

countries), cross-sector alliance building and policy work on Northern-driven development challenges. The credibility of Northern NGOs were be further undermined in the eyes of their Southern partners if the pressures of fiscal restraint (and NGO downsizing) lead to an imbalance between institutional maintenance and their social change mission (as reflected in the priority of their policy and public engagement activities).

- As NGOs become increasingly competitive in pursuit of government or public funding, notes one analyst of NGOs, do they "risk becoming mere businesses, where value-driven pursuits are crowded out? For agencies concerned to remain non-governmental and thus able to pursue emancipatory agendas, the future looks troubled. *There is, in short, a mounting crisis of control and ownership.*"¹⁴ [Emphasis in original.]

An additional problem remains the fact that the geography of multilateral policy dialogue (taking place mostly in Northern sites such as New York, Washington and Geneva) has led to an over-participation of Northern NGOs and the under-participation of Southern NGOs.

In order to address some of these concerns, new attempts are being made to establish balanced fora for shared North and South NGO policy development, strategizing and action. Such international policy alliances are hard to establish and maintain since they require trust and open dialogue which depend on the investment of time and expensive face-to-face meetings. Limited norms or facilities exist to support these networks despite the fact that new technology (Internet-based communications primarily) has made contacts much more accessible and inexpensive.

¹⁴ David Sogge, "Settings and Choices", in David Sogge (ed.) with Kees Biekart and John Saxby, Compassion and Calculation: The Business of Private Foreign Aid, Pluto Press, London, 1996, p.15.