

Prof. Lidia Brito

It is indeed an honor to speak to such a distinguished assembly of politicians, practitioners in such a beautiful environment. And coming from Mozambique, we don't have these kinds of buildings. We have other things but it is indeed a pleasure to be here and thank you very much to the organizers for bringing me here. Before I start, I have already to apologize. I may have to leave before the discussion. I have a plane to catch and I am sorry that I may not be here for the full discussion of this panel. As you can see, the title is quite pretentious. Principally, when you think about the southern perspective, the South its very big, it's very diverse, and really what I will do is to concentrate more on the African continent, my continent, and in the experience of my country, Mozambique.

I think throughout today we saw the pictures and talked about poverty in the world. It's one of our biggest challenges and we need to address it. But allow me to give a definition of poverty that you may not agree with, but in Mozambique and Africa – poverty for us is that we can't use and access the resources that we often have. I mean, we have beautiful people, I'm a forester so I need to show forestry, and we have beautiful forests, and the forests and of course we have other natural resources. But the truth is that poverty means that we can't use these resources to live better to develop to be happy. And this of course increases our vulnerability, our human security decreases, and we become more poor and less capable of using these resources and therefore trapped in poverty. And it's not even a static trap. It's a trap that pulls you down all the time. You become poorer and poorer. And the question is, can we break it? Well, why not? I mean, we need to have good governance and clear development policies that will bring equality and democracy to our societies. We need access to services that will give us quality education, good healthcare, electricity, and water so that we can access knowledge and technology to be more productive and mobilize investment that will at the end of the day help us to develop. So really, what we are talking about is the MDGs and I think they are great. But there is a problem with this way of getting out of poverty, there is more to it than there really seems.

The first issue is that for debt to change and the economy to go upwards, we need to concentrate on people. Development models have to be centered on people. By being inclusive, by looking at local realities and addressing the common good, we need to mobilize the local knowledge and innovation that exist in society. We need to look at our potential as a country to solve global issues. We need a culture of science. And we need a culture of science because only that culture will give us two very important drivers for people-centered development. One is ethics and the second one is empowerment. And this for me has huge implications when we look at scientific policies. Most of the time we think of science policies at the top, above all. If we are to try to break that trap of poverty, science policies have to be foundations for other policies. We can't achieve the millennium development goals if we don't use science as a foundation for our interventions. And it's even more deeper than that, and I think Prof. Max-Neef said that beautifully this morning. We need values and principles. Values and principles that are embedded in our science programs but that are strengthened through the mechanisms we

use to implement our policies. The second issue is that coming out of poverty is a little bit more complicated in the world we live in today. Local decisions have global impacts. We are facing changes in our earth, and we don't know what's coming. Knowledge and technology become very important, and we saw the last speaker showing on some of the graphs, the intensity of technology, every one of them influenced by the digital divide.

But let me take the first point only of these. Because the major problem is that there is this belief that if you have resources, and we do, if we receive technology, and we are granted access to markets we will have development and growth. It may be true for a few but this one will definitely increase the gap between the haves and the have-nots. There is more to this and the first one is power relations—how is power distributed? How is power used to take decisions that affect all of us? Terms of trade, you know, how are we trading? Is our raw material going to Asia or to Europe treated the same way in the communities we have to import from? So we are talking again about values and good governance. It is not only at the national level. We are talking about values and governance at global level and this is something that we need to address if we want indeed to have the quality that we need to solve absolute poverty, to create the autonomy that we need to choose our own paths of development. They don't have to be all the same, and we need to have the possibility to choose so that all of us can be happy and have joy, because at the end of the day this is what we want. And again, going back to the first point of local decisions having global impact, you can see that the decision-making parties. Very narrow and very at the top. And we in Africa are sometimes even outside that funnel. We get things secondhand. It means that we get all the bad impacts, and very few benefits for those decisions. And we need to have strategies as Africans regarding how to change that. How can we influence the decision-making and how can developed countries also look at us in a different way so that true partnership can be developed.

I will give three strategies for us Africans and I'm not Danish or from the World Bank but I just choose three like our speaker last night. It could be many more but I want to concentrate on these three. One is quality education for all and I'm putting emphasis on the quality. We talk about education for all; it's not enough. We need quality education for all because we really need to transform mentalities and visions and have the ability to act on them and to build on them. We are talking about building the conviction and the commitment to pursue sustainable development. So education alone is not enough; quality has to be something we look for constantly. The second one I mentioned already, the importance of science policies and their position as a foundation policy that will not only give the knowledge, the understanding, and the comprehension that we need to act and to choose the ways we want to act, but also the passion and the compassion to really pursue sustainable development. The third one is networks. We need networks. We need networks to deeply understand the factors that influence the policymaking process at the global level, and most of the time we don't understand. We need capacity to contextualize the policies at the national and regional level so that we can critically understand the impacts and come with alternative solutions to those problems. And this is very important for Africa. We unfortunately don't have yet the critical mass to do it by ourselves so we need strongly as Africans to invest in that. We need to go beyond the

networks of scientists. We do this very well and naturally. We have colleagues, friends—we communicate, we change ideas. But we need to institutionalize these networks so that is a common research agenda and synergies for sustainability and growth of that critical mass that is not only Africa but is mobilized for Africa. So maybe we should think about networks of excellence. But I don't think it's enough. It's a good step, but we need to go farther. We need to go farther.

We need to guarantee that our research institutes are embedded in their own societies. We need to guarantee that we are able as research institutes to make and develop partnerships with government, with media, with civil society. We need to engage primary schools, we need to engage teachers who alter the education systems; nurses; we need these network; we need to be able to support the capacity that is endogenous, that is already there so that we can indeed have a much stronger movement toward sustainable development. And if we do this, if we guarantee that our single center in Maputu, in Beira, in Cape Town, here in Vienna, is embedded in its own society. As the networks of excellence start working and building, each of them brings with them its own societies, values, aspirations, dreams, and maybe, maybe with these kinds of networks, maybe we can indeed get a better world.

And this is very important because if science and technology works for development, we have to guarantee that the cycle of knowledge in society is complete. So basically what we are talking about is that we do this very well, but rarely. In fact we don't do this if we don't have the networks in society. I would like to also give some—more than 3 now because I am an African and I have a lot of recommendations for our partners—but I think the main ones are to continue to support and strengthen support for an integrated approach to people-centered development. Support networks and collaboration for research for Africa. Not about Africa, it's for Africa. You can be doing research about Europe for Africa and that's fine, that's what we need. Support networks to build our capacity and skill development. Increase financial support. We have pilots everywhere. They don't create this movement we need; they don't mobilize the social energy that we need to change and to fight and to gain the war against absolute poverty. So we need to scale up; we need more investments. We need a multi-stakeholder approach and more partnerships.

Allow me to finish with a few remarks related to the enabling environment. For this all to happen, the first thing is leadership. Leadership that will unite us in a common vision and a vision that focus on the common good, on the public good so that ownership, we can own these vision, and we can be the actors to implement these visions. So that we have the autonomy to choose how we want to act and when we want to act. We need to build conviction so that we prioritize the actions that have the widest impact. It's very hard to choose when you are poor. If you don't have the leadership, if you don't have the ownership, you will not have the conviction to make very hard choices that you have to do. You need the commitment so that once you make the choices you go for it. You need relearning capacity. Sometimes you need the capacity to unlearn, to relearn again. And this gives us a very, very important responsibility as scientists. We need to go back to education as we do research. We need to constantly feed the education sector so that

all the advances, all the understanding, the conventions, can feed into the education system. And finally, we need ethics. We need to build true partnerships. We are all responsible for building a fair and a better world for all. To achieve that we need partnerships and networks at the national, regional, continental, and global levels. And that is why I feel that is so important that we are here today and tomorrow to see how can we work together for a better world. I thank you very much.