

Informal Working Breakfast on the Post 2015 Development Agenda, 11 June 2014

TOPIC: Universality, differentiation, and our shared responsibilities

Organized by the Bahá'í International Community and International Movement ATD Fourth World

A diverse group of stakeholders¹ held a working breakfast to discuss key issues on the topic of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) and the Post-2015 sustainable development agenda. The following are highlights of the discussion:

TRANSITION TO SDGs

- High-level document uses language of 'shared responsibilities,' this has political connotation in the UN context. Prefer to consider in terms of shared goals and differentiated responsibilities
- Frame of reference key; how we construct the problem has profound effect on how we construct solution
- In Rio1992 issues around CBDR clearer. There was a stronger connection to issue of emissions: developed countries had higher emissions and that steps were needed for development of the south
- The UN development cooperation system operates on a north-south model which is designed to help developing countries. It is not sufficient for south-south cooperation and has become more fragmented
- Security Council also doesn't reflect current realities. Willingness to revisit this critical matter not found.
- SDG process challenged countries to elaborate universal goals; but it is difficult to transition to this perspective. How do we ensure universality?
- Logic of MDGs made sense at that time; they were focused on developing countries. Bold decision made in Rio to integrate pillars of development, but difficult to implement.
 - 2 reasons universal goals needed: (1) shifting view of world over past 20 years from a binary to a continuum and (2) new challenges require collective action (e.g. overuse of oceans).
- WTO has lost respect in many ways. Their provisions are focused on LDCs while some major economies remain underdeveloped. The largest number of poor live in mid-income countries

GOALS/ CBDR

- CBDR critical to achieve SDGs. Goals should be universal, but commitment differentiated. Goals are shared but commitments and efforts to obtaining them should take into account national realities, i.e. strength/weakness of institutions, resources and time frames
- Goals do not pose an issue, but problems arise in connection with commitments.
- What are graduated responsibilities? Graduation is differentiation that is more nuanced than rich and poor (even within G77 and China, LDCs, etc)
- To be truly universal, the new agenda must be applicable to all member states; no part of world should be left at the status quo. Disparity in terms of GDP of southern countries shows universality not achieved yet
- Differentiation needed, especially in area of sustainable consumption patterns. Rio sets expectation that developed countries take the lead
- How will CBDR be reflected in SDGs? Goals have to be quantifiable. How to measure differentiation?

ODA/ PARTNERSHIPS

- New commitments coming from SDGs are ambitious and will need reliable financing and support. ODA is the main resource, but seems like a drop in the bucket because so many areas are being addressed. ODA is accountable to donors and that is a problem; but it's still the most reliable source of funding.
- Beyond ODA, the corporate world can be a significant source of money. It will be important to build

¹ Permanent Missions: Argentina, Brazil, Ethiopia, France, Kenya, Organisation internationale de la Francophonie, Peru, Singapore, United Kingdom. Representatives from UN: UN Children's Fund, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UN Non-Governmental Liaison Services, UN Volunteers. Non-governmental organizations: Bahá'í International Community, CIVICUS, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, International Committee for October 17, International Presentation Association, Loretto Community, Medical Mission Sisters, Plan International, Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, Salesian Missions, Save the Children, SOS Children's Villages, University of Oxford, World Council of Peoples for the United Nations, World Vision International.

partnerships, but to scale up with private sector requires a better framework. Member states do not have a framework to assess validity of public-private partnerships – no accountability mechanisms, no reporting commitments, no reporting relationship to assess how much money and under what terms and conditions.

- Private sector should have social responsibility, but there is conflict of interest with public sectors aims. What about targets that don't benefit private sector? What are social responsibilities of corporations? How to make sure corporations pay appropriate tax rate?
- July 2015 financing for development conference in Ethiopia will have in-depth discussion on taxes.
- At Rio+20 corporate partners said they wanted direction from UN but felt UN doesn't have clarity. Time to clarify expectations from corporations who have exacted profit and contributed to current predicament
- Without progress in connection with CBDR, unlikely to create kinds of partnerships we want in P2015
- Reference to CBDR in chapeau of the SDGs is not legally binding but weight of UN consensus gives it power. Many legally binding treaties are ineffectual; but there can be transformation through consensus
- From historical perspective work moving fast; transformation requires consensus and movement is happening
- More than 10 recent initiatives from SG with private sector; all are in partnership with tech companies, but none are technology related. These companies help to feed children but don't offer assistance in their area of expertise, like by facilitating access to technology.
- What makes us think major corporations will be interested in anything other than their bottom line?
- The tech transfer needs to start with coordination within the UN system. Almost every part of UN has a tech initiative that other parts of UN are uninformed about
- Need to control and regulate UN side of UN-private sector partnerships so that Member States are fully informed of processes and corporate partners are not abusing the UN banner.
- Previous versions of text more palatable in that they could fit in different parts of document, but latest version focuses on peace and security and not clear how it links to rule of law
- Document heavily weighted on social elements and human rights and this captures aspirations of NGOs