

ADVANCING GOOD GOVERNANCE in International Development

Peace, Security, and Governance in Goal 16: How Do We Tackle This?

9 – 10 June 2016

Rhodes House, Oxford

Opening Keynote: The Pursuit of Development: Governments and Governance

The Opening Keynote address presented by Professor Ian Goldin focussed on the failure of governance in crisis affected areas. There are over 125 million people currently displaced, representing the worst human suffering since World War II. Professor Goldin stressed that this situation requires those providing humanitarian assistance to come up with a new vocabulary and approach.

Key Points from the Session

- 1. As inequality increases across the world, effective leadership is vital to good governance.** Mass killings, extremism and xenophobia are symptoms of widespread poverty around the world. Even though literacy rates and life expectancies are higher today than they have ever been, there are still regions of the world where the current generation's chances of living in poverty are higher than their parents'. Public sector and private sector leaders must be prepared to deal with the root causes of this inequality in order to effectively address displacement. They should push for creative coalitions that are determined to prevent and resolve conflicts. While institutions have the ability to impact society on a large scale, many issues are best moved forward by the people directly affected. Heads of public and private organisations should also look internally to determine what types of problems their institutions were built to solve.
- 2. Humanitarian efforts are everyone's responsibility.** The average refugee spends over 17 years in a camp. As these camps become as large as some cities, expansion and immigration into other countries becomes inevitable. The ease of access to information and the interconnected nature of the world's economies means that countries can no longer claim ignorance to the consequences of their inaction. This requires a stronger political push for humanitarian assistance focused on the longer-term, such as employment opportunities and investment in children, in addition to short-term assistance ("biscuits and blankets"). This combination of response and prevention can help to address the rapid spread of displacement.
- 3. Good governance mandates accountability.** Today, goods and services are bought and traded within global marketplace, putting pressure on individuals to analyse the effects of their actions on the macro-environment. Decisions to buy sushi, medicine, or airplane tickets seem unimportant from an individual's perspective, but may cause a cascade of impacts spanning from the point of purchase throughout the supply chain. Additionally, individuals should question whether leaders in the private and public sectors are qualified to tackle the growing issue of global displacement. Finally, due to the growing influence of investors on the governance of development organisations, inquiries should also be made into who funds humanitarian efforts, and whether their involvement is appropriate.

Emerging Questions

1. Are humanitarian organisations only paying lip service to the principle of sovereignty?
2. How do institutions define good governance, and how does this definition affect their decisions regarding development?
3. How can people's commonly held values be reconciled by governments that are run with a different sets of beliefs?