



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

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PREVAILING PARADIGMS FOR DEVELOPMENT AND OUR HOPES: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE EAST

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First of all, thank you very much for inviting me to this very interesting conference.

I am from Russia, from Eco-Accord NGOs, based in Moscow and working on environment and sustainable development issues in 12 independent states (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan). In international terminology sometimes these countries are also called NIS (Newly Independent States), or CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States), or EECCA (Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia), or ECONOMIES IN TRANSITION. Today's conference calls the region EAST, or EU NEIGHBOUR COUNTRIES. This is quite a diverse group of countries, which had a common past, most likely a different future but now all these countries are at the stage of transformation from totalitarian to democratic societies, from centralized to market economies. This process goes with different speed and success in different countries, but this transitional period makes it useful to exchange information on problems, lessons and experience learnt within the region.

Eco-Accord actively works in this region on environmental and sustainable development policies, energy and climate change, chemical safety, public participation and education for sustainable development. We also created a EECCA Network on WTO (World Trade Organization), international trade and Sustainable Development. During the last years we organized a lot of multi-stakeholder discussions at regional and national levels (in particular on Rio+5, Rio+10 or WSSD/World Summit on Sustainable Development, WTO, G8) where we touched upon issues related to development. Today I will share some ideas from these discussions.

If we analyze international discussions on development, then we will see that EECCA region is strongly underrepresented at international discussions on development issues, especially on international trade, FFD (Financing for Development) and development cooperation effectiveness. In these discussions usually North and South are represented – but economies in transition of the region don't fit into this North-South formula, although we are also part of the world. Donors don't support NGO projects in this field, or regional NGO networks' participation in international events like UNCTAD/United Nations Conferences on Trade and Development, WTO Ministerial, or FFD or others. So for me this conference is a unique opportunity to share our perspective on development from the East.

SOME KEY ISSUES FOR DEVELOPMENT:

I would like to focus on some issues which participants of the discussions we organized consider as crucial for development.

- **GOOD GOVERNANCE AT NATIONAL AND SUB-NATIONAL LEVELS:**

We think that improving governance is key for the countries of our region.

International assistance could be very important, despite currently it is often not effective enough – but without improving governance in the region we can not solve development problems.

Therefore it is a very important task to create a well-performing government administration, professional, accountable to the people with independent judiciary, respecting rule of law, freedom of the press and opinion, with no corruption, respect for human rights, strong civil society participation in decision-making.

NGOs watch on the process of improving governance is crucial.

- **INTEGRATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES IN POLICIES AT ALL LEVELS**

Despite our governments made commitments on sustainable development, in most cases sustainable development principles have not been integrated in national planning and practice. There are no comprehensive policies in these fields – but as economic, environmental and social problems are interconnected, we can not achieve development without taking these links into account.

- **GLOBAL TRADE WORK FOR PEOPLE**

Making global trade work for people is crucial for achieving sustainable development and eradication of poverty all over the world. It is necessary to ensure that international trade rules and financial development serve sustainable development and protect, fulfill and respect environmental, social and human rights, as well as fundamental labour rights. Developing countries and economies in transition must have the right to determine their own economic and public policies. They should get flexibility and policy space to meet their development needs and national interests, including protection of small farmers, infant industries and the delivery of basic services.

We call for the democratic deficit in WTO to be addressed immediately. This would include a proper democratic review of trade agreements by parliaments; and increasing the capacity and participation of developing countries, and economies in transition, in trade negotiations using impartial advice. We believe civil society should enjoy the same level of participation in the WTO as it does in the UN.

The governments must declare that all countries, when negotiating their WTO membership, should not be charged with WTO-plus obligations or other non-favorable for national development conditions. Economies in transition should be allowed to enjoy the same flexibilities (in particularly, special and differential treatment) as developing countries and, in some cases, least developed countries.

Financing for Development

Better financing is an essential foundation for trade justice. We believe that:

- The HIPC (Heavily Indebted Poor Countries) initiative must be deepened and broadened to include more countries handicapped by debt, including some of the former USSR countries;
- Resources for debt cancellation should be additional to the Official Development Assistance (ODA) currently allocated for these countries;
- Debt cancellation should not carry policy conditions.

Rich governments should:

- Reaffirm and implement 0.7% of GNI on development assistance
- Support initiatives for innovative financing such as the tax on the air tickets and the regulation of money transfer agencies.
- Priority focus areas for assistance should be access to basic services (education, health care, nutrition, safe water and sanitation, environment, infrastructure).

It is necessary to ensure enforcement of international legislation to curb the illegal transfer of funds from developing countries and economies in transition.

WHAT WE CAN DO AS NGOs:

- networking between NGOs from donor countries, developing countries and East, exchange of information and experience, common actions, solidarity aimed to achieve global sustainable development;
- public awareness campaigns and public debates on development issues and effectiveness of international assistance for development – both in donor (and new donor) countries and recipient countries; (Russia – new donor, new EU members – also new donors; I don't know about the new EU members, but in Russia there are still no public debates and civil society involvement in governmental development assistance activity)
- lobbying national governments and international organizations (UN, WB, IMF, WTO) and international structures like G8 for real changes.