

Preliminary Caucus Meeting, Week VIII
The Way Ahead

The UNDP *HDR* asserts that while globalization has integrated people, markets, environmental challenges, and myriad other institutions and processes, human development remains uneven. The challenge today for aid-receiving countries and donors alike is how best to integrate people who have been left out while also fostering transparent governance values like participation and accountability as we move towards achieving the SDGs. In other words, how to bring back ‘hope’ in this era of uncertainty.

Process for this week: We will have eight groups: 4 consisting of representatives from distinct countries, 1 of bilateral donors, 2 of multilateral donors, and 1 INGO. As we did last week, we will break down into small groups for a while; this will continue into Thursday’s class. We will then reconvene to report on our responses, which should be based both on the readings and your groups’ experiences. This should enable those who have not yet done so to catch up with the readings for this week, and apply them to the questions below.

COUNTRY GROUPS

Simply meet with the other two members of your group (i.e., all 3 members) for this assignment.

Your country faces a number of difficulties in responding to the new challenges of the emerging world Order, the COVID pandemic and achieving the SDGs. An associated issue is that the international community has charged your government with poor, autocratic governance, which is further aggravating your peoples’ opportunities for new forms of sustainable work as many businesses are reluctant to invest in your country. After briefly identifying the challenges people in your country face with respect to viable employment and the challenges your government has had with transparency and good governance, frankly discuss what you collectively consider to be the most effective kinds of policy decisions you can make to promote measures to foster enabling conditions to move forward and include groups which have mostly been left out and to give hope to your people in these uncertain times. Be prepared to share the following responses with the class:

- What are the greatest challenges your country faces in ensuring transparency and good governance, encouraging peoples’ participation, and giving hope in these uncertain times? What are the sources of these challenges?
- What role has conflict within your country played that is limiting peoples’ work and civic participation opportunities? What impact has the COVID pandemic had on the economy and people’s economic opportunities?
- How might improving governance lead to more viable work options for your country’s people?
- What policies exist in your country or what kinds of policy shifts do you anticipate you might make to lead to a rebalancing in the world of work to viably include greater numbers of people in enjoying the positive results of development?
- For those countries where this is an issue: why do you surmise that the international community is more focused on governance concerns in your country than on supporting your efforts to alleviate poverty and help you achieve the SDGs?
- What do you surmise would be the most viable ways that your country can work with donors to improve your chances to achieve at least some of the SDGs in your country?

BILATERAL DONORS

We have read that mainstreaming and integrating good governance is central to development planners' efforts to improve socioeconomic development today, but donors go about achieving this goal very differently. Where in this debate does your organization fall: that the point of mainstreaming governance is to insert political goals directly into socioeconomic sector programming-- so that, for example, a health program is also explicitly aimed at furthering certain governance values, like participation and accountability-- or is integration primarily about methods rather than goals – injecting more political understanding and process-focused approaches into development planning? What are your organization's priorities that contribute to this view? How do you respond to criticisms that bilateral donors, on the whole, are more focused on good governance, transparency and human rights concerns than on supporting efforts to alleviate poverty and build resilience? Do you have any particular concerns in this regard concerning Cambodia, Colombia, Kenya, and/or Pakistan?

MULTILATERAL DONORS

Group 1 (*2 FROM WORLD BANK AND 1 FROM UNICEF*): How does your organization regard your success on achieving the MDGs, what are your priorities on achieving the SDGs, and how has the COVID pandemic affected your priorities and operations? How can multilateral donors best promote transparency, civic participation, sustainable practices, and hence good governance? Can multilateral donors adequately promote priorities such as gender equality, environmental and ecological protection, and human rights? If you think they can, do you have any explicit examples you can share?

Group 2 (*1 FROM WORLD BANK, 1 FROM UNICEF, AND UNIFAD MEMBER*): How is your organization responding to new challenges associated with integrating people from previously disenfranchised groups into ongoing development processes? How can multilateral donors be particularly effective in influencing other donors and aid receiving countries (SDG 17) to address related challenges and hence alleviate poverty? What additional roles might they play in promoting good governance and containing corruption, either from external or domestic pressures? Do you have any examples of them doing so?

INGOS

Both members of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Society and Mercy Corps groups are in this.

How do you see INGOs uniquely situated to address global concerns of promoting health and education, good governance, transparency, participation, and alleviating the stresses of these uncertain times? How is this work affected by INGOs partnering with bilateral and multilateral donors? What are the possibilities for giving a new orientation to development priorities and practices when there are political and economic interests, both external and internal, determined to keep the status quo?