

CIVIL SOCIETY-UNDP CONSULTATION ON HDR2010 (28 OCTOBER 2009): SUMMARY REPORT

I. Background: The meeting was convened as a follow-up to the Platform HD2010 meeting in June 2009 to begin the work of the Working Group on Human Development Discourse. Participants were from this WG and from the larger Platform HD2010. The specific purpose of this discussion was to engage with the Human Development Report Office on the proposed content of the Human Development Report 2010 to discuss a process of engagement with HDRO and advance planning for the WG beyond its contribution to the HDR.

The roles of the working group with respect to the HDRO are:

- To act as a catalytic entity to foster additional input in the preparation in the HDR 2010;
- To solicit input from constituents not yet reached by the current HDRO consultations;
- To support key processes *after* publication of the HDR 2010.

The roles of the working group are:

- To act as a catalytic entity to foster input in the preparation in the HDR 2010;
- To solicit input from constituents not yet reached;
- To support key processes *after* publication of the HDR 2010.

II. HDR2010: Outline of content and process: HDRO participated in the discussion with a full presentation (*The 2010 Human Development Report: Rethinking Human Development of the concept and outline of HDR2010*, by Francisco Rodriguez) and expressed interest in substantive engagement with civil society in contributing to HDR2010, within the time frame (inputs to be received by January-February).

The presentation was organized as follows:

1. HDR: origins and evolution
2. 2010 and rethinking human development
3. Preliminary ideas on conceptual restatements
4. Initial findings on HDI trends
5. Addressing measurement issues
6. Process going forward

Some highlights:

20th anniversary:

- Timely opportunity to reflect on achievements of the HD approach, and its robustness and scope for change
- How the world has changed, and not changed since 1990, and what have we learned
- Economic and financial crises suggest that the time is ripe for a reassessment
- There is a need to reinvigorate the HD approach: The HDR and HDI used to be a countervailing concept to a dominant market-led paradigm; today the concept of human development has come to mean market-centered individual economic empowerment that is far from the people-centered development approach
- A world in crisis: finance, food and climate: How did we get here and what do they tell us about how we think about development?

Redefining the HD idea:

- Emphasis on empowerment (keeping in mind who is empowering whom)
- Go beyond individualistic market-centered approach
- Embody the development as freedom approach (central place to inequality and distributive issues; reflect on broad scope of substantive freedoms)

Achievements and challenges in a changing world:

- *Advance of people:* trace trends (beyond HDI); typologies and alternative paths; deprivation, traps, inequality – multiple dimensions
- *Advance of ideas:* international acceptance of poverty reduction as priority, & MDGs; local specificity
- *New opportunities:* new actors, channels for participation and democratic activity; information technology
- *New and old challenges:* man-made destruction of HD – conflict and environment; role of institutions

Revisiting conceptual and measurement framework

- Agency; participation; and democratic practices; inequality (e.g. socio-economic, gender, and group); environmental sustainability figure...
- Measurement -> Review critiques of HDI -> propose framework for considering revisions: potential adjustments to HDI, inequality, environment sustainability

How human development matters for development strategies and policies

- Evidence on effectiveness of different strategies and policies in impacting economic/HDI growth. Review of micro evidence on how interventions differ

Process for 2010 report

- Continue with regional consultations and with a range of constituencies beyond experts and “usual suspects” to involve alternative voices. The HDR is about people-centered development: this means that people have also to be part of the analysis
- Establish Academic Advisory Panel, establish links to key researchers
- Finalise by May 2010

III. Discussion on ‘Rethinking Human Development’

A. Relevance of the HD concept and HDI approach today:

- The concept of HD has been so successful that it has become part of the mainstream and is now often used in contexts that *don’t* imply alternative thinking or ‘enlarging people’s choices’.
- The HD concept has had a **three-fold impact:** on HD discourse, on development policy and strategy and as a way to measure progress. On the first two counts, it has lost its way, with the HD approach used in multilateral and bilateral agencies as a **minimalist agenda focusing on service delivery in health and education**. On the third count, today’s environment calls for a new way of measuring vulnerability and inequality.
- The climate crisis is game-changing and requires massive investments to save people and the planet. The HDI has a stable set of indicators that worked in its day but are we **fighting today’s war with yesterday’s army?** The HDI and HDR were ‘yesterday’s heresy to yesterday’s orthodoxy’ – they were risky and edgy in their time – but now it is important to ask what the heterodoxy is today and what would be the best measures to assess its impact.

- It is the 20th anniversary of the HDR but the **analytical framework should take into account market fundamentalism** promoted by the Reagan-Thatcher years of the last thirty years to which the HD approach was a response.
- The use of the HD approach as a **minimalist agenda to focus service delivery in health and education** has left out thinking on environmental dimension and community development dimension.

B. *Suggestions for rethinking:*

- Today's major crises are in **finance, food security, climate change and care**. A new HDR ranking could address some of these issues, e.g., comparing how countries with 'open' versus 'closed' markets are affected differently by the financial crisis. Similarly on food security, e.g. rank countries in terms of those having the most open and most protected markets.
- Participation in the report process should **move beyond academia and NGOs** to include those who are rarely reached.
- **Caution against big overall conclusions of GDP and HDI convergence** without looking at the growth of inequality in these countries.
- **Important to look back 30 years rather than 20 to account for market fundamentalism and decline in labour market shares.**
- Important to include **cross-sectoral issues** that affect HD measurement. So far the human development approach has not been able to penetrate macro-economic thinking.
 - The HDR should include discussion on factors that impact the **measures underlying health and education**. These include threats emanating from trade and macro policies. For example, the impact of the export of nurses and teachers on the availability of and access to affordable health care and education; the impact of user fees, etc. on health care and mortality. This is an area of much discussion, especially in leading health journals (David Stuckler, et al, [Cambridge University](#)).
 - Need for some recognition and **assessment of the continuing rise in maternal deaths**. There is no indicator that captures this as part of progress in health care, since most cost estimates tend to focus on child health. Also there is need to pay more attention to the nature of health spending, e.g., infrastructural spending and loss of personnel, that would impact maternal death.
 - It is also to explore the **impact of trade and climate policies on domestic health and education**. The HDR can consider the framework used by the IPCC fourth assessment report (Ar 4) which uses cross-sectoral studies to acknowledge and draw attention to critical factors that are germane to the topics (adaptation, mitigation, technology) but which might not be seen as being under the purview of a science-based report.
 - A **cross-sectoral approach could be used to deal with issues of market failure and social policy failure on human development**. Here macro policy issues could be explored as well as gender, technology and infrastructural development issues in health and education.
- Some of these cross-sectoral issues and ideas that represent a **counter-narrative to the main report** can be presented in a series of **side-bars** that run through the report. These side bars could explore different frameworks and approaches – cultural, religious and economic – see human development and HDI.

- The HDR should also address **changing notions of global power and the failure of politics**. How can a **new multilateralism** be a solution to these issues? The HDR is a UN intervention: it must make the case that some global economic issues need to come back to the UN because of the failure of other political arenas.
- Ref. to **concepts of ‘rootedness’** discussed in the working group (summary attached with this report).
- **Language of human development is corrupted and needs to be recaptured** through civil society engagement.
- Use **CSO perceptions of what constitutes human development** and how it should be measured to evaluate human development achievements.
- The HDI as it stands today is like ‘fighting today’s war with yesterday’s army.’ The HDI should **use indicators that can speak to today’s politics**.

C. *Discussion on HDI and suggestions for inclusion of:*

- **Environmental /ecological indicators** – looking at the [Happy Planet Index](#) of the New Economics Foundation, for example.
- **Vulnerability indicators** – looking at the havoc caused in people’s lives by climate change now, and how/why some countries are more vulnerable than others to shocks.
- **Equality indicators** – reference to Richard Wilkinson’s thesis that on almost every indicator of wellbeing, more *equal* societies do better than unequal societies (*The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better*, by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett).
- **Sustainability indicators** – looking at how sustainable some of the advances in Human Development are for future generations.
- **Gender equality indicators** – the two indices (GEM and GDI) do not measure gender gaps; ref. to Beijing+ 15 review in 2010.
- Indicators on **political freedom** and cultural patterns of political freedom. This could also include an indicator on the **‘robustness’ of civil society**.

IV. Suggestions for civil society-HDRO collaboration: The following suggestions were discussed:

1) **Survey**

Develop and circulate a survey among broad constituencies of civil society (including social movements, trade unions, indigenous peoples) in order to generate a range of people’s voices and perceptions of HD, the dimensions of HD that should be included in HDR 2010, and the ways in which the crises have affected HD. The survey will consist of a mix of closed and open questions and responses could be analysed in one section of the report. Process of distribution and identification of recipients to be determined with HDRO and WG.

2) **Sidebars**

Invite a number of critical (not necessarily well-known) thinkers to write **concise pieces that could feature as ‘side-bars’** in the report, presenting ‘edgy thinking’ on critical issues. They can address areas currently beyond the frame of the human development concept (e.g., social stratification, capture of governance and economic wealth, indicators of extreme wealth). Side-bars can also be written by individuals or community groups, indigenous peoples’ groups, on what human development means to them.

3) Workshop (end of January 2010)

Building on civil society involvement in the survey, civil society participation in HDRO consultations (see below), and the side-bars, a **workshop to elicit civil society inputs** at the end of January will be important (going beyond the ‘usual suspects’) for HDR 2010. The workshop can bring a combination of issues and constituents and will help to increase ownership of the report by a broad swath of civil society.

4) Civil society and HDRO participation in upcoming consultations

HDRO has planned a number of thematic consultations, some upcoming ones of which are:

Topic	Date	Location
Aid	Nov 13	Brussels (with EU)
Political rights, democratic participation and human development	Between Dec 1-10	New York / North America
Gender	Early Dec (pre-meeting at UN Nov 7)	Istanbul
Sustainability	TBD	TBD

In addition the following consultations organized by other organizations in the coming months offer HDRO opportunities for consultation with specific constituencies:

Topic	Date	Location	Organized by
Review of progress on MDGs in Africa	December (dates TBD)	Addis Ababa	Millennium Campaign with LDC Watch
Development with culture and identity	Jan 12-14 2010 (Possible focused discussion with HDRO: Jan 11)	New York	Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues