impact on other multilateral and bilateral agencies working in the field of ‘population and development’, including most specifically, reproductive health. They sought to inject concerns of human rights, including equity, into this process in order to lay the foundation for in-country mobilisation to change specific programmes in this area.
Coalitions and networks: working from within or working from without

A range of different alliances were formed, and, in an unprecedented step, 14 international women’s networks strategised together, producing a ‘Women’s Declaration on Population Policies’ and hosting a preparatory meeting in Rio de Janeiro. Within this overarching strategy, different NGOs chose to operate at different levels. In particular, some felt that it was inappropriate to engage directly with the United Nations conference, since population policies, supported by multi- and bilateral agencies had, by and large, been used to reinforce a eugenist message in the provision of contraception, rather than fostering the rights of women. Moreover, most of these groups believed that the population and development programme should focus exclusively on some of the fundamental issues of inequity, specifically North-South economic relations and structural adjustment programmes. By engaging with the United Nations conference, they felt they would be colluding with the population-control establishment, and the inclusion of reproductive health as a focal issue. NGOs with this perspective chose to push for policy change by participating in the parallel NGO forum in Cairo, organising protest actions and engaging with the media in order to get an alternative perspective presented to the public.

Other NGOs and NGO networks believed that their activism had won them a space at the negotiating table – that women’s health activists, through their research, networking and lobbying efforts, had won the respect of many of the players and, moreover, that they had achieved recognition that women’s views and voices had to inform any Programme of Action for its implementation to be successful. Moreover, they located sexual and reproductive rights and health, including access to health services, as a fundamental development issue. One of these groups, the International Women’s Health Coalition, brought together women from NGOs, mostly from the South, but some from ‘countries in transition’ and one from a ‘Northern’ country (New Zealand!), who had a shared perspective on the causes of underdevelopment, and a shared belief in the right to development and in the linkage between women’s rights, including sexual and reproductive rights, and women’s oppression generally. This group later consolidated itself as HERA – Health, Empowerment, Rights and Accountability. Together the women in the group agreed on priorities for inclusion in the ICPD Programme of Action and then developed a number of strategies to achieve their inclusion. Firstly, in collaboration with other NGOs who had chosen this ‘engagement’ route, through the vehicle of a Women’s Caucus facilitated by an international NGO, Women’s Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), they developed wording for the Programme, which they adjusted at each phase of the programme’s develop-
ment (through a series of preparatory conferences and then in Cairo). They then lobbied potentially sympathetic governments to introduce this wording. They did so by working with the preparatory committees in their own countries, in some cases by being chosen as members of government delegations, and by lobbying government delegates in the hallways of the conference venues. The result was that the language developed by this grouping was accepted in a number of key sections of the Programme of Action. This method of work was carried forward into the process of developing the Platform of Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. A number of other networks similarly engaged with the Cairo and subsequent conference processes – each with their own particular focus (such as environment or globalisation).

As a result, the documents give greater attention to the overarching context of which population trends are a reflection, specifically production and consumption patterns, the need for economic and environmental sustainability, and the recognition of reproductive rights and matters of sexuality as part and parcel of human rights, and essential components for the achievement of equity and improved quality of life.

In 1998, HERA began preparations for the five-year review of the ICPD programme, by identifying case studies of good practice in the sexual and reproductive rights and health field and hosting a major conference to promote awareness of successes in the field and identify critical requirements for success, focusing on equity, accountability and partnerships. It also used action sheets it had developed the previous year, to lobby key players about the interpretation of the ICPD Programme of Action. HERA members participated in NGO preparations and some were given places in their government delegations to Preparatory Committee meetings, and the final United Nations General Assembly review. Significantly, by this time, key government representatives considered HERA a legitimate force, and were advocating the use of the fact sheets to clarify concepts during informal negotiations. During this process, the HERA secretariat facilitated the development of a Women’s Coalition for the ICPD, comprising 80 NGOs from all over the world which, again, prepared draft wording and amendments to the UN review documents and facilitated, with members of other organisations in the Coalition, breakfast meetings of like-minded NGOs to develop lobbying strategies each day. Once again, a number of gender-sensitive and rights-oriented commitments were achieved in the final text through the interaction of NGO activists with delegations, including on key issues such as the importance of implementing agreements regarding abortion made in Cairo and Beijing.
While of course these agreements do not guarantee implementation on the ground, they do form the framework for the UN agencies’ programmes and, from that point of view, NGO advocacy during and subsequent to the process has influenced the context in which donors and national governments are operating.

In addition, the process of operating the Coalition built the capacity of a wider range of sexual and reproductive rights activists who can now function as policy activists in their own right, having had the exposure and guidance of NGOs who have been doing this work for a longer time.

Factors facilitating and constraining NGO involvement in the policy terrain

The open-policy context
I have chosen these examples because they draw out many of the strategies and strengths required of NGOs if they are to contribute towards the achievement of more equitable policies. The content, however, could be replaced with any number of policy issues in the health, environment, defence, telecommunications or virtually any other sector in South Africa, or with any of the issues under consideration in the UN system. This is because, in South Africa, the context was one of tremendous political fluidity, coupled with a government commitment to transformation in all sectors. In the UN system, too, the case study was preceded by a period in which NGOs had fought for the right to participate – for access to the documents, for access to the meetings, for space for their own meetings within the UN conference venue. All of these rights are continually contested by those who fear NGO participation, as witnessed when the NGO forum in Beijing was located miles from the UN conference. The importance of NGOs in policy development and implementation is nevertheless formally recognised by the United Nations system and this gives scope to NGOs to maintain and further open this space, while posing new challenges of co-option, which are discussed later.

Lack of institutionalised party research and advisory capacity
In the case of South Africa, the majority party, the ANC, began without any institutionalised systems for research support for parliamentarians. In addition, the process of bringing in new civil servants with a commitment to equity and the skills to guide policy development was very slow. As a result, there was a gap in resources acknowledged by politicians and government officials, which many NGOs and policy consultancies exploited. Moreover, since many of those in power came from the same political perspective as those in NGOs, they felt comfortable with the political perspec-
tive of NGOs. The political space available to NGOs who have supported oppressed groups that subsequently come to power has been documented for other Southern African countries too.35

Likewise in the case of ICPD, the lack of research and strategic resources within government delegations created a gap that NGOs chose to fill. The reason for HERA and other alliances’ success was predominantly their access to a level of information and skills that many government delegations lacked. When delegates needed to know how text related to past international agreements, it was NGOs who had comparative documents on hand. When delegates needed information on the impact of specific programmes on target communities, it was NGOs who had local-level experience and data. When delegates wondered what positions other countries were likely to take, it was frequently NGOs, through their international collaboration, who were aware of how government delegations from different countries and continents were shifting their perspectives! It was this informational and strategic role that secured their influence.

A related gap that NGOs filled, as the process moved from Cairo to Beijing to the five-year reviews of these conferences, was institutional memory! Although HERA, for example, was only a network, its members had stayed with this process from the start. They remembered the nuances achieved in the language through negotiations and could advise governments on why different delegations felt strongly about particular wording. They had also built strong relationships across continents, and at times played the role of building linkages between countries and continents. Government delegates, in contrast, were frequently new to the process.36

The existence of policy-oriented NGOs and a consultative political process NGO impact on policy of course presumes that there are NGOs willing to play this role, and a political context that can tolerate it. In South Africa, in addition to thousands of service NGOs, many professional NGOs and many community-development NGOs, there are in most sectors some NGOs concerned with policy. Most of these developed in the period of anti-apartheid struggle. Whether policy- or service-oriented they developed a human rights culture. Their work was grounded in a commitment to equity, transparency and participation. The participatory style of the mass movement built an expectation of popular participation in policy-making. This discourse survived into the first post-apartheid administration, with the expectation that government would facilitate NGO involvement in policy-making, implementation and evaluation. At the same time NGOs, used to having an adversarial role in relation to government, had the con-
confidence to articulate policy perspectives. This confidence carried them through the period of engagement between all sides in negotiating a political agreement, and into the period of collaboration with government on certain issues. This provided the context in which NGOs could push for a cervical screening policy, among others.

In the international terrain too, there are rights-oriented NGOs. These frequently find their most ardent opposition in other NGOs, with different ideological perspectives. However, even from the rights perspective, the decision as to whether or not to engage those in power is a strategic one (although some elevate this to a matter of principle). It is not always appropriate for NGOs to operate as policy activists (in relation to government or international policy). In the case of oppressive regimes, there may not be the political space for such engagement, and NGOs may focus on welfare or service provision, or may be active in oppositional politics. When, however, there is a moment of transition, where those in opposition have forced those in power to listen to them, NGOs have the opportunity to reassess their strategies and decide whether or not they can facilitate policy change to meet their own goals.

A key factor in such a transition is whether the NGOs have any influence and whether they have won recognition, from those in power, for their constituency – in the case study above, specifically women in developing countries – and their skills.

Ironically, in the UN context, that some NGOs chose not to participate made those who had strategised to play an ‘insider’ role appear more reasonable – one of the positive outcomes of NGOs choosing a range of different strategies for influencing change.

However, although the discourse in the UN system favours involvement of NGOs, the style of decision-making at decade conferences such as the ICPD is still structured to include only government. In some cases, for example the Beijing conference, there was some pressure on government delegations to include NGOs. By and large, however, NGOs have won the right only to lobby and be present, rather than to have a place at the table itself. Even with this limitation, however, they made a tremendous impact. The strategy of getting their members into delegations was the most powerful of routes, given the constraints on NGO participation.

These two examples illustrate how different political processes need to inform the strategies of policy activists. In both cases, strategies included affecting the broad policy environment that is working from the outside, as
well as becoming ‘insiders’ wherever possible. Where there are no policy-oriented NGOs, or where there is no space in the political process for NGO participation, these strategies are not possible, and NGOs are forced to remain engaged in welfare or self-help initiatives, or in the terrain of opposition politics.

The establishment of coalitions
Another critical factor determining the success of NGOs as policy activists is their ability to work with others. In the case of the women’s rights NGOs lobbying the ICPD, they won recognition as those with the necessary knowledge because they drew upon the experience of groupings from all over the world. In addition, they operated in unison. Whatever the ideological or organisational differences between those NGOs that chose to lobby the ICPD, they developed consensus on wording. The importance of ensuring unity in relation to one specific goal, irrespective of other areas of difference, cannot be overemphasised as a critical factor in successfully influencing a policy process.

A similar strategy can be seen in the cervical screening case study, where people were brought together around one specific goal, and all their experience and knowledge were pooled in the formulation of and mobilisation around a cervical screening policy.

Influence beyond its size
In summary, the case studies point to a number of key factors influencing the policy process, specifically the political context and political process. They show how, to be successful, strategies had to be developed to address the concerns of all the influential stakeholders. In addition, the equity goal of the activist NGOs ensured that they gave priority in policy content to the experiences and views of ordinary women. The need for indirect strategies, to influence the public and politicians, coupled with direct strategies – whether meeting with politicians or sitting on government committees or delegations, or undertaking operational research and programme evaluations for government – shows the necessity to identify a wide range of targets and actions so as to achieve the ultimate goal of a change in policy.

Despite their lack of resources, the NGO sector has managed to play a significant role in shaping international and national policy because of its ability to strategise effectively and to win government support for its positions. This begs the question of NGO skills and legitimacy, which are explored below.
Skills required for policy activism

Strategy and facilitation
As the two cases indicate, NGOs need to have, or to be able to access, a wide range of skills to influence policy effectively. The first, and most essential, is strategic competence. It is not enough to have a goal. To affect policy, an NGO needs to be able to analyse the policy context and process, and to have a deep understanding of the range of actors, their strengths and weaknesses and their role in the policy process. It needs to be able to use this understanding to plan interventions that will win over those who are most powerful. In addition, if its goal is equity or any related human right, it must develop strategies to involve those who have been most disadvantaged by past policies, and who have the most to gain by policy change, so that the policy goal reflects their understanding of the problem, and offers solutions that meet their needs and promote their rights. Next to strategic competence, NGOs require facilitation skills if they are to win trust among a range of stakeholders, and keep them all on board in the process of defining a specific policy. The ability to work in teams, to create conditions under which people of all classes and races, and both sexes, feel free to express themselves, are not common skills, yet critical for success.

Finally, policy activists need imagination. They need to be able to identify actions appropriate to the policy terrain. They need to identify when indirect actions are required in order to influence the general thinking on the matter, and when more direct strategies are appropriate. They need to be able to suggest strategies to each of the actors. It is this ability to identify necessary actions and to foster the confidence of others to undertake these actions, individually or in coalitions, that allows policy activists, in this case often small NGOs, to have an impact vastly greater than their own human and financial resources could achieve alone.

Information and technical competence
If NGOs have these competencies, they are well poised for success. In addition, however, they have to have the technical know-how and skills related to their field. Alternatively, they must work in alliances that ensure their access to these so that the NGOs are recognised by other players as having well informed positions based on a consideration of international and national experience, and as dealing realistically with the resource constraints that plague most policy options. For this reason, another strength an NGO should have is an understanding and experience of the site of implementation – if lobbying for health-sector reform, it helps if there is experience of working in that sector with an understanding of the practical issues, whether in management, logistics,
attitudes or skills, that can inhibit implementation. Since so many policies fail at the point of implementation, this understanding is a critical strength.

In some cases, specific arguments will be used against new policies. Having identified these, policy activists must ensure they can respond to these arguments. Where this requires research and if NGOs do not have research capacity, they should access it, even if this means to raising the funds and tendering out the necessary research.

**Trust and legitimacy**

It is all these skills that build a good name for NGOs operating as policy activists, and for their staff. NGO legitimacy is won primarily out of their demonstrable competence at all these levels. Working with others in networks and coalitions builds trust in the NGOs’ style and integrity, and one success builds further confidence in their ability.

Another source of legitimacy is, in Shweitz’s words, that they are ‘keepers of the moral flame’. NGOs operating as policy activists are doing so on the basis of their experience as well as their values. While some might argue that NGOs acquire legitimacy through their accountability to communities or mass movements, in reality, they are winning legitimacy in their own right. This is not only because of their proven expertise, but because they are using this in pursuit of human rights or quality-of-life/development goals.

At the same time, it is usually NGOs who take on the role of facilitating for the most disadvantaged in society to express their own views, as illustrated in the cervical screening example above. Thus, while the legitimacy of NGOs does not reside in being representative organisations, it is enhanced by their commitment to ensure that the experiences and concerns of disadvantaged or oppressed constituencies influence the policy agenda, process and outcome.

### Challenges for Southern Africa

#### Political and economic context

The political and economic context differs across countries in Southern Africa. Some countries are in a period of political change, in the aftermath of war; others are relatively stable, thus lacking the specific window of opportunity that comes with radical change. Of these countries, some are multi-party democracies; others are not, or, while being formal democracies, do not allow substantial freedom of expression or voluntary organi-
sation as means of giving substance to citizenship. Some are financially settled, generating enough resources to have a realistic programme for ensuring the basic essentials necessary for development and equity over a period of time; while some are almost entirely reliant on external donors for financing basic services.

Each of these contexts has different implications for NGOs and other policy activists. However, it would probably be fair to say that most Southern African countries bear out Grindle and Thomas’ assertion that policy elites play a decisive role in policy development in developing countries, because there is no well-organised system of lobbying, no broader ‘political society’. Policy elites comprise bureaucrats, senior politicians and business elites. These operate in a fairly tight alliance, with no formal avenues for other stakeholders to engage with the policy process. As a result, NGOs are having to push for space. In some cases this is being achieved through winning battles at the international level for recognition of the need to involve NGOs. However, this perspective mostly reflects the effort to ‘regenerate the private sector’, since the state ‘is held responsible for the development failings of the last two decades’. Thus, the focus is on NGOs as alternative service providers rather than as human rights or policy transformation activists. Whatever its limitations, this recognition of NGOs sometimes filters down to national level either through governments’ participation in international processes, or through pressure from donors. However, at the national level, the extent of government regulation of the NGO terrain differs, with more or less control over NGOs’ abilities to access funds from donors, or even to register, and different levels of tolerance for the range of roles that NGOs can take on. How this plays out in different countries varies with the particular political, economic and social contexts, and the specific differences in policy-making processes.

**Differences in perceived role and organisational culture of NGOs**

Related to this are the extent to which NGOs in countries in Southern Africa see themselves as being in partnership with the state, in opposition, or in a facilitating/reforming role (and, of course, different NGOs within one country frequently differ in their roles). For NGOs to work together to influence policy in the region presumes some confluence between them. At the moment, there are substantial differences in style of operation and in assumptions about the role of NGOs, in particular the extent to which they are ready to challenge government and to facilitate processes of policy change. There are also differences in style of work, with some NGOs having little hierarchy and a team-based approach to work, and others operating along more traditional organisational lines. However, these differences
apply as much within countries as between. They are problems that could be overcome, were there a pressing sense of mission driving the need for collaboration. The last few years have seen a range of regional networking initiatives in the health field – from those exploring means of promoting equity in health-sector reform, to those specifically sharing information and expertise on HIV/AIDS advocacy.

Language
Another difficulty is that of language. While the English language is entirely dominant globally and in our region, it is not the first language of many of those involved in NGO activism, even within ‘English-speaking’ countries, let alone those where Portuguese is the official language. Talking strategy requires dealing with complexity, reflecting on cultural assumptions, and the development of trust, all of which are less easily communicated and developed in a second or third language.

South Africa’s perceived ‘imperialism’
The increasing economic encroachment of South Africa on other SADC countries, coupled with a perception that South African activists are arrogant – certain of their skills and failing to learn from the experience of others in the region – can undermine efforts to collaborate.

The implications of dependency on donors
From the NGO side, perhaps the greatest constraint on them pursuing a role as policy activists is the increasingly project-driven approach of international donors. Many international NGOs such as those linked to religious groups in Europe or those with a specific development orientation (such as Oxfam), have tended, in the past, to contribute funds towards the overall programmes of local NGOs, with these choosing how exactly to spend the funds, and being able to use the funds to cover ongoing running costs. Accountability would reside in showing, on a regular basis, that funds had been spent on activities that sought to achieve the overall goals and objectives of the NGO, which the donor had agreed to fund. Increasingly, however, and particularly as NGOs look to bilateral and multilateral agencies for financial support, this is tied to specific projects and does not take account of ongoing running costs or capacity-building needs. Frequently these projects have been identified by government as necessary or, at least, have to be given the go-ahead by government. As NGOs become increasingly dependent on such funding, their ability to make quick, strategic and political decisions in order to make policy interventions declines. NGOs find themselves in a position where they could easily become parastatals, predominantly carrying out work for the state, or contracted to in-
ternational NGOs or other agencies. In conditions of financial insecurity, they may even find themselves being attracted to work that does not fully match their own goals simply because of the availability of funds;\(^\text{48}\) worse still, their confidence to criticise government may wane in proportion to their reliance on government or outside donors who are guided by government for funding.

Lack of resources also creates hurdles for collaboration between NGOs from different Southern African countries. Unless the agenda for collaboration paralleled that of either a specific donor or governments under the auspices of the Southern African Development Community, where would the funds come from? In 1996, women’s health NGOs from the region met when invited to participate in a meeting of Southern African governments on reproductive health. NGOs took advantage of that opportunity to propose names of other NGOs to be invited, and, once there, held a meeting to identify possible areas of collaboration. Most of these related to sharing of resource materials, training programmes and the like – the level of collaboration most appropriate for organisations to come to understand each other, and a process that is necessary before actual campaigns or other strategies to intervene in political processes can be developed. The NGOs agreed that a meeting to share information and strategies and to look at means of making use of all groups’ resources would be helpful. By 2001 the meeting has still not happened, for lack of funds as well as for lack of a shared target institution for policy change. While one-off networking is taking place, systematic pursuit of a shared policy activist agenda has yet to be consolidated.

*The need for institutionalised fora to focus collaboration – the role of SADC?*

A possible forum to focus NGO collaboration and participation in fostering new policy perspectives and decisions would be through the operations of SADC. As a body concerned with developing the region as a whole, the SADC is a key forum for developing a regional perspective on issues; it is also a vehicle for exerting pressure on member states to conform to agreed approaches. As such, it could be an appropriate forum for NGOs to both lobby and support in developing appropriate regional policy and in pressurising countries not yet committed to goals and programmes necessary for the achievement of health and equity. There has been NGO collaboration to form an NGO desk within SADC. This effort has not, however, been successful. In relation to health, the health sector, based in South Africa, is still too weak and lacking in capacity and resources to take on the question of formal linkages with NGO groupings, let alone a role in facilitating NGO networking.
At the moment, the formal structures of SADC are not designed to include NGO participation, and there is no requirement on member states to involve NGOs in their delegations (though some countries do so), or to facilitate NGOs’ access to the issues under debate, to the delegations responsible for developing positions, or to SADC meetings themselves. Neither are there formal mechanisms for NGO input to evaluations of SADC delivery.

**Factors facilitating Southern African NGOs**

**Experiences relevant to other countries**

On the positive side, countries in Southern Africa face shared problems of underdevelopment, economic restructuring and human resource shortages that could be the basis of common purpose between NGOs. Moreover, there are resources across these countries that, if shared, could not only build the capacity of NGOs, but contribute towards improvements in quality of life of all the region’s people. There is experience, for example, in managing multilateral agencies, which ought to be shared so that one country does not repeat another’s mistakes but rather learns from its successful strategies. Specifically on the NGO side, there is practical experience in developing interventions in the health field, either as individual NGOs or through building government capacity. The issue of HIV/AIDS, in particular, is one where every success story and the conditions that facilitated it ought to be shared, given the enormity of the challenges facing the region in this regard. Training courses, material distribution and other one-off processes are increasingly occurring across the region. In addition, a number of bilateral and international NGO donors are pursuing a ‘regional’ programming approach. These initiatives may foster further collaboration.

**A growing culture of participation and rights**

There is a growing trend towards democratisation with mass based organisations and NGOs – and in some but by no means all cases governments themselves – exploring the meaning of citizenship and how to create and entrench open government and a culture of human rights. These experiences too, need to be shared. If the drive to learn from one another is strong enough, the difficulties of funding, language and logistics can surely be overcome. Problems such as these seem small from the perspective of those who have witnessed the most powerful institutionalised inequality in the world, that is the apartheid government, being brought to its knees by good strategy, good organisation, good advocacy, and keeping of the moral flame.
Notes

11. *Ibid*.
12. Dr Sharon Fonn, of Women’s Health Project, initiated and sustained WHP’s involvement in this issue from policy through to operational research for implementation – so that the many strategies described are of her doing. I would like to acknowledge this, and to thank her for her input to this article.
13. At the time, in keeping with structures of apartheid, there were separate health authorities for different classifications of ‘race’ group, as well as both provincial and local authorities providing services.
18. Fonn, S., and Xaba, M., ‘Health Workers for Change: Developing the Initiative’, *Health Policy and Planning*, (forthcoming); and Fonn, S., Mtonga A. S.,


25. Fonn, S., *op. cit.*


29. I participated in this process both as a member of this international network and as a member of the South African government’s delegations to Cairo, Beijing, the Hague Forum and the final Preparatory Committee and UN General Assembly on ICPD +5. This account is drawn from that experience. The process is also well documented in Chen, M. A., ‘Engendering world conferences: the international women’s movement and the United Nations’, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 16, No. 3, 1995, pp. 477–493.


36. In the South African case, for example, I was the only delegate in the ICPD +5 review process who had participated in the Cairo and Beijing processes and who therefore knew what positions South Africa had taken; I had relationships with delegates from other SADC countries and with NGO delegates from all over the world, through HERA and other networks. It was left to me to introduce our delegation to these people and to foster alliances.


As one result of a three-year project on Global Governance Reform, the policy-oriented report Reimagining the Future: Towards Democratic Governance (La Trobe University, Australia, 2000) was published in August 2000. The ‘Summary proposals’ of the report are printed here, in the belief that readers of Development Dialogue will find them very relevant. The directors and sponsoring institutions of the project were Joe Camilleri of the Department of Politics at La Trobe University, Melbourne; Kamal Malhotra of Focus on the Global South, Bangkok; and Majid Tehranian of the Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research, Honolulu. The Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation was part of the working group of the project. A monograph containing the three directors’ full reports will be published towards the end of the year.

Summary proposals
The enormous inequities, inefficiencies and dangers of the current system of global governance have made reform both necessary and inevitable. The question is: what kind of reform, at what pace, under whose initiative and with whose participation? The proposals briefly summarized here and developed at greater length in the body of the report set out possible answers to these questions. Despite the tensions and difficulties that will no doubt emerge in the process of implementation, this project rests on the conviction that to succeed any reform agenda must enshrine three distinct yet closely connected principles: human security, political democracy and socio-economic justice.

For the purposes of this study, ‘short term’ is used to describe a period covering anything between a few months and two years, ‘medium term’ anything between two and ten years, and ‘long term’ anything beyond ten years (generally 20–30 years).

Democratizing global governance
OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES
• Democratic reform of global governance means increasing democratization at all levels. It means greater participation, transparency and accountability by states and non-state actors in international decision-making, not least in the structures and processes of the United Nations.
Ensuring balanced access to mass media and communication is vital to creating an informed public, and therefore to democratizing governance.

Given that inequalities of wealth and income lead to unequal access to knowledge and influence, democratizing governance both requires and promotes distributive justice.

INITIATIVES

• The composition and structure of the Security Council should be changed, with the phasing out of the veto power over a fifteen to twenty year period. Initially, permanent members would retain the veto, but limitations would be placed on the frequency with which it is used. Great powers would retain permanent membership, but such membership would be reviewed, perhaps every ten years.

• To ensure greater representation, the membership of the Security Council should be expanded from 15 to 23 or 25, with permanent members expanded to seven or nine, and two rotating members (each serving a three-year term) drawn from each of eight suggested regions.

• A People’s Assembly would be established. It would not have any legislative functions, but would operate as a house of review, carefully monitoring the decisions and deliberations of other UN bodies. Members of the People’s Assembly would be directly elected (every four years) by their constituencies on the basis of universal suffrage, a secret ballot and the principle of one vote one value (with each constituency having an approximate population of 6 million, i.e. an electorate of between 3.5 and 4 million).

• A Consultative Assembly would also be created, with membership drawn from three main types of organization: transnational firms; trade unions and professional associations, and a range of educational, scientific, cultural, religious, and public-interest organizations (NGOs) active around the issues central to the UN’s agenda.

• The General Assembly should establish a new high-level independent Financial Advisory Committee with the aim of substantially increasing the UN’s access to financial resources, and placing it on a sounder financial footing over the next ten years.

• The UN should be authorized to issue world citizenship rights and responsibilities to qualified individual applicants.

• To enable communities and individuals to have a say in the vital decisions that affect their future, several initiatives are proposed under relevant UN auspices, including a Global Commons Bank, a World Human Development Trust, a Women’s Development Bank, and a World Educational Fund.
• The UN General Assembly should immediately establish a standing UN Reform Commission with a distinguished but representative membership to consider the changes proposed here and elsewhere. Its first report should be completed within a year.

Governance of global financial flows

GENERAL PRINCIPLES
• Economic and financial policies should be means to sustainable human development and not an end in themselves.
• Financial and capital flows should exist to support transactions in the real economy of goods and services and not take on a life of their own, independent from the real economy.
• The principle of subsidiarity must consistently prevail.
• States and their governments must be able to exercise greater national autonomy in policy choice.
• Making national, regional and global governance mechanisms more participatory and accountable to citizens is both desirable and necessary for the achievement of sustainable human development.
• A greater role is required for the United Nations (as a relatively more democratic and representative body) in economic and social policy compared to the Bretton Woods institutions and the WTO.
• There needs to be recognition of the indivisibility of economic, social and political rights, policies and governance issues, and no artificial separation or compartmentalization of these.

INITIATIVES
• A Currency Transactions Tax on international foreign exchange transactions should be implemented nationally, within the framework of an international co-operation agreement.
• A supranational body, an International Taxation Organization, with participating member states as its Board of Governors and accountable to the UN, should take responsibility for the allocation of revenues.
• Capital controls at the national level, especially on inflows, should be phased out in a gradual manner, and only when and if the institutional capacity to manage such a phasing-out is firmly in place at national, regional and global levels as part of a coherent and comprehensive world financial framework.
• The creation of regional, or where appropriate sub-regional monetary institutions or arrangements (e.g. East Asian Monetary Fund) is proposed. The objective would be both to have institutions that are more
responsive to regional and country-specific realities and differences and to encourage greater competition and pluralism.

- Most important is the creation of a new, broadly based Economic and Social Security Council as a principal entity of the UN, replacing the current Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and accountable to the General Assembly. The Economic and Social Security Council, without veto power, should in the longer term take on key decision-making roles in its areas of mandate, similar to those of the reformed Security Council.

- A coherent, consistent and comprehensive world financial framework should be established, which encompasses institutions and arrangements at the national, regional and global levels respecting the principle of subsidiarity and based on national and regional building blocks and institutional arrangements. In the long run, this framework should be further formalized and a World Financial Authority should be created under UN auspices, as the overall regulator of finance at the global level. This should be accountable to the Economic and Social Security Council.

- With respect to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the following are proposed:
  - limiting its operations to its original narrow mandate of surveillance and stabilization;
  - no change to its Charter mandate on capital account convertibility;
  - universal implementation of its surveillance role, with particular emphasis on the implementation of this role vis-à-vis industrialized countries.

- An International Independent Debt Arbitration Mechanism should be created under the broad auspices of the United Nations. Such a mechanism should address the invidious current situation where creditors are also the arbiters and unilateral judges of debt.

**Global peace and security**

**GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

- Global governance reform must make international decision-making processes more effective and efficient but also more legitimate and democratic. Placed more specifically in the context of peace and security, the reform agenda must formally adopt as key objectives, and benchmarks of success, three key principles: transparency of decision-making; extensive participation and consultation; rigorous levels of accountability.
**Disarmament and arms control**

**KEY PRINCIPLES**
- Disarmament and arms control negotiations should over 25–30 years place clearly defined, verifiable, and carefully monitored limits on arms production and trade.
- All states possessing or producing nuclear, biological or chemical weapons should be locked into binding schedules for the freezing, reduction and elimination of their arsenals and production capabilities.

**INITIATIVES**
- A multi-track mobilization is needed, with a new upgraded UN Department for Disarmament and Arms Regulation (UNDDAR), the Secretary-General, and the relevant committees and working groups of the General Assembly embarking on ongoing first-track and second-track consultations on the objectives and strategies of an integrated campaign.
- A permanent forum of all NWFZ Treaty Secretariats should be created. Meeting at strategic times, two or three times a year, the Forum could seek to promote the consolidation and strengthening of existing zones, provide assistance to other regions contemplating zone establishment, liaise closely with UNDDAR and other UN disarmament bodies, share information and resources on verification processes, and promote more effective lobbying and international pressure towards wider disarmament objectives and strategies.
- A comprehensive light weapons control programme should:
  - destroy all illicit weapons after they are seized;
  - incorporate mandatory and public destruction of weapons and ammunition;
  - provide international regulation of all arms exports (using codes of conduct developed and applied by regional organizations and arms control regimes but with regional practices registered with and monitored by UN);
  - mark weapons at the points of manufacture and import;  
  - improve keeping of records.

**Conflict transformation**

**KEY PRINCIPLES**
- In devising a global preventive action plan, the UN must adopt a multi-track strategy, engaging and consulting with a wide range of social and political actors at all tiers of governance.
INITIATIVES
• A ‘Lessons Learned’ unit must be established in all relevant UN departments (‘lessons’ must draw on both successes and failures).
• A UN National Office in every member state should oversee all UN activities in that country, with conflict transformation as part of its brief (it would also facilitate other UN peace and security activities).
• Establishment of an International Crisis Prevention and Response Centre is proposed – supported where possible by regional crisis centres.
• There should be early establishment of an independent, well-resourced but accountable International Criminal Court.

Peace operations
KEY PRINCIPLES
• The UN should avoid the use or threat of force, except as a last resort. Its use should be strictly limited and seek to:
  – prevent the outbreak of hostilities or end the violence (a high priority should be given to the prevention of genocide);
  – bring quick and lasting relief to unacceptable levels of human suffering;
  – promote the long-term co-existence of the conflicting parties.
• The following conditions should apply to any decision to intervene:
  – all reasonable attempts at preventive diplomacy have been tried and failed;
  – all appropriate sanctions have been applied and failed over a reasonable time-frame;
  – there is a reasonable prospect of preventing civilian casualties and of the intervention achieving its objectives in quick and enduring fashion;
  – where intervention is necessary on urgent humanitarian grounds, an Independent Review Tribunal will be convened to weigh up the arguments for and against intervention, and make a recommendation to the Security Council.
• The UN should retain explicit and ultimate authority over the conduct of peace operation.

INITIATIVES
• The mandate, which gives effect to peacekeeping or peace enforcement, should set out:
  – the kind of operation that is envisaged;
  – the objectives and legal grounds for intervention;
  – the forces to be introduced;
– the conclusion of an impact assessment conducted by an independent, adequately staffed and well-resourced Impact Assessment Office located in the Department of Peace Operations (to replace the Department of Peacekeeping Operations) and accountable to the UN Secretary-General;
– a number of termination criteria, including the social, political, legal or military conditions which should apply for the withdrawal or scaling down of the operation.

• To strengthen its capacity for effective intervention, the UN should develop a stronger rapid reaction capability, including:
  – the creation of a permanent civilian police force;
  – a readily available pre-positioned stock of basic military equipment;
  – rosters of different types of military and civilian personnel, provided with adequate and standardized training that can be enlisted at short notice.

• Peace operations must be accompanied by an Ombudsman.

• An International Peace Operations Centre should be created that recommends to the Secretary-General international training standards, develops training materials, mounts training programmes, and keeps a detailed record of the training activities of all contributing states.

• A Strategic Committee should co-ordinate the political and military components of each operation, reconcile the needs of humanitarian action with the strategies and techniques of peacekeeping or peace enforcement, and more generally strike a balance between military effectiveness and political legitimacy. To this end an amendment to the UN Charter would be necessary.

• The Strategic Committee would be advised by a Force Contributors Committee and serviced by the Department of Peace Operations and a Peace Operations Adviser who would act as its Chief of Staff.

• The Force Contributors Committee would function as a standing committee comprising one representative from each of the leading contributing nations.

• The General Staff for Peace Operations, located within the Department of Peace Operations, would comprise a fully professional permanent military and civilian staff comprised of several units (e.g. military, police, human rights, electoral, administrative).

• An Integrated Task Force on the ground would liaise with UN agencies, other humanitarian organizations and representatives of the parties to the conflict.

• For each peace operation, a Force Contributors Panel would be established, and would comprise one representative from each contributing nation.
Publications received


Coronel, Sheila S., (ed.), Pork and other Perks – Cor-
Publications received

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Reyneke, Eunice, *Small arms and light weapons in Africa: Illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking*, Proceedings of the OAU Experts Meeting and


Some Recent Publications of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation


A complete list of the Foundation’s publications is available on request and can be found at the Foundation’s website: www.dhf.uu.se

* * *
Development Dialogue
1998:2 The Southeast Asian Media in a Time of Crisis

* * *

Zed Books in London has taken the initiative to a ‘Global Issues Series’ in cooperation with a number of partner publishers and international organisations around the world, among them the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation. The following titles are already available from Zed Books, 7 Cynthia Street, London N1 9JF, UK, e-mail: Sales@zedbooks.demon.co.uk:


Another American Century? The United States and the World after 2000, by Nicholas Guyatt. ISBN 1 85649 779 8 (hb), 1 85649 780 1 (pb).

