

High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable development

Session 11: Review of Implementation of SDGs

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To eradicate poverty, the world need three things: Infrastructure, Technology, and Investment

Building resilient infrastructure : there are two targets- to increase connectivity, and to promote sustainable economic growth.

Physical infrastructures for connectivity, connecting people to services and markets, and connecting people to people : transportation (roads, rails, harbors), oil/gas pipelines and electric grids, fiberoptic cables and communication networks, water and sanitation conduits;

Social infrastructures to underpin growth and development: education system, healthcare system, legal system, financial and monetary system.

Infrastructures must serve three purposes: the three e's

a, economic prosperity: by providing jobs, a foundation for growth

b, equity: social fairness, shared by all, affordable and accessible to all

c, environmentally sustainability: low carbon, resilient to natural and man-made disasters

Promoting Inclusive and sustainable Industrialization.

Industrialization streamlines the production process with economy of scale and technology, so as to increase output, generate growth, and create jobs. Focusing on profits, it should never lose sight of inclusiveness, so that profits are shared and distributed equitably, and of sustainability, being mindful of environmental responsibility.

Fostering Innovation.

Innovation is important for future growth. Profits should be plowed back as investments to support research and development. Technological innovations facilitate the production process and add values to the products, while Systemic innovations such as new forms of social practices , organization and management can also spearhead economic restructuring and social reforms in response to needs and changes.

1) Regarding the top three high-impact actions for the coming years are: to eradicate poverty and achieve most of the other SDGs, the world needs three things; Infrastructure, Technology, and Investment.

a, **Infrastructure:** Energy for all, providing electricity worldwide, over 1.1 billion people still have no access to electricity, it underpins all growth and development;

b, **Technology:** ICT promotion, accessibility, affordability, addressing barriers such as low level of ICT literacy, little local content little, lack of trust;

c, **Investment:** Financial services, empowerment of small scale enterprises, overall MSME financing gap, 3 T, small loans to individuals so that they can lift themselves out of poverty.

2) To achieve Policy coherence: all these goals involve participation from cross sector, cross discipline, cross professional, and involving a multitude of stakeholders. What is needed to get things done is a strong political will coupled with financial and operational know-how. There should be a high level platform (a commission) with a mandate to put before the community a compelling and shared vision of a smart inclusive and environmentally sustainable system of infrastructure development, including a long term plan that spans generations, incorporating present and future needs.

3) Adopting advanced technologies requires community buy in, and innovative form of social practice and business models, can promote technical literacy, and dispell mistrust with an innovative framework of governance.

Adopting infrastructure projects in a democractic society is never easy or straight forward. Public consultations are often lengthy and inconclusive; project structures are often complicated without equitable risk allocation and fair returns; projects are usually long term and subject to varying economic and political conditions; and on the average , major infrastructure projects cost 80% more than originally budgeted and run 20 months behind schedule.

Absorption of foreign technologies and the dissemination of innovation across the economy, can reduce technological gaps. Innovation in method and policy can also improve process, governance, organizational practices, social and economic restructuring .

International collaboration can bring in innovative financing approaches, models and instruments, help attract private investments and participation, and oversee the formation of legal and regulatory framework to ascertain that the projects are transparent, resilient, and sustainable.

- 4) The most significant impacts of emerging technologies on industrialization prospect and sustainable development are probably automation technology, robotics and artificial intelligence, which are cutting edge technologies that, unfortunately in some quarters, instill uncertainty and raise the question of human being, especially the lower class workers, being displaced resulting in unemployment and disruption of social security.

Such technologies, no doubt, will increase human productivity achieving economic growth in leaps and bounds, resulting in big profits for the corporate top echelon. But for it to work equitably and inclusively, the very interests of the ordinary workers have to be duly considered, and a social safety net need to be provided.

I would propose that emerging technologies first and foremost, have to be able to improve the quality of life of every person on earth so that they can live a life free of fear and free of want. The strategic commodities nowadays threatening our security are: food, energy, and water. Technologies should address these facets of human wants.

- 5) This session has offered an overview of the barriers and opportunities for building resilient infrastructures, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and fostering innovation. There are a number of areas that would benefit from further examination and debate: how to create frameworks for blending private and public capital and participation; how to assess existing instruments and platforms; how to develop innovative solutions; and how to accelerate flow of private capitals to invest in these three areas.

But the larger point is that building resilient and sustainable infrastructures and achieving SDG 9 offers great potential to improve the quality of life of people around the world while addressing climate change and other forms of environmental degradation. There are many challenges to the design, construction, financing, and operating these infrastructures, industries and promoting innovation. There are no simple solution. What there should be is a will to cooperate.

The Belt and Road Initiative put forward by China in 2013 has attempted to achieve similar goals with bilateral and multilateral cooperation in building infrastructure to promote connectivity and produce jobs, followed by empowering MSME for trade and exchanges, and finally

achieving a win-win situation of improving the livelihood of the people by bringing prosperity, hope, and peace. Since 2013, the Belt and Road Initiative is beginning to see results.

Ladies and Gentlemen, in the next 15 years, the world is set to build more infrastructure than the value of all the infrastructure that exists today. That will dramatically remake the global landscape and profoundly shape the trajectory of efforts to deal with climate change, inclusiveness, and the sustainability question for decades. We can secure a better future, but only if we act quickly, wisely, and collectively, such as when we form under the Belt and Road Initiative, a community of common responsibility, of common interest, and of common destiny.

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