

**Conference**  
**ARE WE ON THE RIGHT TRACK?**  
**PARADIGM REVIEW BY CSOs AS**  
**DEVELOPMENT ACTORS**

Prague, Czech Republic, 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> May 2008

**Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> May 2008**



**Panel Responses to the key findings from the workshops**

*Panelists:*

Rebecca Tanui, Kenya (BEACON)  
T. Rajamoorthy, Malaysia (Third World Network)  
Chico Whitaker, Brazil (World Social Forum International Council)  
Hildegard Hagemann, Germany (VENRO)

*Chair:* Ondřej Kopečný, Czech Republic (Glopolis)

Reacting to the outcomes of the workshop discussions, **Rebecca Tanui**, from BEACON in Kenya, pointed out that there is a development paradox. While the current development paradigm is not sustainable, it has created another global problem. The local impact of climate change has been dramatic. The already impoverished have been the ones affected the most. Biofuels have led to food insecurity. In light of these challenges, she encouraged us to work around strengthening corporate social responsibility and to learn from local communities on developing sustainable models.

Rebecca has also identified emerging powers and their impact in Africa to be an important variable that development actors should take into account in their future work.

The second panel speaker, **T. Rajamoorthy**, has stated that he regarded this conference as a historical encounter with civil society from Eastern Europe. He recognized that there were diverging views on the role of the state and free market economics, marked by historical backgrounds of the participants. He stated that he was looking forward to the next conference to further the dialogue to nuance the views and discover more common ground. He also said that he noted the changing nature of the EU and realised that the EU that he had encountered so far, has been its Western wing.

He also stated that while China has become a challenge for the East as well, it is important to keep a sense of proportion. He stated that being too alarmist against the threat that China is imposing on development will be counter productive.

**Chico Whitaker**, member of World Social Forum International Council, has pointed out that the cooperation between different networks to identify whether we are on the good track has led to a fruitful reflection and said that he would continue to seek opportunities to link with the NGOs in the North to deepen the reflection and his desire is to see more linkage with Eastern Europe. He pointed out the importance of building networks of exchange for learning from each other. While Eastern Europeans have the experience of the transition from socialism to capitalism, others have experienced the transition from capitalism to socialism. These distinct experiences provide us with the basis to deepen the analysis and draw a clearer picture of the limits of social democracy in delivering our goals.

He encouraged us to think how we can promote active and solidary citizenship in our societies. The number of people who know their rights and fight for them is small but even lower is the number of people who know about their rights and fight for the rights of others. He also invited us to reflect on the question of the limits of economic growth.

**Hildegard Hagemann**, the ‘European voice’ of the panel, explained that the focus of our work, as development NGOs, is to improve the livelihood of the poor and marginalized. She stated that when we look at development cooperation from a technical point of view, instead of adopting a human rights based approach, we cannot overcome the tendency that criminalizes poverty.

While governments have committed to reaching the MDGs and are therefore accountable for delivering them, development NGOs need to fill them up with human rights. Improvement of partnership, networking, and adopting a human rights approach can help us reaching sustainable development.

Hildegard also emphasized that development NGOs in Europe have to respect the rights and the ways of their partners. She also stated that the discussions on development paradigms and future challenges have motivated her as they demonstrated that the emphasis put by NGOs on rural development and environmental sustainability proves that civil society is on the right track. Yet, more needs to be done on other strategic issues like migration.

In her closing remarks, Hildegard invited participants from new member states to get more actively involved in CONCORD working groups and said that she was looking forward to finding jointly new ways of working and exploring new approaches.

*Minutes: Melis Alguadis, CONCORD*