

Participation Outside Elections

To influence policy through the election of proven people's representatives may be regarded as the highest form of participation, but there are other means of participating in governance outside the electoral framework. For example, the non-government organizations (NGOs) and people's organizations (POs) in the Philippines have often emphasized activism outside the electoral and legislative processes. Since a large number of them were born during the period of opposition to the dictatorship, POs and NGOs have understandably deemphasized the improvement of the existing system in favor of exposing it with a view toward replacing it. Undeniably, the political activities of POs and NGOs outside the electoral and parliamentary framework are a more reliable gauge of people's political involvement. The participants have a deeper and more conscious commitment that is less prone to distortion by the purely pecuniary and entertainment motives surrounding the electoral process. However, to seek to influence governance merely from the outside without directly participating in the electoral process is to accept marginalization, much like coaching people how to swim without oneself getting wet.

Increasingly, POs and NGOs are coming to learn that the tangible benefits of people's participation can be attained only when electoral participation is regarded inseparably from other modes of popular participation, just as the latter should complement the

former. In the Philippine experience, people's participation has been most genuine when activism is combined with active involvement in government-initiated mechanisms such as the electoral and legislative processes.

Lobbying and Protest

The most prominent manner in which POs and NGOs have participated in political affairs is through *lobbying and protest* activities for concrete policy reforms. To this end, they organize themselves into coalitions that take on strategic or tactical issues to influence the outcomes of formal political processes that are *prima facie* not under their control. The strategic issues around which long-standing coalitions have been built at the national level are foreign and public debt (Freedom from Debt Coalition), agrarian reform (Congress for a People's Agrarian Reform), the environment (Philippine Environmental Action Network), and women's rights. Earlier, there were also successful coalitions against the presence of the U.S. bases and for human rights. The labor movement itself has had a long history of forming coalitions, both among labor groups and with other sectors. This trend toward coalition formation has also permeated through the regions. In general, coalitions with broader participation are possible only for narrower, more focused issues; the national coali-

Box 6.1
TOWARD ASSESSING PEOPLE'S
PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNANCE

To evaluate peoples participation in governance, particularly by POs and NGOs, three interrelated dimensions must be considered, namely, the *intensity, extent, and localization* of participation.

Intensity of participation is the degree of involvement in initiating actions at various phases of processing decisions in government: policy-making, implementation, monitoring, feedback. This dimension ranges from merely receiving information or being a passive follower (low intensity), to being an active follower (medium intensity), all the way to initiating decisions (high intensity).

Extent of participation measures the number of people's constituencies involved in the making of decisions. This dimension ranges from involvement by a single organization, a PO, or NGO (low extent); to involvement by a coalition or federation of POs and NGOs organized by sector, class, or by issues (medium extent); to involvement by multi-sectoral, multi-class and multi-issue coalitions of POs and NGOs (high extent).

Localization of participation measures the degree, to which POs and NGOs are able to participate in the making of decisions by their most immediate, local structures of governance. Participation in decisions at the most locally accessible structure of governance, for instance, the *barangay* or municipal level, receives a high localization rating; while participation in decisions farther removed from the local structures of governance receive medium to low ratings.

This index of people's participation in governance (IPPG) can be used to evaluate dimensions of participation that are desirable and feasible given specific forms of government activity at various phases of the decision process.

Some generalizations can be made regarding the probable IPPG at every "function-decision" phase. As a whole, the function-decision phases involving policymaking and implementation would be more resistant to people's participation compared to those phases focused on monitoring, evaluation and feedback. Moreover, some government functions would be more amenable and accessible to people's participation than others. For instance, government functions like the administration of justice, public safety and security, and regulatory and licensing functions, particularly at the policymaking and implementation of decision phases, would be generally inaccessible and resistant to people's participation and intervention.

It is also important to know where the function-decision

phases occur. Decisions made by elected officials of Congress, local government units and the president of the Republic, relative to the judiciary, are in general more accessible to public participation and intervention. The legislative body (Congress) has formal and established mechanisms for people's participation at the policymaking phase (such as public committee hearings and lobbying), compared to the executive branch where popular intervention at the policymaking phase tends to be flexible though unpredictable and idiosyncratic. But while there are predictable and formal mechanisms for people's intervention in Congress, it is difficult to build a social consensus for people-initiated policy reforms in this legislative body long dominated by powerful economic and political elite interests.

Within the executive branch, the IPPG for the different agencies will also vary. Those agencies with well-defined and large natural constituencies like the Departments of Labor, Trade and Industry, Agriculture, Agrarian Reform, and Education, tend to be natural targets for popular intervention.

It is predictable that the judiciary and judicial functions of governance would rate the lowest in terms of the IPPG. By law and by its peculiar system of public accountability (judges and justices are not elected), the judiciary is expected to be relatively insulated from the various forms of public pressure and interventions that the executive and legislative branches are routinely subjected to. This does not mean, however, that the present state of affairs is desirable and that the people should not explore appropriate forms of participation and intervention in judicial functions. For instance, there can be a more democratic, publicly accountable mechanism of selecting judges; and competent, professional organizations and NGOs can undertake closer monitoring and evaluation of the judiciary's decisions and behavior.

Certain functions of government, however, may require a degree of insulation from popular participation and intervention at specific decision phases in order to ensure credibility and efficiency.

Effective governance does not become superfluous by people's participation. Ultimately, the challenge is to fully harness the dynamism of popular participation, and to determine the areas and levels of governance where it will be most feasible and effective. Thus, by nurturing broad political support for reform projects and by resisting the particularistic agenda of vested interest groups and traditional power blocs, the government can function more effectively as a democratic yet decisive instrument of governance.

tions just cited are a remarkable achievement, since through working together, they have managed to pull together and unite over a wider agenda of reforms than has, heretofore, been thought possible.¹

In many campaigns, the usual pattern is for organizations with fully elaborated social reform agendas to begin the spadework of research, analysis, forming

political demands, and disseminating information on a specific issue which may be an important part of a long-term program. For example, the presence of the U.S. bases was the item of a long-term program against foreign domination in general. The oil levy came under a framework of debt and the fiscal crisis, and so on. Typically, the interest in these issues expands, so that

Box 6. 2 FDC's ELECTION CAMPAIGN

The Freedom from Debt Coalition (FDC) recognized earlier on that a nationwide advocacy campaign on the foreign debt would be more effective if it was made an election issue. Candidates would then possibly be pressured into taking a stance and be duty-bound to fulfill this once elected.

Over the period covered by its plan, the FDC conducted policy research, put out publications, engaged in mass mobilization, and made extensive use of media to publicize its position. By the end of 1992, independent surveys indicated that 80 percent of the public were aware of the issue, one in which the then-incumbent Aquino administration was consistently rated low. Toward the end of its term, the Aquino administration decided to enter a settlement with Westinghouse, the contractor of the anomalous Bataan Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP). The FDC campaigned to reject this deal and led the creation of a network specifically on the issue called *NO to BNPP*. By the time the electoral campaign started, foreign debt was considered an urgent national issue. Presidential candidates were impelled to include it in their platforms, and the Comelec-sponsored debates included questions on handling the debt problem.

Although it declared that debt should be an election issue, the FDC decided that candidates would not be directly endorsed. Instead, the positions of the various candidates would be published and disseminated to all FDC members. However, as the election fever escalated, individuals and organizations considered the possibility of supporting a candidate; there were even requests that the FDC field candidates and actively participate in the elections. But FDC did not change its original policy. This did not prevent member organizations or individuals from supporting the campaigns of favored candidates, however.

FDC pronouncements during the campaign dealt with specific debt issues, namely, the anomalous deal involv-

ing the Bataan Power Plant and the disadvantage to the country resulting from the impending deals with foreign commercial banks. A few weeks before the elections, FDC issued guidelines to its members. In a special issue of its newsletter, it presented a matrix of the different political parties and presidential candidates's position on debt management; debt cap and moratorium; fraudulent loans; the Bataan Power Plant, and domestic debt, drawing on the published statements of candidates and parties.

Subsequently, *NO to BNPP* then rated the positions of the various candidates on the specific issue of the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant. On a scale of 1 (best) to 5 (worst), J. Salonga not surprisingly received 1, while F. Ramos, R. Mitra, and S. Laurel received 4; E. Cojuangco, I. Marcos, and M. Defensor-Santiago all received a 5. Senatorial candidates were also endorsed on the basis of their positions on Bataan. These results were then released to the public in a joint press conference. While these issuances were carefully researched and well-argued, it must be admitted that they were not produced in massive quantities; funding constraints and lack of time limited their dissemination to voters.

It is difficult to tell whether the debt issue made an impact on the 1992 elections. In the end, of course, Salonga who had the most consistent position on the debt, lost, while Ramos won. The latter began with a stance of paying all debts, although he subsequently changed this to a position of considering the nonpayment of fraudulent loans. Other candidates who supported or were close to the FDC position did win, especially at the senatorial level. But there are many other factors making for a candidates success, and it is difficult to tell from this alone whether a sufficient debt vote was mobilized, or whether it was a factor in the candidates success. It is probably realistic to say that the debt issue by itself could not have been sufficient to make a candidate win or lose; but their stance on the debt probably made candidates more or less attractive than they otherwise would have been. In this sense, it was a factor.

¹It is unfortunate that this working relationship at the political level has been affected by ideological divisions. For example, the *Bagong Alyansang Makabayan* withdrew from the Freedom from Debt Coalition over disagreements in handling the campaign for an oil price rollback.

more and more sectors become involved although they have differing viewpoints. At this point, some demands may be modified — to the extent that this is still consistent with original principles — to accommodate new participants, and to expedite the mobilization of a broader coalition.

Some activities in which POs and NGOs participated include the deliberations of the 1986 Constitutional Commission (Box 6.3), the Senate rejection of the U.S. bases treaty in 1991 (Box 6.4), and the Kilusang Rollback (Box 6.5). What these instances illustrate is the possibility of combining parliamentary and

Box 6.3 THE 1986 CONSTITUTIONAL COMMISSION

The revolutionary government under President Corazon C. Aquino decided that the drafters of a proposed new constitution would be appointed as a commission rather than elected. The names of 1,000 persons nominated to the Concom were published, and this gave the opportunity for the people to give their comments about the nominees. President Aquino appointed 48 among the nominees. The composition of the Concom was admittedly elitist. People's participation in the process of drafting the Constitution took the form of lobbying, which was encouraged by the Concom. Each group fought for the causes it espoused — the right to life-lobby, tribal minorities, organized labor and farmers groups, the National Economic Protectionism Association, mainstream business, and the Opus Dei.

The Concom conducted public hearings, including weekend hearings in the provinces. People were consulted on such issues as unicameral versus bicameral legislature, controls on foreign investments, industrialization, national language, land reform, military abuses, and the presence of U.S. bases.

The Concom was polarized between the conservative and nationalist blocs. Through the process of conciliation, certain progressive provisions on education and social justice were included; but even as conservatives tolerated certain progressive postures, a clear message was given that transnationals and U.S. bases could not be touched.

The experience of the Concom shows that the success of people's organizations in transmitting their demands depends on the willingness of policymakers and lawmakers to listen and respond to the popular will.

Box 6.4 THE ANTI-BASES LOBBY IN THE SENATE

The 1987 constitution mandated that no foreign military bases shall be allowed in the country unless a treaty to that effect is ratified by two-thirds of the Senate. The issue approached a critical stage, since the military bases agreement with the United States was due to expire by the end of 1991.

POs have actively opposed the U.S. military bases for infringing on Philippine sovereignty and for the social damage they caused. As early as the 1950s, prominent statesmen such as Claro M. Recto and Lorenzo P. Tañada called for the removal of these military installations; these and other people opposed to U.S. military presence were routinely labelled communists by the government.

In the late 1980s, labor, peasant, and youth sectors were joined by professionals, academics, and Church people to form the Anti-Bases Coalition headed by Senator Jose W. Diokno. The coalition later became the ABAKADA (*Anti-Baseng Kilusang Demokratiko*) and included both radical and moderate elements.

Since 1988, the coalition carried out an aggressive and systematic information campaign. Their representatives were highly visible in media, presenting dispassionate and carefully researched argument; they gave lectures at uni-

versities and public forums, as well as organized rallies and demonstrations. They conducted studies for sympathetic senators but maintained close relations even with those who were unconvinced. They participated intensively in Senate hearings on the treaty and mobilized the respected opinion of others who could not be easily dismissed as being ideologically motivated.

As it happened, in June 1991, Mt. Pinatubo erupted, forcing the closure of Clark Air Base. The U.S. negotiators' shabby treatment of their Filipino counterparts alienated members of the Aquino cabinet. When the terms of the treaty became known, they were so lopsided that even Senators initially disposed to retain the bases could not, in conscience, vote for its ratification. The anti-treaty movement that emerged included prominent citizens who saw benefits in the bases' continued presence but could not accept the conditions of the treaty.

On 16 September 1991, twelve negative votes were cast, the two-thirds majority was not reached, and the treaty was rejected.

Then Senate President Jovito Salonga described the event as "the day when we in this Senate found the soul, the true spirit of this nation because we mustered the courage and the will to declare the end of foreign military presence in the Philippines and help pave the way to lasting peace here and in the world."

Box 6.5
THE KILUSANG ROLLBACK (KRB)

In late 1993, the fiscal crisis confronting the government (See Chapter 2) made it resort to an additional levy of P1.00 per liter on all oil imports. This was achieved by executive order and with minimal publicity, since the law gives the President some prerogatives in imposing tariffs. For the rest of the year, the effects of this levy were not felt, since instead of pump prices being raised, the added levy was being taken out of an Oil Price Stabilization Fund (OPSF) that had been accumulated earlier. By early 1994, however, the OPSF had been depleted, and the government announced that to build it up again in addition to a continued collection of the levy, pump prices would be raised. The Energy Regulatory Board began holding hearings for that purpose. It was generally depicted that such a course of action was inevitable, and pump prices were indeed raised.

Many POs and NGOs had already anticipated that the result of the previous levy imposition would ultimately be an oil price increase. Therefore with the groups within the Freedom from Debt Coalition and the trade unions as the core, an alliance was formed in January 1994 and named *Kilusang Rollback* (i.e., the rollback movement) or KRB. Its main aim was to press for an unconditional rollback of oil prices and the scrapping of the oil levy. It was argued that the hike in many other prices resulting from an oil price increase represented an additional burden to the poor and that secondly, the government's fiscal problems could be addressed without resorting to new tax and revenue measures. Subsequently, senators close to the labor movement, and businessmen would join the movement as well and would play a prominent though more compromising role.

The KRB was the broadest coalition so far on a single issue. For once, mainstream religious organizations like

the Catholic Church, NCCP-UCCP and the Iglesia ni Kristo joined in the protests; even the RAM joined forces with left organizations.

A "National Day of Protest" was declared for 9 February, which would be marked by large-scale marches and protest in various parts of the country; the media played this up as being plans for a *welgang bayan* (a general strike). As the day approached, the government sent feelers for a dialogue, and on 7 February, a meeting of the KRB was held with President Ramos, the result of which was a "temporary rollback" of the higher oil prices that had been in effect, until 28 February. The decision to roll back would be conditional on whether alternative revenue measures could be found. A task force between government and the KRB was also constituted to study the matter and come up with alternative measures to raise revenue or cut spending in order to replace the levy.

In the matter of alternatives, the KRB negotiating panel put forward measures that did not include new taxes namely: increasing the government's tax collection efforts (i.e., going after tax evaders); scrapping of Congress's pork barrel fund; reduction in government's excess fat and cut in unproductive spending; the reduction of interest rates through reduced debt service and neutralization of the bank cartel; and passage of the alien legalization bill.

On 28 February, the temporary rollback was made final, and the peso levy was removed.

There is still no unified assessment on all aspects of the KRB experience. Some POs and NGOs thought that the decision of the KRB to enter into a dialogue was a mistake, since it compromised the original position of an "unconditional rollback" and instead cast the POs and NGOs in the role of an accomplice to the government in raising new taxes. How far should POs and NGOs do government's work? What is not at issue, however, is that the movement achieved its immediate goals with unprecedented success.

extra-parliamentary means of protest, the need for broad coalitions around simple principles, and the need for long years of campaign at the grassroots.

Foremost example of this is the 1986 EDSA uprising itself which led to the ouster of the Marcos regime. The uprising was a combination of opportunities proffered by elections and of more direct and militant forms of resistance. It is doubtful whether the massive participation of millions could have been secured if people had not actually gone through the elections and experienced them as being fraudulent. At the same time, the same degree of militancy and daring would not have been shown if the POs and NGOs had not prepared the

groundwork through decades of extra-parliamentary, or what were at times even clandestine, methods of organization and struggle.

In many instances, sharp protest and lobbying actions on specific issues have culminated in PO-NGO representation in policymaking bodies themselves, either on a formal or on an *ad hoc* basis. This has been the case, for example, on the issue of women's rights where the government ultimately recognized the intrinsic importance of the issues raised by women's groups and, thus, created a national commission for women. Similarly, the environmental movement gained sufficient prestige and recognition to be prominently in-

cluded in the Philippine Council for Sustainable Development, which is composed of both government and non-government representatives. What has been achieved, at the very least, was that government line agencies have formally changed their style of work to include informal consultations with the concerned sectoral POs and NGOs.

Direct Implementation

The most direct means by which POs and NGOs participate in governance is through implementation of projects at the grassroots level. Projects typically involve alternative livelihood (including credit), basic services (health, nonformal education, and sanitation), the environment, and others. They involve extensive social preparation and lead ultimately to the setting up of cooperatives, sectoral organizations, councils, and management organs at various levels.

Self-reliance and autonomy from the government in mobilizing communities is both a desirable trait of POs and NGOs and a pragmatic reaction to the lack of mainstream income opportunities and basic services in the communities where many POs and NGOs work. POs and NGOs are in effect filling up pockets of vacuum in governance which the state is unable or unwilling to fill. On the extreme, the revolutionary underground sets up organizations that are part of the so-called "parallel government." But even organizations with more modest political reform agenda can be, and have in the past, been regarded as government

adversaries precisely because their existence and activities (and often vocal criticisms) point to the inadequacies of the authorities.

There are several reasons why these activities, while necessary, are insufficient channels for PO-NGO participation. *First*, although there is much talk about alternative systems and a drive for greater capacity to deliver comprehensive services, the obvious lack of resources among POs and NGOs means they can never implement projects that span the entire range of social needs that governments provide. Directly providing access to physical infrastructure, for example, is clearly out of the mandate of POs and NGOs and must be obtained by lobbying at central and local governments or by putting in representatives to implement that agenda.

Second, the integration of more and more areas in the market economies (indeed, global economies) makes the sustainability of many PO-NGO projects dependent on more thoroughgoing reforms. The implementation of simple projects may suffice for social mobilization and immediate improvement of people's lives in isolated areas. To proceed beyond this, however, will often require more comprehensive changes in the entire policy regime. For example, environmentally sound cropping patterns, while desirable in themselves, cannot be economically sustained unless they yield adequate incomes for the poor. Incomes themselves, however, will depend on prices obtained, which may be affected by policies that depress agricultural prices or discriminate in infrastructure provision. In either case,

Box 6.6 THE EXPANDED PROGRAMME ON IMMUNIZATION

The Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) is a success story of partnership between government and community. It is not uncommon even in remote barrios for a mother to show off her fully immunized child. Prouder still are community (*barangay*) health volunteers and health center midwives who work hard to reach out to every child in their area.

Although launched in 1976, the implementation of the EPI did not accelerate until 1986, when through President

Aquino's Proclamation No. 6, the Department of Health mobilized both local and foreign resources for EPI. Five years later, the Philippines was one of the few countries poised to meet the Universal Child Immunization target of 90 percent. In a 1989 survey, the EPI was cited as the most satisfactory service received at the *barangay* level.

Various factors contributed to this success: political will, resources, the abilities of public health workers, social mobilization, and programme management. Social mobilization is regarded as being especially important. This aims to create awareness and understanding, and interest in immunization, and modify people's behaviour and beliefs.

Box 6.7
NGOS AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT:
THE LRFW PROGRAMME

The LRFW seeks to contribute to the liberation and empowerment of women by providing them with credit to initiate livelihood projects. Of course, economic assistance alone cannot solve the problem of the oppression of women. Therefore, LRFW also seeks to address their personal, social, and even political needs, while providing them a chance to change their economic status.

The LRFW began in 1990 as a programme of three major NGO networks: PHILSSA (Partnership of Philippine Support Service Agencies); PhilDHRRA (Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas); and the NATCCO (National Confederation of Cooperatives). It was funded via the Presidential Manage-

ment Staff (PMS) through the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW).

Its concept, design, and mechanisms were borne of a comprehensive study of traditional credit institutions like the "five-six" system, commercial and rural banks, and other livelihood programmes, including the Grameen Bank concept of Bangladesh.

Progress reports show most projects experiencing profits and most loans have been repaid although actual changes in the income of beneficiaries are much harder to pin down. Notwithstanding problems in implementation and from the side of beneficiaries, the LRFW has been able to effect changes in poor rural women's lives, provided support mechanisms, and paved some of the way towards people's empowerment in the community and in the home.

Chris Bantug, *Development NGO Journal*,
Vol. 1, no. 1. (1992).

the matter will have gone beyond the confines of purely livelihood concerns and spilled over into the political playing field.

A final point has to do with purpose. It cannot be the aim of POs-NGOs entirely to supplant the functions of the state or of existing economic institutions but rather to reform these to make them respond to people's needs.² Even when introducing new institutions, such as cooperatives or people's enterprises, the challenge lies not simply in differentiating them from existing institutions, but in ensuring that they survive and function once immersed in the mainstream. To do so, however, means enabling people to lay a larger claim on political and economic life, not carving out a separate enclave. While the deep cleft between "civil society" and "the state" is often noted, what is not clearly seen is that the solution is not to glorify this parallel existence but for the elements of civil society to lay claim to the state.³

For these reasons, the mutual recognition of the need for critical collaboration between POs and NGOs and various government agencies should be welcomed. Some of these are documented in Boxes 6.5-6.7.

Decentralization and the Local Government Code

The Local Government Code of 1991 (Republic Act 1760) is an attempt to involve people, through their organizations, in the process of governance on a more regular basis. Its purpose is to reverse centuries of centralism believed to be behind the slow development at the grassroots level, and make up for the government's failure to deliver basic services. But putting the Code into practice faces many difficulties.

The Code decentralizes governance by devolving powers and functions to local government units (LGUs) and by strengthening the mechanisms for people's participation in governance. This is based on the judgment that local leaders and residents know their own problems best and can decide on the best way of using resources to meet their needs.

Through *devolution*, "the National Government confers power and authority upon the various local government units to perform specific functions and responsibilities." Authority is decentralized to local chief executives who appoint personnel to perform the enumerated duties. Through increased shares from internal taxes, LGUs can finance the devolved services. Section 17 directs LGUs to administer basic services

²All POs and NGOs, even those with the underground, aim at eventually capturing state power and harnessing it in the service of their constituencies.

³Marx's critique of the separation between state and civil society consisted precisely in rejecting this separation.

according to their capability. Services include those in agriculture, social welfare, health, local infrastructure, and environmental protection.

For this part of the Code to become effective, two things are needed. *First*, the electoral process must veer away from the politics of patronage to one where people can realize how their choices affect the larger-scale allocation of funds. The problems surrounding this have already been discussed in the previous chapter. *Second*, local government finances and spending must be placed more exclusively in the hands of local officials without pre-emption by national level decisions. A negative example of this is the current situation where devolved services such as health or agricultural extension starve for funds owing to inadequate revenue allotments to LGUs, yet representatives and senators dispose over huge amounts of "countrywide development funds" for local purposes. Again, in this case, a regime of budgetary shortage combines with discretion to reproduce patronage.

Another way of decentralizing power is by institutionalizing people's participation in local governance through: (1) sectoral representation in local legislative bodies, (2) membership of PO and NGO representatives in special local bodies, and (3) participation in political exercises such as referendums, initiatives, and recall.

Chapter 4 of the Code, devoted to relations with NGOs/POs, specifies that "... [LGUs] shall promote the establishment and operation of [POs] and [NGOs] to become active partners in the pursuit of local autonomy." Toward this goal, the Code provides for NGO membership in the following local bodies: two in the local prequalification, bids and awards committee; and one each in the local development council, the peace and order council, and the people's law enforcement board. In addition, local school boards are expanded to include representatives of the local *Sangguniang Kabataan*, the president of the Parent-Teachers' Association, and a representative of non-academic personnel.

Sectoral representation in the *Sanggunian* seeks to assure a representative each for women, workers, and a special group named by the local council. To date, however, only the youth are represented, with sectoral elections conducted for the purpose. The LGUs are in

no hurry to fill up the sectoral slots; sectoral representatives are often considered unnecessary expenses. Studies by the GO-NGO Watch of the Institute for Social Development Studies (1992) show that the positions of sectoral representative are hardly filled up. Subsequent follow-up studies show reluctance of LGUs to comply. Up to now, elections for other sectoral representatives still have to be held.

Saligan, an NGO that keeps track of developments in the local political process, contends that there is no great hurry among local officials to push for sectoral elections, and politicians have been clamoring for optional sectoral representation instead (*Political Update* 1993). A study by Tumbaga and Rairao (*Political Update* 1993), concluded that "local government officials in urban [LGUs] are less receptive to people's participation...compared to their rural counterparts." These findings are discouraging, considering that urban areas can better afford the additional cost of sectoral representatives.

Accreditation by the *Sangguniang Bayan* is the main prerequisite for NGO-PO participation in local boards and councils. According to CODE-NGO (1992), around 68 percent of 4,539 NGOs and POs applying for accreditation were approved. Among 850 Local Development Councils (LDC), the average NGO and PO membership is 14 for each LDC (Table 50). [The data are for December 1992 and the numbers may have changed since then.]

Reports from the field, such as those from GO-NGO Watch and CODE-NGO, show problems beyond accreditation. Many LGUs, for example, accredit only those NGOs led by relatives of local officials, and often these are the only NGOs that exist.

Conclusions

Partnership between GOs and NGOs is the key to effective people's participation in governance. According to Abad (Garcia et al. 1993), successful efforts by such partnership can be traced to the fact that "[m]utual suspicion between NGOs and government has gradually diminished; both are beginning to appreciate each other's roles in the development process... What is established in this partnership is an emerging definition of the roles played by the parties involved in the proc-

Table 50
ACCREDITATION AND SELECTION OF POs AND NGOs
IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS

ACCREDITATION					
Region	No. of POs and NGOs	Standards (No. of Items)	No. Applied	No. Approved	Percent Approved
NCR	1753	1,009	1143	489	42.8
CAR	265	n.d.	14	8	57.1
I	2113	162	1095	796	72.7
II	1159	382	211	67	31.8
III	525	238	131	136	103.8
IV	240	92	70	70	100.0
V	620	169	347	201	57.9
VI	1289	161	464	434	93.5
VII	300	133	136	136	100.0
VIII	306	44	168	119	70.8
IX	199	149	126	299	78.6
X	305	259	120	91	75.8
XI	380	184	222	212	95.5
XII	408	194	243	208	85.6
ARMM	178	83	49	10	20.4
TOTAL	10,040	3,259	4539	3076	67.7

Source: "Conference Results: National Coordinating Council on Local Governance."

ess. There is the recognition of the people, through their organizations, as principal actors in their own development. The role of NGOs is to enable them to perform that role by providing institution-building, education and technical support, while the government focuses on creating the necessary policy environment conducive to the process. Government is also asked to provide the needed logistical and technical assistance to both NGOs and POs" (Garcia et al. 1993: 156).

The active participation of people in governance in the Philippines was made possible by political events which drove people to organize and which, in turn, led government to provide more mechanisms for participation.

Human development, as defined by the 1990 *Human Development Report (HDR)* "is a process of enlarging people choices." To achieve this, a strategy of participation is necessary. Participation, in the context of the 1993 *HDR*, means that "people are able to influence and control decision-making processes and relationships of power."

In the Philippine context, the aim of people's participation in governance is to democratize the political base for the exercise of power so that government may be able to act more decisively in the pursuit of greater collective interest. Thus, a more effective people's participation in governance is a key ingredient for transforming the government into a more decisive and yet

democratic instrument of governance. This means that government will have to actively harness the people's initiative and enthusiasm to neutralize and ultimately undermine the traditional control and influence of entrenched political and economic clans in the country.

During the Marcos years, many avenues for participation were closed, but the post-EDSA years provided more opportunities for participation through the Local Government Code, the greater consideration given to women and the marginalized sectors, and the strengthening of the electoral process. People took advantage of those open opportunities and did their best to provide inputs in the policy process, participate in the implementation of programs, monitor programs and projects, and provide feedback on program impact.

For instance, in the framing of the present Constitution, people through organized groups influenced the policy process, getting into the Constitution their concerns, such as priorities for education and other basic services like health, involvement of ethnic communities, and concerns for peace. The process of interaction between the government-created Constitutional Commission and the cause-oriented groups has led to the present pro-people Constitution.

The government initiated decentralization of powers from the center. Through the Local Government Code, devolution of basic services to the LGUs is being gradually achieved. The Code not only decentralized the administration of health, agriculture, welfare, environmental protection, and local public works to the provinces, cities, municipalities, and, to some extent, even the barangays; it also provided for mechanisms for increased participation of people, especially organized groups, in local governance. The Code provided for people's representation in the local legislative councils and special boards, and mandated for closer government-people collaboration in activities. However, decisionmakers at the local level have shown reluctance to open the doors wider for people's participation by preventing the implementation of the provision on sectoral representation, and by slowly accrediting POs and NGOs, or giving priorities to NGOs where their relatives are active. In a meeting on decentralization, one of the framers of the Code remarked that while local officials fought for decentralization, "they do not want to decentralize to others."

Nevertheless, having experienced repression, people have taken advantage of the new democratic space. They have organized groups with legitimate causes, lobbied for their causes, and actively engaged in projects intended to meet the needs of the groups affected by their causes. They have lobbied for policy changes in national issues such as the debt problem, and in local issues such as the recall of a few elected officials.

The government has initiated mechanisms for people's participation. Through the reconstitution of the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women, for example, a more grassroots-oriented Commission had succeeded in getting a Philippine Development Program packaged in the early post-EDSA years. But, as in other programs, continued vigilance of the people is needed. The present development plan has failed to include specific sections on women; thus, the Commission, through its grassroots network, is active again in trying to get the government to look at a second plan. Women's groups are also active in lobbying for the prompt conduct of elections for sectoral representatives, because without elections, the women's participation is only given lip service by the Constitution or the Code.

In the meantime, cause-oriented groups are pushing for faster accreditation and sectoral elections, while such groups as the Green Forum, Freedom from Debt Coalition, and Philippine Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas (PhilD-HRRA), among the 20,000 registered POs and NGOs, are actively prodding the government to take a closer look at their concerns which they consider as legitimate interpretations of the national interest.

By actively working with POs and NGOs, the government can create a counterfoil to powerful vested interest blocs with parochial agendas. With a stronger political base of support from POs and NGOs, the government can also be more effective in pushing powerful elite economic players to become part of strategic government-business coalitions for sustainable industrial transformative projects. In this dynamic relationship between government and the people, the government must fully respect the independence and integrity of POs and NGOs even while it actively solicits their active support for comprehensive reform projects. On the other hand, POs and NGOs must realize that en-

hanced political participation does not make effective governance irrelevant but, in fact, strengthens it.

Policy Conclusions

Policies aimed at enhancing people's participation in governance focus on four interrelated areas:

- The mechanisms for cooperation between the government and POs and NGOs must be expanded and institutionalized. This policy stems from the realization that the government needs to fully access and harness the dynamism and dedication of legitimate POs and NGOs while respecting the integrity and independence of these same organizations.
- With the Local Government Code of 1991 as the basic framework for decentralization, the government should further facilitate the active participation of POs and NGOs at all local governing councils, particularly by ensuring the immediate and regular election of sectoral representatives to these governing councils.
- Policy reforms should focus on improving the electoral and party systems as basic mechanisms for making more intelligent and responsible public choices and for articulating and aggregating more effectively the people's aspirations and programs of government.
- Finally, in consideration of the special significance that the women sector plays in enhancing people's participation in governance, a major set of policy reforms should further address problems and opportunities specific to women in any participatory process in governance.

Thus, by enhancing the process of people's participation in governance, the government deepens the social bases for policy reforms and strengthens the possibility of building a coalition for reforms that would be more resistant to the traditional demands of power blocs in the wider civil society.

Some Policy Recommendations

1. Expand and facilitate the active participation of legitimate NGOs and POs in key policymaking agencies at the national level, such as the Departments of Agrarian Reform, Labor and Employment, and Environment.
2. Implement fully and speedily the provision of the Local Government Code on the election of sectoral representatives to the various local councils and Sanggunians. Provide for a regular system of electing the sectoral representatives through appropriate amendments to the Local Government Code and prompt implementation by the Commission on Elections.
3. Monitor the accreditation of NGOs and the formation of local development councils and special bodies to ensure faster and more meaningful participation of the people as envisioned by the Local Government Code.
4. Ensure the passage and enforcement of electoral reforms that address the following issues:
 - prohibition of political dynasties;
 - institutionalization of an electoral and voter education program to raise the consciousness of voters, candidates, and parties;
 - development of a more effective system of monitoring and controlling campaign expenditures by candidates and parties;
 - setting up of a system of subsidy for the campaign expenditures of smaller political parties and organizations that manage to get a reasonable minimum percentage of votes cast in their electoral districts; and
 - formulation of an enabling law to implement the Constitutional provision on the party list system.
5. Dismantle all private armies and the Citizen's Armed Forces Geographical Units (CAFGUs).
6. Enhance the respect for people's rights and improve the administration of justice by addressing the following concerns:
 - institutionalization of an information and public awareness campaign on human rights (particularly for the police and military personnel) and putting in place a system of monitoring human rights violations by enlisting the full participation of NGOs and POs; and

effective implementation of the mandatory continuous trial system in all judicial levels.

7. Deputize local NGOs and POs as official "watch-dogs" of the bureaucracy through:
monitoring of the effective delivery of local services; and

monitoring of cases of graft and corruption of local officials.

8. Facilitate the access by NGOs and POs to official development assistance (ODA) funds especially for countryside programs.

9. Assist NGOs in capability-building programs, especially women's groups and special groups that need further training in participation in governance.