

Andy White

Thank you. First of all I would like to thank IIASA for the invitation to come and participate in this wonderful event. I have learned a lot; it's an honor to be here to help celebrate IIASA's first 35 years. I think that this conference amply demonstrates that the world needs at least another 35 years of IIASA maybe more. Second I am not going to attempt to try to summarize the excellent presentations during this morning's natural resource session, I think that would be an injustice to the presentations I have only had a few hours to think about it. There are a lot of interesting discussions, in the meantime, so I am not going to try to do that. I will try to pick up on what I identified as key themes that emerged from those discussions and that's what I would like to suggest to you now. I saw three key messages and then I will raise what I see as two key challenges for 2008 and beyond.

The first key message as has been repeated by previous speakers both the presentation and the rapporteurs, is that it's clear that our global, natural resources, whether you look at fish, water, certainly the climate, forests, are in crisis. Not only in crisis; the key message here is that this crisis takes place in the context of extreme and indeed shameful poverty and inequity. Those themes of poverty and inequity were evoked on the very first day, the very first evening speech by Steen Jorgensen, and have carried through all of our discussions, and I think that is a very important message. No longer does it make sense from a scientific or certainly a moral perspective to separate these two. These two are intertwined. Indeed because of booming growth and demand in economic development there will be greater pressure on the limited resources, and without robust and proactive attention to the equity issues to access, there is a very real risk of growing conflict. And some people have already said that we are already beginning to witness the first conflicts of the climate change era. So these two issues are linked and they have to be dealt with together. The business models that we have adopted in many parts of the world as we promoted development have not delivered either sustainable use or poverty reduction. In fact, lots of evidence has been discussed that made the rich richer and poor poorer and it is clear as well that the world simply cannot continue on this path. We know that I am not the first to say that this week; it's not feasible not because we are going to run out of rocks as one of the speakers said quite compellingly it's because we are going to run out of action. And that indeed is what we need to focus on.

The second message that came through the presentations at least for me was that we are not at all organized to deal with this problem. The stock of institutions, the stock of approaches that we have now at our disposal is inadequate. This is not 1945. This is not a challenge of rebuilding preexisting states as Paul Collier and other economists have pointed out in reading the growth and poverty literature and doing the econometric analysis. There are at least 58 countries where these bottom billion are falling apart and they are falling behind. We are not organized to deal with this crisis. The UN is not equipped; it's not designed to deal with it. Arguably I think IIASA is probably more equipped maybe because it came later in the stage to deal with this—where you have a balance that respects the balance of interests. The balance of power and the need for science and the strong role science to leverage change. So it's clear that we have to act.

Lots of people said that it's urgent, but as a number of people said, we can't wait on our governments, we can't wait on international organizations, we can't wait on our private sector to take the lead. Similarly, as was pointed out by another set of presentations, we can't wait for democracy and development to emerge and generate the wealth and the wisdom in the developing countries. As we in the developed countries had the benefit and the fortune of time to incrementally evolve into this wealth and wisdom, relative wisdom, I guess you should say, we can't wait. So, if we can't wait for governments, and we are not going to wait for the private sector, what's left? You are left. You are going to make the change. You, the other citizens in the civil society organizations that you are involved with they are the ones that are going to drive change.

The third message that I derived from these presentations is that not all is lost. Of course there are some of us in the room that see the glass as half full and others half empty. I think that there is compelling evidence that not all is lost. There are lots of good things going on. The model from Costa Rica, the examples from Costa Rica Carlos' presentation reminds us and that's just one example there are lots of good things going on. We have got to build on these new elements of hope. What's new and what works, and here I see things that came from the presentations.

One, there really is a much stronger, more robust civil society in the world today, the developing world in particular than there was 20 years ago, 30 years ago. That matters, that's promising and it's there, driving demands for transparency and accountability of their governments. They are building democracies and I think we need to look at them not as partners. I think it's anachronistic to look at civil society and people as partners. We need to look at them as the drivers; they are not our partners, they are the drivers. We are the drivers; this is civil society in the people of the developing countries and we need to support them. That's one positive change. We need to get behind that.

Second there really is new communication mapping technology that's very promising, I think in some ways arguably cell phones have done more to empower the poor than the plow. Especially when you take into consideration that today's challenges are primarily political. What's keeping people poor are the choices that are made by powerful people dealing with power, and enabling the poor to advance their own aspirations requires taking much better use of this technology, that's promising. And in some ways I think we have not yet really figured out how to best use that—the technology that's at our disposal. Many people are working on it and that's very promising, we need to think more about that.

Thirdly and finally, in terms of what's new and what's positive and what we should get behind, there really are new financial mechanisms and there really are new market opportunities for the poor, All of this demand growth means opportunity for some. Markets as we know don't work for many people, the playing field is not level; we in the developed world have got to deal with the subsidy issue. Subsidizing agriculture, we have to encourage deregulation; markets have got to serve the poor or we all face peril. It's not just them that are suffering, as we all know, all of us will suffer. I know that all of this adds up to kind of a recipe for development that seems to, maybe, lead to chaos, because

I am suggesting that the past approaches of plans, kind of a master plan of how we get it all right, line it all up is just not going to work. But I think that we can put our trust in people, we can put our trust in civil society; that is indeed the only thing that has really delivered democracy and development in the past, why not encourage it and trust it in developing countries?

Finally, I would like to mention two things that I think merit focus in 08. Those encouraged to think about two things that IIASA and other scientist that work on these issues might want to focus on. The first issue is inequity. Arguably this coming year politicians and the public will focus on climate change and I think quite rightly so. Finally, leadership in my country is taking this seriously, some leaders anyway, but arguably, unless we deal with this growing inequity there will be greater poverty and greater conflicts and conflicts that contagion will spread across regions. There will be more conflicts over water, access to resources. In many ways I think that this inequity is the challenge of our time. Because without dealing with this we will not bring effective solutions to climate change, it seems to me. So I would suggest that scientists should focus on equity now that politicians and the public are finally getting on to the climate change issue. We scientist need to think about equity and everything that we do, whether we work on health, whether we work on forestry, whether we work on water, what are the equity dimensions and see what we can do to level the playing field and empower the poor? And I think that IIASA again is well placed, not only has a scientific but also a moral duty to embrace this equity issue and bring its great intellectual minds to this issue and shine a bright light on this so that governments will eventually begin to work on it – that's the role of science.

Secondly, I think that the other issue to focus on in 08 is, we as scientist need to do much better at listening and learning from local people. This room is full of scientists from the North. We have to think this again. My comment is not new, but whom are we doing this research for? And if indeed civil society and local people in countries are the real drivers of democracy and of development, we scientists need to be filling up this room with them. We need to help them, as I think there were excellent arguments made yesterday and the day before and some today about the urgent need to really enable scientific discussion and capacity in countries so that they can design their own answers not our answers, their own answers, and again IIASA is well placed and has a moral duty to do this. And I think arguably it is a win-win, I have always resisted that word but it's a win-win when you work on the equity and inclusion issues empowering local people, then we can all win. Thank you very much.