

Ms. Sarah Staveteig

Good evening. Tonight I find myself in an unusual position. I am a junior scholar commenting on no less than 40 presentations by my senior colleagues. I was asked to speak from the perspective of a young scientist and well certainly I have no illusions that I could possibly represent the perspectives of young scientist. I will with some humility try to offer some central cross-cutting themes, to make some suggestions, and to point us towards some more ways forward. The rapporteurs have already done an excellent job of talking about the conference topics so I'll move on to what I think are some key cross-cutting themes that I took away.

First is this notion of increasing inequality, and perhaps this is not the best phrase but the sense that in the last two decades we have seen tremendous progress particularly for elites but we are still seeing a group of people who are the sort of bottom billion. That not only are they not faring well or haven't improved, but in many cases have had real losses. And these groups tend to face compounding vulnerabilities; that is, not only are they poor, not only are they more at risk of environmental problems, but also they tend to be in countries where there is conflict which then makes it difficult to assist them and so on and so forth; and one of the main challenges we face at the beginning of this new century is trying to assist these desperately poor people. I think development much more than economics is a theme that was raised by many speakers including Allister McGregor and Berit Olsson; and many of us have talked about how an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure. In terms of climate change, health, disease, I think this is where IASA in terms of looking towards the future and doing forecasting and helping us figure out the costs and benefits of these alternative scenarios can help point the way and has helped point the way toward prevention. We are all stakeholders in this even if we are far removed from the problems and in luxurious surroundings such as these with plenty to eat and drink. I'll talk about this a little bit more in a minute. I think as many speakers have said IASA is uniquely equipped to address many of the current challenges because it's an international institution, it's independent, and it already has quite a strong reputation and is able to attract a lot of wonderful scholars.

Then I was asked to talk about what was missing. I have changed this to what was underemphasized - after 40 presentations I am not sure what was missing but one thing I think is really important and this is what Manfred Max-Neef talked about was how are languages deployed in terms of development. If I may suggest just one example we talk a lot about sustainability but we very rarely ever use sustainability in the context of the developed world; we only talk about it in terms of development. If we consider our elite Western or even within developing countries elite lifestyles, I think Dr. Pacala had a very powerful presentation where he showed us how it's really only the elites that could make a huge difference in terms of climate change. Belt tightening, as Dr. Chipeta told us, among the poor probably is not the best solution in term of sustainability.

Then a sense of urgency, this I go back and forth on, I think a discussion of our intended audiences was not very well developed, in terms of, we just sort of assume that perhaps policymakers or other scientist or people will come and consult us, but I would suggest to

you that perhaps we need to make more of an effort as scientists to reach out to the broader educated public to try not to cloud our fundamental message in some of the nuance and verbiage of scientific discussion. And this is a very challenging task particularly given the complex science that IIASA does, but one that I think may be important.

And then the discussion of our incentives to act and to fund. When I had discussions the first night with one of the other speakers and I told him I was going to talk about what was missing, and he said well that's easy, action and funding. That was true. I have just come two days ago from Rwanda so a lot of these realities are particularly poignant to me and I have just included some pictures here of people so desperately poor for transportation that they literally hang on to the back of a moving van. And I think it is important to remember that development as we talk about it is not simply about good will or charity but development is really also about our own self interest. If the plane crashes sitting in first class won't help. We may in a sense be sitting in first class and we may be quite comfortable, but if climate change health, infectious diseases, pollution, and other themes that have been developed in the course of these two days catch up with us, the fact that we are comfortable now isn't going to help much and I think it is easy to fall into complacency. In fact as a good scientist there are actually different probabilities, and first class as it turns out, is actually the worst section to be sitting in. I'm sure that's not comforting but the risk of plane crashes are relatively low.

So moving forward I am out of time already and I was asked to be brief. I just want to touch on a few points. I think one crucial key is facing some of the uncomfortable realities confronting the problem of inaction it is true that IIASA is a scientific institute and not an institute of action but I think we need to work on how to communicate some of our findings to a broader set of publics in terms of ultimately influencing the holders of power. The International Panel on Climate Change which as mentioned won the Nobel Prize has been a very powerful model and a very tough model that requires scientific consensus but might be one idea for development. How can we reach the broader educated public? I have talked about this and I would just remind us that politically neutral does not mean that we can't advocate for policy or that we can't express a policy opinion in rather clear and straightforward terms. In fact, I think that the poor and vulnerable of the world are in some ways depending on us to sound the alarm if we feel it is necessary. And for IIASA of course just continuing on the forefront of innovative research, IIASA has a tremendous record and it is easy to become pessimistic. Particularly in the first session this morning when we looked at all the natural erosion and deforestation it's easy to become pessimistic and I share that with Dr. Mokhele. But I think perhaps pessimism is a luxury that we can't afford and we should try to move onward and to reach out to a broader public. Thank you