



Background Note for Discussion

Plenary 4: Sustainable Globalisation

Background

More than 20 years ago, the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development – the Brundtland Commission – established the concept of sustainable development as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainability in development therefore requires both economic growth and social stability, placing them in a context of vigilance regarding environmental degradation. In this approach, the concepts of growth and environmentalism do not compete but complement. They create a win-win for present-day development efforts, especially as they can benefit the poor, and they also aim to provide for future generations, who will inherit a planet for which, ideally, solutions to environmental challenges have been acted upon with foresight and a long-term perspective.

Sustainable globalisation takes the idea behind sustainable development even further, adding to it a dimension of the global market. The speed and dynamism of economic globalisation, and the now widely-recognised lack of equitable distribution of growing worldwide wealth, bring the sustainability issue into sharp relief. How can markets continue to grow, and the demand for labour and from consumers expand, sustainably – as set out by the Brundtland Commission two decades ago – ie, in a way that takes heed of both present and future needs? What are the consequences of this global growth for natural resources, and how will the poorest benefit?

Among these many challenges, sustainable globalisation raises issues of governance – of finding the public policy and market solutions to manage growth in a way that can better serve the world, now and in the future. In the past decade, governments and the private sector have increasingly taken the concerns of achieving sustainable globalisation on board. Companies are ever more committed to non-financial bottom line results, such as in environment, labour or human rights, while governments and policy makers have created new incentives for linking sustainability to growth, such as in the solutions to mitigate against climate change.

The management of the global economy, with all its uncertainties, is not being left to markets alone; one need only consider the impact in the past year of the credit crisis in the sub-prime mortgage market and the increasing interventions of regulators to support the financial sector. Managing globalisation in a sustainable fashion, with particular concern for its impact on the poor, has also been part of the ethos behind commitments to increase development assistance and to achieving development targets, such as those in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), set out to be achieved by 2015.

Sustainable globalisation requires an ongoing awareness of how people around the world live, in relation to land, water and other natural resources, and how they benefit from the marketplace. The more globally integrated trade becomes, the more the need for the articulation of the needs of people, especially those who are often left behind, such as poor women or youth. It is critical then, that the governance of the global economy enable the voice of people to be heard. Civil society has a crucial role to play to promote citizen concerns and to hold both the public and private sector accountable to their commitments to achieve growth that benefits all and builds a liveable future.

The IACC Stream and Plenary on Sustainable Globalisation

Sustainable globalisation requires the successful implementation of corruption prevention and enforcement measures and concerted action between the main actors of society on a local, national and international level.

The purpose of this stream is to examine the challenges that corruption poses to sustainability and globalisation and the effectiveness of current anti-corruption efforts undertaken by the public sector, private sector and civil society, as well as the achievement of particular development goals as set out in the MDGs. A special focus is on innovation and the need for partnerships. This stream includes, but is not limited to, the following issues:

- International instruments and cooperation for tackling corruption (UNCAC, OECD etc.), judicial corruption, prosecution and enforcement.
- Anti-corruption/bribery programmes, public contracting, public-private partnerships, voluntary initiatives (such as Global Compact, PACI) and emerging trends in private sector corruption.
- MDGs, transparency in basic service delivery (health, education, sanitation etc.)
- Access to information and new information technologies.
- Investigative journalism and whistle blowing.

Plenary Objectives

The aims of the plenary are as follow:

1. To discuss the meaning of sustainable globalisation for the governance/anti-corruption community.
2. To show the particular threats of corruption to a sustainable development approach.
3. To examine the role of various actors (public sector, private sector, civil society) in adopting and promoting good governance for a sustainable development.
4. To look at emerging trends (such as climate change, restructure of international finance, etc) and explore corruption threats and their impact on sustainable development goals.

Suggested Plenary questions – for participants to consider as they prepare their remarks:

1. How do good governance solutions apply to sustainable globalisation?
2. What are the greatest concerns regarding corruption in sustainable globalisation?
3. Does corruption threaten sustainability or globalisation, or both?
4. What are examples of new or successful partnerships among the various stakeholders in the area of sustainable globalisation?
5. What are the key issues that need to be addressed in sustainable globalisation? How can issues of transparency, accountability and integrity be applied to make for positive outcomes?
6. And, for reflection: Has globalisation exerted an excessive burden on the capacity of the world to pursue environmentally sustainable solutions? Has globalisation exacerbated corruption? If not, then how can the poor and future generations be assured greater equity: a larger stake in global growth? If yes, what needs to be most urgently done to rectify this?