

**Talking points for Ms. Taylor  
Expert Group Meeting  
2015 and 2016 ECOSOC Cycles  
UN Women Conference Room  
4-5 December 2014**

What's Needed: Institutional Structures and Behaviors for Transformation

1. To what extent are existing global institutions and policy frameworks successful in adopting a more integrated/coherent approach to development?
2. How would such frameworks and institutions be able to guide integration in policy areas underpinning the SDGs?
- 3. What adjustments may be needed to ensure that governments, the UN system and other partners respond to the universal and unified agenda and deliver results to global citizens?**

I'd like to focus my comments on this third question that was laid out for us and relate to the second stated objective of this convening, which highlights the need to 'increase understanding of what needs to change in the way policy is made, results are monitored and accountability is carried out in the development field.

First, I think we have to recognize the extent to which national policies continue to be guided by global norms and priorities rather than national realities. While the SDGs signal a transition to a more integrated approach to development that highlights the roles and challenges for both developed and developing countries, this will require us to continuously interrogate the actual space that exists for differentiated approaches.

In one of my roles with the Open Society Foundations, I've worked with the Global Partnership for Education in part to review proposals from countries seeking funding to reach the targets of the current global agenda in the education sector. We noted an interesting convergence, or re-convergence, of 'individualized' country proposals and the shifting priorities of whichever bilateral or multilateral organization was most prominent in the sector. And this was at a time when the GPE was advocating for highly individualized proposals and differentiated priorities. You could literally read the proposal and know whether DFID, or UNICEF, or the WB was the most prominent organization (meaning they either provided the highest level of funding or was

noted as the key partnering organization.) And this was after several years of continued 'rhetoric' about individualized country plans, but if you look at them they were clearly not individualized.

So I think we have to remember that in this transition from the MDGs to the SDGs that the global community, particularly multilateral and bilateral organizations, should be cautiously optimistic at best and remember that the space to actually articulate and implement an inclusive global agenda at the national level has to be continuously protected, interrogated and broadened. So in that sense, the task may be more about ensuring that bodies such as ECOSOC can ensure the conditions and monitor the ability for governments, particularly in the least developed countries, to articulate their own path towards the SDGs than it is about ensuring their 'ability to respond to a universal and unified agenda'.

There's a danger for the language of 'universality' to obscure the power dynamics that are inherent in the aid architecture for development. Conversations about these power dynamics that have as much, if not more, influence on how things play out on the ground as the global frameworks have not been at the forefront of deliberations around the emerging agenda and the ability of governments to implement it. So as we think about how accountability is carried out, let's focus only in terms of developing countries, but let's place the onus for accountability on the entire international community, particularly on the organizations that hold the purse strings.

Finally, we need to recognize that these ambitious goals, particularly in terms of the extent of the integration and intersectoral collaboration that is envisioned, will require a dramatic shift in the way in which policies are developed, implemented, and financed at the country level. And this shift will require a significant restructuring of governance mechanisms. This places an added burden on already weak systems and requires focused attention on the resources (both human and financial) necessary to support their ability to respond to the paradigm shift that the SDGs will bring. So discussions of resource mobilization must be broader than the costs of implementation, levels of ODA, and anticipated funding gaps.