Preliminary Caucus Meeting, Week VII
Uncertain Times, Unsettled Lives: Shaping our Future in a Transforming World

Process: We will have four groups: Cambodia, Colombia, Kenya, and Pakistan. If you are a member of a country group, you are automatically in that group for our discussion; please select which of the three questions each of you will answer. Representatives from donor agencies will 'count off' to be assigned to a specific country group. We will have the groups meet for about 30 minutes on Tuesday, and on Thursday share key issues raised in their discussions with the class. Please remember, we are combining representatives from aid-receiving countries with those from donor agencies so you can share your insights from that vantage point.

The 2003 *Human Development Report* identified "structural impediments" to growth that have affected various countries' efforts to alleviate poverty. It contended that seeking to achieve the MDGs could provide practical solutions to many of these problems, requiring "policy changes by rich countries and much larger investments in infrastructure, disease control and environmental sustainability by poor countries, backed by more financial assistance from donor governments." The 2004 *HDR* built on these pragmatic issues, adding another dimension that advocates incorporating multiculturalism into human development strategies so as to mitigate conflict and tension between groups and provide "effective mechanisms of power sharing" to provide "respect for their cultural identities . . . for social justice, for greater political voice . . . for recognition and respect."

The 2005 *HDR* made a number of pragmatic suggestions on how ODA can be made more effective and truly prioritize human development. The 2006 *HDR* drew connections between accessing one of the most basic human needs – clean water – with having (or not having) power and wealth, and then laid out various ways of rethinking aid governance and mobilizing support to get clean water. The 2007/08 *HDR* warns the global community that the one single precious resource we share – Planet Earth – is in peril, and only by acknowledging issues of equity, social justice and political responsibility can the kinds of accomplishments already achieved in the arena of human development be maintained and expanded. *HDR 2009* highlighted how poverty affects mobility, human security, and a range of factors affecting overall development. In effect, it is a handbook on policy dialogue as it identified problem areas and tentative solutions from both aid receiving countries and the global donor community. *HDR 2010* sought to recap these various arguments and move the argument forward on how best to ensure viable human development.

The *HDR 2011/12* explored the integral links existing between environmental sustainability and equity, showing how these are critical to expanding human freedoms and that progress in human development cannot continue without bold steps to reduce environmental risks and inequality. *HDR 2013* acknowledged that power relations between states and regions in the world have been changing, and that southern states are now viable contenders in the global arena. *HDR 2014* posited that the global donor community should consider the question of vulnerability more than poverty, and using the 'capabilities approach' lays out explicit steps for the global community to tackle deep, systemic vulnerability and build resilience in vulnerable communities. *HDR 2015* argued that sustainable work – whereby workers earn a livable income that contributes to a country's economy – is a necessity to alleviate poverty. It moved away from active involvement on the part of governments to control their economies. *HDR 2016* argued that while globalization has integrated people, markets and work, human development remains uneven. Only by changing national policy priorities complemented by actions at the global level, particularly "reformed global governance with fairer multilateralism," can

we attain human development for everyone. *HDR 2019* argues that "something in our globalized society is not working" due to "deep and rising frustration with inequalities." It claims that we are seeing the crest of a wave of inequality and to move beyond it will require tackling entrenched interests, the social and political norms embedded deep within a nation's or a group's history and culture. The 2022 Special Report "New threats to human security in the Anthropocene: Demanding greater solidarity" argues that while steady improvements had been made in human development worldwide, the COVID pandemic resulted in huge upheavals: "The Covid-19 pandemic has now affected everyone, imperiling every dimension of our wellbeing and injecting an acute sense of fear across the globe. For the first time, indicators of human development have declined -- drastically, unlike anything experienced in other recent global crises. The pandemic has infected and killed millions of people worldwide. It has upended the global economy, interrupted education dreams, delayed the administration of vaccines and medical treatment and disrupted lives and livelihoods. In 2021, even with the availability of very unequally distributed Covid-19 vaccines, the economic recovery that started in many countries and the partial return to schools, the crisis deepened in health, with a drop in life expectancy at birth." The new *HDR 2021-22* takes this argument that we live in "uncertain times" resulting in "unsettled lives" further by arguing that there are ways to navigate uncertainty to expand human development.

Bearing the progression of the *Human Development Reports* in mind and the importance the global development assistance community places on achieving the SDGs, ***please turn to the questions below:***

i. ***For country representative A***: What are the structural impediments, or barriers, that appear to have a negative effect on your country's ability to eliminate poverty, promote social justice and implement policies to promote sustainability and equity? As far as you can ascertain, what has been the impact of the COVID pandemic on your country's overall wellbeing? What are the greatest uncertainties facing your country today?

ii. ***For country representative B***: Which of the Millennium Development Goals had your country achieved, and what do you attribute as the reasons behind your success in achieving them? Did democratization or good governance play any role in helping you to do this? If so, what; if not, to what do you attribute your success *despite* the lack of democratization or good governance? What are your priorities now in the era of the SDGs?

iv. ***For country representative C***: Given what you know about realities 'on the ground' in your country, what specific policies are you aware of that are focusing on eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality in education, reducing child mortality, ensuring environmental sustainability, and encouraging equity, especially for diverse classes, groups and cultures? Does your country have any policies specifically to address democratization and/or good governance?

v. ***For donor organization representatives:*** In what ways do representatives from donor agencies anticipate that they can support these efforts? What constraints – impediments, barriers – exist which may prevent them from doing so? How might these barriers be overcome, specifically, in this country? Which of the SDGs are of the greatest importance to your current development assistance priorities and portfolio? How has the COVID pandemic affected your work and priorities? Which author helps you understand best the distinct challenges that countries you are seeking to support are facing in the arena of democratization and good governance, and what is it that author is arguing that resonates with you?