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National Dialogue Series
Report on National Dialogue Series #1
Les Cayes and Gonaives

From November 20-22 1997, a three days meeting was organized to the Cayes, around the theme of "Decentralization and Participation", about 88 civil society organizations of the region attended. A similar event was organized from December 17-20, 1997 in the city of Gonaives, where some 110 organizations of the High and Lower Artibonite

In all, more of three hundred fifty representatives of youth, students, women, and peasants' associations, local private sector representatives, as well as representatives of the the different governing bodies of Territorial Collectivities (ASECs, CASECs, Town Delegates, Municipal Assemblies and Councils, Departmental Assemblies and Councils), as well as the leadership of elected officials' associations (Federation of Mayors and Departmental association of CASECs), and finally representatives of the central government (Delegations, representatives of various ministries (such as Plan, Public Works, Public Health, Education, etc), local judicial authorities, representatives of the National Police and of Volunteer Fire Brigades had the opportunity to openly debate this topic and to adopt a series of public recommendation on the subject matter to be submitted to the attention of central government authorities and to the general public

These "Debates of Civil Society on Decentralization and Participation", are being executed within the framework of project activities of the Civil Society (ASOSYE) component of the Democracy Enhancement Project (DEP), a bilateral Program agreed upon between the Governments of Haiti and of the United States of America, and financed by USAID/Haiti. The objective of these Debates is to stimulate a collective and national reflection on the new decentralized structure of the Haitian state, as mandated by the Constitution of 1987 and any or all national legislation related to this matter, and to identify some common tracks for a concerted and lasting action by all social actors involved. ASOSYE foresees to pursue these Debates on Decentralization in different cities of the country in the beginning the next year, then to repeat the experience around other themes of national importance. This series of Debates that will take place during the years to come, aim to facilitate the process of dialogue between the different sectors of civil society and with the government.

These first two Debates were positively evaluated, as much from the point of view of the large number of local and regional organizations represented, as from the aspect of the dynamic involvement and the quality of the debates engaged in by the participants. The general opinion expressed by participants indicate that these events mark an important stage in the process of dialogue and participation demanded by the Haitian people over the past decade, and required of the Haitian State in the Preamble of the 1987 Constitution. ASOSYE takes pleasure to bring to the attention of the general public the following resolutions adopted during the Debates of Civil Society in the regions of the Cayes and of the Gonaives

Civil Society Debate on Decentralization and Participation in Les Cayes

Political Background

Departmental Capital of the South, present population estimated in 1995 by IHSI at 119,666 people (1 67% of the national total) There are 18 different communes and a total of 67 communal sections in the Southern Department

In the June 1995 local elections, at the Departmental level,

- Lavalas won 16 Municipal cartels
- FNCD won 1 Municipal cartel
- KONAKOM won 1 Municipal cartel
- published results did not indicate the political affiliation of winning CASECs

At the Departmental level, the breakdown of the April 1997 elections results published by the CEP shows

- La Fanmi Lavalas winning 26 ASECs cartels and 3 cartels of Town Delegates
- OPL winning 10 ASECs cartels and 1 cartels of Town Delegates
- PLB winning 1 cartel of Town Delegates
- Independents winning 31 ASECs cartels and 13 cartels of Town Delegates

In the municipality of Les Cayes itself

- La Fanmi Lavalas won 1 ASEC cartel and 1 cartel of Town Delegates
- OPL won 1 ASECs cartel
- Independents won 4 ASECs cartels

In the June 1995 elections, 41 30% of registered voters actually voted Lavalas won the Municipal cartel with 55% of the popular vote, published results did not indicate the political affiliation of the 6 CASECs

Political notes

- The Mayor of Les Cayes is a member of the departmental executive body of the OPL, he is also the Coordinator of the Departmental association of Mayors (AMUS), and Vice-president of the National Federation of Mayors (FENAM) As such, he has become one of the most articulate promoters of political, fiscal and administrative decentralization in the country

- As elsewhere in the country, in the Southern Department, the Lavalas movement has splintered into the rival La Fanmi and OPL factions, with La Fanmi holding the apparent upper edge However, it is interesting to note that a vast majority of civil society organizations have distanced themselves from both parties, and presently maintain an apparent relative independence

- Around some of the key municipalities of the Department, such as Cayes, Port Salut, Camp Perrin, Saint Louis du Sud and Cavaillon, for example, grassroot organizations have proven themselves over the past decade to be amongst the country's most politically involved During the 1991-1994 Military Coup, repression was particularly fierce against community leaders and activists However, popular resistance in favor of the return to Constitutional order remained palpable and unrelenting Due to popular pressure, about 18 months ago, the GOH had to revoke the Departmental Delegate, this position remains unfilled to this date

- In the past two years, the GOH has supported a number of noteworthy community development initiatives in the area, such as the handing over of the Davezac irrigation canals to a peasant association

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composed of some 10,000 members/users. One must also note the handing back by the international community to the GOH of the management of the Macaya Park reserve.

-A number of potentially important private sector-led initiatives are underway in the region in order to support the rebirth of the Tourist industry in particular (for example, the development project of the wharf/airport complex around Aquin). Recently, a number of "Agricultural Business Chambers" have been created in a number of municipalities, and the "Chamber of Commerce of the Cayes" has also been revamped.

- Since the arrival of the HNP, a number of incidents have marked police-community relationships. Instances of alleged police brutality against the local press in particular, gained national attention last year. In the past few months, important discoveries of illicit narcotics in the area led to a number of arrests, including that of local judges, elected officials and community leaders.

Proceedings of the Debate

Workshop #1 Theme Decentralization and Development

Number of participants: 33, all representatives of civil society organizations of the Département du Sud.

The Workshop identified 7 priority areas where institutional changes are required for decentralization to serve the development needs of the majority of the population. These are:

1. Role of cooperatives

As indicated in the constitution, cooperative structures and efforts, being opportunities to learn good management, freedom and respect, and being a means to develop financial autonomy, solidarity, and the local practice of democracy, are a key to development and decentralization. Development of cooperatives should therefore be supported.

2. Superior Court of Accounts and Litigation

Article 200 of the constitution permits every region of the country to oversee local finances. The Court of Accounts should provide for more transparency in public finances at all levels. It should hold public meetings and hearings and should publicize the results of its inquiries and audits.

3. Ministry of the Environment

The Ministry of the Environment has a key role to play in Development and Decentralization. Four other ministries, -Agriculture, Public Health, Public Works, and Mining,- have a responsibility to work with the Ministry of the Environment in fulfilling this role. In fulfilling this key role in Development and Decentralization, the Ministry of the Environment should emphasize the following areas:

- Development of solar energy,
- Protection of marine and terrestrial biodiversity,
- Development of recycling for agriculture and livestock production,
- Reduction of noise pollution, and
- Sustainable and equitable management of underground water resources.

4. Territorial Subdivisions

The workshop resolved that Communes and Rural Sections are too large, and that Territorial subdivisions would best be made along watershed lines in certain cases. Workshop participants cited specific examples in the Les Cayes Commune.

5 Managerial Oversight within Participation

Local Accountability must be improved (local officials should be accountable to local citizens)

6 Decentralization and Privatization

There must be accountability regarding privatization. The central government must explain the need for privatization, the process, and the expected results to grassroots communities before proceeding with privatization.

7 Deconcentration and Decentralization

Deconcentration and Decentralization are not the same thing. Deconcentration, though perhaps necessary to some extent, is not the desired end. The workshop participants wish to point out that they want Decentralization.

Within these 7 areas above, the Workshop recommends that the following actions be taken:

- Conduct thorough rural needs assessments and resource surveys,
- Support increased production at grassroots level,
- Provide services to peasant communities,
- Motivate and educate widely for popular action, using every possible means of communication,
- Valorize local resources rather than allow low value imports,
- Reward competence in the public sector and develop anti-corruption policies and practices

Workshop #2 Theme: Decentralization and Security

Number of participants: 15, all representatives of civil society organizations of the Departement du Sud

This workshop discussed three subjects. They were:

- The problem of justice in the Rural Sections
- CASECs playing the role of "Chefs de Sections", and
- The absence of police in the Sections

Regarding the first subject, Justice in the Rural Sections, the following conclusions were reached:

- There is no tribunal (court of justice) in the Sections
- There are no judges in the Sections
- The CASECs have started to dispense "justice"
- "Justice" is being dispensed in return for money

There were no disagreements between workshop participants on these conclusions.

Regarding the second subject, CASECs playing the role of "Chefs de Sections", the following conclusions were reached:

- The CASECs are making arrests,
- The CASECs are placing people under house arrest,
- The CASECs have recruited aides throughout the Sections, just as the Chefs de Sections used to do,
- The CASECs are charging illegal fees to fill out and process property transfer documents

In discussing these subjects, the participants of the workshop could not agree on whether or not CASECs had the right to carry weapons. Those arguing that the CASECs had no right to carry weapons stated that they felt the CASECs would use the weapons to abuse their authority. Those taking the opposite view felt that the CASECs had a constitutional right as citizens to carry weapons.

Regarding the third subject, the absence of police in the Sections, the following conclusions were reached:

- Police officers are not present in rural areas, where people live in insecurity
- Even when there is an important problem in the Sections, the police show no will to provide the needed assistance
- The State has been remiss in recruiting and training police officers for all the communal sections as required by the constitution
- On this subject, the point that was most debated was the reasons why the police are staying in the cities. Three reasons were put forward by different groups of workshop participants. Some felt the police were staying in the cities because they are city dwellers (being "intellectuals"). Others felt the police had no will or interest to act ("they are young"). Yet a third group felt they are afraid ("they lack experience").

Workshop #3 Theme: Civil Society Actions to Require the State to Respect the Law and Implement Decentralization

Number of participants: 21, all representatives of civil society organizations of the Département du Sud

The Workshop made the following recommendations:

- The ASOSYE Project should decentralize itself,*
- ASOSYE should put into action a network of "animateurs" in civic education and economic growth in the Département du Sud. These animateurs would have, as objective, to promote democracy and decentralization within the framework of a civic education and economic program. These animateurs
- should perform this work on a nationwide basis
- ASOSYE should have a competent, experienced staff person in charge of an office in Les Cayes for activities in the area, selected with the help of civil society organizations of the Département du Sud
- The CASECs must satisfy the needs of the rural communities. Consequently, they must play a consultative role in local development
- ASOSYE must follow up on this debate in collaboration with the participating civil society organizations present

* (The members of this workshop found the idea of a CCH to be very attractive, and felt that ASOSYE should have a CCH comprised of Provincial civil society representatives at decentralized levels in addition to the current, Port-au-Prince based one.)

Workshop #4 Theme: Participation, Decentralization, Democracy

Number of participants: 19, all representatives of civil society organizations of the Département du Sud

Workshop #4 made the following recommendations and statements

- Civic Education is the key to decentralization,
- Decentralization is not feasible without the presence of State authorities in the Sections,
- The Electoral Council must develop stricter criteria to screen candidates on the basis of their competence ,
- The Electoral Council should publish the basic qualifications required of candidates to specific positions,
- Popular organizations must educate their members and they must block people who are obstacles to decentralization,
- Political parties must not play any role in the Assemblies (ASECs),
- Women must be more knowledgeable and involved in State affairs,
- The Councils (CASECs) must take the lead in planning for the collectivities,
- There should be sincere, full and honest collaboration between the Assemblies (ASECs) and Councils (CASECs),
- Parliament must develop laws for Collectivities and pressure the Executive to apply them,
- The Press has a duty to diffuse information to promote the concept and process of decentralization

Civil Society Debate on Decentralization and Participation in Gonaives

Political Background

Departmental Capital of the Artibonite, present population estimated in 1995 by IHSI at 122,254 people (1 71% of the national total) There are 15 different communes and a total of 62 communal sections in the Artibonite Department (although some confusion exists in all official GOH documents, and in fact there might really be at least 2 more communal sections in the Artibonite Department)

In the June 1995 elections, at the Departmental level,

- Lavalas won 12 Municipal cartels and 23 cartels of CASECs
- FNCD won 1 Municipal cartels and 10 cartels of CASECs
- KONAKOM won 1 Municipal cartel and 10 cartels of CASECs
- Independents won 1 Municipal cartel and 2 cartels of CASECs
- RDNP won 2 cartels of CASECs
- PADH won 2 cartels of CASECs
- PSR won 1 cartels of CASECs
- UPDC won 1 cartel of CASECs
- Published Results did not identify political affiliation of 13 winning CASECs

At the Departmental level, the breakdown of the April 1997 elections results published by the CEP shows

- La Fanmi Lavalas winning 3 ASECs cartels and 2 cartels of Town Delegates
- OPL winning and 3 cartels of Town Delegates
- Independents winning 25 ASECs cartels and 9 cartels of Town Delegates

In the municipality of Gonaives itself

- La Fanmi Lavalas won 2 ASEC cartels
- Independents won 2 ASECs cartels
- No results are available regarding cartels of Town Delegates

In the June 1995 elections, only 37 5 % of registered voters actually voted Lavalas won the Municipal cartel with 38% of the popular votes, FNCD won 2 cartels of CASECs, Independents won 1 cartel of CASECs, KONAKOM won 1 cartel of CASECs, and UPDC won 1 cartel of CASECs

Political notes

- The Mayor of Gonaives resigned late 1995, since then, the municipality has been managed by the 2 assistant mayors Recently, this situation has been the source of a growing conflict with the newly elected municipal assembly of Gonaives

- Although the CEP did not publish complete results of the April 1996 elections, as elsewhere in the country, it is evident that in the Artibonite, the Lavalas movement has splintered into the rival La Fanmi and OPL factions This split is more apparent in the High Artibonite, while La Fanmi has kept a stronger hold on the lower Artibonite (particularly thanks to GOH efforts at implementing the agrarian reform there) A vast majority of civil society organizations have nevertheless distanced themselves from both parties, and presently maintain an apparent relative independence

- Over the past decade, grassroot organizations in some of the main municipalities of the Artibonite (such as St Marc, Verrettes, Petite Riviere de l'Artibonite, Gonaives, St Michel de l'Attalaye and Gros Morne) have proven to be amongst the country's most politically involved During the 1991-1994 Military Coup, repression was generalized against community leaders and activists in all of these areas, but the general

population in the Gonaives slums of Raboteau were also particularly hit. However, popular resistance in favor of the return to Constitutional order remained palpable and unrelenting.

- Since the return to Constitutional order, the citizenry and activist CSO's in the field of human rights have been clamoring for judicial redress to abuses and violations that occurred during the Coup. More recently, a disorganized but growing grassroots advocacy movement has reappeared, clamoring for the return to Philadelphia of the toxic wastes that were illegally dumped near Gonaives some years back.

-The Departmental Delegate of the Artibonite is the daughter and wife of well known left wing activists of Gonaives. Through the network of vice-delegates, all hand-picked by former President Aristide from the leadership of peasant federations in the region, she has maintained a close relationship with grassroots movements throughout the Department over the past three years.

- In the past two years, the GOH has supported a number of noteworthy community development initiatives in the area, such as the handing over of the Davezac irrigation canals to a peasant association composed of some 10,000 members/users. One must also note the handing back by the international community to the GOH of the management of the Macaya Park reserve.

-Over the past three years, a number of potentially important private sector-led initiatives were launched in the (for example, the development project of the Gonaives wharf), but apparently stalled due to GOH political and administrative constraints.

Proceedings of the Debate

From December 17-20 1997, more than a hundred civil society organizations of the Lower and High Artibonite met to discuss the theme of "Decentralization and Participation". Close to 110 participants answered present to attend conferences by three invited specialists on the first day, the following day, there were over 150 participants that divided themselves into four thematic workshops in order to adopt the following resolutions, that were submitted on the third day to the attention of over 200 participants.

WORKSHOP #1 Decentralization and Development

1 Decentralization and Development

- for some of the participants, decentralization is a tool permitting to advance towards development, development will emerge out of decentralization,
- for a second group, decentralization and development must advance together,
- for a third subgroup, development must occur before the process of decentralization.

2 Role of Cooperatives in the process of Development and Decentralization

- the participants unanimously affirm that the cooperative movement represents the basis of development and of decentralization,
- cooperatives are a tool that can be utilized to struggle against the privatization program.

3 Role of autonomous governmental institutions

- as they exist and function currently, these institutions are not really autonomous,
- the autonomous state institutions should serve as mechanisms to encourage development and decentralization.

4 Role of the Ministry of the Environment

- according to participants, currently it is a ministry that exists by name only, and of which one hears of only through the newspapers, however, an agreement exists as for its potential importance in the decentralization process

5 Decentralization and Agrarian Reform

- as currently implemented, the agrarian reform doesn't support the decentralization process,
- participants reaffirm their support to the agrarian reform, but it must be realized within a proper framework, only in such a case, will it become a serum for decentralization

6 Decentralization and Privatization

- for a first group of participants, privatization is a good path that can lead to decentralization and development,
- for a second group, privatization is a dark beast and a constraint to development and decentralization
- a third group didn't have a declared position for or against the privatization of public enterprises

7 Decentralization and Autonomy

- local autonomy is a tool of first importance to advance toward decentralization,
- without the autonomy of Territorial Collectivities, development will not occur

8 Decentralization and Deconcentration

- deconcentration represents a first step toward decentralization and a process which can favorably support it,
- the deconcentration which is being proposed today is a demagogic term used by the state to mock the people

9 Decentralization and Infrastructures

- the road infrastructures are a first essential step toward decentralization, and should be set up before proceeding with decentralization

10 Proposals relative to the follow-up

Participants committed themselves to transmit the training and information acquired during this debate to members of their respective organizations. According to them, if this kind of forum were organized more often, the population would better understand the stakes of decentralization

- ASOSYE should plan these proceedings on longer periods of time (two to four weeks), in order to have them be more efficient
- Participants suggest that the end of every Debate serves as the departure point for the next set of Debates thus, the continuity and the follow-up would be more efficient
- Participants recommend also to ASOSYE to have a representative in each township

WORKSHOP #2 "Decentralization and Security"

1 the CASECs tend to replace the former Chiefs of Sections

- the CASECs write up official investigative reports, that in fact only judges of peace have the right to make,
- they arrest people and jail them in their homes,
- the CASECs prepare arrest mandates,
- they seize animals and require money to return them to their owners

2 Absence of the National Police in the Municipal Sections

- as the absence of the police, when two individuals fight, it can arrive that one kills or seriously maims the other, or otherwise later may seek revenge and to give himself justice,

- because there are not any policemen in the municipal sections, very often the population itself gives the CASECs this role to play

3 Role of the Ministry of the Justice relatively to the climate of insecurity

- the ministry is responsible of the fact that the CASECs send mandates, imprison individuals and dispense justice,
- legal mandates sometimes arrive in the hands of those concerned, but those that receive them ignore them because they know that there isn't anybody to apply them, and they know that the CASECs don't have this right
- Participants didn't manage to reach a consensus on the specific issue of whether or not it is this absence of the police that encourages the emergence of the growing number of delinquents and thieves, or whether it is the present economic crisis that is basically at the root of this problem

4 Role of Civil Society relatively to the insecurity problem

- it is not normal that the population gives itself justice
- it sometimes happens that the population is victim of a given situation, but they do not inform the competent authorities, and remain apparently indifferent to their own fate

5 Proposals relative to the follow-up

- on the coming year, participants recommend a) to the concerned officials and institutions, to insure that the CASECs know their rights and duties, where their powers begin and end, b) it is necessary to implement programs of civic education for the population,
- on two years a) a justice of the peace courthouse must be created in every municipal section, b) closely knit relationships must be woven between the local Police headquarters and Courthouses, while both strive to respect each other's responsibilities and jurisdictional powers and to accomplish their own missions, c) ongoing training must be provided to policemen and judges of peace, in order to permit them to assume their responsibilities adequately,
- on 4 years a) the civic education of the general population must be assured by all means possible and through all available venues through workshops, conferences, debates, through the written and spoken press, etc
- participants underlined their appreciation of this Debate, offered by ASOSYE, but they would like to see a follow-up to the work accomplished the resolutions adopted must be submitted to the concerned authorities, and the latter must give them the necessary attention,
- participants also recommend that the next time that ASOSYE, another ONG or the state organizes an event as important as this forum, that the individuals in charge make certain to invite members of local elites and public civil servants, in order to ensure that information doesn't only circulate in a manner confined to grassroot organizations, but also reaches those that have the responsibility of the state in their hands

WORKSHOP #3 Role of Civil Society in Decentralization

1 Interventions of civil society relatively to elected officials

- elected officials should inform the population of acts that they intend to commit before executing them,
- civil society must ask elected officials to be accountable,
- citizens and organizations of civil society must know and understand better the roles, rights and duties of elected officials,
- a group of participants underlined that in their opinion, too many organizations are not structured well enough, and exist only to undermine ongoing developmental efforts, in spite of all, participants recognized that these grassroot organizations are an integral part of civil society, and have the right to constitute themselves into pressure groups in order to influence the development process

- another group remarked that civil society organizations should get actively involved in all elections, in order to choose competent representatives, thereafter, if they believe to have been mistaken in their choices, they must hasten to denounce these bad or incompetent elected officials, because then it is all of society that finds itself confronted with an accomplished fact

- this same group added that it was necessary to reject the old political practices and to support everything that was positive, particularly the Territorial Collectivities, important for decentralization, for local development, and because these structures allowed civil society to gain more strength and to intervene more efficiently in regards local elected officials

2 Role of civil society in drafting the legislation relative to the Territorial Collectivities

- a first group of participants advanced that civil society must participate and involve itself further in the ongoing public debates, the only means to ensure that its ideas and aspirations are taken into account, but this necessarily implies that the Parliament would momentarily suspend the process of drafting and of ratification of the various legislative bills currently being considered

- another group asked the Parliament to gather all of these different proposed bills and to bring them to the attention of the broader public opinion, after large public debates, it would be easier for parliamentarians to establish a consensus around ideas and proposals having some common points, in order to advance the process of development and decentralization

- for a last group of participants, civil society doesn't need to express its views on decentralization, because the Constitution is sufficiently explicit on this point, and if parliamentarians don't adopt laws that are both adequate and constitutional, they will be the first ones trapped by their own makings

3 Opinion of civil society on the April 1997 elections

- a first group expressed their opinion that these elections had been badly organized and fraudulent, only one political party had benefited these elections, and refuse to share the political power with the other parties. However the dice have been cast, the results officially announced, and the game will continue whether one accepts it or not. If the opinion of civil society could really help to resolve this crisis, one would have asked the two main opponents to ease their positions, to give in country a last chance, to get along for the good of the country

- a second group affirmed that the problem of the April elections was a false problem, and that to resolve them would not change anything for the population since 1986 that elections are being held, the demands of civil society have remained unanswered, parliamentarians continue to vote for money, corruption spreads, Electoral Commission after Electoral Commission organizes fraud, ect. For these participants, it is necessary to radically transform the State, so that it becomes capable to adequately respond to civil society demands

- a last group underlined the importance of elections, the only road leading the way for development, decentralization, and democracy. The institution responsible for elections must enjoy the trust of civil society, it must organize civic education campaigns before all elections, it must study the dossier of all candidates, including an analysis of their present possessions, and until well after the actual elections

4 What forms of control can civil society exercise on local governance?

- a first group advanced that on the legal and administrative levels, once a law would be adopted that would define the roles and limits of the governing, at that moment civil society could exercise a control on these elected officials and on civil servants. Civil society must execute, submit to, or participate in decisions made by officials, but on the administrative level, it must be able to control the management of public finances and of public possessions entrusted to officials and public servants, and even to call upon the Courts and the Superior Court of Accounts in all suspected cases of embezzlements

- a second group of participants added that civil society must demand of officials adequate information on their management, on their local action plans, and even the setting up of communication channels that could help to establish adequate transparency relatively to public interventions undertaken throughout all of the Territorial Collectivities

- another group asked for the closing of public offices and institutions that only serve to waste public resources, the central government also must supervise all their transactions, taxes collected on a monthly and yearly basis, the detail of expenses, ect, in order to be able to punish officials and public civil servants suspected of theft and corruption
- a last group affirmed that such a control will only be possible if civil society truly begins to involve itself in public affairs

5 How can civil society organize itself in view of decentralization?

- civil society must organize itself, must structure itself better, it must involve itself in the social and economic development processes, in the struggle towards increased literacy, to ensure the adequate circulation of information, to denounce and to point to all information that only serves to feed social division and confusion,
- a group insisted on the importance of restructuring the neighborhood committees and community groups, because these associations had done good work in the past, other participants observed that grassroot community groups already existed, but that instead, what was necessary to ask of the state, was its encouragement, technical support and adequate training programs
- another group affirmed that one of the best means that civil society had to support decentralization, was to respect the law, to support democracy and to actively participate in all development activities being implemented by the government and by PVO's

6 Proposals relative to the follow-up of the Debates

- a group of participants judged important that they share what they had learned by organizing mini-proceedings in their respective localities
- participants identified other themes deserving to be debated in the Gonaives region agrarian reform and democracy, privatization and national production, ect.,
- the Haitian state should consider organizing some similar proceedings throughout the Territorial Collectivities,
- for another group, this type of debate is so important, they should not be a loss of time, nor to be organized in the interest of only one sector, participants affirm that they feel that they have worked in the interest of the whole of society,

7 Proposals relative to actions of civil society in order to demand of the state the respect of the Constitution and the effective implementation of the Decentralization process

- a) the ASOSYE project should train civic education extension agents within grassroots organizations, in order to pursue the work already undertaken, and invite a larger number of organizations has participate in these Debates,
- b) these Debates must be organized in the Central Plateau area,
- c) ASOSYE should provide help and support to all organizations that have development and civic education projects,
- d) ASOSYE should have representatives throughout all Territorial Collectivities

WORKSHOP #4 "Decentralization and Participation of Civil Society"

1 Civic education of civil society

- education is the motor of decentralization it is what will allow the population to mobilize itself, of become increasingly aware, then to actively participate in the implementation of Decentralization

2 Role of Political Parties

- they play an important role and must help the population through the implementation of literacy programs in view of increasing its awareness and understanding of issues,
- they must also encourage popular organizations to unite for national development

3 Differences between Decentralization and Deconcentration

- decentralization goes with deconcentration, the first concept refers to the displacement of power from the central state toward Collectivities, the second means the widespread provision of public services offered by the central government throughout the Territorial Collectivities

4 The incompetence of elected officials

- Several of the elected officials are incompetent. They have no notion of the legal code, they buy their collegial diplomas (Baccalaureat I & II) in order to present their candidacies at election time, other participants remarked that art 96 of the Constitution doesn't put any accents on the academic levels of candidates. The result, is when for example they begin the agrarian reform without even a general framework law

6 Role of the Press in regard decentralization

- to ensure the adequate information of all citizens throughout the country

7 advantages and inconveniences of decentralization

a) Advantages

- autonomy of Collectivities
- 60% of the municipal fiscal returns will remain within the Collectivities, and only 40% will go to the central state
- there will be greater creation of jobs

b) Inconveniences

- the state doesn't have sufficient financial resources to pay for civil servants affected in the deconcentrated offices,
- the population lacks basic civic education,
- if the ASECs and CASECs don't get along, it is possible to see the CASECs mismanage and steal the financial resources of sections

8 Relations between Assemblies and Councils

- the ASECs and CASECs should strive to develop harmonious relations,
- these two elected bodies should participate in all activities being executed in their zone, each in what concerns it,
- they don't work together as yet because they don't know if the April elections are legal or not,
- in the exercise of power, they behave themselves like the former chiefs of section

Civil Society Debate on Decentralization and Participation in Cap Haitien

Political Background

Departmental Capital of the North, present population estimated by IHSI in 1995 at 117, 604 people (1 64% of the national total)

There are 19 different communes and a total of 82 communal sections in the Northern Department

In the June 1995 elections, at the Departmental level,

- Lavalas won 15 Municipal cartels and 46 cartels of CASECs
- FNCD won 3 Municipal cartels and 15 cartels of CASECs
- KONAKOM won 1 Municipal cartel and 6 cartels of CASECs
- RDNP won 2 cartels of CASECs
- PAIN won 1 cartel of CASECs
- PANPRA won 4 cartels of CASECs
- PADH won 2 cartels of CASECs
- UPDC won 1 cartel of ASECs
- Independents won 3 cartels of CASECs

At the Departmental level, the breakdown of the April 1997 electoral results published by the CEP shows

- La Fanmi Lavalas winning 34 ASECs cartels and 7 cartels of Town Delegates
- OPL winning 17 ASECs cartels and 1 cartel of Town Delegates
- Independents winning 21 ASECs cartels and 10 cartels of Town Delegates
- PLB winning 8 ASECs cartels
- MOP winning 1 ASECs cartel

In the municipality of Cap Haitien itself

- La Fanmi Lavalas won 1 ASEC cartel
- MOP won 1 ASECs cartel
- Independents won 1 ASECs cartel
- No results were available for cartels of Town Delegates

In the June 1995 elections, only 17 10% of registered voters actually voted Lavalas won the Municipal cartel with 41% of the popular vote, and 2 cartels of CASECs, Independents won 1 cartel of CASECs

Political notes

- The Mayor of Grande Riviere du Nord recently replaced the Mayor of Milot as the Coordinator of the Departmental Association of Mayors of the North (AMNO) Under the leadership of the Mayor of Milot, AMNO had taken the position that they were not about to struggle to get away from the political and economic domination of the "Republic of Port-au-Prince" only to fall under the domination of the provincial capital The municipal council of the Cap Haitien had therefore not joined (or been invited to join) this association, thereby causing some frictions between the association and the authorities of this, the second city of the country

- The northern department is the most important stronghold of the "Assemblee Populaire Nationale" (APN), a politically radical federation of grassroots organizations controlled by Ben Dupuis, Director of the weekly newspaper "Haiti Progres" The Mayor of Milot was one of the leaders of the Peasant Federation of Milot, one of the driving forces of the APN, and remains close to them to this day The political influence of the APN on popular organizations throughout the north and in the Cap Haitien in particular, remains unchallenged

- As elsewhere in the country, it is evident that in the North, the Lavalas movement has splintered into the rival La Fanmi and OPL factions, with the PLB (a key regionally-based political member of the original Lavalas coalition) managing to maintain its base. While the La Fanmi/PLB alliance has kept a stronger hold on the Departement, a vast majority of civil society organizations have nevertheless distanced themselves from both factions, and presently maintain an apparent relative independence, although they have been ever more critical of the OPL's pro-economic reform positions.

Proceedings of the Cap Haitien Debate.

WORKSHOP #1 Theme Decentralization and Development

Five major sub-themes were selected for discussions by participants

- 1 Environmental Protection
- 2 Decentralization and Autonomy
 - 2 1 Decentralization and National Production
 - 2 2 Decentralization and local resources
 - 2 3 Management of local resources and local economic growth
- 3 Relationship between civil society and local governance within the framework of local development planning
 - 3 1 International aid to Haiti and importance of a decentralized model of international cooperation
- 4 Role of the central government in regard the development challenge and the problematic of public services to the population
- 5 Follow-up to the Debate

1 Environmental Protection

According to participants, it will not be possible to ensure the protection of the national environment until decentralization and development occur. They underlined the importance of taking stock of peasants' experience and of relying on their participation in order to find solutions to this problem. Thus, with growing awareness and education efforts, peasants will not be planting useless species of trees, but instead would plant mango trees, orange trees, lime trees and the like, which they would not be interested in cutting down later on.

Participants agreed that it was not only the State that should be preoccupied with the protection of the environment, but that all citizens should get involved. However, the Ministry of Agriculture must play its part in setting up nurseries, distributing seedlings, and demand broad-based participation of civil society and citizens in order to ensure the country's reforestation. Then, it should contract agricultural extension agents in order to monitor, take care and protect the young trees.

Another group of participants observed that environmental problems are not just reforestation problems. Drainage canals have to be cleaned and maintained, the population must be made to stop throwing garbage in the streets, the State must prevent other nations from dumping their toxic wastes near our coastlines. All things having negative potential to the population's general health must be monitored and regulated.

2 Decentralization and Autonomy

Participants declared that Decentralization is important, but that it must be implemented in step with the growing autonomy of Territorial Collectivities. They observed that one thing that must be done by the central government is to resolve the various problems related to the jurisdictional delimitation of local governments.

The Parliament should work closely with the ASECs, CASECs, Municipal Assemblies, Municipal Councils and with the participation of civil society in order to elaborate and ratify the various laws that are to define the key aspects of the autonomy of the various levels of Territorial Collectivities.

Local authorities should consult with local civil society representatives in order to identify how to best exploit local resources.

The taxes collected locally should remain at the disposal of Territorial Collectivities, in order that local governments could execute some development projects, with the complementary support of the central government if necessary.

The Superior Court of Accounts, which has the mandate to control all receipts and expenses of the State, should be present at the level of territorial Collectivities, in order to ensure the proper execution of local projects.

Within the framework of the autonomy of Territorial Collectivities, the central government should have an elected "governor" in each Department, and this governor should work closely with local civil society.

The central government should give its financial support to the development of cooperatives within the Territorial Collectivities, to develop local infrastructures that would entice private sector investments within the Territorial Collectivities, and to create competent vocational schools so that trained technicians would be available in all areas of the country.

The CASECs should undertake a demographic census each year in order to determine how many people actually live in their communal sections, and to identify local priorities.

Locally elected officials should not divorce themselves from local civil society after elections.

2.1 Decentralization and local resources

Participants pursued their discussions by observing that the Northern Department is the tourist capital that most contributes to central government receipts. Furthermore, agricultural production is quite important, particularly with coffee, cocoa, oranges, mangos and cash crops, however, the majority of this production is wasted because of the absence of penetration roads. In regard coffee production, participants observed that this crop could bring in a lot of foreign exchanges, but speculators buy local production for next to nothing from peasants, because the latter have no technical support.

Other resources particularly discussed were the local gravel and sand pits, the airport in "Petite Anse" (Cap-Haïtien) which is bringing in a lot of taxes, gold, silver, copper and bauxite mine deposits which have yet to be exploited, regional honey production from which syrup can be extracted, and rum (alcohol) which is made from local herbs and trees.

Participants asked of the central government to implement a network of Agricultural Credit Banks throughout the Territorial Collectivities, in order to encourage the peasants to increase agricultural production in the Northern Department

2.2 Decentralization and national production

Participants stated their belief that decentralization would be advantageous in order to increase national production, but the agrarian reform has to be implemented in an adequate manner in order to support and facilitate the rebirth of national agricultural production. They remarked that the central government should take the necessary measures to ensure that agronomists provide technical assistance to peasants working in the back hills of the country, and to encourage national production, agricultural extension agents should be trained in all communal sections in order to provide technical assistance to peasants. It should also block contraband, which is undermining national production.

The Haitian population should be taught to appreciate the various products made in Haiti, while craftsmen and peasants increase their production in order to attract businessmen. Participants expressed their deepest hopes that national production be revitalized from within communal sections themselves, which are at the basis of our national wealth.

2.3 Management of local resources and local economic growth

On these subject matters, participants remarked that they had been extremely concerned to see that the St Genevieve mining company had one day arrived in Haiti and started exploration activities in the municipality of Trou du Nord in order to exploit the country's resources, without the CASEC and civil society of the area having been consulted.

It is vital that the youth of all Territorial Collectivities have the possibility of finding gainful employment in their area, so that they may collaborate with local authorities in the exploitation of local resources, in a way which will limit rural exodus.

3 Relationship between civil society and local governance within the framework of local development planning

According to a number of participants, local governments and civil society today are at odds and ends. One does not want to collaborate with the other, and yet in the context of true decentralization, officials in charge of local governments should seek to work with civil society organizations in order to better identify the various problems affecting communities. Even the budget of local governments should be prepared in this manner.

The Municipal Councils and CASECs should sit down and consult local civil society organizations in order to execute development projects within the Territorial Collectivities. In this manner, they would develop adequate structures of governance and stronger autonomy.

3.1 International aid to Haiti and importance of a decentralized model of international cooperation

Participants expressed their desire to utilize this forum to give their opinion on the manner with which the international institutions are lending money to Haiti today, saying that this represented a grave danger for the nation at this point in time, because these funds were not being invested to resolve the country's real problems. They stated that the representatives of these institutions and of the international community should go talk with local authorities and representatives of civil society, so that the latter would be able to tell them in which sector they need help and support. In other words, they categorically

reject the notion that only the central government should make decisions for them, although they agreed that the central government should give its concurrence to all activities that relate to international aid

Participants asked of parliamentarians to adopt a law that would redefine international cooperation with Haiti

Participants also observed that Haiti could not expect the international community to indefinitely continue to aid the country. In this sense, they believe it would be more beneficial for international cooperation and friendly nations to help us begin to better exploit our own resources

PVO's should inform civil society on their programs in Haiti every year, in order for community organizations to better understand in which sector they can intervene and are willing to consider development projects submitted by local grassroots organizations

4 Role of the central government in regard the development challenge and the problematic of public services to the population

The central government should ensure the implementation of adequate infrastructures within the Territorial Collectivities, in order to support the decentralization process

Nominations in the public administration should be made in a non-partisan manner. The central government should ensure the presence of vocational schools and university faculties throughout the Territorial Collectivities, in order to guarantee the adequate training and availability of technicians able to serve the general population. In this manner, participants expressed their hopes that public services would eventually be able to truly play their role in the context of decentralization. As an example, they mentioned the problem of street children that are growing in numbers throughout the country

5 Follow-up to the Debate

The participants hoped that

- these Debates would continue in the future,
- the resolutions adopted would not "disappear on a shelf",
- all participants would commit themselves to share the information and knowledge gained during this three days workshop with other grassroots organizations in their respective areas,
- ASOSYE would provide more informational materials in order to support this work,
- ASOSYE would decentralize itself by opening a field office in each Department

WORKSHOP #2 Theme Decentralization and Civil Society

Five major sub-themes were identified for discussions

- 1 How can civil society influence the central government
 - 1 1 Relationships between the central government and civil society within a decentralized framework
 - 1 2 Relationships between local governments and civil society within a decentralized framework
- 2 Opinion of civil society on the major differences existing in the draft legislation on Territorial Collectivities as developed by Parliament and on the proposed legislation submitted by the National Association of Mayors

- 3 Role of Women's organizations in the Decentralization process
- 4 The ways through which civil society could gain access to credible and accurate information related to Decentralization
 - 4.1 Importance of civic education in the context of Decentralization
- 5 Follow-up to the Debate, and proposals submitted to the ASOSYE project

1 How can civil society influence the central government

Participants first tried to reach a consensus on a definition of civil society. For some of them, this means all existing organizations or associations, that is to say any part of the nation that does not belong to one of the three constitutional powers of the State. For others, since 1986 everyone in the country understands this to mean grassroots organizations, but today different sectors of the elites, of politicians and of the corrupt bourgeoisie are trying to say they belong to civil society, in order to utilize the people as a "diving board" towards power and riches.

After a long discussion, the debates focused on the subject theme, a group of participants submitted that the only manner through which civil society could influence the central government would depend on the day all organizations, all associations (whether associations of shoeshine boys or of porters), should unite so that all organizations that represent the people speak with one voice, as they are all confronting the same problems. These same participants continued to say that when we will have a good development planning process that starts at the base, in the localities, to go all the way to the top, when we have established good structures within grassroots organizations themselves, when we begin to exert socio-political pressure on the State, starting with local governments and going all the way to the central government, on that day, civil society will force the government to reach into its garbage can and dig up the forgotten demands of the population.

For another group of participants, it is when civil society is able to participate in well organized elections, prepare its own programs and field its own candidates, so that when these electoral promises are not kept there are adequate sanctions that can be taken against elected officials, on that day we will be able to institutionalize adequate and efficient Territorial Collectivities able to implement Decentralization, although civil society should never forget its basic tools of struggle such as mobilization, demonstrations and strikes if necessary.

1.1 Relationship between the central government and civil society within a decentralized framework

On this point, participants agreed that decentralization is a process that can facilitate the drafting of a social contract between civil society and the central government. For example, when the government creates conditions to help the population stop its migration to other countries, where they have to live through diverse humiliations such as going through sugar cane cutting in the Dominican Republic.

The relationship between civil society and the central government will grow much closer when the latter begins to help the population in all ways possible, such as resolving the problems of inflation, of impunity, of insecurity, etc. The government can truly begin to collaborate with civil society in implementing the development and decentralization processes, and in adopting decisions that stem from the basis of society, and then in ensuring the effective application of these decisions in the advantage of local communities and that of the country as a whole.

Another group of participants stated that the relationship must be established as between two adult counterparts. In that sense, the resources of each area, of each locality should be made to serve the population living there, it is the population of each area that should pronounce themselves on how many doctors or school teachers they need, etc. It should not simply be up to the central government to decide.

what they are willing to give to each area, but these decisions should be made on the basis of local choices, defined from local needs. This same group of participants continued by again asking the government to go dig in its garbage can and look up the population's demands. Amongst these basic demands, they will see where the Constitution said that the first constitutionally elected government was given 6 months to clean up all of public administration. This was not really done, and without such a step, it will always remain impossible to develop a relationship of trust between the government and civil society. One has to go through step #1 before undertaking step #2 and so on.

Another group of participants added that the relationship between civil society, the Territorial Collectivities and the central government must also be somewhat like that between a father and his children. Civil Society is the father, and should keep an eye on the annual program of the government, and demand that it be widely publicized through radio, television and newspapers. The government is a child that should obey its father's directives, because it is in the smallest of localities that the government's program should begin to be elaborated, going all the way to the top at the InterDepartmental Council that is constitutionally mandated to participate in all Cabinet meetings.

In closing this discussion, all participants agreed that whether one likes it or not, a relationship of total trust and confidence must be established between the central government and civil society in order to remove the country from its present situation, in order to begin to think of the national good and not individual pockets.

1.2 Relationship between civil society and local governments within the framework of Decentralization

Participants stated that at the present time, this relationship is like that between dogs and cats, where one attempts to eat the other. It must change to the point where locally elected officials are under the control of civil society and understand the real problems affecting the population. But first of all, harmonious relations must exist between these elected officials themselves, only then will civil society be able to award them its trust and confidence. For this to occur, training should be provided for elected officials, so that they may understand that they are accountable to civil society, which can demand of them to account on the work they have been entrusted to accomplish.

A group of participants added that both parties should collaborate in the interest of the population as a whole. In that sense, elected officials should regularly consult civil society representatives, which are their true advisors, and determine jointly what has to be done to further the development of their region.

Another group continued the discussion and ended up stating that the relationship between the different institutions, locally elected officials and civil society must be reinforced and become more dynamic, especially when one considers that elected officials are representatives of civil society, which can bring them back to their senses in order to ensure the further development of the area they represent. These participants concluded that these relationships will truly blossom only when adequate laws are adopted that define clearly the function, role and responsibilities of all institutions of local governance, and that indicate where their powers begin and where they end.

2. Opinion of civil society on the major differences existing in the draft legislation on Territorial Collectivities as developed by Parliament and on the proposed legislation submitted by the National Association of Mayors

Participants began by underlining that they were referring here to the general framework bill on Territorial Collectivities presently being discussed by Parliament. They continued to say that in their eyes, such a draft legislation did not even exist, as they had not even heard of this debate before. However, they welcomed the opportunity to give their opinion on how these matters should truly be approached.

A first group of participants observed that the Mayors should not have taken up any position before consulting their base, all the more so that they do not have the legal authority to draft legislation. The Mayors' Association should organize a series of conference-debates in all regions of the country in order to inform the population on their proposal. At that point, civil society in general would be able to decide if their position is in the interest of the general population and of Decentralization, or only in the interest of Mayors themselves.

Another group remarked that it would be better for all sectors of civil society to collaborate with Parliamentarians in order to study and analyze the 2 proposals presently on the table, and thus develop a consensus on a law that would be advantageous for the population, for the decentralization process in general, and that would ensure that solid foundations are put in place for the Territorial Collectivities. On this point, all participants agreed that civil society organizations must take up their responsibilities, so that it is not the elites or the powers that be alone that decide on what has to be done for the country. In this sense, they asked of ASOSYE to help widely distribute copies of these draft legislation.

3 Role of Women's organizations in the Decentralization process

Women's organizations should focus on reinforcing their own base, so that they may become a force to be reckoned with, better able to struggle for their own demands. Women must participate in all activities, they must get more involved with politics at all levels. Participants added that they must present their candidacies for all elected positions, so that they may better participate in the country's public affairs and ensure that their concerns are taken into account in all major decisions being made.

Participants specified that women organizations must unite and collaborate in order to mobilize, inform and train all women. They insisted that all men should support this struggle by accompanying the efforts of women organizations to free women, because it is in their own interest. Men must encourage women to actively participate in local women organizations struggling against poverty, demographic growth, etc.

A group of participants went further still, insisting that the education of women themselves has to be rethought in regard to their domestic roles, their educational status, etc. They pointed out that it is necessary to stop teaching young girls that they are inferior to boys, and to ensure that both sexes are equal in all matters, especially before the Law.

Women opened the way to democracy for the population in general with former President Ms Ertha Pascal Trouillot, women play the role of a social catalyst, they play seven major roles in society such as their domestic role, their conjugal role, their parental role, their professional role, etc. Women are demanding their proper place in the midst of Haitian society when they ask of men to stop ignoring them, insulting them, taking them as hostages, forcing them to do things that are not correct, at that point, they will be able to choose for themselves, without any constraints, which organizations, associations and which political party they want to join.

Women participants asked other women in general to unite evermore with the Haitian people's struggle, to gather their own strength and not wait for anyone else to come and help them, to defend their demands directly on the road to national development. Finally, women must better learn how to love, and give their children another kind of upbringing. Some participants intervened to say that this should be done in conformity with what the Bible says about women's role in society, but on this point a major debate occurred and participants could not agree on the matter.

4 The ways through which civil society could gain access to credible and accurate information related to Decentralization

One group of participants observed that one of the best ways that information could be disseminated on Decentralization, would be to organize a country-wide information campaign, civic education programs through radio, television, newspapers, in the schools, through the churches, etc. Wherever people gather, they should share with one another and between organizations their experience and knowledge on this issue. In that sense, the press in general should actively participate in helping to educate the population and elected officials.

Another group of participants favored organizing public debates on Decentralization throughout the country between local leaders (such as members of ASECs, CASECs, Town Delegates, Municipal Assemblies and Councils, etc.), large group of citizens and civil organizations' representatives. The participants also demand that literacy centers be created throughout the country, and that civic education training programs be implemented in the school system.

4.1 Importance of civic education in the context of Decentralization

For all participants, this is one of the best ways to enable civil society to become more dynamic, better informed and knowledgeable, better prepared to embark on the decentralization process, it would permit the population to better understand a host of issues, become more sociable, more tolerant, it would help citizens understand their rights and duties, it would facilitate peasants speaking out on all national issues. Civic Education is one of the cornerstones of decentralization, without it, nothing of value will occur, because the population will not be able to participate efficiently in the decentralization process, nor in helping prepare a good national development program. Without civic education, the population could mistake deconcentration for decentralization. The civic education of all Haitians is a vital necessity in order to prevent them being fooled into accepting bananas for oranges.

5 Follow-up on the Debate and Proposals for ASOSYE

- Participants demand that all the resolutions adopted be actually implemented by national authorities,
- These Debates on Decentralization must continue in all corners of the country, and should also include other subject matters that may interest citizens and organizations in each different region.
- The participants expressed their interest in maintaining close contacts between their respective organizations, through sharing their respective experience and the knowledge gained during this Debate with the rest of the population. They hoped to establish communication networks amongst them and to continue exchanging ideas.
- They observed that a real need will exist for logistic and financial resources in order to disseminate lessons learned during this Debate with members of their respective organizations, and ask support for this endeavor.
- Participants asked of ASOSYE to ensure that official copies of these resolutions are transmitted to all participants.
- The ASOSYE project should provide adequate technical and financial assistance to all grassroots organizations.

WORKSHOP #4 Theme The need for a new Haitian State in the context of Decentralization

Four major sub-themes were selected for discussions by participants

- 1 The Relationship between local governments and the central government
 - 1 1 - Relationship between the Executive and the Departmental Councils
 - 1 2 - The role of the central government in the context of the deconcentration of public services
 - 1 3 - Role of local governments
- 2 Role of Parliamentarians in the context of a decentralized State
- 3 Relationship between Councils and Assemblies
 - 3 1 Problem of incompetence of elected officials
- 4 Follow-up to the Debate

1 The Relationship between local governments and the central government

Participants agreed that there has to be give and take and open channels of communications between these two levels of governance. They continued to say that better communications would be an important guarantee for the country's social base, because for example, before any specific law would be ratified in Parliament, everyone would be aware of its content throughout the country.

Finally, others insisted that local governments had to develop various mechanisms to ensure their full participation in all major decisions being undertaken by the central government.

1.1- Relationship between the Executive and the Departmental Councils

Most participants agreed that it would be important for the Executive to meet on a regular basis with the Departmental Councils (each month, or at the worst, on a quarterly basis), in order to discuss the various problems related to all Territorial Collectivities and to try and resolve them. Others observed it would be most important that specific laws be ratified by the Parliament in order to determine the relationship between the Executive and these Councils.

1.2- The role of the central government in the context of the deconcentration of public services

Participants first concurred that there would be no decentralization without the deconcentration of public services. Part of the group felt that the central government's role should be to listen to the population's demands, analyze them, and then set up as needed, efficient local field offices and annexes of the various ministries in the municipal sections or at least the Communes. Another group of participants observed that what was important was not to open up governmental field offices just for the pleasure of it, but the central government's role was to facilitate the implementation of needed infrastructures. In that sense, the government should know how many people will require different kinds of services in the various regions of the country over the mid-term, and identify local capacities and competencies needed to ensure the efficient management and adequate operations of these public services.

Discussions on this topic got extremely heated, with all participants actively engaging in the debate. Various ideas, suggestions and resolutions were thus adopted:

- a) a uniform, nation-wide salary scale for the public civil service must be adopted,
- b) the Superior Court of Accounts should analyze and certify the assets of all public servants, both before and after such individuals' tenure. This would help block corruption and graft.
- c) Justice of the Peace Tribunals must be installed in all of the nation's communal sections.

1.3- Role of local governments

Some of the participants felt that local governments' role was to satisfy the needs of local communities and localities, whilst respecting all laws and administrative rules of the central government. Others insisted that their role was to regularly consult the local population in order to receive their complaints and demands. Participants agreed however that they should ensure the adequate dissemination of information inside municipalities and communal sections. Finally, another group added that local governments should report back to the central government on how local State agencies are functioning.

2. Role of Parliamentarians in the context of a decentralized State

All participants agreed that parliamentarians' role was to elaborate and adopt laws for the whole country, and to regularly consult with civil society. They added that their observation was that parliamentarians tended to remain in Port-au-Prince only and to not work very hard. In a decentralized State, parliamentarians should regularly consult their constituents in order to listen to their demands, and then prepare adequate laws in Parliament.

3. Relationship between Councils and Assemblies

Participants agreed that the Assemblies' role should be to gather up all needs and development projects suggested throughout the communal sections, discuss these and submit them to the Councils, who should in turn execute these plans. Both elected bodies should have harmonious relations and consult their constituents in order to execute projects that would be in the benefit of the whole population.

Well before the elections, they recommend that a Law be ratified by parliament regarding Municipal Collectivities, this should include provisions for an institution mandated to sanction local elected officials guilty of unsavory and illegal acts or corruption. There must also be an institution mandated to receive complaints filed by ASECs, CASECs, Municipal Assemblies and Mayors against Parliamentarians, when the latter block the country.

3.1-Problem of incompetence of elected officials

- After an intense debate on this subject, the participants adopted the following resolutions:
- the population in every jurisdiction should know the candidates presenting themselves at election time,
 - training workshops should not be organized only for the country's Mayors, but also for ASEC and CASEC members, as well as for Deputies and Senators,
 - the Electoral Council should develop a series of criteria to be included in the electoral law in order to block the candidacy of incompetent individuals,
 - technical councils gathering very qualified and competent individuals should be available to support locally elected officials,
 - there must be a well organized civic education campaign for the population in general.

4. Follow-up to the Debate

The participants asked to receive official copies of all resolutions adopted during the Debate, as well as information on whatever results are obtained in the efforts towards Decentralization.

They added that the kind of effort started by ASOSYE must continue.

ASOSYE should think of giving participants some participation fees.

Finally, they would appreciate receiving additional copies of the informational materials distributed by ASOSYE in order to be able to transmit the information and knowledge received during the Debate to their organizations' membership.