

## ***EXECUTIVE SUMMARY***

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This report contains updates on the restructuring of the NGO Forum on the ADB, formerly called the NGO Working Group on the ADB. It also contains updates on the major activities of the Forum – Information exchange, Internship program, Strategy meeting, Regional Consultation and the parallel activities during the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Governor's Meeting (AGM) of the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

The Forum has been formally in existence for seven (7) years and its activities have developed in response to the global trends of multilateral development banks (MDBs) and other international financial institutions (IFIs). The Forum is composed of NGOs and People's Organizations (POs) and other similar formations from the Asia-Pacific Region, Europe and the United States.

The Forum's distinct characteristic is that there are several networks contributing to its success. The Forum's strengths and successes are evident from the growing interest of organizations with diverse and dynamic backgrounds to be involved with the Forum's lobbying activities.

The Forum's main objective is to share information pertaining to the ADB, and to come up with both quantitative and qualitative reports that may be used to trigger reforms in the ADB.

Currently, the NGO Forum on the ADB is composed of more than 200 organizations representing more than 30 countries in the Asia-Pacific Region, Europe and the US. The Forum's activities are facilitated by the interim International Committee (IC), which replaced the former Regional Secretariat.

The Forum's main activities are: 1) Information exchange; 2) Internship program; 3) Strategy meeting; 4) Regional consultation; 5) Participation during the ADB AGM; and 6) Skillshare, seminars, workshops and/or roundtable discussions.

This report is divided in four (4) parts – 1) The NGO Forum on the ADB: The New Structure; 2) Major Activities; 3) Conclusions; and 4) Annexes.

## ***THE NGO FORUM ON THE ADB: The New Structure***

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Based on the proposal submitted by LRC-KsK<sup>1</sup> to the former Regional Secretariat in March 1998, the Forum saw the necessity of restructuring the NGO Working Group on the ADB. The proposal was revised and endorsed at 6th Regional Consultation on ADB Policies and Issues held in April 1999. The members of the Forum who attended the meeting approved the new structure. Based on the discussions, the following were agreed upon.

The network will be called the NGO Forum on the ADB. The previous formation, the Working Group was not functioning efficiently anymore since the network has grown significantly and the roles of the former Regional Secretariat have expanded in various ways.

### Mission Statement:

The NGO Forum on the ADB is an Asian-led international network of NGOs/POs supporting each other so that each could amplify their positions on the ADB's policies, programs and projects affecting life forms, constituencies, communities and resources.

### Goals:

- To develop closer working ties with other Asian POs/NGOs and other public interest groups and to stimulate public awareness and action on issues related to the ADB.
- To develop a cohesive framework/overall strategy for the campaign on the ADB in coordination with partners NGOs/POs.
- To sharpen public debate and understanding of the basic issues on the Bank's growth-oriented development model and centralized top-down development strategies.

### Membership of the Forum:

Membership of the Forum includes NGOs and Peoples' Organizations (POs) that subscribe to the mission and goals of the Forum.

With the new structure, the following bodies were formed: International Committee, Convenor, Sub Working Groups and Independent Secretariat.

### International Committee:

The composition of the Regional Secretariat, which are now called the International Committee (IC), is selected based on geographical representation from the following regions:

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<sup>1</sup> See Annex 1

- 1) 1 for Southeast Asia (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, and Thailand);
- 2) 3 for South Asia (Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka);
- 3) 1 for Greater Mekong Subregion (Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam);
- 4) 1 for Japan;
- 5) 1 for Europe; and
- 6) 1 for US.

There are indeed some countries, which are not included in any of the regions above. This is because only the regions, which are actively involved in the Forum, have been chosen at this stage. The composition of the IC could be regularly reviewed in a flexible manner when the members from other countries/regions show their interests to actively participate in the Forum.

The roles and activities of the IC mainly include the following:

- The IC is the decision-making body in between the Forum Annual Meeting (FAM).
- All IC members are qualified to take one-year term and may still be reelected for another term.
- The IC holds the IC Meeting at least once a year.
- In order to implement the campaigns and programs on regional bases based on the goals set by the Forum, it is expected that each region will formalize the Subregional Working Groups (SRWGs) in the future. Each IC member will take initiatives to consider its timeline, nature, strategy, and program, in consultation with the respective members in the regions.
- The IC is convened by an IC Convenor who has a one-year term.

Convenor:

The Convenor, which is currently Mr. Takahiro Nanri, would coordinate the activities and the meetings of the IC. He would be in charge of maintaining the communication among the IC, the Independent Secretariat and the other members of the Forum. The Convenor would be in charge of making sure that the Independent Secretariat is functioning effectively. He would be the liaison officer in coordinating the different meetings and major activities of the Forum.

For the first year (2000-2001), Takahiro Nanri, who was elected as the International Committee Convenor of the Forum, will take the responsibility to develop the Secretariat. All activities will be done in close cooperation with the IC members and former Regional Secretariat. Mr. Nanri has been working as a coordinator of Japanese Working Group on the ADB for the past several years and he has extensive knowledge and experiences on the ADB campaign.

Independent Secretariat:

Instead of the Information/Liaison Officer (I/LO) and Project Officer (PO) based in LRC, it is decided to establish the Secretariat with the following three functions:

- Information Function - information management for the members;
- Campaign Support Function – to support the lobby and campaign efforts of the members;
- Organizational Support Function – to support the logistical and organizational aspects of the Forum's regular activities, such as the IC Meeting and Forum Annual Meeting.

The Secretariat is headed by the IC Convenor and will be based in Manila as an independent entity. Both the staff of the Independent Secretariat and IC Convenor are expected to work for the Forum as full time staff.

Sub-Regional Working Groups:

There are a lot of strong organizations in the network and the commitment to lobby in a very proactive manner has been raised time and again. Organizations from the different regions can conduct their own advocacy efforts and strategy sessions. They can raise issues that are more in-country. Requests, meetings and other similar discussions may zero in on ADB's involvement in their region. Colleagues from the different geographical regions can pick their own representative to sit in the IC.

The groups currently involved in the Forum represent the following geographical regions:

- Southeast Asia -- Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, and Thailand
- South Asia -- Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka
- Mekong Region -- Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam
- Europe --Netherlands, etc.
- Japan
- US

There is a possibility in the future that the groups from other regions/countries -- Australia, Central Asia, China, and the Pacific -- will be interested to join the Forum. In order to strengthen the campaigns and advocacy on the regional and country level, detailed analysis and critiques on ADB projects must be given priority. By pointing out these specific cases, we can address how the ADB fails to adhere to its policies and guidelines. Some cases to be looked at will be: non-project loans in Indonesia and Thailand; energy, agriculture, and education sector projects in the Philippines; forestry and aquaculture projects in Bangladesh; infrastructure and environmental sector projects in Sri Lanka; fisheries, irrigation and drainage sector projects in Pakistan; hydropower and water resource management in the Mekong Region; and others. On the other hand, the groups in the Bank's donor countries can focus more on the accountability and responsibilities of their

Executive Directors and governments, while actively monitoring the decision making processes related to the ADB. Moreover, there is a possibility to pay attention to the Bank's Regional Development, whose targeted regions currently include Mekong, EAGA, IMT-GT, Central Asia, Pacific Islands, and so on, through sub-regional activities of the Forum. The Forum will also concentrate on supporting capacity building efforts in the Mekong region because some of the groups in the region identified the necessity of organizing such activities. Taking into account that the ADB is actively involving in the region to initiate a region-based development, capacity building for these groups is strategically important within the context of conducting advocacy to the Bank.

Efforts to encourage the formation of Sub-regional Working Groups (SRWGs) will greatly strengthen the activities in regional and country level, according to regional needs and opportunities. The members of the International Committee (IC) will take initiative to consider its possibility, timeline, nature, strategies, and programs, in close consultation with the groups in their respective regions.

#### Issue-Based Working Group:

One advocacy point which the forum can explore is to strengthen the issue-oriented activities based on critical issues, such as already exemplified above. In view of this, the Forum plans to strengthen the Issue Based Working Groups (IBWGs). The IBWGs will focus on particular sector or issues and take an active role in making the campaigns/advocacy points and strategies throughout the whole year. Case studies of bank-funded projects must be drafted. These case studies can serve as platforms for particular issue-oriented activities of the Forum. Currently, some of the organizations in the network are showing interest to participate in the following IBWGs; Inspection Function; Forestry; Energy; Agriculture; Gender; Resettlement; Private Sector; AND Public Participation.

The IBWGs, which focus on particular sectors or policies, will be established. The IBWGs will hold their own campaigns and lobbies to the Bank. Its membership is loose and not constricted to geographical location. The IC and the Independent Secretariat can gather these groups and have several strategy and plenary sessions.

## **MAJOR ACTIVITIES**

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The IC will maintain the major activities of the Forum the previous years. These activities include:

1. Information Exchange  
Information materials are shared to other groups to familiarize themselves with the Bank's programs, policies and projects and also to orient them on critiques, reviews and other campaign papers produced by the members of the Forum. The UPDATES and PROFILE, the regular newsletters of the Forum, and also the electronic mailing list, serve as tools for this purpose.
2. Internship Program  
This activity is for selected groups who would be invited to visit the Philippines for at least two (2) weeks to have a briefing on the Asian campaign on the ADB, to conduct interviews and research at the ADB Headquarters and to network with NGOs and other local groups in the Philippines. An optional visit to an ADB-funded project may also be put in the agenda.
3. Regional Planning/Strategy Meeting  
Core groups in the region would be invited to assist the IC and the Information Desk in planning the activities for the Asian Regional Consultation and the ADB Annual Governor's Meeting.
4. Regional Consultation  
Prior to the ADB Annual Governor's Meeting wherein NGOs and local groups in the region would be invited to share their experiences and case studies in monitoring ADB policies and projects. One of the major outputs of the consultation is the letter to the ADB President outlining some suggestions and recommendations. Major outputs of the Consultation would also be the case studies and critiques on Bank policies and programs.
5. NGO/PO participation during the ADB Annual Governor's Meeting  
The delegation obtains ADB accreditation to attend the meeting. Usually, during the Annual Meeting, the groups conduct parallel activities such as the NGO Strategy Meetings, seminars and workshops, skillshares, dialogue with the ADB President, government delegations, Executive Directors and senior Bank officials. The groups also prepare for NGO press conferences, media briefings and newsletters.
6. Skillshares, Seminars, Workshops and/or Roundtable Discussions  
In order to facilitate information and discuss issues, the Forum conducts these types of activities. These activities enhance participation of

organizations in the network wherein particular ADB policies, programs and projects are discussed and analyzed. It becomes a form of sharing of experiences and encourages organizations to share tips on how to lobby on a particular issue. In some instances, the ADB is also invited to join these activities so that they can provide information and answer to the queries of the NGOs and POs.

Below are the detailed updates on the major activities of the Forum.

### Information Exchange

The Information Desk of the NGO Forum on the ADB has established more than 250 NGO and People's Organizations (PO) contacts as of December 1999. For the period of January to December 1999, more than 400 correspondences were sent out by the Information Desk. At least thirty (30) NGOs participated in the activities of the NGO Forum on the ADB in 1999 – Regional Consultation, Strategy Meeting, International Committee Meeting and ADB Annual Governor's Meeting in Manila.

Information packets and materials are shared to other NGOs, POs and local groups to familiarize themselves with the Bank's programs, policies and projects, and also to orient them on critiques, reviews and other campaign papers produced by the members of the Forum.

The Information Desk of the Forum functioned as the Moderator for the list serve of the network. The list serve features the current initiatives and lobby activities of the NGOs in the network and also Bank activities. There are already more than 200 organizations in the mailing list. Some groups also make use of the mailing list to post messages about their issues and current activities. Aside from the ADB-REFORM list serve, the Information Desk also maintains a mailing list for NGOs based in the Philippines (phil\_groups@egroups.com). Articles and information posted on this list serve are mostly on issues that are very specific to ADB projects and activities in the Philippines.

In addition to the articles and regular updates circulated among the members through surface and electronic mail, the Information Desk also sends classified information on ADB projects and activities to selected organizations in the network.

The MDB/NGO Library Collection at the LRC-KsK office has already accumulated several ADB, World Bank and NGO documents. A staff has been

assigned to maintain the library, and be in charge of listing, indexing and cataloguing the new monthly acquisitions. *See Annex 2 for the list of the materials and other acquisitions.*

## Internship Program

The Internship Program aims to give representatives from different organizations in the region a basic seminar on ADB processes. Representatives from organizations in Asia will be invited to attend a seminar and orientation on the programs, projects and structure of ADB, and how the Bank affects the communities in their respective countries. The Internship Program is a study program that aims to help build the capacities of the NGOs and to provide an orientation of the campaign activities of the NGO Forum on the ADB. *See Annex 3 for the details of the Internship Program.*

Initially, there was a decision by the International Committee (IC) that the area of focus would be the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), since a lot of ADB projects, especially on infrastructure, are focused on this region. Vietnam and Cambodia were identified as possible countries for the Internship Program.

There were attempts to explore and establish networks and contacts in the Mekong Region. Although there were already initial attempts to get in touch with some organizations, one difficulty that was identified is the groups' level of awareness in terms of doing advocacy work on the ADB. Organizations in Vietnam and Cambodia are just starting their activities related to advocacies on IFIs and MDBs.

The NGO Forum sent out letters of invitation to groups in Vietnam and Cambodia – Vietnam's Women Union, NGO Resource Center, NGO Forum on Cambodia, Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association, Cambodian Family Development Services. A description of the internship program containing the goals, objectives, activities, timeframe, funding and criteria was circulated to the members of the Forum in the Greater Mekong Subregion.

The main difficulty of the Forum is in getting contacts from Vietnam groups. Networks and contacts were not as extensive as that in other regions. The groups also lacked knowledge on the relationship between the ADB and the member countries. This made the coordination difficult since they are not well-aware of the effects of ADB policies and programs to their issues and advocacies.

Since the Forum was having some difficulties in establishing contacts in the GMS, the Project Officer (PO) and the Information/Liaison Officer (I/LO) took advantage of their international travels to get contacts in the region. Everytime they are invited to seminars in the GMS countries, they would explore possible networks. The I/LO also planned a visit to Vietnam to be the resource person for a seminar sponsored by a Vietnam-based NGO, but unfortunately, this did not push through. The PO however, gave a brief lecture on advocating the ADB in a skillshare held in Cambodia in July.

With these challenges and difficulties encountered by the Information Desk, the Forum decided to postpone the Internship Program to 2000, so that the Information Desk can have more time to prepare and establish contacts in the region.

### International Committee (IC) Meeting and the Regional Consultation

The first International Committee (IC) meeting was held at the Conference Room of LRC in Quezon City, Philippines in March 1999. The transition paper drafted by LRC was the primary agenda for this meeting. The interim IC members – Hemantha Withanage of EFL Sri Lanka, Arimbi Heroepoetri of WALHI Indonesia, Philip Gain of SEHD Bangladesh, Lidy Nacpil and Egoy Bans of Freedom from Debt Coalition (FDC) Philippines, Ruel Ravanera and Tony Quizon of Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC), Marvic Leonen of LRC-KsK Philippines, Gani Serrano of Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM), Theo Ruyter of BothEnds The Netherlands, Nurina Widagdo of Bank Information Center (BIC) US, Mae Ocampo and Norly Grace Mercado of the Information Desk of the Forum. After much deliberations and discussion on the proposal submitted by LRC, the same proposal was approved. It was discussed that the paper will be presented in the Regional Consultation, wherein several groups from the network will be arriving in Manila to attend the activity.

Two days after the IC Meeting, the Asian NGO/PO Regional Consultation on ADB Policies and Issues was held at Innotech Building in Quezon City, Philippines. The consultation served as a forum where NGOs/POs can raise their major concerns and issues in their respective countries. The body agreed that the sessions will be broken down into the following sections: 1) Discussion of the transition paper; 2) Country presentations; 3) Sectoral discussions; 4) Case studies; 5) Planning for the new structure of the network; and 6) Planning session for the 32<sup>nd</sup> ADB AGM in Manila,

Philippines. See Annex 4 for the papers and other materials from the Regional Consultation.

Participation in the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Governor's Meeting  
of the Asian Development Bank

Last 29 April to 02 May 1999, various representatives from the organizations in the NGO Forum on the ADB lobbied in the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Governor's Meeting (AGM) of the Asian Development Bank (ADB). This AGM is the first under the administration of the new ADB President, Mr. Tadao Chino.

Aside from the letter submitted to the President, the group was able to have a 45-minute meeting with Chino. Some individuals also met with their Executive Directors, and with different Project and Program Officers of the Bank.

Below is the press release of the NGO Forum: (See Annex 5 for other materials during the AGM – Letter to Pres. Chino and Press Kit)

**NEW ADB PRESIDENT TADAO CHINO'S COMMITMENT TO NGOS**

During the meeting with NGO representatives held on April 28, 1999, chaired by Mr. K.F. Jalal, Chief of the Office of Environment and Social Development, the ADB's new President Tadao Chino made the following commitments in response to the NGO Forum's Statement and presentations addressed to him:

- 1) The President will read the Statement as well as the attached documents provided by NGOs and will answer in due time and in due written form;
- 2) The President recognizes the importance in building partnerships with indigenous peoples and will "strengthen dialogues" with them;
- 3) The President welcomes input from every stakeholder in implementing projects in Cambodia;
- 4) The President will continue to work on the issues of governance and corruption control with the recognition that the ADB is a "forerunner" in fostering good governance and corruption control among international developmental institutions;
- 5) The President will look into the inspection function and make it as "truthful" as possible;
- 6) The President will take into serious consideration the negative impacts of the recent Asian economic crisis on people in the region; and

- 7) The President recognizes that the information disclosure policy is important and that he welcomes input from NGOs to improve the policy, including suggestions such as (1) increased Bank staffing in the Information Office, and (2) the translation of documents into local languages be part of the Bank's operational procedures and practice;

In response to the NGOs' request that he should meet NGOs more often in more meaningful dialogues, not just during the Annual Meeting but also during his visits to member countries, the President made positive comments, with the recognition that input from NGOs is essential to the Bank's operations. After the President left the meeting room, Mr. K.F. Jalal spoke to the NGO representatives and promised that he will propose a one hour dialogue between the President and the NGOs for the next annual meeting.

#### Capacity Building/Skillshare Program

The NGO Forum on the ADB recognizes that some groups in Asia need to build their capacities on doing advocacy on the Asian Development Bank. Therefore, the Forum prepared to hold a capacity building skillshare seminar in some countries, specifically the Greater Mekong Subregion countries – Vietnam, Cambodia, Lao, Thailand and China.

The Greater Mekong Subregion was identified to be the region that needs capacity building seminars since the ADB has a lot of infrastructure projects and programs focused on this area. To complement the Internship Program, the Forum identified Vietnam and Cambodia as the possible countries where the skillshare can be organized. The preparations for the Capacity Building Program were done simultaneously with that of the Internship Program, since the same region was targeted for the activity.

The Information Desk began to get in touch through electronic mail with some groups in the GMS in the early part of the year. The groups identified were: Vietnam's Women Union, NGO Resource Center, NGO Forum on Cambodia, Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association, Cambodian Family Development Services.

The Project Officer (PO) of the Information Desk attended the skillshare sponsored by Oxfam America in Cambodia in July. The Advocacy Learning Initiative (ALI) on the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) was a four-day seminar on the basic points of lobbying and advocacy work. The PO gave a lecture on the Forum's experiences in doing advocacy work on the ADB. This

also became an opportunity for the Forum to expand their contacts in the Mekong area. Since the Forum is looking for an organization which will function as the Focal Point for the whole region, it was a good venue to meet the individuals and organizations who were doing active advocacy work on Mekong issues. The PO was able to talk to different organizations that can be possible participants for the Internship Program and Capacity Building Program. Since the Forum wanted groups from Vietnam and from other countries in the region, the activity was also very timely. The PO got the chance to talk to groups from Vietnam, Lao, and some from China.

However, since the groups in the region, specifically those from Cambodia were still very new, the PO was not able to get new information and insights on doing advocacy work in the ADB. Same difficulties in the Internship Program were encountered in the preparations for the Capacity Building Seminar/Skillshare – lack of contacts/networks, level of knowledge on ADB issues, etc. Taking these considerations, the Forum decided to postpone the Internship Program to 2000, so that the Information Desk can have more time to prepare and establish contacts in the region.

## Publications

The Information Desk has released five (5) UPDATES during the year. UPDATES is the newsletter of the NGO Forum on the ADB Information Desk. The UPDATES is published to provide groups with information gathered from the ADB and other information relevant to the NGO campaign.

For 1999, the issues of the UPDATES covered the following topics: (*See Annex 6 for the compilation of the issues*)

1. Report on the Strategy Meeting and 5<sup>th</sup> Asian NGO Regional Consultation on ADB Policies and Issues in Silang, Cavite, Philippines
2. ADB President Sato's response to the NGO letter during the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Governor's Meeting in Geneva
3. Discussion on the World Bank's Philippine consultation of the Indigenous People's Policy.
4. Details of the 32<sup>nd</sup> ADB Annual Governor's Meeting
5. Speech by World Bank President James D. Wolfensohn to the WB Board of Governors

The Information Desk also published seven (7) issues of the PROFILE (*See Annex 7*). This publication is a regular one-page data sheet which contains short summaries of data and information regarding the activities of the NGO Forum on the ADB, the Asian Development Bank and other IFIs and MDBs.

This publication contains the new projects of the ADB in the pipeline. This gives the member-organizations an idea on the trends of the Bank's lending portfolio. The PROFILE is usually circulated through surface mail to the different country focal organizations of the Forum.

Another project of the Forum is to revise the "NGO/PO Campaign Manual on the ADB For Beginners". This effort is very timely since most of the papers included in the present manual are already five years old. There are also new and more pressing issues and studies that could have been included in the manual. The Information Desk started to get in touch with possible writers for the different articles.

Topics for the Manual include:

- The Asian campaign activities
- Practical lessons for social activists
- Tips for negotiations with ADB officials
- Applications of guidelines on access to Information and Public Participation
- ADB's role in promoting good governance
- The ABC of the NGO-ADB lobby
- The Bank's Information Policy
- The Bank's Inspection Function
- The Bank's policy on Indigenous Peoples
- The Bank's policy on women
- The Bank's policy on involuntary resettlement
- The Bank's policy on energy

The Team initially sent out invitations for papers to be included in the campaign manual. There was no response to this first notice. Another call for papers was issued after the ADB AGM, but still there was no response. Due to the difficulty in getting writers for the different topics, the Forum deemed it necessary to move the revision of the Campaign Manual to year 2000.

The Forum also planned to come up with a book on the experiences and learnings of the organizations in the Forum on the ADB advocacy. The suggested outline was already drafted and possible authors were already identified. Letters were sent out to invite writers for the book. One of the writers identified for this project is Mr. Filomeno Sta. Ana, one of the first advocates in the ADB lobby and currently the head of a Philippine-based organization, Action for Economic Reforms. However, due to difficulty in setting the schedules, the book project did not push through.

## Meetings/Invitations

### WB Annual Meeting

The Information/Liaison Officer (I/LO) attended the WB Annual Meeting in Washington DC in October. This opportunity was also used to build networks with some organizations that attended the activity. This trip was not very productive because the NGOs and other advocacy groups were not organized. However, activities were held separately and without coordination

### Oxfam America's Advocacy Learning Initiative (ALI) on the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS)

The Project Officer (PO) attended this activity, which was sponsored by Oxfam America in Cambodia last July. This was a four-day seminar on the basic points of lobbying and advocacy work. This also became an opportunity for the Forum to expand their contacts in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) area. Since the Forum is looking for an organization which will function as the Focal Point for the whole region, it was a good venue to meet the individuals and organizations who were doing active advocacy work on Mekong issues. The PO was able to talk to different organizations that can be possible participants for the Internship Program. Since the Forum wanted groups from Vietnam and from other countries in the region, the activity was also very timely. The PO got the chance to talk to groups from Vietnam, Lao, and some from China.

Since the groups in the region, specifically those from Cambodia were still very new, the PO was not able to get new information and insights on doing advocacy work in the ADB.

## Insights and Conclusion

Like what have been mentioned time and again in the previous annual reports of the NGO Forum on the ADB, the increase in the number of organizations in the network lead to a more matured formation. The apparent challenges that the network faced and will be facing are the results of an ever growing diverse network. Indeed, the network needs to be restructured to achieve a more effective lobby and advocacy mechanism on the ADB. The following are some reasons for the immediate need for an assessment and a new structure: 1) increasing number of organizations in the network; 2) widening gap of diverse opinions, views, strategies, and approaches; 3) the organizational structure has remained the same since

1992 despite the growing number of organizations; and 4) the expectations and dependence of some organizations on the former Regional Secretariat.

The former Working Group has contributed to the building of capacities of organizations actively participating in the lobby. It is therefore, time to share responsibilities and actively encourage other organizations in the network to act as catalysts in the Forum's activities and maximize their capacities to trigger more changes in the Bank. The new structure is designed to optimize the skills and dedication of all the members of the WG. Changes are inevitable for a network to meet the challenges of the present times.