REPORT OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC PANEL

ON

"NGOS IN E-GOVERNANCE"

Program and Introduction

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I. Introductory note and future perspective

Asia-Pacific countries are once again experiencing drastic political, economic and social changes. Asia-Pacific Governance is accordingly coping with many challenges. For example, social actors, particularly NGOs are now faced with the needs to transform themselves. In one country, changes in political environment prompted to reshape the law system concerning NGOs and they have come to act more freely in many more fields. In another country, NGOs are developing the networking systems among various other social actors in public service delivery; and such development may reshape the institutional arrangements of NGOs. Some governments are deliberating reform programs on how to transfer some public service functions to NGOs and how to institute the appropriate legal systems for NGOs in order to make for the public service delivery more efficient, along with the economic restructuring reform programs.

The roles and activities of NGOs and their missions expected by the society are contingent upon the many political, economic, and social changes. Rapidly developing information and communication technologies (ICTs) that have brought about "Information Revolution" in our society, is one of them. NGOs can take advantages of the opportunities given by rapidly developing ICTs that may in return bring about fundamental changes in every aspect of their work.

For instance, in organizing an NGO, especially a small grass-root organization, a founding individual must seek other individuals who have the same interests and objectives in certain fields to form a peer group of the NGO, so that these individuals would become core members of the NGO group. In this work, personal computers (PCs) and the Internet can play crucial roles of easily connecting people who have   the same interests, and of promptly and effectively soliciting the new members for the NGO.

Likewise, when NGOs carry out activities and/or ask for donations, they have to contact various interested people, groups, organizations in their work, and in some cases, the government. PCs and the Internet can make these works much easier with speed and efficiency.

Management of the human resources within the NGOs often imposes a lot of workload, as NGO workers are in many cases volunteers, who may not be the staff of the NGOs.

ICTs can make contact them much easier, and hence the ICTs can enable the human resources management to perform much more efficiently.

Cooperation and collaboration among NGOs and between NGOs and the government are required not only for the public missions to function, but also for the NGO missions to realize effectively and efficiently. For more productive cooperation and collaboration activities among NGOs and between NGOs and the government, ICTs can play the important roles. ICTs can also coordinate activities of the relevant entities more effectively and efficiently.

When NGOs perform certain public roles and activities with relatively large financial resources, they must be accountable to the general public as well as to the donors. Transparency of their activities and accounts should also be ensured. By establishing their own websites, for instance, NGOs can show their financial and activity reports to the public speedily and easily with lesser costs. They can also solicit the comments from the general public with ease and speed. As consequences, NGOs can attract additional members, volunteers and donors and can make their activities more active. They can also expand their activity range in the society which they serve.

In these ways, ICTs have come to benefit more efficient and effective networking, cooperation and coordination among the governments, citizens, NGOs and other entities. They may thus transform the relationships among these actors.

In the Asia Pacific Panel, the keynote speaker set the "Asian" tone by sketching the common portrait of the traditional Asian society still observable now in China, Korea and Japan that was influenced by Confucius and Buddhist teachings on the state and family orientation. The experts from Korea, Hong Kong, China and Japan presented the cases of the recent changes experienced in the roles and activities of NGOs in their countries, and outlined the impact of the "Information Revolution" to the networking, cooperation and coordination among the governments, NGOs and citizens. The comparison and evaluation of their experiences was followed by three experts from the United Nations, South Africa and the World Bank.

After the presentation and discussion by the speakers and discussants, common understanding of devolution of e-governance in the civil society organizations was made at the panel. Key emerging issues of NGOs were

identified when they work in e-governance. In conclusion, the panel felt that there is a need to improve the knowledge and information on the experiences of NGOs in e-governance by learning more cases. To facilitate such learning, organizing a global network of information on the roles of NGOs in e-governance was suggested by the program coordinator. The panel supported this suggestion unanimously. It is expected that the knowledge and expertise that the meetings of the Asia-Pacific Panel held in 2000, 2001 and 2002 delivered should be utilized fully in constructing this global network.

II. General outline of the Asia-Pacific Panel on Public Administration

1. Time and Date   2: 00 pm – 4: 00 pm   17 July 2004
2. Venue   Seoul, KOREA
3. Conference site   Room 104, Convention & Exhibition Center (COEX)
4. Theme   NGOs in e-governance

5. Panelists
Mr. Jai Chang **Park**
  Professor, Public Administration Department
  Sookmyung Women's University, Korea

Dr. Jin-Wook **Choi**
  Assistant Professor, Department of Politics and Public Administration and
  Center Fellow, Center of Asian Studies, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

Mr. Takahiro **Nanri**
  Program Officer, The Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Japan

Dr. Demetrios **Argyriades**
  Professor, Consultant, Department of Economic and Social Affairs
  United Nations

Dr. Fanie **Cloete**
  Professor of Public Policy Analysis and Management, School of Public
  Management and Planning, University of Stellenbosch, South Africa

Dr. Ladipo O. **Adamolekun**

   Lead Public Sector Management Specialist

   World Bank

6. Chairperson and Vice-chairperson

Chairperson and keynote speaker

Dr. Hiromitsu **Kataoka**

   Professor, Waseda University, Japan

Vice-chairperson

Dr. Itoko **Suzuki**

   Professor, Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, Japan

7. Organization of the Panel

   14:00-14:15   Keynote speech by Prof. Kataoka

   14:15-15:15   Presentation by three speakers

   15:15-15:45   Comments by three experts

   15:45-16:00   Discussion

   16:00   Conclusion by the Chairperson

8. Organizers

   Japan Steering Committee for the Study of NPM,

   Kataoka Research Institute, Waseda University

   1-6-1, Nishiwaseda, Shinjukuku, TOKYO, 169-0051, JAPAN

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   BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

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10. Funding Agency

   The Sasakawa Peace Foundation, JAPAN