

Response to the Panel

by

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Thanks to all the panelists. This has been really stimulating comments. There is not enough time to comment on everything so I will really limit myself to a couple of items.

I very much liked Dr Voorhoeve's comment that the World Health Organization should be seen as the most important security organization, although one can maybe argue that all the major UN agencies are also in a sense security organizations. I think the International Labor Organization I think was founded early in the twentieth century with very much in mind the events in WW I and in the pre-ambule stating that creating stable employment situations was essential to social stability and therefore also for security. So, some of the thinking is actually not that new but I think that we should remind ourselves of some of our earlier learned lessons.

Another important point that Dr Voorhoeve raised is this whole issue of uni- and multi-polar world. I very much agree that we need to continue to work with like-minded alliances between government and NGOs and businesses. But I am not sure that that obviates the need to reform, redesign, the UN - come up with an international system that is more workable than the current one seems to be. If we look at what these likeminded organizations accomplished - on landmines is one example, that's one thing. But another case - one that is especially relevant to The Hague - is the International Criminal court. When we look at what happened: yes, the Court is now a reality, but we also know that the world's most powerful nation has not signed on to it and actually opposes it. So we are still back to the issue of how we are going to make this work on a global level, how do we bring everybody in? So I think we can make first steps in a very innovative way by various kinds of partnerships. But we still need to figure out the fundamentals of global governance. I think that is a task that remains.

It would have been really good if our co-author of chapter 4 would be here because we could have had a great debate, I think. I am not an expert on food and water issues, so I think what I will do in response is focus on one particular angle. If we are going with a high-input agriculture especially in areas that have not gone down that road, particularly Africa, apart even from that system alone, the implications of it, we also need to look at the social structure repercussions. What happens if in effect if we go with high intensity agriculture that doesn't need very many farmers? What do we do with people? We already have a situation in many developing countries, where because there is enough land and water or because land distribution is highly unequal, more and more young people feel that there is not much of a future in rural areas. This adds to the momentum towards people migrating towards the cities; it adds to the urbanization pressures. We have not come near to figuring out what we are doing in urban areas, how can we better provide jobs, social infrastructure, how do we improve the governance of urban areas? So if don't pay attention to those kinds of repercussions, I think we will just shift some of the security and instability related problems elsewhere and find ourselves again confronted with a different set of issues - but really issues that follow as a consequence of the policies concerning agriculture.

Thank you

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