

HELSINKI PROCESS ON GLOBALISATION AND DEMOCRACY

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PEACE AND SECURITY: THE ROLE OF NON-STATE ACTORS IN PROMOTING PEACE AND SECURITY

1. How can non-state actors contribute to confidence and trust building?

Panellists agreed that in a world where the majority of conflicts are intra-state rather than inter-state, the involvement of non-state actors is essential for mediating between opposing views. Different roles were suggested for non-state actors: domestic NGOs were seen as particularly useful for trust and confidence building, international NGOs for facilitating and supporting locally owned processes, and religious communities for bringing valuable assets to bear through multi-religious mechanisms.

2. What are the particular challenges for improving both democracy and security in unstable environments?

Panellists noted that there is no general formula for dealing with this sensitivity – countries need to examine the dark as well as bright chapters of their history in order to find the model that suits them. The argument was made that the security of citizens should be the starting point for achieving state security, and that the initiatives of citizens for promoting security should also be examined. Discussants noted that a shift from representative democracy towards participatory democracy would be needed and that political parties need to consider how they can answer this challenge.

3. What are the possibilities for non-state actors to contribute to resolving crises in the Middle East?

Panellists stressed the crucial role of civil society for advancing peace the Middle East, because changing the mindsets of people requires cross-border, people-to-people and business-to-business cooperation. The experiences from the Oslo process were presented as an example of a situation where governments were not ready to answer the calls for peace and an alternative model had to be found. Pressure from non-state actors was instrumental in pushing governments to make the required concessions.

“Now is the time to actively involve non-state actors in peace and security. The message of involving all stakeholders should go to the peacemakers in the Middle East.”

Ambassador Raouf Saad

POVERTY AND DEVELOPMENT: THE INTERFACE BETWEEN NATIONAL AND GLOBAL ECONOMIC POLICIES

1. How can developing countries gain more policy autonomy and best make use of it?

One way of gaining policy autonomy is through debt cancellation, but many developing countries lack the capacity to fully benefit from this increased space. The panel pointed out that knowledge systems are needed in order to allow developing countries to fully utilise their policy space, and that broad-based knowledge development is particularly crucial at the level of production. A progressive state needs to play an active role in guiding the economy, including the development of infrastructure and education. The experiences of Malaysia suggest that high-level political commitment, a stable social and political environment, rapid and continuous growth of the economy, strong focus on pro-poor development strategies and programmes, and the complementary support of NGOs and the private sector are crucial for eradicating poverty and dealing with crises.

2. How can the global economic framework best support national development programmes?

The panel agreed that the global economic framework needs to be geared towards supporting the development and implementation of country-owned national development strategies. In order to achieve this, discussants recommended the democratisation of the decision-making processes of international financial institutions and the strengthening of the role of the UN so that the voices of the South would be heard.

3. What innovative measures and new forms of cooperation between different stakeholders could be taken at the national and global levels?

Globalisation has brought countries much closer and increased interdependence for better and for worse. The Helsinki Process could promote stronger cohesion between the social and economic development policies of international institutions. One new mechanism needed at the level of the global economy is global taxation, the proceeds of which should be directed to funding development.

HUMAN RIGHTS: AN INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS BASED APPROACH TO GLOBAL POLICY MAKING

1. How to ensure that the rights of the individual are respected in global policy making?

Both the panel and the participants stressed the responsibility and accountability of states in protecting the rights of individuals. States and municipalities should ensure that law enforcement and officials recognise the rights of individuals in cases of human trafficking, domestic violence and migration.

In order to be able to convince global policy makers about the importance of the rights of an individual, there is a need first to convince policy makers at the national level, as human rights are more sustainable when locally owned. Also, the collaboration of networks of like-minded groups in the UN can help push forward common interests in global decision making.

2. How to reconcile national interest with individual interest?

The interface between national and individual interest was considered a particularly difficult question. The participants expressed concern for the lack of implementation of international agreements and considered impunity as one of the main obstacles to the realisation of human rights.

There is a clear need for wide and participatory dialogue among governments, civil society and other relevant stakeholders – it was argued that all policy making on the rights of individuals should be inclusive in nature. The role of local government and NGOs in promoting and guarding human rights was also emphasised.

3. What is the role of regional and multi-stakeholder cooperation in highlighting the rights based approach?

The role of regional and multi-stakeholder cooperation was highlighted particularly with regard to migration and human-trafficking. Cooperation among neighbouring countries and regional organisations as well as the involvement of non-state actors would be crucial for example in the case of Thailand, which is the country of origin, transit and destination of victims of human trafficking. Different forms of cooperation should encourage open and constructive dialogue, identifying new ideas, practical recommendations, promoting the exchange of lessons learned, and enhancing networking among relevant actors at the national, regional and international levels.

GOVERNANCE: THE ROLE OF INFORMAL DIPLOMACY IN GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

1. How can informal consultations help advance intergovernmental processes?

Informal consultations enable stakeholders to respond expeditiously to emerging global challenges by bringing together key actors to build confidence and search for feasible solutions. Panellists gave examples of situations where informal multi-stakeholder consultations have had a major impact, such as the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the ongoing multi-stakeholder dialogue on climate change.

2. What is the value-added of involving different stakeholders in informal consultations?

Different stakeholders have different roles to play in informal consultations. For example, involvement of civil society in informal consultations is crucial because it provides diversified grass-root concerns and solutions. The media does not take part in negotiations but is useful in disseminating information and raising awareness. The business sector brings technical solutions and can marshal much needed resources. Religious organisations can also play a significant role in local and global policy making and implementation thanks to their networks from the level of local communities to the global stage.

3. How can informal consultations contribute to North-South confidence-building?

Informal consultations can contribute to North-South confidence-building by addressing the time lag between decisions and their implementation. Moreover, informal consultations can address structural deficiencies. Perhaps the greatest strength of informal consultations rests in their ability to respond to emerging global challenges promptly, in a manner that builds understanding, trust and respect between the North and South.

