



WORLD FEDERATION OF UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATIONS
FEDERATION MONDIALE DES ASSOCIATIONS POUR LES NATIONS UNIES

A peoples' movement for the United Nations

WFUNA response to the Cardoso Report on Civil Society Relations with the UN.

The WFUNA submission to the Panel contained 9 recommendations and we are pleased to note that 6 of these recommendations are reflected in the Panels final 30 proposals: notably

- The inclusion of civil society into UN policy decision making – proposals 2,3,5
- Establishment of a senior position in the Secretariat to coordinate civil society engagement – proposals 7,24
- Encourage strategic partnerships, including for the realization of the Millennium Development Goals –proposals 7,10,13,30.
- Establish a global civil society fund –proposals 10, 26, 27.
- Support capacity building for UNAs in developing countries – proposals 26, 27
- Training of UN personnel to interact more effectively with civil society – see proposal 7, 28

The report states that the Panel's proposals map out a course of change, building on the best practices of the UN. The approach is informed by 5 principles –

- The UN should be more innovative
- The UN has a track record to be proud of and to build upon
- The main civil society partners of the UN – networks of NGOs and UNAs - have already done a great deal to help strengthen the outward orientation of the organization and would be invaluable allies in helping to implement the suggested strategies
- The UN should make more use of information and communication technologies
- Opportunities are context-specific, as are the parties critical for making or breaking them.

The reference to UNAs in the 3rd of these 5 five principles signals the importance attached to their role in working in support of the UN. The Panel challenges UNAs around the world to help implement its strategic vision. There is clearly a role for WFUNA to facilitate this.

The WFUNA Executive Committee approved the following points for inclusion in a letter from WFUNA SG to UNSG Kofi Annan

1. The World Federation of United Nations Associations warmly welcomes the report, “We the peoples: Civil Society, the United Nations and Global

Governance”, produced by the Cardoso Panel. As the original peoples’ movement for the United Nations, WFUNA endorses the report’s emphasis on the need for the UN to move beyond being ‘just an intergovernmental forum’ to enhancing dialogue and cooperation with civil society.

2. WFUNA supports the 4 main principles underlying the proposed paradigm shift in the way that the UN functions. The UN needs to:
 - Become an outward-looking organization
 - Embrace a plurality of constituencies
 - Connect the local with the global
 - Help strengthen democracy for the 21st century.
3. WFUNA welcomes the Panel’s recognition of the role of UNAs in strengthening the UN’s outreach to civil society and the potential for developing deeper partnerships between the UN and UNAs for purposes of improving the UN’s communication strategies.
4. WFUNA will engage UNAs in a strategic discussion about how they could develop their communication and other capacities to support the UN in its efforts to build policy and operational partnerships with all constituencies...including NGOs, private sector, parliamentarians, academics and the media.
5. WFUNA is giving priority to revitalizing quiescent UNAs and setting up new UNAs where they do not yet exist, notably in Arab countries.
6. WFUNA will encourage UNAs throughout the world to hold civil society forums for local opinion leaders to discuss the implications of the report’s four paradigm shifts and the proposed changes for the future of the UN’s relations with civil society. The key proposed change concerns the UN’s convening power and moral authority to bring often conflicting parties together to tackle global problems. The report recognizes that non-state actors are often the prime movers to promote global debate on an emerging issue. It further states that the UN has often played a weak role in such innovations and now needs to “learn the skills and be more proactive, in bringing together all constituencies relevant to global issues and galvanizing appropriate networks for effective results”.
7. UNAs should be encouraged to strengthen their own networking skills and abilities to engage with diverse constituencies. As a people’s movement in support of the UN, there is strong basis for WFUNA to promote the view that the UN is most effective when it focuses on the specific needs, values and interests of clearly defined population groups – such as women, youth, children, the ageing, indigenous people, people with disabilities, refugees, people subject to trafficking and slavery.
8. WFUNA welcomes the proposals to strengthen the capacity of the UN Secretariat to engage with civil society at the global and national levels. UNAs would

appreciate being consulted on the terms of reference of the proposed 'constituency engagement specialists' that may be appointed to UN offices at the country level. In the absence of such specialists UNAs could perform many of the required functions.

9. WFUNA endorses the proposals to increase the level of funds available to promote civil society engagement, particularly for constituencies in developing countries, including women, indigenous people and the poor. In addition, WFUNA supports the idea of integrating civil society, government and private sector representatives into the funding decisions or the review decisions annually.