



CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Hunger – Nutrition – Climate Justice 2013 Conference

Conference Key Messages, 16 April 2013

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Friends.....

Firstly – I know that I won't capture all that was discussed in the last 2 days – but rest assured that any of the good ideas I miss here have been collected by the rapporteurs so that we can capture them in the conference report. I am so energised and inspired by what I heard – and honoured to try and reflect some of our collective thinking.

The first key message I take from this conference is that we need to do more of this...getting grassroots practitioners, the people with experience and who live with the problems we are all trying to solve, together with the policy makers with responsibility at national and international level.

We need to have more meetings like this and not just in Ireland but all over the world – who will be next? Who can commit to ensuring that grassroots participants will be included in the next meeting or conference they hold? And let's take policy makers into local communities - and other grassroots practitioners to new places and cultures to facilitate the direct sharing of experience.

Some of us may assume that everybody knows what the post-2015 development agenda is – but it is clear from this conference that we have work to do to raise awareness of the processes that are in train for post-2015. In the red learning circle this morning this was expressed as '*we need to kick it out of the elite!*'

We also need to communicate in 2 directions – and spread the word that there is an opportunity to move away from business as usual and to capture real solutions and inject these into the discussions. We cannot waste the opportunity we have between now and 2015.



Those who are going to be making the decisions need to be aware of the realities on the ground – we all have to be champions, super champions of this cause as Lindiwe (Dr Lindiwe Sibanda, CEO FANRPAN) reminded us.

So - this meeting is a microcosm of what needs to happen between now and 2015.

New relationships have been ignited here – people have met, talked and listened to each other that wouldn't normally get to meet. I get a real sense that the learning here has been influential learning - by policy makers listening to real experiences and by grassroots practitioners sharing stories, ideas and solutions.

I am pleased that these encounters have been respectful, meaningful and hopefully the start of something new –if we all do something different as a result of what we have learned here – that is an outcome. Who will you stay in contact with? Who will you go and visit? Who will you invite to your next event? What will you do differently?

Esther Jabesi from Malawi said - *'you have to listen to me because I have experience – what I know isn't written in your papers!'* We heard examples from Ethiopia, Malawi and Senegal of how local knowledge has to be the foundation on which research and solutions are built.

In Lesotho, home grown ideas that are simple and practical have been scaled up to national level. This makes the case for putting people at the centre – because they know what they need and want. Paulus Verschuren had a nice quote at lunchtime – *'local people don't have to think outside the box because they don't put things in boxes in the first place!'* Now if we could reflect this in the post-2015 agenda – that would be progress!

Several learning circles highlighted the need to strengthen institutions and set up platforms for real dialogue between all stakeholders to enable local priorities and solutions to be communicated and scaled up.

Equally, when researchers and policy makers really want to catalyse change – they need to find better ways to express themselves – in plain language – and to use various ways of communicating from the high tech to the culturally appropriate (so Facebook in the Arctic, drama in Niger and radio and TV in Nepal). Likewise laws, policies and international

frameworks aren't enough – they need to be translated into action – with resources and awareness raising.

On gender – don't keep half the people outside the door. Aichatou, Cecilia, Runa, Bayarmaa, Aissatou, Esther, Etrida, Dolsie, Leese and Patricia – you have showed us what women can achieve when given half an opportunity!!

And we need to be careful that we aren't adding to women's work load or assuming that women will benefit from interventions – this was expressed at the presentation of the case study from Lesotho, *'Will my kids eat more veggies if I grow them or will my husband sell them so he can buy a saddle for his horse?'*

We need to get the resources needed to deliver change at the local level - suggestions included directing resources to districts, to communities and to farmer and herder organisations – not just to ministries at national level.

From the Presidents' opening onwards we were reminded not to dodge the politics and the difficult issues - including the social and cultural constraints that stop us from making progress when other barriers are removed –we have to tackle issues around land ownership, power struggles, inequalities, the rule of law and the need to uphold human rights.

We can't be afraid of empowering people or protecting rights – it is not a zero sum game...giving power to another will not make you powerless. It might instead lead to positive change.

To the private sector – speak up, engage, we need to hear your voice. We know you have a role to play – the case study on scaling up access to legumes in Malawi showed that the private sector, business, has to be on board from an early stage to enable scaling up and commercialisation. We also heard from the learning circle on rights that rights belong to us all – from people to business and governments.

We celebrated diversity here at this conference - and this highlights the need to recognise diversity – pastoralists, forest people, hunters and gatherers, and slum dwellers need their way of life to be recognised and respected as a valuable contribution to sustainable development. (Ecuador, Arctic...)

We have seen that poor people have to adapt to climate change because they have no other option – in the industrialised world we have to find a similar compulsion to change our consumption and production patterns and to take action on climate change. The urgency felt locally needs to be felt internationally and trigger action. It is an injustice to put the burden of dealing with climate change on local people - developed countries have to take the lead on reducing greenhouse emissions – this is a basic tenant of climate justice, enshrined in the climate change convention.

And while we reduce emissions we must also deliver on commitments to provide financing for adaptation and make it flow to the local level. It is simply too hard to get at the money that is there – and not enough money in the pot!

The message from the people here to global decision makers is - put your money where your mouth is – deliver the commitments you have made.

All of the good work showcased in the last 2 days will be washed away unless we take action on climate change.

We also have to stop making contradictions – you can't invest in adaptation to climate change and fossil fuels at the same time. We heard from Minister Coveney, the need for more coherence between policies on agriculture, climate change and development in the EU.

This morning the orange Learning Circle suggested that 'Local people have to influence Ireland and that Ireland has to influence the European Union which in turn has to put a new agenda forward for the post-2015 development agenda, informed by this dynamic'.

The MDGS matter, the post-2015 development agenda matters, the SDGs matter – but so too does the Climate Change regime. We have to stop looking at these as separate territories run by separate people with separate mandates. So, to the climate change negotiators here – are you going to bring food and nutrition security issues into the Climate Convention as an argument for urgent action? Will you bring the voices we heard here to the table? Development practitioners – will you integrate climate change into your work and be advocates for climate justice?



The new international development agenda will only be effective if it is supported by national and sub national commitments and targets, with practical implementation plans. Other advice is to connect this new post-2015 development agenda to the MDGs and not start again.

Finally – I think we can conclude that we have shown a people centred approach to be effective. We need to bring more farmers, pastoralists, fisherfolk and women to the table to negotiate the post-2015 development agenda – this conference has shown this can be done and that given the opportunity they are articulate and convincing.

Jay (Jay Naidoo, Chair, GAIN) reminded us earlier – in the words of Nelson Mandela – that *‘Overcoming poverty is not a task of charity; it is an act of justice.’* We have shown and have to continue to argue that tackling hunger, under nutrition and climate justice are also issues of justice.

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