

Transitioning Towards A New Development Framework:

Changing Mid-set

It is a great pleasure to be part of this Panel which is looking at a very critical issues related to the major undertaking the United Nations, member states and the international community have embarked upon with respect to the Post-2015 development agenda. This is an agenda which, to my mind, has enormously significant historical importance, and it would not be an exaggeration, too hyperbolic, to say that this is an undertaking which would have a major impact on the destiny of our world, and in shaping our future.

I say this because I am convinced that we are entering a period where genuine and effective international cooperation is becoming an existential necessity for all countries and peoples, big or small. It is becoming more and more apparent that perspectives and views on what is in the interest of states, defined on the basis of the concept of

narrow national interest, is not only myopic, but is also becoming dangerous — dangerous to the concerned nations and to the international community, as a whole.

This might sound an exaggerated reading of the situation we face and the challenges before us. But any objective assessments of the global difficult security situation— some of which we hear and read everyday about, and some festering underneath—, the growing danger posed by climate change and the threat to our environment and the conditions of the so many affected by extreme poverty, must make it plain that our future can be secured only if we manage to think beyond what is prescribed by narrow national interest. I have often heard Deputy Secretary-General, Jan Eliasson, talk about the pursuit of enlightened national interest, as being critical, for ensuring our survival at this juncture in world history. I believe he is right. In other words, the objective realities of the world today and the challenges we face appear to make it unavoidable that there be a paradigm shift in how we think about our specific and individual interests as nations and people. A change of mentality, of thinking, and of mid-set, must lead to a genuine

and effective commitment to multilateralism and to partnership which can happen only when we manage to have a robust and effective inter-governmental cooperation. But the question is, do we have now the kind of inter-governmental cooperation that would rise up to the occasion, and is commensurate with the kind of collective challenge in various areas that the global community faces today? Do we, in fact, have even the mental readiness and the willingness to start thinking about practical steps that need to be taken in this regard? The controversy surrounding what otherwise should be a not very complicated principle — Common but Differentiated Responsibilities — must make it all too apparent that we have yet to go a long way before we develop the confidence that we have managed to lay the basis, even in terms of mindset, for addressing the issues that would help us ensure that the post-2015 development agenda would be crafted and implemented in a way that it would make a difference in terms of ensuring our collective destiny.

Now, let me step back to underline that I don't believe for a moment that the technical elements with respect to institutions, policy frameworks and the so many other adjustments required in connection with the transition from the MDGs to the SDGs, and the Post-2015 development agenda, are mundane matters. There are indeed complex issues that need to be handled at the national, regional and global levels and the fact that unlike the MDGs, the SDGs are planned to be universal also has its own complexities. The challenge in connection with data and statistics, particularly in situations such as my own country is in, cannot be understated. There is no do doubt, there would be some period of learning and experimentation. These are real challenges to overcome.

But the point again is, all this technical challenges and others, that are rooted in genuine and deep-rooted differences on the proper road to societal well-being, could be rendered less formidable and less of an impediment to a more effective inter-governmental cooperation, if there is the proper mind-set reflecting how much our growing interdependence has made unilateral action on the basis of perceived narrow national interest a dead-end, and even worse.

I would like at this point to zero in on just one issue to illustrate what I am trying to suggest. The issue of “Governance” — you call it good governance or whatever — has been one of those issues surrounding which there has been quite an interesting, but often frustrating debate. Some of us take umbrage when there is insistence that it be taken as a fundamental issue in connection with development and to ensure the well-being of societies, including which respect to peace and stability. But the truth of the matter and seen in non-ideological ways, good governance is a critical condition both for peace and development. But, no doubt, the basis of the objection is the often justified suspicion that the issue might be pushed with the view to imposing an external agenda and deny ownership and political space.

For others, the issue of governance, in its global dimension is beyond discourse; for them, what we have now, in terms of global governance, is almost sacrosanct. But obviously, if there is inequality in the world today where it is most manifest, among other areas, is in some of the most critical multilateral institution whose decisions affect the bulk of the humanity but on which only a few have decisive voice. One might ask, how it would be possible to develop an effective international partnership to address common challenges — the existence of which is denied by no one — while there is so much inequality in global governance whose effect is felt at the national level in terms of denying ownership of development policies and strategies, particularly for those that are less developed.

Here I wish to take the opportunity to express appreciation to the Committee for Development Policy whose recent publications must be considered as major contribution in highlighting this critical matter, and for the attempt they have made to fill the big gap in this area in the product of the work of the Open Working Group.

Now, I don't want to sound polemical or naive. I understand how formidable it is, even when politicians develop the conviction that something should be done about all this, to make progress in addressing the issue of inequality. But how long can the developing world, as the Committee for Development Policy says, continue to "abide by/or shoulder the effects of global governance rules and regulations, they have limited influence in shaping."

It is in this connection that, in fact, the debate on the means of implementation to realize the SDGs has not been sufficiently broad enough to ensure that there would be an outcome that would make a real difference from the point of view of the eradication of poverty. Perhaps, for a start, a consensus on the Principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities, must be secured. That might indicate the beginning of a change in mind-set which could catapult the intergovernmental process for addressing the Post-2015 challenge, into a period of greater optimism about the future of international development cooperation, and of our future.

I Thank You