

Development Policy Seminar Series

“Towards a sustainable social model: Implications for the post-2015 agenda”
presented by Dr. Nazrul Islam

Agenda 21 came up with an integrated agenda covering all three dimensions of sustainable development, namely economic development, social development, and environmental protection. However, the implementation process bifurcated into two tracks. While economic and social development agenda took the form of advocacy for “human development,” and subsequently gelled into the *Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)*, the environmental protection agenda largely moved along the processes represented by the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)* and *Convention on Biodiversity (CBD)*. The bifurcation also led to very different “domain configurations” for human development agenda and the climate agenda, with the former limited to developing countries and the later limited to developed countries. However, this bifurcation had its undesirable effect, as manifested in the unsatisfactory progress regarding climate change mitigation, on the one hand, and the gaps and weaknesses in the achievement of MDGs, on the other. Yet, the bifurcation lingers, as illustrated by the two streams of discussion of post-2015 agenda, one represented by the *UN Task Team (UNTT) Report* and the other by the *Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)* formulation process, triggered by the Rio+20 conference. A closer analysis shows that sustainable development is difficult to achieve without developed countries moving towards a changed social model, which can then inspire developing countries to follow a more sustainable course of development. The agenda for sustainable development needs to be reintegrated..

Nazrul Islam did his Ph. D. in economics from Harvard University and taught economics at Dhaka University (Bangladesh), Harvard University, Emory University (Atlanta, USA), and Kyushu University (Japan). He made his mark on the literature on growth empirics through introduction of the panel econometric methods in his seminal *QJE* 1995 paper “Growth Empirics: A Panel Data Approach.” Over the years, he worked in different areas of economics, including development, international growth, relationship between environment and growth, and economic reform and transition. He has written extensively on development issues of Bangladesh, publishing five books and numerous articles. In recent years, he has focused on development issues of China, publishing many journal articles and the acclaimed edited volume, *Resurgent China: Issues for the Future* (Macmillan 2009). He is an Associate Editor of *Asian Economic Journal* and an Honorary Fellow of the *International Center for the Study of East Asian Development (ICSEAD)*. He joined the United Nations in 2006 and has been working as Senior Economic Affairs Officer at Development Policy Analysis Division (DPAD) of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA). At DPAD, he plays an important role in producing the *World Economic and Social Survey (WESS)*, taking particular interest in issues of sustainable development.