

Cooperation with International Organizations and NGOs

“You cannot move mountains without using tractors – intentions and philosophies are not good enough.”

[Peter Drucker]

Globalization, which characterizes the movement of modern civilization away from the parochial and toward the global or universal, embraces many dimensions. These include the vast array of technological changes; the movement to a global economy; the pervasiveness of new information tools; and the kind of social adjustments so well articulated by renowned management specialist Peter Drucker in his book, *Post Capitalist Society*.

With the development of a diversified society, nongovernmental organizations are playing an increasingly important and dynamic role in the international community. The growth of NGOs reflects a new enthusiasm on the part of citizens to engage more directly in public problem solving. The *1999 Human Development Report*, which focused on the increasing difficulties of global governance, described how the lack of cohesive developmental policies and strategies has heightened the focus on NGOs in solving global problems.

Addressing this issue in his inaugural address, President Chen Shui-bian said that in addition to strengthening substantive relations with diplomatic allies, Taiwan must actively participate in the process of NGO development and take collective action toward building a “civil society.” Taiwan’s achievement of this goal is based upon strengthening cooperation with international organizations and NGOs, humanitarianism, economic and trade cooperation, and cultural exchanges. The implementation of this

policy indicates Taiwan’s willingness and ability to assume global responsibilities.

I. The Role and Importance of NGOs

NGOs grew rapidly in the second half of the 20th century as a result of private sector involvement in community development. As “civil society” actors, NGOs have come to play an increasingly important role in the implementation of development assistance. In some areas, the capacity of NGOs exceeds that of governments, especially in health and medicine. That is because NGOs focus their efforts and have defined goals, and they coalesce specialists, technology, financial means, volunteers and ample experience to form a comprehensive information network.

Taiwan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs established an NGO International Affairs Commission on 2 October 2000, to encourage and facilitate the participation of domestic NGOs in international affairs. The hope is to integrate resources and expand Taiwan’s presence in the global community. There are many thousands of NGOs throughout the world; Taiwan itself is home to about 4,000 NGOs and one out of every four of those has a connection with an international organization. Since one of the ICDF’s missions is to strengthen international cooperation and enhance foreign relations, strengthening cooperative relationships with international organizations and NGOs is a logical focus.

II. Strategies in Cooperation Between the ICDF and International Organizations and NGOs

For successful implementation of international cooperation projects, the ICDF utilizes Taiwan's foreign assistance resources and promotes Taiwan's competitive advantage in macroeconomic policy planning and management, SME development, foreign trade expansion, and training of labor resources. To reduce planning costs and achieve efficient leverage in cooperative projects, the ICDF cooperates with international institutions and organizations on a bilateral or multilateral basis. This strategy boosts the chances for success and expands Taiwan's presence in the global arena. Current strategies being employed by the ICDF in its cooperative work with international organizations include the following.

1. Joint financing between the ICDF and international organizations in implementing international cooperation development projects.
2. Utilizing the advantages of Taiwan's technical missions abroad and combining these with capital provided by international organizations to carry out agricultural upgrading projects.
3. Combining Taiwan's advantages and specialties with the capital of international organizations in undertaking technical assistance projects.
4. Taking the initiative to participate in humanitarian assistance projects with international organizations or NGOs.

III. Achievements of ICDF Cooperation with International Organizations and NGOs

In order to expand its presence in international activities, the ICDF has increased the number of cooperative programs with international organizations and NGOs. In addition to cooperating with regional development organizations such as the IDB, the ADB, the AfDB, the CABI and the EBRD, the

ICDF is increasingly diversifying its technical cooperation activities with NGOs. Examples include technical missions stationed abroad and the "SME Technical Assistance Project." As described below, cooperation with international institutions extends to joint investment and lending, technical cooperation, international human resources development and humanitarian assistance.

1. Technical Missions

Cooperation in this regard unites the expertise of Taiwan's technical missions with the financial resources of international organizations to achieve project goals. For example, Taiwan's technical mission in Nicaragua utilizes funds from the CABI to carry out management training in rice production cooperatives. The technical mission's food processing project in Belize cooperates with the Pan American Health Organization to raise the nutrition and incomes of the people. Taiwan's technical mission in Saudi Arabia has cooperated with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to complete projects covering orange pest prevention and the nurturing of large numbers of disease-resistant orange tree seedlings. The technical mission in São Tomé and Príncipe receives loans from the AfDB to carry out chicken immunization and feed production programs.

In addition, successful cooperation has occurred between technical missions of other countries stationed abroad and Taiwan's missions. Technical missions from Spain and Taiwan worked collaboratively in Honduras on a vegetable export project. The German and Taiwan technical missions in Nicaragua cooperated on a pig raising project in southern Nicaragua. The US Peace Corps Mission and the Taiwan technical mission in Panama cooperated on a horticulture project. Japan's JICA studied examples of our successful foreign experiences in Paraguay for future reference.

2. Technical Assistance

The ICDF utilizes the successful experience of Taiwan's development of SMEs. Integration of this experience with the resources of international organizations enables the ICDF to send experts abroad for short term visits to other countries to lend technical assistance on the development of SMEs in their own countries. For example, the CABI is presently considering providing funds to individuals or firms that are participating in the ICDF's technical assistance projects, to provide needed capital to initiate industrial upgrading and subsidies to procure necessary equipment. The CABI and the ICDF have also agreed to collaborate in funding a Central American regional economic and industrial seminar where information on Taiwan's successful experience can be shared with others. The IDB's Japan Program has asked the ICDF for assistance in carrying out advisory services to upgrade the seafood processing industry in Nicaragua. The IDB is also providing funding for two Nicaraguan experts to visit Taiwan to receive training in seafood processing. In addition, the ICDF has recommended that Taiwan experts travel to Nicaragua to assist in the industrial upgrading and development of that industry. This endeavor involving the seafood processing industry in Nicaragua is a prime example of mutually beneficial interaction between the ICDF and international organizations to achieve industrial upgrading.

3. Investment and Lending

The ICDF has a lengthy history of cooperating in investment and lending operations with international institutions and NGOs. In addition to implementing four joint financing projects with the IDB, the ICDF has also cooperated with the EBRD on the Financial Intermediary Investment Special Fund and a relending program in Belarus. The ICDF has cooperated with the CABI on many projects, including a relending project in five Central American countries. The ICDF collaborated with the ADB on a project to provide water resources in Papua New Guinea and worked with the AfDB on infrastructure development

projects such as the "Two International Roads Project in Swaziland." Also, the ICDF cooperated with the Organization of American States in the rebuilding projects following Hurricane Mitch in two Central American countries.

The ICDF has worked with local NGOs in other countries when underwriting small farmholder financing schemes and microcredit projects. In these cases, the ICDF provides capital, while NGOs carry out project implementation. There are several examples: assistance to the Costa Rican Guava Association to build a jam producing factory; loans to the Panama Fishermen's Cooperative to undertake development of fishing villages; loans to the Oman Torrijos Cooperative in Nicaragua to carry out a rice production program; loans to the Honduran Fishermen's Cooperative; and sponsoring of a small farmholder financing scheme for the Belize Enterprise for Sustainable Technology (BEST). In the East Caribbean, a microcredit project has been implemented with four development foundations. The ICDF has also provided microcredit to the Micro-Credit National S.A. in Haiti and it has cooperated with an agency in the Solomon Islands on an agricultural loan project.

4. Education and Training

The ICDF has worked with World Links to assist Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Paraguay and Senegal in developing Internet education in schools. In addition to nurturing the technical personnel that developing countries will require in the future, the program facilitates cultural and intellectual exchanges, as well as the sharing of information. The ICDF is also cooperating with Japan's Interchange Association to assist several developing countries in carrying out professional training.

5. Humanitarian Assistance

The ICDF is cooperating with the French NGO SODECO in assisting underprivileged families in Cambodia to improve their nutrition and basic living

conditions. The ICDF has also cooperated with the US Mercy Corps in refugee relief work in countries bordering Afghanistan. In addition, the ICDF has worked with World Vision Mongolia to provide scholarships for Mongolian children of unemployed families.

IV. Areas of Future Cooperation

Given the reality of finite resources, the ICDF will need to determine the best implementation procedures for cooperation with international organizations. Possible areas of future cooperation include:

1. Uniting the efforts of domestic NGOs, such as medical, humanitarian, health, and SME organizations, to work jointly on global points of interest. The intention is to integrate resources, participate actively in international activities and expand Taiwan's global presence.

2. Continuing to strengthen the relationships that the ICDF already maintains with international organizations, sending personnel abroad and inviting foreign personnel to Taiwan to study share experiences and jointly plan new cooperation programs.

3. Selecting global points of interest, taking part in various programs, and encouraging additional domestic NGOs to participate in programs with the ICDF in an effort to strengthen Taiwan's relationship with international NGOs.

4. Strengthening Taiwan overseas volunteer work and alternative service programs by carrying out exchanges with similar international organizations, such as the US Peace Corps and like-minded organizations in Japan and South Korea.

V. Conclusion

The ICDF is sparing no effort in cooperating with international organizations. In addition to utilizing Taiwan's expertise and specialists in combination with the capital of international agencies to achieve the goal of international cooperation, the ICDF has

established cooperative relationships with international organizations, regional agencies and NGOs. However, in light of Taiwan's precarious diplomatic situation, more efforts are needed by government agencies and NGOs to help Taiwan overcome problems and raise its visibility in international cooperation projects.

World Links

World Bank President James D. Wolfensohn initiated World Links in 1997. It combines knowledge, information and technology to assist developing countries in raising their quality of education and human resources training. This program aims to integrate targeted countries into the global economic community in a short period of time. In 1999, the project was spun off from the World Bank to become an NGO.

In April 1994, World Links proposed a cooperation plan with the ICDF. After careful consideration, the ICDF believed that the program focusing on Internet education was suitable to global trends and decided to participate in it. During the cooperation period (2000-2002), the program assisted five friendly countries in implementing Internet computer education in schools and raising global awareness.