

Where governments fail, others must rush in to fill the void. This is evident by the outpouring at the disaster relief after the tsunami of 2004, the earthquakes in Ecuador and Argentina, and even in the United States after Katrina. In regards to the effort to fill the void, no effort is more appreciated than that of the Non Governmental Organizations.

By United States definition, “A non-governmental organization (NGO) is any non-profit, voluntary citizens' group which is organized on a local, national or international level. Task-oriented and driven by people with a common interest, NGOs perform a variety of service and humanitarian functions, bring citizen concerns to Governments, advocate and monitor policies and encourage political participation through provision of information. Some are organized around specific issues, such as human rights, environment or health. They provide analysis and expertise, serve as early warning mechanisms and help monitor and implement international agreements. Their relationship with offices and agencies of the United Nations system differs depending on their goals, their venue and the mandate of a particular institution.” This can include organizations such as the Red Cross, Gates Foundation, Ford Foundation, and UNICEF.

These organizations are useful for a number of reasons. First, they are not bound by the limitations of governments. While a government must take an action, appropriate supplies, and then mobilize the aid to devastates and needy areas, NGO’s do this in a fraction of time and with less red tape. What may take hours to work out legally for a government can take minutes for an NGO. Second, NGO’s can solve a range of issues such as supplying aid to victims of war, famine, natural disasters, or other governmental

action. According to a UN press release from Fall 2007, “The greatest share of aid to victims of the conflict in Sudan has been donated and distributed by non governmental organizations.” This leads me to the third reason of support for NGO’s, they recognize problems well before larger bodies do. In the Sudan, the UN as failed to yet classify the action as a genocide, and thus, has delayed aid in both timeframe and magnitude. In the same sense, non governmental organizations have stepped in to advocate aid.

In a world where disaster happens every day and modern governments are stretched to their breaking point, the role of non governmental organizations is critical. Countries like Russia and South Korea have called for the greater deployment and international support for these organizations. The suffering of people in disaster zones is a cry heard on many government’s deaf ears and where each second is a drop of blood or a life, it is imperative that something be done. The topic area before you would be to support the efforts of non governmental organizations.

Questions

1. In fall of 2007, Afghanistan banned the aid from non governmental organizations. Why did they do this and what implications can this have on debate and implementation?
2. Many NGO’s are funded and sponsored by major cooperation. Many feel that this is another attempt for the capitalist ideals to corrupt lesser developed nations. What effect does cooperation sponsored aid have on lesser developed nations?
3. What should be done if a nation refused NGO aid?
4. Should the receiving country be able to delegate the use of aid as many aid situations are created by said government?