

Anniversary NCDO, 4 February 2012

Introduction Speech Frans van den Boom, director NCDO



Your excellences, colleagues and friends,

Welcome to the 40 + anniversary of the NCDO. And welcome to the 1st bi-annual NCDO conference bringing together practitioners from different fields: global development, development cooperation, environment, human rights, economy, business, and different affiliations: science, civil society, private sector, policy and governance.

A special welcome also to our esteemed international guests:

Dr Pascal Lamy

Dr Sri Mulyani Indrawati

Dr Jamu Mwapachu

for their participation and contribution to this meeting.

The words spoken by Prince Claus, the first chair of the National Committee on Development Cooperation, superbly express what development and development cooperation was all about: support and work in collaboration with poor countries, in a relatively stable political environment, in order to get out of the poverty trap. Invest in people as well as in infrastructure, institutions, and governance. Don't take over and prescribe people what is best for them, but provide tools and assistance for self-reliance.

For more than 40 years, The Netherlands and its citizens have full-heartedly supported the goals of development cooperation. The Netherlands is one of the 5 countries that currently allocates .7% of its Gross National Income to Official Development Aid. And the total amount that Dutch citizens per capita donate to charitable causes is amongst the highest in the world. The Dutch branches of Oxfam-Novib, Greenpeace, Amnesty, Unicef, MSF belong the most important branches, as do religion inspired organizations like Cordaid and ICCO.

But international orientation and commitment is not limited to ODA. In other areas, the Netherlands has taken its international responsibility seriously: peace keeping missions, climate negotiations, fair trade. This is reflected in the annual Commitment to Development Index of the Center for Global Development, where the Netherlands always ranked in the top 5.

And without trying to quantify its contribution, NCDO has contributed to this exceptionally high and broad level of public and political support. But the support base is weakening and it would be too simple to attribute this to the banking crisis in 2008, the current Euro crisis and the related significant budget cuts. Factors that should be taken into account as well:

- Questions about aid effectiveness
- Issues around bad governance and corruption
- The decreasing number of LIC's, a result of amongst others impressive growth rates and free trade agreements
- The emergence of the new superpowers: China, India and Brazil
- The fading of the North – South paradigm: wealth can be found all over the world, as can poverty
- The changed face of poverty and hunger: 50% living in emerging economies, 25% in politically stable poor countries, and 25% in conflict ridden countries
- Access to information through the ICT revolution
- and last but not least, the re-emergence of other issues: food- and water security, a fast growing population, an upcoming energy crisis, and ever rising CO2 emissions, to mention just a few.

People who have a positive attitude towards development cooperation indicate that on the one hand they feel that development cooperation is a moral and humanitarian obligation, on the other hand they have trouble in dealing with negative media coverage around development. For some reason, civil society and media don't succeed in transferring the positive results. Those with a negative attitude, find their attitudes and opinions reinforced by negative media coverage. They are not interested in what happens in the world (their circle of identification is limited to their most immediate network, and they emphasize that the government should solve the national problems first and foremost

The world no longer is the rather simple and comprehensible world it once used to be. From unilateralism, to bilateralism, to multilateralism, to pluri-lateralism and quasi-lateralism. A world where – next to the nation-states, non-state actors have acquired and expanded its power and influence. The interdependencies and interconnectedness have made the world much more complex, and sometimes incomprehensible –not only for the average Dutch citizens, but also for those who are supposed to give guidance, to make sure that adequate checks and balances are in place.

The above calls not only for a new paradigm around global development, global governance, and global responsibility, but also for a new and contemporary conceptualization of citizenship and global citizenship. A new paradigm that centers around 3 major themes: economic, ecological, and social sustainability. A paradigm in which dealing with global issues and the securing of global public goods for all, is a global responsibility. Not a responsibility of the North or the West alone. No one country, no one sector alone will be able to solve the global challenges we are facing. But we have to be aware of and accept the fact that our responsibility is higher than average. Simply because we, to a high extent, are responsible for the creation, existence and continuation of these global challenges.



These are just 2 maps, one on the existence of absolute poverty and one the ecological footprint. And the distributions are similar when it is about disease burden, maternal mortality, child morbidity and mortality, absolute poverty, chronic hunger, lack of – clean - water: the countries in the South are still worse off. And if we look at level of education, health care expenditures, investments in R&D, the ecological footprint, the production of waste, and the prevalence of obesity we are the ones with the fat bellies.

At the same time:

- Citizens are aware of the enormous growth and influence of emerging economies, China in particular. Companies are taken over, factories are closed down, jobs disappear
- Income inequalities in the US and Europe are increasing.
- Acquired arrangements around pension schemes, access to health care and higher education, unemployment provisions turn out not to be securities and guarantees.
- Last but not least: The current euro crisis has given rise to an already existing distrust in institutions, governments, and elites.

This creates a specific cognitive problem for people. The old paradigm was simple: we are rich, they are poor. So we have to help them. The new paradigm is more complicated: their wealth is increasing, they are taking over our companies and jobs, and they expect us to make a greater financial contribution in order to deal with urgent global problems. “We” have to slow down, while “they” are surpassing us. Generally speaking: people don't like this. They

want to keep what they have and preferably they want to grow it. This easily creates a situation where at the level of the citizen an inward looking, individualist, local and provincial perspective takes over, and where on a state level there is a tendency to fall back to protectionist and isolationist policies.

This, ladies and gentlemen, is the main theme of our conference today.

This morning, Dr Lamy, Dr Mulyani, and Dr Mwapachu will elaborate on these themes from a global perspective. A globalised world requires global citizens, but economic connectedness doesn't automatically translate into social and interpersonal connectedness. Even the more so, if differences rather than commonalities in value systems, religions, cultures and societies are emphasized.

The implications of the above paradigm shift also are paramount for NCDO. Creating awareness about and the understanding of global challenges and opportunities needs to go hand in hand with awareness about what people as citizens can contribute to alleviating, mitigating and ultimately solving, the global challenges we are facing. It is no longer about creating support for development cooperation, but about citizenship in relation to global development, about responsibility, perspectives, and fairness. The creation of a sense of global citizenship, in which there is not only a felt responsibility at the family, social, local and national level, but also at the regional and global level. A shared responsibility for a common future, for us and for future generations.

But let us be realistic about this transformation from strengthening public support for development cooperation to an engagement of all in dealing with huge global problems. That challenge is the lead theme in the plenary talk of Jos van Gennip, who stepped down as the chair of the Board of NCDO in November, but will never let down on his commitment to international development and social cohesion.

The Netherlands still is one of the countries where social cohesion at a local level is high. Almost 50% of Dutch – women and men - engage in voluntary work. This is an exceptionally high percentage compared to other European countries, and a strong indication of the strong commitment to active and participatory citizenship. However, local cohesion doesn't necessarily mean that people connect at a global level, despite the fact that ICT and travel allows us to do that.

This afternoon's panel with Andree van Es, Paul Scheffer and Herman Wijffels will address the issue of how to connect local communities to global communities, how to transform a sense of local anchorage to global anchorage. It is easy to say that if all of us would feel and act as global citizens, many things would be so much easier. But it is not a question of the why, but of the how.

Finally, in what way will NCDO contribute to this transition?

It is NCDO's ambition to contribute to building bridges between citizenship and global challenges and between local and global citizenship. NCDO will do this in a variety of ways – and importantly many of the examples I will give are implemented in partnership with others.

Firstly, we will continue to invest in global education and awareness.

- samsam with 420.000 subscribers in grades 6,7, 8 at primary schools and 115.000 in grades 3,4,5
- One World Magazine and website: 120.000 subscribers and 70.000 unique visitors per month
- The dissemination of the Earth Charter
- Surveys and focus groups amongst the Dutch population and subpopulations (business, kids, young adults). A recent example is the survey around the Occupy-movement in The Netherlands
- Discussion and debate
- Publications files on the green economy, water and food scarcity and other global public goods
- The development of an atlas on global development – the successor of the MDG atlas.

Secondly, we will empower people to take action themselves. We should never forget that Prince Claus' vision about empowering and facilitating people applies to all of us: each of us is in the position to contribute to global development. Many of us in small ways, together in a big way. Just a few examples:

- The online platform and journal for small-scale development initiatives (My World)
- The World Connectors
 - Vision Document on Agriculture
 - The real price initiative
- The Food First Alliance
- Training and bringing together of people with different backgrounds and perspectives: young business professionals, teachers, civil society professionals, political talent, journalists etc

And finally we do research

- To understand public opinion about global development and challenges and how they act on it, for instance the annual population survey on International Cooperation, and our recent opinion poll on the Occupy-movement.

To identify ways in which citizens in whatever role can act as responsible citizens on these issues. As a volunteer, as a political participant, as a consumer, as a producer, as a decision-maker, as employee, as entrepreneur and so on. And I hope that this is exactly what we will see in our Battle of the Cheetahs, of which you will hear more just after lunch.

Once again, welcome!

I hope you will enjoy the discussion, the interaction, and the spirit.

Thank you