

**Commonwealth of Independent States NGOs' Participation in the ECOSOC:  
Current Situation, Challenges and Solutions**

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## **Disclaimer**

The opinions expressed in this paper are Tural Ahmad's opinions and should not be attributed to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs NGO branch.

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## **Introduction**

The United Nations (UN) is the primary inter-governmental organization that supported Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) relation in its founding charter, which was the starting point of the civil society engagement to the work of the inter-governmental organizations<sup>2</sup>. Article 71 of the UN Charter states: ‘The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) takes suitable arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations which are concerned with matters within its competence. Such arrangements may be made with international organizations and, where appropriate, with national organizations after consultation with the member of the United Nations concerned’<sup>3</sup>

NGOs have played very important and helpful role by linking the United Nations and civil society in general. As such, ‘NGOs have effectively disseminated information related to United Nations goals and programmes, publicized and gathered support for major campaigns carried out by the Organization, while at the same time transmitting the concerns and the views of various sectors of civil society to United Nations forums.’<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless the significant role of the NGOs to the UN work, the NGOs involvement to the work of the United Nations bodies has only been possible through Economic Social Council (ECOSOC) which is the one out of six UN’s principal organs. The input of the NGOs to the work of the UN has been deliberative to the processes, mainly engaged to the Secretariat, the information and education work and the operational activities of the UN.

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<sup>2</sup> UN System and Civil Society, An Inventory and Analysis of Practices, May 2003

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Charter (1945), article 71

<sup>4</sup> Arrangements and practices for the interaction of NGOs in all activities of the UN, par 48. July 10, 1998

NGOs at the national, sub regional, regional or international levels those are concerned with the matters falling within the competence of the ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies, those purpose and principles are in conformity with the Charter of the UN can apply for accreditation to consultative status with ECOSOC that can be accepted into one of three categories which are general, special and roster. ‘General consultative status is for large international NGOs whose are of work covers most of the issues on the Council’s agenda. Special consultative status is for NGOs that have special competence in a few fields of council’s activity. The third category, which is inclusion on the Roster, is for NGOs whose competence enables them to make occasional and useful contributions to the work of the United Nations and who are available for consultation upon request.’<sup>5</sup>

The engagement of the civil society to the work of the UN has always been the topic for the debate as it has positive and negative outcomes. On one hand, NGO involvement has improved accountability and transparency of the processes and enhanced the work product through a multiple views and experiences, on the other hand the involvement of the civil society to the work of UN has resulted the confusion of the choices, hindered the inter-governmental search for the common ground, impeded the privacy needed for responsive discussions and presented distraction at significant meetings.<sup>6</sup>

Taking into consideration the significance of NGO involvement to the work of the United Nations from all the parts of the world as it has been articulated at paragraph 5 of the resolution on “Consultative relationship between the United Nations and Non Governmental Organizations” adopted at 1996, which states ‘The committee , in considering applications for consultative status , should ensure, to the extent possible, participation of non-governmental

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<sup>5</sup> Arrangements and practices for the interaction of NGOs in all activities of the UN, par 5. July 10, 1998

<sup>6</sup> UN System and Civil Society, An Inventory and Analysis of Practices, May 2003

organizations from all regions, and particularly from developing countries...'<sup>7</sup>, this research paper analyze the involvement and participation of the CIS region NGOs with the ECOSOC.

This paper consists of three parts. The first part describes the current situation of CIS NGOs with status in the Council: their participation at the ECOSOC meetings and submission of the written statements. The second part will analyze the main factors which are influencing the participation of the NGOs of CIS countries. The third part presents the recommendations for the outreach program.

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<sup>7</sup> Consultative relationship between the United nations and non-governmental organizations, paragraph 5, UN, 1996.

## **Part 1. CIS region NGOs at ECOSOC**

Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was founded in 1991 right after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. There are currently 11 member states of the CIS which are Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. Alma-Ata declaration is one of the most important documents for the CIS as it was adopted by the member states upon the foundation of CIS which played the official promise role for the member states 'to cooperate in various fields of external and internal policies, and announced the guarantees for implementation of the international commitments for the former Soviet Union.'<sup>8</sup>

The economic, social and cultural affects of the totalitarian regime to the CIS countries are the common heritage for all 11 countries. Nevertheless CIS countries took the path to the democracy they have not achieved much with in these 18 years. 'The negative factors common to all the CIS countries, unstable economic growth, traditions of state paternalism, low living standards, a hazardous investment climate, the "soviet mentality" are still even now determining the everyday lives of the majority of the population of our countries.'<sup>9</sup>

There are several challenges those civil society faces in CIS countries. The most significant one is that the 'Governments in the CIS countries do not recognize that non-governmental youth organizations make up a vital contribution to civil society and democracy in their countries.

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<sup>8</sup> Commonwealth of Independent States. Inventory of International Nonproliferation Organizations and Regimes, p:1, May 2007

<sup>9</sup> Information Technologies and Building Prospects for the Development of Civil Society Institutions in the CIS Countries, St. Petersburg, Russia, April 2003. Retrieved on Oct 5, 2009 from <http://www.mail-archive.com/gkd@phoenix.edc.org/msg01073.html>

Often, instead of promoting youth NGO development, the governments perceive them as being “anti-governmental” and discourage their activities and development.<sup>10</sup>

In addition, the democratic values had not yet been settled down in the CIS region society and thus there is not much trust to the civil society sector from general population as they can do a lot for the support for the development of the country and bring the change to whole society.

Besides, the funding issue of the CIS region NGOs has to be raised. As such, there are very limited, almost no opportunities of the CIS region NGOs to be funded by the general or local governments. Therefore, the CIS region NGOs are becoming dependant on the foreign donors, precisely from USA donors.

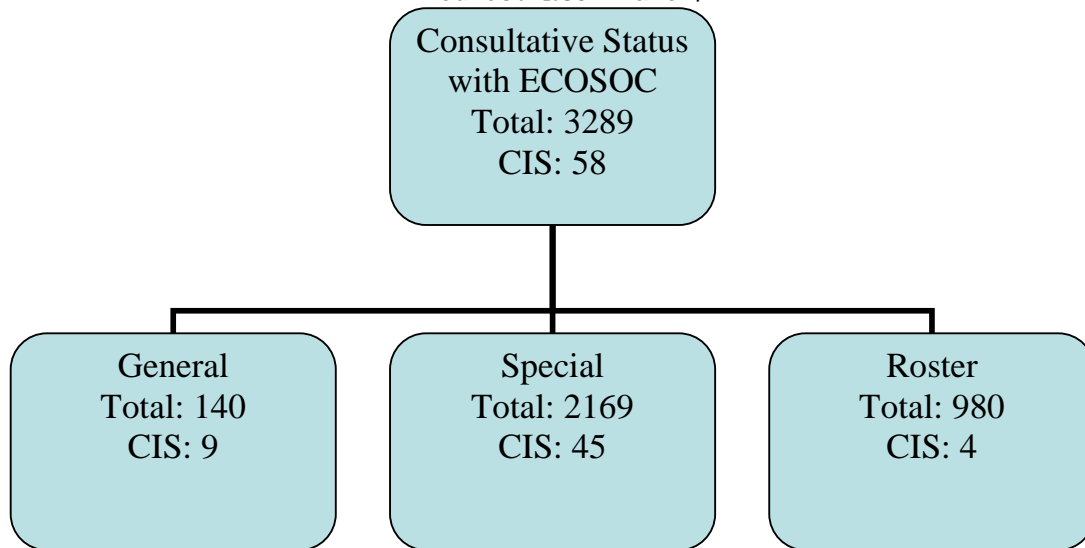
The funding problem of the CIS region NGOs seriously affects their mobility, network and share of the information which is directly influencing their future cooperation. As the CIS region NGOs cannot afford participating at the various international NGO gatherings, they basically stay out of the global NGO network. While there is no much access to the information, the development and regional cooperation cannot be developed. Specifically, if we consider that the NGOs functioning at the rural areas those have very limited or no access to the internet, it makes their work even more challenging to cooperate and develop. All these above mentioned facts slow down the development of civil society sector in CIS countries has significantly affected the UN and NGO relations from CIS region.

Although the total area of Europe Union (EU) (4,324,782 km<sup>2</sup>) is approximately 4 times smaller than the total area of the CIS region (22,100,843 km<sup>2</sup>), the number of the NGOs in Consultative Status in EU (approximately 855 NGOs) is 14 times more than CIS region (58 NGOs).<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Challenges and the Opportunities: The Non-governmental Youth Sector in the European CIS countries. P:4 Council of Europe. Retrieved October 26, 2009 from [http://www.youthforum.org/fr/system/files/yfj\\_public/strategic\\_priorities/en/0466-02.pdf](http://www.youthforum.org/fr/system/files/yfj_public/strategic_priorities/en/0466-02.pdf)

**Chart 1. NGO Consultative Status (October 2009)**  
 Source: NGO Branch/DESA



Consultative Status with ECOSOC

|  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| <a href="#">All organizations in Consultative Status</a> | <a href="#">3290</a> |
| <a href="#">General</a>                                  | <a href="#">140</a>  |
| <a href="#">Special</a>                                  | <a href="#">2170</a> |
| <a href="#">Roster</a>                                   | <a href="#">980</a>  |

According to the Chart 2 based on the ECOSOC, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) NGO Branch database, there are overall 58 NGOs with consultative status from entire CIS region total of 11 countries, whereas 150 NGOs has consultative status from only United States of America (USA). The total amount of 58, there are only 9 NGOs with general consultative status which all are from Russian Federation. There are 45 NGOs with Special consultative status, 4 NGOs are in Roster. The indicated fact illustrates how much CIS countries are underrepresented in ECOSOC.

Out of 58 NGOs from CIS region, 41 are from Russian Federation which leaves only 17 NGOs to the rest – 11 countries. After Russian Federation Azerbaijan and Ukraine are the relatively more represented on the ECOSOC as each state has 5 NGOs with special consultative statuses. Four countries of CIS out of total amount of 11 are not represented at ECOSOC this way or

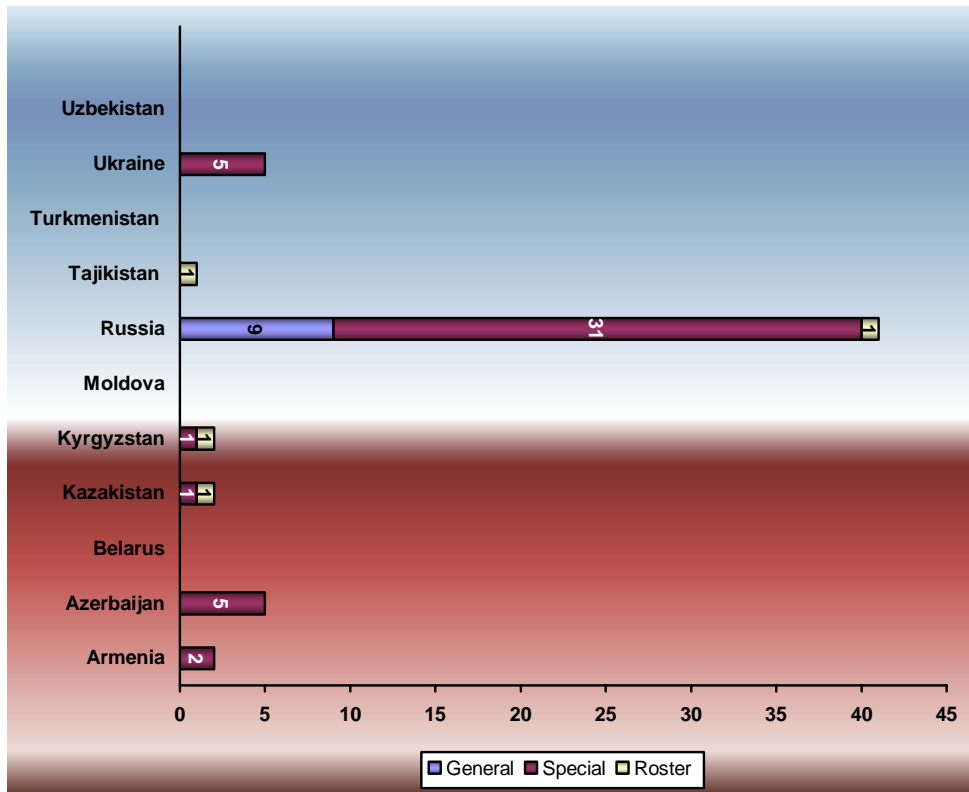
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<sup>11</sup> United Nations ECOSOC/DESA, NGO branch database. Retrieved on October 5, 2009 from <http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ngo/>



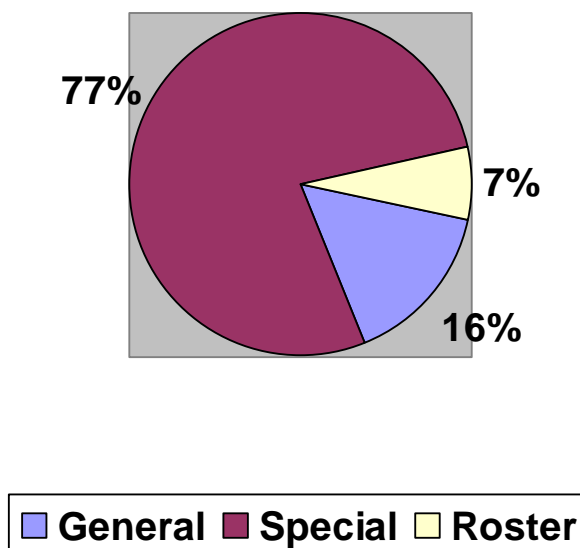
another. Those countries are Belarus, Moldova, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Tajikistan is represented with only one NGO with Roster status.

**Graph 2. Number of CIS region NGOs in Consultative status with ECOSOC by Country and Status**  
 Source: NGO Branch/DESA, October, 2009



The articulated fact indicate that there are only 16 % of the whole 58 NGOs that has consultative status from CIS region are in general consultative status, which all represent Russian Federation. 7% of NGOs with consultative status from CIS region have the Roster status and the rest, 77% possesses Special consultative status.

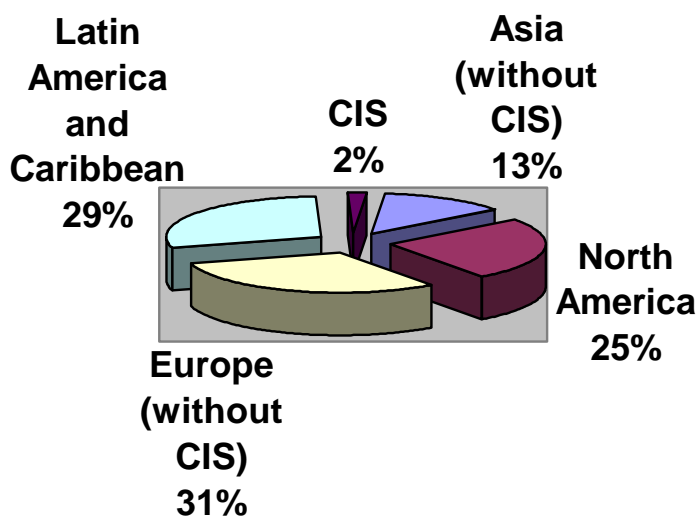
**Chart 4: Number of NGOs with Consultative status in CIS region (November 2009)**



Source: ECOSOC DESA/NGO branch data

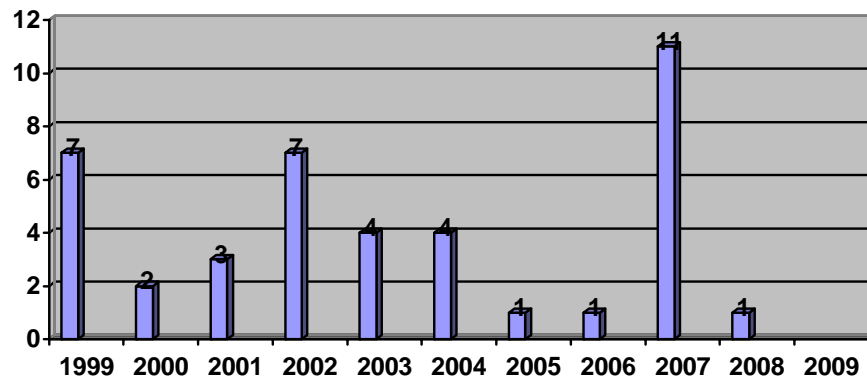
The CIS region NGOs are consisting only 2% of the 3289 NGOs with consultative status from the whole world. The biggest representation is from European NGOs which is 31% of the. Latin America and Caribbean is 29%, North America 25 % and the whole Asia is only 13%.

**Share of NGOs with Consultative status by region (November 2009)**



The registration process of CIS region NGOs at ECOSOC has been analyzed from 1999 up to 2009, in order to learn the increase or decrease tendency over the ten years. Nevertheless, revealed registration facts in each year, has no regular order and doesn't show increase or decrease tendency on registration. As such, the highest registration rate from 1999 to 2009 has been in 2007 as 11 NGOs has been registered. The lowest registration rates were in 2005, 2006 and 2008 as only one NGOs got registered in these years. As it has been reflected on the chart 5, the registration of NGOs from CIS region on ECOSOC, varies year by year, without order of things.

**Chart 5. Number of New CIS NGOs getting consultative status per year (November 2009)**



Source: ECOSOC DESA NGO branch

**CIS NGOs participation at United Nation events**

CIS NGOs participation at the ECOSOC meetings and events is another indicator of the CIS NGOs involvement to the work of UN and how much they are committed. Nevertheless, the Meeting Participation chart below doesn't represent the full attendance of the NGOs at the ECOSOC events, it lists the NGOs participation as speakers, as well as roundtable participants of the Special high-level meeting of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (Spring Meetings of ECOSOC) and the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development and the Follow-up

International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus. Out of 70 NGOs participating at the listed ECOSOC events, there has been no representative of the CIS region NGOs at the above mentioned events lists since 2004.

**Chart 6: Meeting participation**

|  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| <a href="#">2008: Spring Meeting of ECOSOC</a> | <a href="#">10</a> |
| <a href="#">2007: High-level Dialogue</a>      | <a href="#">24</a> |
| <a href="#">2007: Spring Meeting of ECOSOC</a> | <a href="#">11</a> |
| <a href="#">2006: Spring Meeting of ECOSOC</a> | <a href="#">5</a>  |
| <a href="#">2005: High-level Dialogue</a>      | <a href="#">7</a>  |
| <a href="#">2005: Spring Meeting of ECOSOC</a> | <a href="#">7</a>  |
| <a href="#">2004: Spring Meeting of ECOSOC</a> | <a href="#">6</a>  |

**CIS NGOs submitting the Quadrennial Reports**

In accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in General and Special consultative status 'shall submit to the Council Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations through the Secretary-General every fourth year a brief report of their activities, specifically as regards the support they have given to the work of the United Nations.'<sup>12</sup> Quadrennial reports must be submitted to the Secretariat (NGO Section/DESA) no later than 1 June of the year following the last year of the reporting period i.e. a quadrennial report covering the year 2005-2008 should be submitted no later than 1 June 2009.<sup>13</sup>

CIS regions NGOs submission of the quadrennial report has been analyzed base on the submission of reports for the period of 2005-2008. According to the ECOSOC DESA NGO branch data 509 actual NGOs must submit quadrennial reports for the period of 2005-2008. Out of 509 total amounts of NGOs 41 NGOs are in suspension list, out of which 6 NGO has already

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<sup>12</sup> Consultative relationship between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations, paragraph 61/C, UN, 1996

<sup>13</sup> Guidelines for submission of quadrennial reports for NGOs, ECOSOC, DESA,NGO, page 2

submitted. Out of 509 NGOs, 468 NGOs are not in suspension list and one NGO dissolved in March 2008.

Out of 468 NGOs those are expected to submit their quadrennial reports for the period of 2005-2008, 14 NGOs are from CIS region; specifically 12 NGOs are from Russian Federation, 1 NGO from Azerbaijan and 1 NGO from Kyrgyzstan which have already submitted their reports.

### **Which fields of expertise do CIS NGOs with consultative status work?**

The areas of expertise and fields of the activity of the NGOs from CIS region that have consultative status with ECOSOC fit with three areas which are economic and social, sustainability development and gender issues and advancement of Women. The NGOs those are working with economic and social issues mostly deal with business and industry, micro-credit, science and technology, social development, disabled persons, aging, education, humanitarian affairs, migration, human rights, international law and security, media etc.

The second area of expertise is sustainability development which is mostly dealing with the environmental issues. The issues of atmosphere, biodiversity, climate change, consumption and production patterns, forests etc are the major issues those being perceived by the CIS NGOs with consultative status.

The third area of expertise and field of activity is Gender issues and advancement of women. CIS NGOs working on the gender issues and advancement of women, doing activities on capacity building, education and training of women, human rights of women, violence against women, women and HIV/AIDS etc.

## **Part 2. Factors those are influencing the Participation of CIS countries at the ECOSOC**

The United Nations and civil society cooperation and partnership have always been discussed between the United Nations and the Civil Society Sector as how NGOs engagement to the work of the United Nations can symbiotically benefit each other.

Firstly, engagement of the civil society to the work of the United Nations helps it to become a real organization belonging to “We the people” which has been articulated on the United Nations Charter.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, involvement of the multiple actors from diverse areas to the work of the United Nations helps to identify the global priorities, become more responsive and accountable in its work. Considering that Governments have enough power to conduct high level forums in order to be raise their concerns on various issues, the United Nations panels are more or less the only high profile tribunes for the civil society to raise their voice and be heard. Thus, United Nations might play the role of the mediator to empower the civil society and government dialog and partnership between two sides.

In short, the social connections and experiences of the civil society helps increase it's the efficiency of its work, 'improve its legitimacy, identify priorities and connect it with public opinion',<sup>15</sup> Thus, considering the significant role of the civil society to face the global challenges, the United Nations made the following proposal:

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<sup>14</sup> Strengthening the United Nations System, paragraph 23, General Assembly, 2004

<sup>15</sup> Strengthening the United Nations System, paragraph 27, General Assembly, 2004

**Proposal 30**

*Member States should encourage, through the forums of the United Nations, an enabling policy environment for civil society throughout the world and expanded dialogue and partnership opportunities in development processes. The Secretariat leadership, resident coordinators and governance specialists should use their dialogues with Governments to similar effect.*

Source: Strengthening the United Nations System, General Assembly, 2004

**Why to get Consultative Status with ECOSOC?**

There are several practical benefits of getting consultative status with ECOSOC. The most important benefits are obtaining passes to enter UN grounds, participate at meetings, interact and network with state authorities or secretariat staff, etc. Besides, ECOSOC accredited NGOs are automatically accredited to main UN conferences which allow them to enter into the conference preparatory processes early, thus have greater chance of influencing the results.<sup>16</sup>

**Table 2. Privileges and Obligations of NGO accreditation to ECOSOC**

| Privileges/obligations                                     | General    | Special    | Roster  |
|--|------------|------------|---------|
| Relevance to the work of ECOSOC                            | All areas  | Some areas | Limited |
| Are in consultative status with ECOSOC                     | yes        | yes        | Yes     |
| Designate UN representatives                               | yes        | yes        | yes     |
| Invited to UN conferences                                  | yes        | yes        | yes     |
| Propose items for ECOSOC agenda                            | yes        | no         | No      |
| Attend UN meetings   | yes        | yes        | yes     |
| Can speak at ECOSOC  | yes        | no         | No      |
| Circulate statements at ECOSOC meetings                    | 2000 words | 500 words  | no      |
| Circulate statements at ECOSOC subsidiary bodies' meetings | 2000 words | 1500 words | no      |
| Can speak at ECOSOC subsidiary bodies' meetings            | yes        | yes        | No      |
| Must submit quadrennial reports                            | yes        | yes        | no      |

<sup>16</sup> UN System and Civil Society, An Inventory and Analysis of Practices, May 2003

Above mentioned facts are strongly encouraging the NGOs from all regions to be involved to the United Nations however not all are able to do so. There are several factors those are strongly affecting the participation of accredited NGOs at ECOSOC and in UN work in general. In this part research paper identifies the challenges and obstacles preventing CIS NGOs accreditation with the ECOSOC in order to get consultative status. Those challenges need to be categorized in three parts:

**A – Concerns regarding the CIS Governments and raised by the CIS Governments,**

**B – Concerns regarding NGOs and raised by NGOs**

**C - Concerns raised by United Nations.**

### **A. Concerns regarding CIS Governments and raised by CIS Governments**

Firstly, not all the governments are supporting the NGO involvement and interaction to the work of the United Nations, since those governments are arguing that United Nations is inter-governmental body. Some governments state that the growing numbers of the NGOs with consultative status are basically overwhelming the system which leads to loosen the decision making process and impede the focus of inter-governmental negotiations.<sup>17</sup>

Secondly, the security issue of the United Nations has been raised by the governments.

Governments state that the United Nations is excessively open to the civil society actors which may consequently result threats to the United Nations security. Specifically after September 11, as well as Seattle/Prague events the United Nations are inclined to face security challenges.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> UN System and Civil Society, An Inventory and Analysis of Practices. May 2003

<sup>18</sup> UN System and Civil Society, An Inventory and Analysis of Practices. May 2003



Thirdly, it needs to be born in mind that, the CIS region countries lack the international commitments on human rights, democracy and freedoms. According to the Freedom House annually comparative assessment of the state of political rights and civil liberties around the world, the CIS countries almost always fall under the category of partly free or not free countries.<sup>19</sup> The rights of the civil society to the freedom of assembly and expression are constantly violated in CIS countries. This indicated fact directly affects the CIS region's NGOs free functioning and participation at ECOSOC. As such, CIS Governments are accepting the NGO demands as unreasonable or unrealistic, specifically those intends to have access to General Assembly or Security Council or to be the part of decision making machinery.

## **B. Concerns regarding NGOs and raised by NGOs**

### **Organizational Design/Leadership**

Nevertheless, it has been 18 years since CIS countries got independence, the managerial skills for the leadership of the Organizations and the method of the supervising the organizations are still remain the same as it was during the Soviet period. Expressing the argument, the CIS organizations are being ruled by the charismatic leaders, all the decisions are given from the top and decentralization of the authority is not existed. As first step on building an organization instead of identifying the answers to the questions as 'How to create a good mechanism that good leaders arise long after us?' or 'How to create a mechanism to that make our ideals realize?', the CIS organizations dealt with the questions like 'Who is the best out of us?' or 'Who should lead us?' which diverted the NGOs from the building strong feasible mechanisms which will take them to their big audacious goals and ultimately vision.

On the other hand, CIS NGOs most significant problem is that they don't have strong ideology, which is the combination of the organizational values and purpose which should guide and

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<sup>19</sup> <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0930918.html>

inspire the members and staff on the NGOs. Thus, since the NGOs are entirely depend on the foreign donors, their activities and projects reflect the interest and ideology of the donors rather than organization's own.

Besides, CIS NGOs mostly lack of the vision and big audacious goals. Since the NGOs are all depend on the foreign donors, not having support from the governments, they tend to adjust and adapt their projects to the needs and interests of the foreign donors. CIS region NGOs are predominantly funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Therefore, national NGOs are obliged to come up with the projects within the priorities of the USAID, rather than their own initiative in order to get the grant which is the main or in most case the only resource of the NGOs.

#### **Funding NGOs at CIS region**

NGOs at the CIS region face very important and vital financial constraints which is another significant affect on their active engagement to the United Nations work. There are very limited or no opportunity to get fund from governments to implement national, regional or local level projects constitutes with the United Nations ideals and/or participate at the international level meetings or events. The articulated fact creates a barrier and keeps the CIS NGOs out of the circle of involvement to the United Nations meetings. By all means, foreign donors are not inclined to fund the NGOs participation at the United Nations meetings.

#### **Professional skills**

Since the CIS NGO staff are being paid on the project base and do not get monthly salaries, these NGOs are mainly operated by the interns and volunteers who mostly lack professional skills to write effectively for the purposes of the work of an NGOs, project proposals and reports, develop action plan and/or strategic planning, write high quality funding proposals etc. The lack of the

professional staff that has deep knowledge on the United Nations system and its aims and International Law influence to the quality of work and the NGOs participation at the ECOSOC.

In addition, language skills are another barrier between the United Nations and the CIS NGOs. Since the CIS countries had been the member of the Soviet Union for nearly seventy years and the main communication language of these 11 countries had been Russian until the collapse of the Soviet Union, the proficiency of the of the two official the United Nations languages are not high. Taking to the consideration that official communication of the United Nations system has to be either in English or French, language barrier keep many CIS NGOs out of the picture.

Additionally, considering that at all levels in ECOSOC communication is conducted purely in English it is not hard to understand why the total amount of the CIS region NGOs with consultative status is only 2%. The indicated fact can also be observed by reviewing the quadrennial reports which are submitted to the ECOSOC DESA NGO branch. It is vital that NGOs are challenging to express themselves and pass their messages to the United Nations system.

#### **NGOs arguments on low participation caused by the United Nations**

Firstly, civil society operatives state that they are not taken seriously and not being heard by the governments and the United Nations Secretariat. As such, during the dialogs, hearings and special events, NGOs cannot do much input to the overall work and makes them feel marginal to decision making process.

In addition NGOs argue that getting accreditation from the ECOSOC has been politicized and becoming more lengthy and bureaucratic. Civil society requests that United Nations coordinate

and make the accreditation process more efficient. Furthermore, the United Nations should elucidate the rules of engagement across the multiplicity of bodies and organs.

In addition ‘Civil Society actors perceive government or secretariat calls for its accountability as a veiled threat to their participation and assert that they are fully accountable to their own constituencies. In response to proposed codes of conduct, they feel transgression by a handful of NGOs should not lead to sweeping and potentially restrictive codes.’<sup>20</sup>

### **C. Concerns raised by United Nations**

Interestingly, United Nations officials are more inclined to work and cooperate with civil society members as they argue that, United Nations has far more things to learn from the civil society experiences and offerings on substantive issues. As such, the United Nations assigns too little time for each NGO, including NGOs from CIS regions to express them which are not enough to come up with consequential contributions. NGO participation and involvement to the United Nations work is artificial and in fact does not contribute to the work of the United Nations this way or another. Thus, the United Nations officials suggest doing attitude shift towards civil society and letting them execute their role as it is articulated at the United Nations Charter.<sup>21</sup>

Additionally, the United Nations secretariat assigned working with the civil society has a huge resource limitation and lack of the considerable support from the leadership. There is an essential need for substantial improvement between the United Nations and developing countries. The most significant insufficiencies are human and financial resources.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> UN System and Civil Society, An Inventory and Analysis of Practices, p: 21. May 2003

<sup>21</sup> UN System and Civil Society, An Inventory and Analysis of Practices. May 2003

<sup>22</sup> UN System and Civil Society, An Inventory and Analysis of Practices. May 2003

The United Nation has also concerned about the participation of NGOs from developing countries which CIS countries lay under this category. As such, United Nations has to concentrate on building the capacity of NGOs from developing to work effectively with the United Nations. The qualifications of NGOs varies from state to state which is defines the increase of input of NGOs to United Nations system.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> UN System and Civil Society, An Inventory and Analysis of Practices. May 2003

### **3. Recommendations for outreach plan**

The Secretary General in his report articulated the significance of the NGOs for the expanding international cooperation and leading the United Nations as well as other intergovernmental organizations 'towards transparency and accountability and closer linkages between national and international levels of decision-making and implementation.'<sup>24</sup> This was the very positive welcoming for NGOs to take active role in the United Nations system. However, it needs to be born in mind that, not all the NGOs, particularly from CIS countries are equal. They diverse with respect to their size, methodology, impact, resources, objectives and approach to the international organizations. Thus, before making the strategy for the outreach plan to CIS countries it is inevitable to do in-depth research which will reveal the most practical and mutually beneficial strategy to work on.

Firstly, as it has been reflected at the Part 2 of this paper, the resource problem needs to be addressed, in order to make the CIS NGOs able to have satisfactory working conditions. These resources are human and financial resources. If the financial resources been solved, it will make it easy to involve professionals to the work of the NGOs who are capable effectively communicate, know the United Nations system in-depth and able to network, do fundraising and attract the attention of the private donors. Since the United Nations has been aware of the financial situation of the NGO, particularly from CIS region it has always been on the agenda of the United Nations and the NGOs mutual cooperation plan. The alleged fact has been articulated on the General Assembly's 59th session on the Strengthening of the United Nations system in 2004 as following:

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<sup>24</sup> Arrangements and Practices for the interaction of non-governmental organizations in all activities of the United Nations System, parag:71, 1998

**Proposal 27**

*The United Nations should establish a fund to enhance the capacity of civil society in developing countries to engage in United Nations processes and partnerships. The Secretariat should seek contributions from Governments, foundations, United Nations sources and elsewhere, and it should establish an administrative and governance structure for the fund that puts maximum emphasis on decision-making at the country level.*

Source: Strengthening the United Nations System, General Assembly, 2004

Besides, The Report of the Secretary-General Arrangements and practices for the interaction of non-governmental organizations in all activities of the United Nations system in 1998 stated: 'Member States may also wish to consider the establishment of a trust fund for the purpose of facilitating the participation of NGOs from developing and least developed countries, and countries in transition, in activities of the Organization. This fund could serve to provide such NGOs with the means of retrieving important information from United Nations sources as well as attending important meetings or conferences of relevance to their work.'<sup>25</sup>

As it has been stated at the second part of the paper, the language issue of the CIS NGOs is the one need to be addressed urgently in order to maintain the easy access of the CIS NGOs to the ECOSOC. In order to inform the CIS NGOs about the accreditation process the ECOSOC should issue the guidelines, terms and conditions, as well as general information on the responsibilities and benefits of the consultative status with the ECOSOC in Russian language which is one of the working languages of the United Nations on the ECOSOC/DESA NGO branch website.

Moreover, Russian language can be used as one of the eligible languages for the submission of the quadrennial reports which can significantly simplify the work of the CIS NGO.

Unsatisfactory participation of the NGOs those obtained the consultative status with the ECOSOC has been discussed at various level in the United Nations system. The most common

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<sup>25</sup> Report of the Secretary-General Arrangements and practices for the interaction of non-governmental organizations in all activities of the United Nations system, paragraph 79, General Assembly, July 10, 1998.

and simple reason of the unsatisfactory participation was the lack of information about the liaison offices between NGOs and the United Nations, the mutual rights and responsibilities and the practical guidelines for the functioning of NGOs. As such, Report A/54/329 of the Secretary-General, 'views of the Member States, members of the specialized agencies, observers, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations from all regions on the report of the Secretary – General o arrangements and practices for the interaction of non-governmental organizations in all activities of the United Nations system' has suggested after obtaining the consultative status with the ECOSOC NGOs 'should receive an orientation/welcome booklet and/or session upon obtaining formal status with the United Nations. Information should include specifics about the NGO liaison offices in the United Nations system, including names, contacts, and locations. The booklet should also reinforce mutual rights and responsibilities, as well as practical guidelines for the functioning of NGOs within physical structures and protocols of the United Nations, including how to follow debates and so forth'<sup>26</sup>

Additionally, in order to engage and succeed more engagement of the CIS region NGOs to the ECOSOC, the United Nations may conduct informative workshops and skill trainings at the CIS regions through the United Nations offices in these countries. The workshops may provide information 'on how to comply with the technical requirements of applying for consultative status as well as explaining the formal rights and responsibilities of NGOs in consultative status.'<sup>27</sup> The trainings may also inform the NGOs about the contributions they can give to the United Nations.

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<sup>26</sup> Report of the Secretary General, A/54/329, paragraph 24, New York, 1999.

<sup>27</sup> Report of the Secretary General, A/54/329, paragraph 24, New York, 1999



## **Conclusion**

This research paper assessed the CIS region NGOs participation in Economic Social Council activities and their involvement to the overall work of the United Nations. In addition, it has been proposed recommendations for the improvement of the relations between the United Nations and CIS region NGOs. In doing so, this paper identified a – the number of the NGOs from the CIS region with consultative status b – Number of the meetings and conferences, attended by the CIS region NGOs. The research analyzed that the CIS region is insufficiently represented in ECOSOC.

Research discovered that, the CIS region NGOs' insufficient participation and low performance at the ECOSOC can be examined in three different categories which are **a** – concerns regarding the NGOs and rose by Governments **b**- concerns regarding the NGOs and rose by NGOs and **c** – concerns caused by the United Nations. The solution to those concerns should be found within the collaboration of these three distinct parties. The paper has revealed that the internal and professional capacity of the CIS NGOs do not meet international standards and needs to be developed. As the main issue for the NGOs, the funding problems of the CIS region NGOs also need to be solved.

As the final part the research paper suggests certain recommendations those can be efficient to help the CIS NGOs engagement to the work the United Nations, and recommendations to the outreach plan of the ECOSOC to the CIS region.

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