The Asian Development Bank’s Cooperation with NGOs and Civil Society

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The Asian Development Bank has long recognized the contribution of nongovernment and other civil society organizations to the development process. ADB has pursued a program of cooperation with NGOs/CSOs in its member countries with a view to strengthening the effectiveness, sustainability, and quality of the development services ADB provides to its member countries. The objective of ADB’s cooperation with NGOs/CSOs is, where appropriate, to integrate NGO/CSO experience, knowledge, and expertise into Bank operations, such that Bank-supported development efforts will more effectively address the issues and priorities reflected in ADB’s poverty reduction agenda.

In 2002-2003 ADB’s NGO Center initiated a participatory exercise involving governments, NGOs/CSOs, the private sector, and ADB staff to assess the relationship between ADB, its member governments, and NGOs/CSOs and also to explore opportunities for enhanced cooperation. The result of this exercise was a “Framework for Action” that serves as a medium-term “road map” for expanded tripartite cooperation, focusing on the reduction of poverty in the Asia and Pacific region.

The presentation will review ongoing efforts to implement the Framework. Issues to be addressed include the following:

- Government sovereignty, ADB lending, and the public interest
- Enhancing transparency and interaction through access to information
- Accountability and performance – by ADB as well as NGOs/CSOs
- Bank responsibility to indigenous peoples and other marginalized groups
- Dispute resolution
- Developing Bank capacity for NGO/CSO cooperation
- Building NGO/CSO capacity and providing institutional support to civil society organizations
- Strengthening Government-NGO/CSO cooperation and collaboration

By documenting the Asian Development Bank’s efforts to work cooperatively with NGOs and other civil society groups, the presentation will consider opportunities as well as constraints in promoting effective development partnerships.