Round Table 5
"CREATING SYNERGIES AT THE GRASSROOTS LEVEL"
Thursday, 18th June 2009"

CREATING SYNERGIES AT THE GRASSROOTS LEVEL: On Thursday, 18th June, Manu Gupta, Seeds India, moderated the NGO roundtable on creating DRR synergies at the grassroots level, which was chaired by Jemilah Mahmood, Mercy Malaysia.

Chair Mahmood asked panelists to address issues related to the contribution of alliances and networks to the scaling-up of community driven practices, and ways to develop a benchmark to encourage government accountability to grassroots actors on DRR issues.

Maureen Fordham, Gender and Disaster Network, described her organization's experience as a web-based gender network whose aim is to connect various actors to further the DRR agenda from the NGO perspective. She noted that there remain barriers to fully integrating gender into the DRR agenda.

Margaret Arnold, ProVention Consortium, described the work of her organization in post-disaster needs assessment, disaster resilience funding at the community level and creating links between the grassroots level, the civil society and the government. She described the work of networks as "viral," which spread from one individual to the next with the ultimate goal of creating sectoral change.

Carmen Griffiths, Construction Resource and Development Center, South Africa, said that disasters bring women together. She highlighted an example of women in Jamaica sharing experiences and knowledge in DRR with women in Honduras and Guatemala, and urged NGOs to replicate such experiences in other parts of the world.

Angel Marcos, Center for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America, stressed that to further DRR, grassroots organizations need to be mainstreamed. He called for strengthening the link between DRR dialogue and practice on the ground. He also highlighted the linkages between grassroots organizations, women's organizations and civil society in relation to DRR, noting that the three must be included in the design and elaboration of public policies in the region.

Marcus Oxley underscored the need for political will in order to scale-up local level capacity for resilience, and emphasized that governance systems must be able to create consultative decision-making processes on DRR.