

2010 HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT CONSULTATIONS OCTOBER 28th and 30th, 2009

The 3rd OECD World Forum “Statistics, Knowledge and Policy” had a focus on measuring society’s progress and counted with the participation of representatives of national statistical agencies, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, policy makers, among others. During the conference most of the issues discussed were about measurement, and in this regards many times the HDI and HD family of indices were mentioned, as well as the presentation and discussion of the global, regional, national and sub-national HD reports open a discussion about the potential that the Human development approach has to measure society’s progress. This brief note complements the more general report that we have on the Forum and it will only focus on the 2010 HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT CONSULTATIONS held on OCTOBER 28, 2009 and the final NHDR meeting held on OCTOBER 30, 2009.

GLOBAL NHDR TEAMS MEETING – HDR2010 DISCUSSION – 26 OCTOBER 2009

During the Global Meeting of NHDR Teams, involving representatives of UNDP Country Offices and their national counterparts, three working groups have discussed issues related human security and environmental sustainability, gender and inequalities, and macroeconomics and social capabilities. The main remarks included:

- In terms of human security, the HDR 2010 should look at the combined impact on HD of food crisis, financial crisis, energy crisis, and climate change, which might be relevant to set the policy agenda for the future decade.
- The recently launched Central America report, focused on violence and crime, on citizens’ perceptions and reaction to security issues, and related policy implications might also be a good input for the assessment of the Human Security approach.
- Consider the role of inequality (especially horizontal inequalities – see Frances Stewart presentation at the OECD Forum) in determining human insecurity.
- Also gender analysis requires to take into consideration both vertical and horizontal inequalities.
- Investigate the possibility to better integrate existing economics work into a human development framework
- Create a human development framework for policy analysis (to assess the human development impact of various policy options).
- A special focus on Africa and its specific dynamics could support the engagement of key development partners (including Governments, other international organizations and the donor community) in the HD discourse.

2010 HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT CONSULTATIONS OCTOBER 28, 2009

The purpose of this consultation was to allow for an initial exchange of views about the frontier of thinking regarding the measurement and new dimensions of human development. The idea was to take

advantage of the selected group of academics, practitioners and researchers involved in the Forum to exchange ideas in the preparation of the 2010 Human Development Report. The main (and most mentioned by participants) messages talked at the consultation lunch at the OECD Forum can be divided as follow:

Policy

- The 2010 HDR should focus on what we have learned so far, and how we can have a post MDGs development agenda. This should include a review of how the Human Development approach has influenced policy implementation and its main actors (politicians, civil society, etc.).
- In general, the report has to take into account its audience target, and they have to make an effort to be closer to policy makers. Institutions and political economy cannot be at the end of the report but rather the starting point.
- A participant mentioned that policy design has to be a topic covered in the report and mention that this goal will require the use of better indicators and this increase the relevance of our 2010 HDR discussion about measurement issues.
- The HDI has to be useful both for developed and developing countries policy agenda (e.g. fiscal decentralization and the incentives on human development related public expenditure). In this regard, participants discuss about the need of new dimensions to be included in the HDI but some participants noted the controversy ranking may create.
- There has to be some discussions about the financial crisis and its impact on human development. Also some participants suggest that the analysis of the impact of technological changes on human development has to be analyzed.

Measurement

- The use of principal component analysis was recommended as a useful tool to get the weights if more dimensions are incorporated to the HDI.
- The OECD participant mention that there is a need for developing indicators at the country level, but this has to be standardized for international comparisons and that the 2010 HDR could lead this process.

Dimensions

- Democracy/ political participation, inequality, environment sustainability and volatility/uncertainty have to be included in the HDI. It was also mentioned happiness during the discussion but this point do not received much of attention from other participants in comparison with the other dimensions that were mentioned. Regarding democracy some

participants suggested that the current surveys on democracy could be a good source of information to be used for HDR 2010.

- The inclusion of more dimensions could be done by maintaining a core HDI but adding a family of new indicators. The idea is to show new measures when good data for that exist although coverage could be reduced.
- It will be useful to have a platform where people can freely choose their own weights.

In general, although the discussion was very interesting and participants made very good point most of the discussion is already incorporated in the HDRO 2010 concept note.

NHDR meeting held on OCTOBER 30, 2009

During the Busan OECD forum there was an important recognition of both UNDP and HDRs (global and nationals). This increased visibility for global, regional, national and sub-national HDRs raises the demand for better data, more conceptual discussion and improving screening process to ensure the quality of the reports. In particular, during the NHDR meeting it was suggested the need for improvements on the communications channels between the global and the regional, national and sub-national HDRs.

Regarding conceptual aspects during the discussion was mentioned that human development should shift from being an alternative paradigm to be the main paradigm of development, but in order to do that more conceptual analysis is needed, and the 2010 HDR will be an excellent place to have this conceptual discussion. In particular, it was mention that more work is needed in order to discuss the tensions between an individualist and a more social approach. It was also suggested that more conceptual work is needed in order to understand why it could be the case that more choices not necessarily always is good.

Regarding measurement issues, it was suggested that special emphasis has to be putted on the credibility and the quality of the data involved in the HDI and the HDRs. Also a question was raised about the possibility of going from just using data to producing data, given the increased use of survey data to measure well being. Finally, during the discussion about measurement it was mention that the HDI is a political achievement and any changes made to it has to be carefully done to do not jeopardize this.