



A report from the World Service Board of Trustees on THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FORUM--20 APRIL 1991

"There are many things we could have attempted to do today," the chairperson explained as she opened the 1991 International Development Forum. "We have chosen one approach--it's not necessarily the right way or the wrong way. Today, we need to ask ourselves, what is the most basic question we're talking about? What is the need underlying the issue being raised? If we keep asking ourselves that, I think we're going to come up with some interesting answers."

With those remarks, the chairperson of the External Affairs Committee of the World Service Board of Trustees opened the first WSB International Development Forum, held April 20, 1991, at the AirTel Plaza Hotel in Van Nuys, California, U.S.A. Approximately 100 people--RSRs, alternates, WSC officers, committee leaders and members, WSO directors and staff, and interested N.A. members--attended the day-long event. In the morning, participants heard nineteen presentations on basic issues in world N.A. development given by N.A. members from ten countries on three continents. After lunch, the forum broke up into five discussion groups where participants shared ideas, beliefs, questions, and hopes about international development, coming back together late in the afternoon for group reports. The day ended with an international N.A. recovery meeting.

By all accounts of participants, the first International Forum was very successful--as a starting point. But what went into planning for the event? What happened at the forum? And what will happen in the future, now that the forum is over? Beginning with an examination of the events and discussions that led up to the International Development Forum, this report seeks to answer those questions.

BACKGROUND

Over the years, many members have been frustrated with the World Service Conference's apparent inability to address the needs of the fellowship worldwide. Those frustrations culminated in three meetings held by certain members at the 1990 annual conference meeting--one with the World Service Board of Trustees--to discuss growing dissatisfaction

with the conference. "Among the chief concerns expressed," they reported, "seemed to be that the international development of N.A.... should take more priority than many of the issues debated and discussed at length at the conference. Members... shared some of their frustration with the apparent inability of the WSC to tackle major issues, and some were concerned that... much of what had been discussed and debated only affected the U.S. fellowship."

The trustees agreed to study the matters presented to them, assigning the job to their External Affairs Committee. At its August 11, 1990 meeting, the committee began discussing the issues, hoping to prepare some sort of position paper on international development issues. Upon reflection, however, it became clear that more was called for than a mere report.

"In our First Tradition, we all acknowledge that *our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on N.A. unity*," a committee study affirmed. "All of us seek to promote that common welfare in the actions we take which affect the fellowship internationally. Yet there is no mutually accepted policy or philosophy for N.A.'s development worldwide. In doing what they think best for N.A. as a whole, elements of the world fellowship sometimes find themselves at odds with other elements of the N.A. service structure. Each region--both within and without the United States--brings its own limited perspective and parochial interests to bear on matters affecting N.A. as a whole. Each world service board and committee conducts its own projects, develops its own vision of things, and defends its own prerogatives, often without regard to the interests of the local N.A. communities they affect, and sometimes without regard even to what other world service branches may be doing or thinking."

Somehow, the External Affairs Committee felt, all

Sidebars appearing in this report are taken from the morning presentations given at the April 1991 International Development Forum, except where otherwise noted.

parties concerned in the international development of Narcotics Anonymous needed to come together, to begin discussing the issues involved, and to start developing a common understanding of what needs to be done to help our worldwide fellowship grow. They began planning a forum where these matters could be discussed—a one-day event, mostly just for sharing, to kick things off. "Narcotics Anonymous needs to establish a consensus," the committee study continued, "concerning the role each element of our world service structure should play in the life and growth of N.A. It would not be realistic to expect that a first-time, one-day gathering could establish a full-blown consensus of this sort. However, such a gathering could clarify the agenda for future discussions, identify necessary participants, and create a mechanism for the future resolution of international development issues." And so, planning for the first International Forum began.

PREPARATION

The trustees envisioned the International Development Forum as the beginning of a process that would

bring all the different elements of the N.A. world service picture together in a single frame. The consensus necessary to chart a clear development course must arise from N.A. unity, they felt; it could not be imposed. Consistent with that philosophy, they began seeking input on the forum's agenda from the entire fellowship. The first call went out in a memo to World Service Conference participants and key international contacts, in English, on November 2, 1990. The memo asked several questions:

* *Is N.A. a worldwide fellowship? Should it be?*

What does "worldwide fellowship" mean?

* *To what extent are groups, areas, regions, and national communities autonomous of one another? How can they assist one another? Or must each element survive and grow on its own resources alone?*

* *What services do growing N.A. communities want from N.A. World Services?*

* *What once was a California assembly, what is now primarily a gathering of N.A. representatives from the United States, is struggling to become a forum for our world fellowship. What role should the World Service Conference play in the life and development of N.A. worldwide?*

On December 19, the same letter, translated into Spanish, French, Portuguese, German, and Japanese, was sent to 131 individual contacts, N.A. groups, or service committees in 50 countries. Input was received from Angola, Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, Colombia, Denmark, Hong Kong, The Netherlands, Panama, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States, greatly assisting the trustees in their preparations.

To insure that voices from outside the United States would be heard early in the forum planning process, a series of phone calls were made early in December 1990 with trusted servants in Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom. The idea was not to get detailed input on the specific questions included in the earlier announcement, but to find out whether those questions were the ones that actually needed to be asked.

Comments from those spoken to were by and large positive, though a few negative remarks were heard

Is N.A. a worldwide fellowship? No.

Should it be? Yes.

What does "worldwide fellowship" mean? A fellowship where everyone has the possibility to express themselves.

To what extent are groups, areas, regions, and national communities autonomous of one another? Simple—just read Traditions Four and Five.

How can they assist one another? My experience is that the U.S.A. helped the U.K. and other countries, France among them. Now there are exchanges between the U.K. and France; France, in turn, helps smaller countries like Belgium and Switzerland. We exchange experience, strength, and hope, literature, ideas, etc.

Must each element survive and grow on its own resources alone? No. Alone, I can't; together, we can. All the steps start with "we," and I think the same could apply for countries as well.

Written input from Pierre T., French-language Loner Group, United Kingdom

fairly consistently. While many appreciated that the April 1991 event was only a beginning, they still regretted that only one day was being devoted to international issues. A number of people expressed their unhappiness that the International Forum was being held the day *before* WSC'91, rather than as part of the conference itself. Finally, almost everyone remarked that, if it was truly essential that representatives from outside North America attend the forum, the trustees should make arrangements to fund the travel expenses for those participants, as their own N.A. communities would not be able to do so.

All the input and comments received by the WSB External Affairs Committee were considered at a meeting in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, the weekend of February 7-10, 1991. There, a final agenda for the International Development Forum was compiled and approved by the full World Service Board of Trustees. The only point of serious contention was the funding of travel expenses for delegates to the event. Some trustees strongly urged the funding of participants attending the forum from outside North America, but a majority felt uncomfortable with the idea for a variety of reasons. Ten months earlier, the World Service Conference had voted down a proposal to fund RSR travel to the WSC annual meeting. Funding participant travel to the forum, to be held the day before opening the 1991 conference, could be in conflict with the earlier WSC decision, some felt. Others believed the proposal's \$12,000 price tag was simply too steep, given the state of the WSC treasury, and that only the conference itself could approve such a large expenditure. In the end, there was consensus that the trustees would not seek delegate travel funding for the April 1991 International Forum. All, however, expressed hopes that such funding would be available for future international forums.

FORUM PRESENTATIONS

Finally, the day of the forum arrived. The chairperson of the WSB External Affairs Committee shared her own hopes for the event at the beginning of the morning presentations. "I think the theme for today is that our common welfare must come first," she said, "that personal recovery depends on N.A. unity. I hope that as we share with one another today, we begin to realize that we are all truly a part of a worldwide N.A. community, and that the needs of suffering

addicts anywhere in this world are our business. It's not just the addict right next door who needs our help, but any addict anywhere on the planet."

With those remarks, the chair introduced the speakers for the morning. Presentations were made by nineteen speakers, each focusing on one of six world regions: the Western Pacific and Asia, Latin America, Canada, the Caribbean, the Middle East, and Europe. The dual themes for all the morning talks were communication and cooperation--how N.A. communities can share their experience, strength, and hope with one another to help carry the recovery message worldwide.

The value of visits to young N.A. communities by world-level trusted servants and leaders from developed N.A. communities was cited over and over again. "World services support was of great help to us in developing on the Pacific Rim," the Australian RSR told forum participants. "Visits from world services helped us understand the traditions and their importance, the service structure and its importance in N.A. development, and gave us a feeling of security in that we were part of a larger worldwide struc-

Development funding: an investment in N.A.'s future. "Where once Australia's connection to world services was one of take, take, take, our experience and growth has now led us to believe that we can give back, that we have an important role in the international Narcotics Anonymous structure, that we can support and give input and experience of our own. We believe that it is not a one-way street anymore, that the traffic is both ways. We're the ones now who, I believe, should be given, where possible, the delegated responsibility to assist and help the development of N.A. in nearby countries in our geographical region. We still need the resources of world services, though, both financially and manpower, to help this development. We are more familiar with customs, culture, and in some cases languages of nearby countries, and it seems only natural that world services should look to well-established regions and appropriately qualified people from those regions to cooperate with in these situations." *Chris W., RSR, Australia*

ture and not alone. Their strength, experience, and enthusiasm spread throughout our developing Australasian fellowship, and our growth rate exploded, building on those good foundations."

These visits not only serve to establish personal contact between new N.A. communities and world services, presenters said. They also enhance the credibility of Narcotics Anonymous as a viable program of recovery from drug addiction, convincing government officials and helping professionals to lend their support to the local N.A. community. "One thing real exciting about a workshop we did in Tel Aviv," one special worker remarked, "was that the director of Israel's national public health service came in and spent several hours, listening and asking questions about Narcotics Anonymous and who we were and what we did. From what was reported to us this last summer when we went back, that had a big impact on the growth of Narcotics Anonymous. It had given some credibility to the fellowship. The health director had seen that N.A. wasn't just a bunch of little groups meeting in bomb shelters around the country, but that it was a worldwide fellowship and that the local community had support from the world body."

World service visits give insights into fellowship development that would be difficult to gather from mere correspondence. One negative factor discovered in many visits is the impact of racial or ethnic bias. "In India, you have Hindu members, and they normally do not interact with Moslems," one member who had visited India noted in his presentation. "Class is also an issue in India, and the classes do not usually mix.

The miracle of N.A. "Upon arriving in Bombay and meeting with the members of the fellowship there, I think that, as an addict, I gained more respect for the miracle of this program in adversity. We ended up sitting in a church room having an area service committee meeting with no windows, no doors, no real furniture to speak of, and the level of enthusiasm, commitment, and dedication to service and to carrying the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers was that like I've never experienced before." *Anthony E., WSO staff*

Most current members in Bombay were educated in church schools and speak English. Most addicts in India, however--and there are thousands upon thousands of them--do not speak English, and without translated literature, we have no way of reaching them. The principles of unity do not usually cross cultural lines in these countries."

However, in addition to gaining insight into the challenge prejudice poses for fellowship development, the visitor also observed local members' eagerness to surmount that challenge. "The members who are willing to be of service in Bombay," he said, "are willing to go into those communities to try to carry the message, given the tools to do so. While we were there, we put into place a process whereby I.P. No. 1 and then the White Booklet will be translated into Hindi, one of the major Indian languages. With translated literature, current members will have the ability to go into a community that they normally would not interact with."

Recovery literature is not the only printed matter sought by developing N.A. communities, according to more than one International Forum speaker. "The *Newsline*, *The N.A. Way Magazine*, the conference reports, the communications that come from world services are the lifeblood of these communities," one presenter reported. "They take a copy of *The N.A. Way Magazine* and they pass it from one member to another all the way around the entire Narcotics Anonymous community. They look forward to it; they crave it; and they don't get enough of that type of information."

Clear, simple service literature is also in demand among young N.A. communities. Unfortunately, according to some speakers, material currently on the approved-inventory list is often not helpful. "In my experience, a lot of what we send--like *A Temporary Working Guide to our Service Structure*--is virtually useless," a trustee reported. "If you've never talked to anyone who's tried to use that structure, and you don't know what it's supposed to look like, it's impossible to figure out how it works just from what appears in the *TWGSS*. I've read it a couple of times, asking myself, now what would I do if I were reading this in a vacuum? And I understand why they have problems."

Most speakers endorsed the "neighbor-helping-neighbor strategy" for fellowship development--well-developed N.A. communities providing support and guidance for newer N.A. groups and areas in neighboring parts of the world. "We have looked at the possibility that, as Bombay becomes more and more structured, they will be able to facilitate the needs of the rest of the Indian subcontinent," a special worker reported after his visit to India. "They have a sufficient service structure and experience to be able to be placed in that position."

Similar hopes for Latin American development were voiced by one trustee, though her optimism was somewhat tempered by the realities of poverty and geography. "The distances and the lack of finances make it virtually impossible for the Latin American communities to get together. Last year's Colombian convention was the first time a lot of these countries had gotten together, but it was one member from Venezuela, a couple of members from Ecuador, and four members from Peru--it wasn't that a large majority of the fellowship had the ability to travel."

The neighbor-helping-neighbor strategy may require some assistance from world services, the trustee continued. "My recommendation for where we go from here is to help them help each other. There's a lot of the struggles and the things that they go through that they can learn and grow from, if they have some way to communicate with each other. Right now, that's very difficult for them. They're willing to do anything, but their resources are very limited."

"International development of N.A., in cooperation with well-established neighboring N.A. communities, should be an important world service priority," the Australian RSR affirmed. "Along with that, I believe we should have a more flexible structure. We should not have to adapt our needs to fit in with that structure; rather, we should first establish our needs and then develop a service structure that is flexible enough to adapt and respond to those needs." A more flexible structure for international support and participation, he continued, might involve the creation of "zonal conferences."

Finances prevented the RSR from Aotearoa New Zealand from attending the forum. The trustee from Australia reported on her behalf, speaking at greater

length about the idea of zonal conferences. "The New Zealand RSR said she could see benefits in zonal conferences, and I agree on this point, so long as it's coordinated by world services. An example she put forth is the European Service Conference. It would be more financially viable for them to send reps to Australia, she said. They could send two reps to Australia for \$600, or even Hawaii for that matter, but to spend \$5,200 to send two reps to the World Service Conference just doesn't seem practical." The Australian trustee went on to suggest, "Maybe we should establish such conferences worldwide--say, a North American Service Conference, a South American Service Conference, and a South Pacific Service Conference. A closer service network would be more affordable and there would be more frequent contact, thus addressing a lot of the challenges they're having in Aotearoa New Zealand at this moment."

Giving background on the subject of zonal conferences, a World Service Office director living in the United Kingdom briefly explained the nature of the European Service Conference, now known as the European Conference and Convention or ECC. "The ECC started eight years ago, and it started as a conference, but it's never been a conference as perhaps one might understand it over here--it's never been a decision-making body. From the start, it was really an annual learning day and workshop on service: how to start an ASC, how to do H&I, that kind of thing. Through its evolution, it also became something of a convention." However, a study group created by last year's ECC in Lisbon, Portugal, has been

Self-support--and poverty. "The average collection for a group in India is about ten rupees per meeting--that's less than a dollar. Out of that ten rupees, they have to make some payment to the meeting place that they have, they were making attempts to acquire literature, and to pay for their tea. We were able to come to some arrangement for them to be provided with literature at no cost for two years. You should be aware, however, that India will not be a participant, at their expense, in the World Service Conference for many, many years; it would be totally outside of their economic possibilities."

Anthony E., WSO staff

at work developing options for the possible creation of a cooperative European service decision-making body. Those options, according to an International Forum presenter who served on the study group, will be offered for fellowship consideration at this year's event in Rome.

Such conferences have already been formed in the United Kingdom and Canada. According to the Canadian Assembly chairperson, "I think the real answer to all the questions that have been put today is communication—just more and more communication, be it a person standing in front of you, whether or not they spoke English, a newsletter, a mailing list, a phone call, whatever it was. Communication has always been the key for growth in Canada. It will continue to be the key for world growth. We really have to open up those lines somehow. [But the impetus for that] has to come from a single body, a unified front, otherwise I don't think we will have much luck. It's going to require the support of everyone worldwide to truly make this happen. I just hope we can get to that point."

GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Following the morning presentations, International Forum participants took a lunch break, returning in the afternoon for small-group sharing sessions. These groups, facilitated by six WSO staff members, covered a wide range of topics, including: translations and literature, fundamentals of development,

Doing it right. "These communities want to have interaction with world services just to find out if they're doing things right. Most of us who started in an early N.A. community in the United States remember that [what was valuable] wasn't so much that anybody gave you solutions, it was just the fact that we found out that everything was okay. That's the kind of interaction that these communities want from us. They want to ask us every question in the book. If we've got three hours to spend with them, they'll spend three hours asking questions. What we really need to work on in the next few months is communicating our service experience to them so that they can get on and provide their own services in their own countries." *George H., WSO staff*

networking among N.A. communities, development strategy, carrying the message to parts of the world where there are no N.A. communities yet established, heightening awareness, providing guidance for developing communities, and the role of the World Service Conference in future development efforts.

For three hours, these five groups—each composed of about fifteen N.A. members drawn from various regions and countries and all three branches of world service—brainstormed the topics they'd heard in the morning International Forum presentations. As participants discovered when they returned to the main room for closing reports from the discussion groups, there was substantial agreement on the issues at hand and on the questions of international fellowship development that have yet to be answered.

The first principle for N.A.'s fellowship development strategy, according to a number of the International Forum discussion groups, is this: Just as the new individual member is the most important person at a recovery meeting, so should developing N.A. communities be considered the most important members of our world service structure—we should put efforts to aid them at the top of our priority list. Each of our development efforts are an investment in the future of N.A. When we help one N.A. community become self-sufficient, we are also helping them become able to help another N.A. community in turn.

Discussion group participants also agreed that world services should play a coordinating role in international development. N.A. should continue to utilize members of the fellowship—including world service members—to visit developing communities, using members in close geographic proximity whenever possible. These visits let members of developing communities know that they are truly a part of the worldwide fellowship.

World services should also continue to coordinate contacts with national and international government agencies and health officials, particularly those serving countries where there are no N.A. communities. These officials can tell addicts about Narcotics Anonymous; those addicts, in turn, can—and, in our experience, *do*—start new N.A. communities. N.A. should continue to take part in international conferences of government and private health and treatment organizations, and should continue to cultivate

contacts and relations with key organizations--in fact, should not merely continue such activities but should step them up.

International Forum groups felt that, with attention being focused on development issues, a thorough study should be made of those issues. We need answers to some basic questions, such as, are there definable stages of development? Are there different types of support appropriate for each stage? Once such a study is complete, a uniform, comprehensive policy should be established, incorporating international development efforts taken by world, zonal, regional, and area committees into a coordinated strategy for N.A. growth.

As we continue to consider fellowship development, forum groups said, we should also begin a thorough examination of world service priorities--all world service priorities. Are there things we are doing, things we are spending money on, that are not as important as some of the things we would like to do but are *not* doing?

In particular, all groups agreed that we should move translations up on the world service priority list. One of the most effective means N.A. has of communicating its complete message is through its literature. The more translated literature we have, the more likely it is that new N.A. communities worldwide will develop, strengthen, and stabilize. The translation process should be streamlined, if possible, and the pace should be increased so that recovery material already on hand is available as soon as possible to whomever needs it, anywhere in the world.

Service materials also need to be developed for use by young N.A. communities, the groups said--not just translated materials, but items specially prepared for international development efforts. *A Temporary Working Guide to our Service Structure*, one group noted, is more confusing than helpful for many developing N.A. communities. We need something that clearly and simply describes the functions of local service committees, and that also provides guidance on applying the traditions. Each community will have to experiment to discover exactly what works best for them, but the world fellowship should do what it can to lay out the basics for new communities so that they don't have to reinvent the wheel.

As noted earlier, most groups felt that N.A.'s world services should play a coordinating role in international development. However, they also felt that world services should not bear the total responsibility for such efforts itself. Developing N.A. communities, most discussion groups felt, are best served by established N.A. communities in their own part of the world. Zonal assemblies (such as the Canadian Assembly and the European Service Conference) or smaller bodies (possibly composed of representatives from N.A. communities whose members speak the same language) can work closely with their developing neighbors to great effect.

Two specific suggestions for fellowship development came out of a number of group discussions. One was to encourage the development of newsletters and "tape newsletters" between emerging communities. Such newsletters could facilitate the exchange of service experience, reports of challenges and solutions, and other information among developing communities.

Four stages of development. "I see four stages of growth for N.A. communities. The **first stage** is the established, independent, and self-supporting N.A. community, such as Australia--self-supporting, financially, right through to world services. The **second stage** I see is the established but semi-independent N.A. community, such as Aotearoa New Zealand. Although they're self-supporting at the regional level, they're still struggling with recovery issues and have internal service structure challenges. The **third stage** I see is geographically isolated groups and communities with virtually no structure except for group positions--for example Hong Kong, Singapore, and Kuala Lumpur. This category has added complications of non-English-speaking and cultural barriers to contend with. The **fourth** and last group I can divide them up into is communities, both English- and non-English-speaking, with vast numbers of addicts but, as yet, no Narcotics Anonymous, but many professionals and government officials that could be reached. Such communities exist on every continent." *Garth P., Trustee*

The second suggestion was for a "development sponsorship" program. World services, some forum participants suggested, could encourage groups, areas, and regions to "sponsor" emerging communities. Such sponsorship would consist primarily of regular, direct communication between a well-developed N.A. community and a developing community.

Along with specific suggestions, two specific questions also arose in the International Forum group discussions. The first relates to autonomy: Where support for developing N.A. communities is concerned, what is the balance between support and enabling? And, where fellowship development is concerned, what does "self-support" mean?

The second question arises from an observation made in many discussion groups: In our worldwide contacts with developing N.A. communities, we sometimes have problems recognizing and effectively accommodating cultural differences. The question is this: Is the N.A. message as universally adaptable as we think it is? If not, how far we can we go in adapting it to the local cultural background? At what point does "cultural adaptation" compromise the integrity of the N.A. message?

All discussion groups agreed that N.A. should con-

The language barrier—not a U.S. problem, but an English-language problem. "The language barrier appears to me as one of the biggest problems for N.A. as a worldwide fellowship. As it is at the moment, literature and meetings at any level above the region are being held in English. Although simultaneous interpretation is available at such meetings, and literature does get translated, it is difficult for members who don't speak English to participate in "inter-regional" meetings or in the "original literature" process. I know a few members with a negative attitude towards the U.S. and anything that comes from there. They believe that we have or should have nothing to do with the WSO or the WSC. Others who don't speak English can't even read the *Newsline*. Although members who speak English translate to non-English-speaking members, it is still fairly difficult to get them interested." *Written input from Oliver N., Switzerland*

tinue the development dialogue process at the world service level. The April 1991 forum was only the first necessary step in a process. One discussion group suggested that the International Development Forum be incorporated as a regular part of every meeting, both quarterly and annual, of the World Service Conference.

More than one group noted that the lack of local money and the lack of funding from world services prevents representatives outside North America from taking part in world-level service events. They felt that trusted servants from developing N.A. communities should be brought to the World Service Conference and the "quarterly" workshops, held once or twice a year, for sharing and training.

Some groups called into question the name given today's "World Service Conference"—some believed it to be a primarily North American conference with an international outreach agenda. The World Service Conference, some groups asserted, should take steps to become more relevant to and more focused on the needs of the worldwide fellowship, and should focus less on the fellowship in the United States. More than one group ventured to suggest that the N.A. community in the U.S. form its own conference to focus specifically on U.S. service needs, allowing the World Service Conference to focus on issues affecting N.A. worldwide.

Finally, each and every discussion group spoke of the need to increase awareness among existing N.A. members of international development issues, activities, and needs. This should be done regularly and repeatedly, they said—it should not be just a one-shot deal. One group suggested that world services investigate the possibility of having articles from newsletters published in languages other than English translated for publication in *The N.A. Way*. Doing this, the group believed, could heighten the English-speaking community's awareness of international development issues. Another discussion group urged the inclusion of more—and more detailed—updates on international development in the *Newsline*, *The N.A. Way*, and other world-level periodicals.

World services, however, do not have the kind of regular face-to-face contact with the N.A. membership that regional service representatives have. Forum groups affirmed that RSRs have a special re-

sponsibility to heighten local awareness of international fellowship growth issues. Regional reps should also encourage increased fellowship donations to world services to facilitate increased international development efforts. We all need to ask ourselves whether there are "luxury services" we could dispense with at home, freeing up resources for international development.

In the final analysis, development of the worldwide N.A. Fellowship is not only the concern of the World Service Office, the World Service Conference, or the World Service Board of Trustees--it's the concern of every region, area, group, and *every N.A. member* concerned about carrying the N.A. message to the still-suffering addict, wherever she or he may be.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The April 1991 WSB International Development Forum was the first chance N.A. representatives, trustees, conference officers, and WSO directors and staff had been given to sit down together and examine the total international fellowship development picture. The speakers and discussion group reports gave everyone involved much to think about over the coming year.

For their part, the trustees have acknowledged the serious need for comprehensive international development planning. The time has come to develop a complete picture of international development: What are the needs of N.A. communities in various stages of development? How can world services meet those needs, or coordinate the efforts of areas and regions in supporting developing communities? What resources will be needed for effective international development, and what are available?

International development will be a particular item on the agenda of the trustees' External Affairs Committee, the body responsible for planning the April 1991 International Forum. At its meeting in June, the committee will begin planning three "mini-forums" tentatively scheduled for this year in Europe, Latin America, and the South Pacific. The committee will also begin talking about an agenda for the 1992 forum, which has been incorporated as a permanent part of the World Service Conference annual meeting. Travel funds may become available for next year's forum because, though conference finances

for 1991-92 are tight, International Development Forum funding came up Number One in a WSC'91 ballot on discretionary funding priorities--in fact, five of the top six priorities were related directly to international development.

What will the future hold? None of us are certain--but all of us can take part in shaping it. Perhaps the forum chairperson's closing remarks say it best: "I think one of the reasons these discussions worked as well as they did today was that we started with the most basic question imaginable: What is our common welfare about, and how can we help the addict who still suffers, regardless of where he or she lives? This fellowship--the people in this room, and the people out there in our home regions--I have all the faith in the world in us. I don't think when you ask an addict if they're willing to help another addict, I just don't hear us ever saying no. I think that, as N.A. leaders, we are responsible to find ways for our fellowship to effectively reach out to those addicts. And I think every time we're given the opportunity to do that, I believe we will. I'm real proud to be a member of Narcotics Anonymous. I want to thank all of you."

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