

Questions & Answers / Discussion Part 1

Symposium on the Worldwatch Institute report
"State of the World 2005: Redefining Global Security"
Peace Palace, The Hague, 28 February 2005

Ms Pallavi, Student, Institute of Social Studies

I belong to the child protection sector in India, the sector which is very grossly underrepresented in this book. I work with street children and children under various different designations such as children affected by aids and HIV. I was wondering why there was no mention of child protection in your book, especially when you talk about urbanization. When you talk about border issues you should have a look at children who have no status on paper. When you talk about war, you should take a look at children in armed conflict. This subject is treated the same as women; you just give lip service and you are going the traditional line of giving children voices and giving children's education to make them more empowered but child protection is synonymous with security and when talking about global security you really should take a look at child protection. I was wondering why the exclusion?

Prof Dr Georg Frerks, Professor of Conflict Studies, Centre for Conflict Studies Utrecht University

I basically have two remarks. I did not have the advantage of reading the book because I just bought it, so perhaps it is my ignorance. First of all what I found remarkable and in a way the presentations of professor Voorhoeve, Professor Rabbinge and also what the Secretary of State said is that there are many ways in which we can improve our performance in agriculture. It seems that a lot of benefits and improvements can be reached, and apparently everyone knows that, through eco-efficiency agro-efficient channels and humanitarian efficient way if you would if you would calculate your measures in the correct manner.

I have a more general question on that: what are the impediments? Is it the knowledge, is it that we don't know how to apply the knowledge, is it policies, is it the market which is not interested? Where do we have the bottlenecks? And it seems to me that also a political and institutional analysis would be of the essence in discussing this kind of implementation problem, if you want to call them like that.

I was also intrigued by the remarks and observations about what is happening in China at the moment and your plea and to a certain degree the confidence that if something is applicable and seems to work that the market will pick it up and that it will be applied. I am not so sure about that. There are all the security problems which we may have in the world and child protection I think was one of them, but I could think of many more in parts of the world where there is no purchasing power, where people are deprived and disprivileged, is there not the risk, I am not saying you argue for this as a general strategy, but if we have too much confidence in the market, large sections of underprivileged people will be left out. And I think it is with globalization: you can call it a force for inclusion, but you can also call it a force for exclusion. And we should maybe take this double perspective, and I would like to have your comments on that.

Mr Dane Rattliff, Legal Counsel, Permanent Court of Arbitration

Just based on the comment that Mr. Flavin made regarding the International Criminal Court and the lack of overall attention, it seems that the report has given to it. It seems too pessimistic about the role international environmental law can play in bolstering environmental security. I should mention that my name is Dane Rattliff, I work for the Permanent Court of Arbitration in this building. And here at the seat of the PCA, numerous disputes involving environment and natural resources have been resolved from those involving the legality of transport of nuclear fuels to those that involve river pollution or fisheries disputes. It is true that good global governance will ensure good faith implementation

of environmental obligations that have been undertaken in environmental agreements, but I equally think that access to justice is an important part in ensuring the implementation of environmental good governance. And on the point of eco-efficiency of Mr van Hoogstraten I would invite him to replace the light bulbs in the Peace Palace with low wattage high luminosity equivalent bulbs.

Mr Michael Renner, Senior Researcher, Worldwatch Institute

I would like to talk about the first issue: child protection. The point is well taken and I thank you very much for raising it. I would slightly disagree; it is certainly not an issue which we have excluded, certainly not consciously. You could probably rightly accuse us of not making it as visible as maybe it ought to be. It is something that is addressed in a variety of ways in the second chapter on population, again indirectly on HIV in the health chapter and also in the chapter on the small arms proliferation issues. But maybe it is something we should keep in mind for the next editions of the book. You can always argue that you can slice a number of issues in different ways. Pending on how you do that, certain issues will become more prominent and others will seem to be left out, whether that is intentional or not that is a somewhat different issue. But I want to thank you very much for raising that.

Mr Christopher Flavin, President, Worldwatch Institute

Let me respond to a couple of points. First on the International Criminal Court: if you heard me say something against the Court or its importance, I was mis-communicating, because that is certainly not my view or the view of the Institute. We think that this international judicial process is extremely important and should in fact be more broadly utilized for more issues, and it was interesting to hear that environmental issues were in fact now brought to the Court, but there have not been any specific cases yet. We think that moving more in that direction is that makes an awful lot of sense. I guess the only point of contest that I would re-enforce is that we cannot assume that we cannot take everything to the crisis of an actual legal confrontation. I mean there have to be efforts but everyone recognizes that an international legal response is only a small part of a broader set of actions that we need to take to address some of these problems.

Let me also respond to this question of the role of markets. Again I really did not mean to say, not in the energy sector but certainly not in a broader sense that the market by itself is going to solve all problems. That certainly is not something that is supported by the evidence and I don't think it is something we have been arguing here today or in the pages of the book. There are many social issues as well as in particular environmental issue that are only going to be addressed if you have governmental intervention. And in the entire sort of euphoria over globalization I think unfortunately many in the private sector are forgetting, or at least for a time have forgotten, the fact that a strong, robust public sector is essential working together with the private sector in markets in solving problems.

And in fact the specific comment I was making on renewable energy pointing out that there are basically four or five countries that have really created an insipient global revolution on renewable energy. What do those countries have in common? They are certainly not the countries with the best renewable resources; they are certainly not the only countries that have strong private sectors and a capability to innovate. What they have in common is a strong government policy. Governments got in and changed the regulations, the regulations which have basically protected monopolies that have built large nuclear and coal plants and opened that up to small entrepreneurs who wanted to build renewable energy. So the government intervention came first, and the private sector investment came second. And I think the key message which I think is important to convey is that this would not have happened with either one of them alone. If you would ask governments themselves to do this you probably would have had a lot of costly gold plated projects that would not have worked, because we saw that tried by many governments, including my own in the 1970s. But the private sector could have not begun to be engaged if you didn't have the change in

governmental laws. So that is what we really needed: a strong partnership between the public and private sectors.

Dr Gottfried Leibbrandt, Chairman, EuroCampus Institute

Let me first explain how we fashioned our scientific panel this afternoon. So many new ideas are being put forward that it is just a pleasure to be here. Maybe because of my background on education I missed a bit the emphasis on world education and research. Many comments presuppose developments in research. We have been saying innovation, innovation, innovation is what we need to face the coming problems. I think research is very important and it has to be more or less a bit guided or stimulated, I guess. And the same of course is true for education. I am thinking about policy makers that have to be educated to better cope with these problems. But I am also thinking about people in industry.

Dr Annemarie Goedmarkers, President FRES - Foundation Rural Energy Services

I think the issue that was raised on R&D in the energy sector is very, very important. The fact is, in this issue area where we have so many problems - the amount of money spent on R&D is decreasing. This is only known in certain areas, but we should bring it more to the public and we should stress that the amount should be increased. Industries should be encouraged to spend more on R&D and on the right issues. I remember that during my time in the European Parliament that we adopted an amendment to the budget that the R&D on energy should be 50-50 percent on nuclear and on other sources. It was a slight attempt to re-shift focus, but I think since then there has not been much attention on it. If this could be picked up by all the people here and put forward as an idea to put politicians on the right track, I think that would be welcome.

Mr Piet Wit, Director, syzygy

I'm mentioned here as director of syzygy, a small firm working on ecology and development, but I am also as a member of CIMIC which stands for Civil Military Corporation. This is a unit in the Dutch army that is dealing with rebuilding the civil society as early as possible during the conflict. And I think it is important especially when you talk about environmental issues to address these issues as early as possible during that conflict. I always say: a bridge you can rebuild even after 10 years, if you have destroyed an ecosystem on which people depend and the nature depends then it is during a human lifetime virtually impossible to reestablish that. I would like to have ideas from the panel how they would see the role of the military during conflict in terms of environmental security.