

Global Agenda Outlook

The Post-2015 Development Agenda

The following materials are excerpts from the conversations that took place in Dubai that were not included in the final publication, Global Agenda Outlook. They summarize content raised by participants, which offers additional context and insights into the issues discussed. The following materials are not direct quotations from the speakers and should not be quoted as verbatim text.

While 2015 is fast approaching, discussions about the achievements made around the Millennium Development Goals and what the development agenda post-2015 will look like have begun. In a conversation between Wu Changhua, Director, Greater China, Climate Group, and John McArthur, Senior Fellow, United Nations Foundation, featured in the *Global Agenda Outlook 2013*, both experts agree that one of the key lessons from the 2000-15 period is that all issues contained in the agenda are deeply interconnected. This additional reading outlines examples of such interconnections and helps explain how different issues should be addressed in the future.

James Bacchus

We understand that one of the important things we have learned so far is that all issues contained in the development agenda are closely connected. Could you both expand on that?

Wu Changhua

This is actually going to be key for the international community to set what we call the Sustainable Development Goals. Looking at water is a good example. Previously, we were looking only at drinking water, specifically. But today, if we also take into account climate change, floods, droughts, pollution, etc., we realize that it's no longer just a drinking water issue. Moving forward, we will start to see more and more cases of integrated solutions. This, of course, also presents challenges, reflected in a lot of debates that are taking place. Discussions between different Global Agenda Councils are a good place to see this complexity, where members realize that a lot of issues are connected. A discussion on climate change issues will also relate to agriculture, food and security issues, and will also link with elements relevant to water and energy. The international community today is at the right moment to figure out what the best tools and instruments or partnerships would be to address existing challenges with limited resource in our hands.

James Bacchus

More broadly speaking, the United Nations has talked about the need to see sustainable development not solely as an environmental issue, but to see sustainable development as environmental, economic and social issues. There has been increasing awareness that these three pillars of sustainable development cannot be considered separately.

John McArthur

One of the things the Millennium Development Goals did is actually integrate different issues of the anti-poverty agenda. We can't lose sight of how that happened. Ten years ago, people were asking if health was more important than education or if education was more important than health. The goals helped to say that this is not the way one should see this. You need both, and you also need [to incorporate] hunger and water, as all of these elements go into the experiencing and challenge of extreme poverty.

James Bacchus

Looking forward, what should leaders have at the top of their minds?

John McArthur

Although there is a growing consensus on what a global sustainable development agenda looks like, there needs to be greater agreement on how we share the cost of achieving it. Rich countries need to be bold and take their responsibilities. But the irony of this is that it is the poorest countries in the world that are still bearing the greatest cost. This is a global issue. We need to think seriously about how we should all pitch in to set this course for the next generation.