

# Norwegian Association for Development Research (NFU)

## ANNUAL REPORT June 1998 – September 1999

### *Introduction*

The period under review has been eventful in Norwegian development research. The Foreign Ministry has released its strategy paper on development research; the Research Council's two new research programmes on development issues have become operationalised; operational responsibilities are shifted from the Foreign Ministry to Norad; and the discussions of a new NUFU programme have begun.

The NFU board has concentrated its activities on the assisting in the planning of annual conference, the publication of the Forum for Development Studies, and on discussing key issues in research policies related to development studies. Through these efforts, through special efforts and through its newsletter and homepage the Board hopes to recruit more members.

### *The Board and its composition*

NFU's 1998 annual meeting was held on 5 June in Oslo. Minutes from the meeting were distributed in NFU-Nytt no 2, 1998.

The annual meeting elected the following as members of the board:

*Elling N. Tjønneland, political scientist, CMI (chairperson)*  
*Odd Helge Fjeldstad, economist, CMI*  
*Axel Borchrevink, anthropologist, SUM*  
*Cathrine Brun, geographer, NTNU*  
*Anne Margrethe Brigham, political scientist, NTNU*  
*Kjersti Larsen, anthropologist, Noragric*  
*Elisabeth Molteberg, Noragric*  
*Audun Ruud, economist and political scientist, SUM*  
*Harald O. Skar, anthropologist, NUPI*

Alternate members:

*Jens C. Andvig, economist, NUPI*  
*Marit Brendbekken, anthropologist, UiB*  
*Hakon Fottland, SMU*  
*Arne Olav Øyhus, anthropologist, Høgskolen i Agder*

The annual meeting elected Guri Stegali as auditor and appointed Ian Bryceson (Noragric), Turid Bøe (CMI) and Harald Aspen (NTNU) as members of the election committee with Ian Bryceson as chair.

At its first meeting the Board elected Fjeldstad as Treasurer and Secretary. Cathrine Brun was elected editor of NFU-nytt.

The Board has had 5 meetings in the period. 4 were held in Oslo and 1 in Bergen.

CMI has provided a number of services to NFU free of charge, including assistance in developing NFU's homepage.

### *Members*

The number of NFU-members as of 30 August is 244. 13 new members have been recruited in 1999, and 6 members have terminated their membership. 190 members paid their fees in 1998, compared to 167 in 1997. It suggests that the downward trend in membership has stopped and that we are witnessing a modest increase. The Board is of the opinion that a significant higher membership level can be reached.

### *NFU-nytt and NFU homepage*

3 issues of NFU-nytt have been distributed to all members. In Cathrine Brun's absence (fieldwork in Sri Lanka) one issue was edited and produced by Håkon Fottland. Expenses have partly been covered by NTNU and UiTø.

The construction of an NFU home page was finalised early in the period and – assisted by CMI's computer department the page is now fully operational. NFU-nytt is also accessible from the homepage.

### *EADI*

Arne Tostensen has remained Norway's representative on the Executive Committee of EADI. His expenses are covered by the Norwegian Research Council through NFU. Tostensen has also served as a Vice-President and a member of the EADI interim committee ("arbeidsutvalg"). The additional travel expenses involved have been covered by CMI.

### *Economic situation*

The economic position of NFU remains satisfactory and has improved. This is partly due to increased compliance by members in paying the annual fee, and partly due to modest travel expenses in connection with the board meetings (cf. audited accounts).

### *Forum for Development Studies*

NUPI in co-operation with NFU (and with financial support from the Research Council) publishes Forum for Development Studies. Currently some 600 copies are distributed to members and other subscribers. Harald Aspen currently serves as NFU's representative on the editorial committee.

The Board has one formal meeting with the FDS editor and the NFU representative on the editorial committee and would like to continue to have regular and formalised meetings, e.g. on an annual basis.

The Board discussed how best to make papers presented at the annual conferences available; through a separate book/proceedings or a selection of papers for publication through FDS. It was agreed that the current practice should continue whereby the best papers are considered for publication in the FDS. A “grey” proceeding with a reprint of all papers may be distributed by the organising Institute. This position may be reconsidered in the case of conferences with many good papers which justifies the publication of a highquality book.

#### *Annual conference 1999*

The 1999 conference will focus on Conflict and Development It is organised by NUPI and is made possible through a grant from the Research Council. NUPI has full responsibility for the conference, but there have been regular consultations between the NFU Board and NUPI both in the conceptualisation and planning of the conference.

In its recent strategy paper on development research the Foreign Ministry has stated its commitment to support through the Research Council an annual conference on development research under the auspices of NFU.

The final decision on the topic for the millennium conference in the year 2000 has not yet been decided, but CMI has indicated its willingness to assume responsibility.

#### *Research policy*

NFU has not yet been in a position to play a strong and pro-active role in the debate about the evolving policy on development research. The Board has made a few attempts to seek improvement on this. Key issues have been discussed at its meetings, some aspects have been raised in “NFU-nytt” and the NFU chairperson and other members of the Board have had meetings with the Foreign Ministry, Norad, NUFU and the Research Council. The chairperson is also an observer in NUFU and takes part in the meetings of “NUFU-utvalget”.

The Board expects to play a more active role in these issues, especially related to the operational shift from the Foreign Ministry to Norad, and the planning of a future NUFU-programme.