

It looks like Civil Society is able to get the last word at this meeting, which is very nice! I must apologize in advance for any shortcomings – I feel overwhelmed with the responsibility of being the only individual to present ‘the perspective’ of Civil Society.

I have three main points to contribute to this discussion: the first is on policy versus people; the second is about a new conceptual framework for analysis; and the third is about the possible role of CSocD in the Post-2015 process. There is much more to share, but I have limited time.

First, the formulation of this session is in terms of transformation, but the questions are all about policy and institutional frameworks.

- And, yet, how many people are transformed by policy? Isn't it transformed people that create policy?
- I recognize that this is a chicken/egg problem: but it is important to at least include the role of people in this session.

That is, prior to implementing a given policy, one needs to consider its shortcomings. I'll give three examples.

- First, you can have a good policy, but a government that refuses to implement it. Take my government in the past years where there was environmental policy, but a President that did not want to enforce it.
- Second, you can have good policy for the wrong reasons. In response to my colleague from the Global Compact, I would say that the idea of private philanthropic donations to “STEM education for girls” is great – except that the motivation to “ensure more women are in the pipeline for their work force” is still limited in scope. Humanity has decided that an educated society is a good thing. And women are the first educators of children. So, philanthropy to STEM education is great, but how do you think the girls, or their families, might feel if they learn that it is not truly philanthropy, it is an investment in their workforce?
- Third, you can have good policy that is well communicated, but people still decide to avoid it. That is what we have in this room right now. We clearly see that sign right there that says capacity of this room is 24 people, yet there are 40 of us in here.
- In conclusion, people matter!

From the perspective of the NGO Committee on Social Development – which has constituents in over 180 countries –

- it is people that will provide the transformation.
- And, in fact, it is people who are already doing the transformation.
- Therefore, an enabling environment should be our ultimate objective.
- And while this may not seem like a policy stance, there can actually be a policy to incorporate the views of people:
 - o Community based consultations may find that the most impactful intervention is just a paved road or reliable trash collection.
 - o Or, as one study has shown, we find that kindness in the delivery of health care institutions has a measurable positive impact on health care, all other things being equal.

A transformation in our approach to social development would be one based on consultation and an inclusive process.

- That is, not just quantitative research, but also qualitative.
- One that is based not only on GNP and health care, but one that is based on surveys and needs analyses from the people afflicted by poverty and social exclusion themselves.
- This would be truly transformative.

II.

The second element I want to mention a conceptual framework of analysis which, were it implemented, could radically shift our approach.

- First is our conception of history. Not to discount the urgency of the agenda, but if we spend too much energy trying for perfection, we may forget about implementation or communication of the agenda.
 - o That is, humanity now sees the shortcomings of the MDGs. Likely, in a few decades, no matter what we do today, we will find shortcomings in this agenda.
 - o Maintaining this perspective on history can help ensure we are engaging in this process in order to learn together about what can work better for future generations as well.
- Second is the idea of **unity** as the guiding principle of our action.

Currently, we operate in a model of competition at worst, and dichotomy at best.

- This follows very naturally from what John said earlier today:
 - o green jobs versus non-green jobs;
 - o ownership and control are yours, externalities are ignored; etc.

If we reframe the analysis into one that mirrors the scientific and practical reality that we have just one planet and we are one humanity, our policies and analysis both shift.

This would also strengthen one of the guiding principles of the SDGs – that being universality.

- This agenda is not for the low income countries, middle income countries, or high income countries – it is for all three.
 - o Inequality, environmental degradation, and social fracturing afflict all societies, high and low income alike.
 - o Do we think that the biker gangs in Texas are fracturing society because of poverty? No, there is something deeper about social cohesion that has profound implications for all of society.
- We must be honest about the scope of this agenda, and not back down from it.

In this line of reasoning, we must also conceptualize the three pillars of development.

- Pillars do not exist without purpose, they are there to hold up a building.
 - o this is the same with development.
- The means of development may be strengthening all three pillars,
- but let's not confuse this with the ends, which must be lives well lived.

III.

On rethinking the role of the Commission. There are a number of very practical suggestions that could be applied.

- The NGO Committee, for its part, is planning to integrate the SDGs into the Copenhagen Commitments, demonstrating that there already is tremendous coherence.
 - o And this kind of integration of the two documents could serve well to guide the Commission going forward.
 - o It could assist with monitoring those elements from the SDGs that were also touched upon in Copenhagen.
- For the first couple of years of this agenda, perhaps we could integrate this commission in some way with the statistical commission – in full support of what Francesca said earlier.
 - o We do a good job of treasuring what we measure, but we still haven't learned how to measure what we truly treasure.
 - o Perhaps some time on that would be worthwhile, and this endeavor could be shared by all the functional commissions.
- Looking at the political realities of the UN, perhaps it's time the Commission take on a Ministerial approach. I needn't delve into the details about why.
- Lastly, there is an important issue of communication here that we have to be honest about.
 - o Much of the power of the SDGs is normative – in addition to its practical implications.

- The norms established by this agenda can have tremendous power if linked to and understood at the local and national levels.
 - Communicating these norms is just as important as creating them.
- Right now we are in a communication heyday, and yet domestic and regional institutions don't know what is happening at the UN.
- A tremendous communications endeavor, utilizing social media, Civil Society and the UN itself, must take place if we expect anything we do here to be transformative.
- If the outcomes of the next CSocD, whatever they may be, can be effectively communicated, that alone would be a big win for the agenda.