

Post Mitch: Proposals from European NGOs to the Stockholm Summit on reconstruction and development in Central America

Brussels, 11th of May 1999

The Brussels Paper represents the result of a wide-ranging process of analysis, reflection and consultation between dozens of NGOs (from Europe and Central America) and other players (international agencies, national governments, local authorities, etc.). It summarizes the main proposals put forward by the European NGOs affiliated to Voluntary Organizations in Cooperation in Emergency (VOICE) at the Stockholm Summit for reconstruction and development in Central America.

The main stages in this process consisted in the Strategy Seminar entitled "Post-Mitch: from Emergency*** to Development", organized by VOICE in Brussels on 17 and 18 March 1999; drafting the conclusions of the Seminar's working groups on Basic Health (Coordinator: Dieter Müller – Medico International), Food Aid and Food Security (Coordinator: Robert Hynderick – Euronaid), Housing and Infrastructure (Coordinator: Carlo Tassara – CISP); carrying out a broad consultation of all the NGOs that had participated in the Seminar, and holding two meetings in Brussels, on 21 April and 6 May 1999, with various officials from the European Commission (DGIB, DGVIII/A/4 and ECHO).

At the same time, it is important to point out that the contents of the Brussels Paper are completely in keeping with the Statement from National Coordinations and Regional Networks of civil society groups on the reconstruction and transformation of Central America (Tegucigalpa, Honduras, 22 April 1999).

A. Introduction

The best diagnosis of the negative impact of Hurricane Mitch was made by a Nicaraguan farmer, who said: "I don't know whether Nicaragua has gone 20 years backwards - but I have!". This statement clearly illustrates how the human