



Mr. Jeffery Huffines, Chair
NGO DPI Executive Committee

Date: May 26, 2009, New York

Dear Mr. Huffines,

Congratulations for your re-nomination to the 2009-2011 term.

The first part of this letter is a personal note to you based on our collaboration and friendship within the UN/DPI. The second part, which I believe contains general concerns for many NGO representatives, is for the Board of Directors, Advisory Board, and DPI Representatives. I hope you will bring these issues up at your next board meeting.

I would like to start by adding a few comments to the discussion in the second letter of the dissolution of the Research-Communication and Website Subcommittee:

Our subcommittee was very productive. "MyTask – MyProject," which defines goals and strategies vis-à-vis human rights, was an open invitation to participate in non-association NGOs. We also started a video project with 5th grade students based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We were developing several other projects as well when we received word from Joan Levy that our subcommittee was going to be shut down. (Minutes of our subcommittee will be provided by request; they are already partly available on Robert Pollard's ngo-framework.net, the website that was to be one of our side avenues for promotion.)

Besides the projects I developed and proposed to our subcommittee members, I was working on a website in conjunction with the 2008 Conference, entitled, "NEXT60"
<http://next60.lightmillennium.org>.

I also wanted to let you know that I have not received any Planning Committee meeting announcements since March 12, 2009. In that meeting, I discovered that co-chairs alone could vote or propose ideas, and that non-chairs were only allowed to speak briefly after the entire agenda was covered. Those of us in this category were consequently put in the position of having to present our ideas out of context; now, without being informed of upcoming meetings, non-chairs do not even have that opportunity.

And finally, I was wondering if you could send me a copy of the bylaws.

Thank you very much.

Best regards,

Bircan Unver, Founding President
The Light Millennium

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I very much appreciated your proposal, at the briefings in October 2007, that NGO/DPI representatives take part in subcommittees under the Executive Committee. Handouts were distributed so that we could choose the subcommittees in which we would like to serve, based on our professional background and areas of interest. I filled one out and returned it right away.

I never received a reply, even after directly asking several members of the Executive Committee. As of today, I still don't know whether or not I've been selected, or if the idea was subsequently dropped.

I trust you plan to follow through with your proposal. I believe that more active NGO involvement – both associated and non-associated – would diversify the cultural and ethnic background of the DPI NGO Executive Committee, enable the committee to gain new NGO members, and lead to more interaction with the existing NGOs.

Research-Communication and Website Subcommittee

I was disappointed with the decision made by the co-chairs of the Planning Committee, along with the DPI/NGO Executive Committee, to dismantle the Research-Communication and Website Subcommittee (on April 21, 2008). I understand that my fellow co-chair's methods sometimes annoyed the DPI and the Executive Committee, but making such a decision without first discussing the issues with the subcommittee's co-chairs does not make sense to me.

Even though the projects we developed, produced, promoted, and posted on the web did not receive a lot of attention, many Planning Committee members were excited about them and wanted to collaborate with us. But then we were suddenly shut down, leaving many unanswered questions and causing newly-joined youth representatives to lose interest in UN-related projects.

Bylaws and Annual Reports

"The NGO/DPI Executive Committee is a service organization that helps UN-associated NGOs make effective use of the available information and material to increase knowledge about, and public understanding of, the UN purpose, structure, policies, actions and programmes."

Based on this stated mission, I would expect bylaws and annual reports to be available for all NGOs on the Executive Committee's website. This is important not only for associated and non-associated NGO representatives, but also for the general public, in order to promote transparency within the UN system. Although the Light Millennium is a small, volunteer-based organization, we e-mail annual reports to our volunteer representatives; we also publish them on our website. The LM's President Reports have been available on the organization's website since 2006. Annual 990 Financial Forms have been available on GUIDESTAR.ORG since 2003, when we started filing 990s with the IRS.

Becoming familiar with UN/DPI NGO documents encourages involvement. I also think that potential changes to the bylaws should be brought to the attention of the NGOs, and that their input should be sought.

62nd Annual DPI NGO Conference

I am dismayed by the Planning Committee's approach for the upcoming conference. Many potentially interested NGO representatives, who could serve the UN vision by promoting its activities, have been deliberately left out of this committee (a key connector between NGOs and the UN). I expressed to you, in person, my opinion that this discourages people from becoming involved. Furthermore, I believe that the result has been a lack of diversity in terms of ethnicity, nationality, and types of organizations.

In conclusion, I hope that as current chair of the NGO DPI Executive Committee, you – as well as the Board of Directors, Advisory Board, and DPI Representatives – will take my observations and expectations into account, in order to implement a more diverse and open approach with both UN-associated and non-associated NGO representatives.

Thank you in advance for your consideration, time, and support.

Sincerely,

Bircan Unver, Founding President
The Light Millennium
<http://lightmillennium.org>

- Main representative of the Light Millennium to the UN/DPI
- Co-Chair of the Research-Communication-Website Subcommittee – February to until April 21, 2008
- Member of the Planning Committee of the DPI/NGO (2006, 2007, 2008)
- Member of the Planning Committee of the ICT Media (2007, 2008, 2009)
- Producer of the UNNGO Profiles (9 profiles in 7 episodes; 28:30 minutes each)
http://lightmillennium.org/unngo_profiles/list.html
- Executive Producer & Director of the Light Millennium TV Programs on QPTV's four channels: 34, 35, 56, & 57
<http://lightmillennium.org/lmtv/list5.html>
http://lightmillennium.org/bu_videography.html
- Profile of the Light Millennium Organization:
http://lightmillennium.org/about/brochure_2009.html