

Informal Working Breakfast on the Post 2015 Development Agenda, 25 April 2014

TOPIC: Post-2015 and climate: Highlighting appropriate environmental targets for the SDGs

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

A diverse group of stakeholders¹ convened to informally discuss key issues on the topic of climate and the Post-2015 sustainable development agenda. The following are highlights of the discussion:

- The merit of the Co-chair's latest document and the political significance of the relationship between climate change and Post-2015 were acknowledged. Work of the OWG is unprecedented in its efforts to progress our thinking around development and climate change.
- In the Post-2015 agenda the approach is to break down the silos that have been predominant. In previous years, development, fighting poverty and a collection of different issues were thought of as problems to be solved sequentially and with different approaches, methodologies and tools. While this approach generated expertise and dedication, its limitations became apparent as externalities were overlooked:
 - This approach was structured as a 'zero-sum' game, i.e. taking money away from solving one problem to solve another; this made it difficult to have a sense of unity
 - Made ODA difficult as countries were seen as falling into two categories – 'northern' spending money on 'other' countries (who were not 'like us'); trying to get away from that approach.
 - Development problems tend to be more and more complex and less and less fragmented
- Climate change is at the heart of the Post-2015 approach and can't be addressed in isolation– one of the most cross cutting issues; it is a root cause of a number of problems (e.g. poverty); it aggravates all other problems (e.g. food security, violence); it is a notorious tragedy of the commons
- To solve global warming, you have to uncouple carbon emissions from growth; need to shift growth paradigm to a non-carbon path
- Perceptions about climate change need to expand beyond purely environmental context to appreciate intimate connection between climate, development and poverty reduction; this will facilitate shift in climate change negotiation from cost-sharing exercise to benefit-sharing one
- Robust and transparent rules need to be put in place
- Latest IPCC report says that while climate change has global relevance it disproportionately affects people in poverty; recognizes countries have different priorities and different capacities to address those goals
- Only a stand alone climate goal is off the table; UNFCCC is the venue to address goals related to climate
- Growing consensus that mainstreaming is the way to go, i.e. 'placing poverty at center of any target'
- Groups have considered the OWG's 140 targets to identify 10 targets that worked to mainstream climate from different perspectives; judged targets against criteria including: ambitious, feasible, measurable, easily communicated, harmonized with extant international agreements, and multi-sectoral impact.
- Issue areas where targets really fit were food security, energy production, land use, and health
- Not every action necessary for climate mitigation will show immediate benefits in development sector
- Discussion needed to identify steps towards achieving targets. Establishing targets may obfuscate the issue, i.e. need to reduce emissions. Agreed that we need to stop putting CO2 in the atmosphere, can't agree on how and when to start – major problem; we must commit and agree to the concept and act.
- We should consider climate as a characteristic of the planet rather than a problem to be solved; approach it as a trust to be preserved; include ideas like 'conserving characteristics'
- Unless causes are correctly identified, solutions won't be effective

¹ Permanent Missions represented: Brazil, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Liberia, Peru, Philippines, Sweden, Uganda. Representatives from UN: UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UN Development Programme. Non-governmental organizations represented: Amnesty, Bahá'í International Community, Catholic Agency for Overseas Development, Climate Advisers, International Committee for October 17, International Presentation Association, NYU McSilver Poverty Institute, Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, Oxford University, Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, Salesian Missions, Soroptimist International, UNANIMA International, Women's Environment and Development Organization

- Thinking about climate change as part of the development agenda, what are solution centric approaches? Is it enough to cut emissions?
- Care must be taken to avoid creating competition between new and existing frameworks; can't create targets that are in competition with those that are being negotiated with the UNFCCC, e.g. SCP.
- Need to tackle social awareness – education and consciousness around individual's actions and choices.
- Climate change can be tackled in energy and infrastructure but not through specific climate targets
- Over long-term that which benefits climate change enhances development and vice-versa. It's a win-win situation; how can we make that really clear to people?
- Concerned about conversations that suggest that we can't do anything about the UNFCCC. P2015 is not legally binding. The goal is for targets on climate to raise ambition. Then, we can allow some overlap.
- One group has looked at several targets including: safe and appropriate technologies (unencumbered by IP laws), comprehensive climate change awareness raising and education (taking into account different generations as well as women and men)
- Instead of the language of “mainstreaming”, the word “integrating” suggested
- Two main areas of concern: (1) How effective have we been in tackling climate change? Inaction – that's why we've been ineffective. (2) Differentiation – how can we address fairly and practically?
- How can we be effective in involving all relevant actors in this subject? (e.g. Montreal Protocol has been seen as one of most effective international instruments, one reason is that it captured the commitment of the private sector). How do we involve sectors that have been marginalized in this debate? SG's world climate summit in September will also be helpful in securing key partnerships
- Industrialized countries have to take greater responsibilities
- Agreement echoed that mainstreaming of climate change is needed, but must be comprehensive.
- Supportive of current articulation of the goal on climate change – allows for prudence and flexibility, acknowledges importance of legally binding agreement in UNFCCC.
- Tendency is to associate inaction with UNFCCC; can be more optimistic considering the advances made. Just 20 years ago, climate change policies were considered only OECD policies! No longer; big progress.
- Good outcome arose from COP in Warsaw: every country is considering a global deal (no nation voiced that they don't want to be part of it). Optimism about Lima and Paris negotiation.
- MOI question remains; critical to progress. Does implementation discussion go in lock step with goals?
- Need to ask who is going to pay for the policies? Points to need for reform in financial system.
- Point was raised in dialogue with GA president: what will be role of private sector in the agenda? Who pays so the government can take this seriously? What mechanisms ensure that those with money pay?
- The question: “who is going to pay?” kills the issue because framed like this, nobody wants to pay.
- Need to have 'green taxation' so that it is smart taxation rather than more taxation; have to be careful as to how issues are presented so that you provide the right incentives
- One thing we can do immediately: stop paying subsidies or start phasing it out
- The cost of maintaining a big economy and transforming it to low carbon economy is huge; costs will be much higher for developed economy than developing economies
- Global economy is interwoven, if you make a tremor somewhere it will affect all others
- There are 2 types of paying: paying for effects and paying for changes; the third world is already paying for these effects, e.g. destruction of ecosystems
- There is a need to promote responsibility; those who caused climate change should feel responsible
- Mainstreaming is critical and makes sense; concern that mainstreaming will not happen
- Four challenges identified:
 - Scope/objective – UNFCCC main objective is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; while Post-2015 is about development so its scope is much broader
 - UNFCCC is legally binding; SDGs are 'aspirational'
 - Sequencing – timelines are not the same; Paris in Dec 2015 months after SDG/P2015 agreement
 - Setbacks have been witnessed over the last few years in UNFCCC – the bottom up approach