

## **COMMENTS BY MR. NZOUANKEU**

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I'm going to do two series of comments, first of all to thank you all for having invited me for the second time to the Asia Pacific Panel. This gives me a desire to come and visit all these countries that are very similar, and many respect to the African countries.

The first series of comments that I would like to make is first of all on what I have heard, there are on some points that I agree that there are some similarities that have been evoked with what is the situation in Africa. We have a very rapid growth in Africa for NGOs. There were not too many NGOs few years ago but there are more and more NGOs now. Like in your countries, we have three categories of NGOs. We have NGOs that offer services, NGOs that help in capacity building, and we have NGOs that are working in advocacy. There are more militant or in a stronger words but I would say simply advocacy. These are champions of causes and of people. As you have in your region, there is a sort of failure of the state, there are certain financial difficulties that states have which are the cause of the appearance of NGOs, and the consensus is that NGOs are autonomous as far as finances are concerned, and autonomous, so much so that they are beginning to worry governments because of their autonomy. When we compare the budgets that they have with the state budgets, there is definitely a difference that is worrying and this is why the governments are trying more and more to control the finances of NGOs. And to try and give them authorizations, but you know in a very partial manner. Therefore, these are the points that I feel are similar with the situation in Africa from what I have heard.

Now as far as the other aspect is concerned, the other series of comments that I would like to make are the certain specific features of NGOs in Africa. And then I would like to say that one asked me to come and speak here as a discussant, I was given a note, I was given an excellent note which sort of is an summary of all that the pannelers were going to say, and we have of course the described problems. We have said the banner has three objectives: the first was to give us a better understanding of the roles played by NGOs in public services; secondly to carry on our analysis of relations between the government and NGOs; thirdly to discuss the way in which one can establish relations, fruitful relations between NGOs and the government. And so what I would like to say here in order to respond to these three objectives of our

discussion within the context of public administration, the relations between administration and users, all the NGOs that intervene in the rural areas etc, would have really no interest at all so I am speaking of restricted relationships between the state and users to come to the first point on the presentation, what is the role of NGOs in the public service and public administration. I think it is a very limited role that NGOs play. They are not, and there isn't a very big role that they play in the African context. They are working for the defense of civil rights, etc, but not so much in the public service. We find certain NGOs in the field of governance, controlling elections for example are as I said, they work on the field of civil rights but that is where I feel that the NGOs should play a far more important role in the sector because we speak in Africa of the externalization of tasks, of the administration that is, the administration must get some of its tasks done by others, certain activities that would normally come under public service and I feel that NGOs could play an important role as far as this is concerned. They could act as a consultant, as an advisory role, or they could act as private companies. The government could create, put together documental, see how users could work with the government. Now the government could put together such documents on its own. It would be better if NGOs could participate more, act as kind of an intermediary between the state and the private sector, because they could act as private consultants. Their products are definitely better adapted to the needs of the people. They know people better, and that's how I go now to the last point, which is the end of my presentation because the last two points were linked.

What kind of population can we have between NGOs, what kind of relations? Up to now we've had relations of defiance, the NGOs be-wised the government or tried to monitor the government and they tried to show up where there has been a violation of civil rights. This kind of intervention of the NGOs is very useful. We are wiped in an agreement about the fact that some important role that they play. But we see that and I feel there should be a new generation of NGOs that emerges as well which work more and more closely with the public administration. And NGOs which don't have conflicting relationships with the state, but which are sort of an extension of the role of the state and this will help to have better communication with the public, better manage, certain heaviness that exist in the administration

lightened to some extent. And with this point I would like to conclude my presentation. They are going to mobilize citizens, for something and not against something as one of the speakers said earlier, and I think that the partners in development must encourage this new generation of NGOs, which could be very favorable element for the performance of the government.