

Panel Discussion on “The Helsinki Process on Globalization and Democracy: The value-added of multi-stakeholder cooperation in the governance of globalization”

7 November 2007

Co-chairs:

- Dr. Erkki Tuomioja, Member of the Parliament of Finland, former Minister for Foreign Affairs and Co-chair of the Helsinki Process
- Dr. Augustine P. Mahiga, Permanent Representative of the United Republic of Tanzania to the United Nations

Panelists:

- Mr. William Pace, Executive Director, World Federalist Movement www.wfm.org
- Ms. Mary Robinson, President, Ethical Globalisation Initiative www.realizingrights.org
- Mr. Rick Samans, Managing Director, World Economic Forum www.weforum.org
- Mr. Jomo Kwame Sundaram, Assistant Secretary General for Economic Development, UN

The Helsinki Process was launched in 2002 to promote more democratic governance of globalization by fostering cooperation among different stakeholders from North and South. The discussion aimed to give concrete examples and best practices of multi-stakeholders, which could be useful in the context of the UN and the Second Committee.

Dr. Tuomioja opened the session saying that globalization is not the solution to all the problems or the cause of all of them. Indeed, it has caused deficit of democracy, coherence and compliance. But some progress has been made too: in some developing countries life expectancy has grown, adult illiteracy has decrease, etc. Dr. Mahiga said that we have to work to make globalization best for all, and that it has to create equal opportunities for all the people.

Panelist agreed that the international system of governance is not the adequate to deal with the global challenges, such as poverty, inequality, violations of human rights and climate change. Major reforms are required to work on these issues, such as give the civil society an innovative role and to increase the voice of the poor.

Better governance involves active participation of all actors, and the United Nations has to work on this direction. There are some good examples of multi-stakeholders cooperation within the UN system: UN Global Compact, WHO working with private sector, etc.

On the specific issue of climate change, Mr Mahiga said that it is exacerbating poverty, and that it is a global problem that requires global solutions. He also said that the Helsinki Process has to deal with climate change and that it has to provide valuable ideas to the Secretary General.

Some panelist highlighted the need to improve the International Environmental Governance (IEG), and to bring sustainable development to the top of the international agenda.

Mr. Sundaram said that climate change is an intergenerational problem, but at the moment there is no sense of generations on the debate that is going on and it seems that this issue is not going to be addressed in the following years. It is not only a problem of future generations having to deal with our environmental legacy, but it also involves the fact that for the past two centuries the industrialized countries have been emitting carbon dioxide to the atmosphere. The panelist also talked about the need to achieve the financing requirements for mitigation and adaptation.

Mr. Pace exposed the example of big international companies that care about climate change, as this problem affects them too. In fact, some companies have elaborated

recommendations and are working with international organizations in order to change the consumer's behavior and the construction of a new and adequate financial system.