

**Senior-Level Meeting on Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation, and  
Parliamentary Forum at the High Level Political Forum, New York, 13-14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> July 2019**

When the Millennium Development Goals were agreed in 2000, they aimed to halve extreme poverty by 2015. They were targetted only at developing countries.

Their successors, the Sustainable Development Goals, agreed in 2015, have even greater ambitions. This time, with 17 goals and multiple targets, the aim is to eradicate extreme poverty by 2030, while leaving no one behind. The SDGs apply to every state in the world, not just developing countries.

To meet these goals requires enormous effort, and the Senior-Level Meeting on Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation at the UN, in advance of the Ministerial Segment of the High-Level Political Forum, particularly sought to involve a range of those who need to play their part – parliamentarians, civil society, business – in order to have a multiplier effect within each country.

Lord McConnell and I represented the UK at these meetings, and at the IPU's Parliamentary Forum which followed the Senior-Level Meeting.

The Senior Level Meeting saw impressive if worrying contributions. Amina Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the UN, set the scene by spelling out the huge challenges in front of us if the SDGs are to be realised, and why it was so important to meet them. She emphasised that strong institutions are required to sustain the levels of investment required. Speakers emphasised that all parliaments and assemblies needed to be involved, and also that tackling climate change was closely associated with delivering the SDGs.

A particularly striking speech was the quietly given presentation from Prof Eun Mee Kim, of South Korea. Many contributors had been noting progress on the SDGs. She simply and starkly pointed out that, far from progress, on certain absolutely key SDGS – particularly on climate change, equalities and biodiversity - the world was simply going backwards.

Her viewpoint was echoed by Egyptian Mahmoud Mohieldin, Senior Vice President of the World Bank, who tore up the speech prepared for him and gave a devastating global critique – Latin America falling back, East Asia making little progress, Africa – “virtually impossible” for them to meet the SDGs. If Governments budgets didn't reflect these priorities, change would not occur. “If it doesn't exist in the budget, it doesn't exist.”

The first day focused on what needed to be done; the second, on implementation. The need for data and monitoring, and good governance came up time and again. Limited resources pointed to the need for harnessing the private sector. Susanna Moorehead, former head of Africa for DFID, former ambassador to Ethiopia and now Chair of OECD DAC emphasised that development needed to be protected, preserved and modernised. It was a global good. But she pointed to a lack of resources, more fragility and less accountability, even though there were now more players involved.

The IPU Parliamentary Forum was useful in bringing parliamentarians from all over the world into these discussions. We heard that half of all of parliaments have taken the step of institutionalising the SDGs. But analysis showed very weak capacity in parliaments to assess the impact of what was and was not happening in individual countries.

Clearly, if the SDGs are to be delivered, Governments need to be held to account, by parliaments, and civil society. It was noted that parliaments themselves are not mentioned in the latest UN statements, a surprising omission, and from the UK we concluded that it remained vital, whatever challenges the UK currently has, that its original leadership on developing the SDGs was not watered down at this key stage. Above all, tackling climate change must be integrated into the SDGs as, without addressing that, it will be impossible to eradicate extreme poverty.

Lindsay Northover