



MOST/2015/WSSF/1

September 2015

Original: English

Plenary Panel by UNESCO's Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme on "Contributing to a just world within the Post 2015 agenda: the role of Social Science and public policies", 14 September 2015

Organised during the World Social Science Forum, Durban, 13-16 September 2015

Ministerial segment

Mrs. Nada Al-Nashif, Assistant Director-General, Social and Human Sciences, UNESCO, chaired the Ministerial segment of the panel.

She informed that UNESCO's MOST Programme has been invited to organize this plenary event by our partners the ISSC, the Human Sciences Research Council and CODESRIA which allowed us to have this event which is at the core of what the MOST Programme is about; *to strengthen the research-policy nexus through creating platform for dialogues for policies supported by research.*

She stressed that the Post 2015 agenda will be the guiding development framework towards 2030.

Although Member States will be in the driving seat for the implementation it is also a strong focus in the agenda on the need for global partnerships. The importance of data is included.

Among the key SDGs included are the focus on ending poverty and reducing inequalities. She drew the attention to that France will host the COP 21 in December 2015 and stressed that there is no doubt that the social consequences of climate

change also have severe consequences on achieving the development goals, and thus to achieve a more just world.

She informed that UNESCO's MOST Programme has a global justice approach to the eradication of poverty and reduction of inequalities. The quest for a globally just world where all human beings can fully exploit their potentials and live with dignity is far from being achieved. It is an ideal that many advocates of global social justice continue to aspire towards.

UNESCO's Strategic objective 6 of UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy for 2014-2021 reads: "With a view to contributing to the Post-2015 development agenda, UNESCO will seek to develop a future-oriented understanding of the dynamics at work, based on the approach of sustainability science, to assist countries in the design and review of inclusive evidence-based policies. At stake is the management of social transformations to support the universal values of peace, justice, nondiscrimination and human rights. Strengthening UNESCO's role in promoting the social dimension of sustainable development will help to harness new opportunities for inclusive social progress in education, the sciences, culture, communication and information".

She informed that during the Ministerial segment of the plenary event, Ministers and high-level speakers would discuss what are the challenges and policy-responses to achieve a more just world, including providing national and/or regional experiences. They would also inform to what extent they use social science research findings, as a contribution to policy formulation, as well as for monitoring and evaluating social policies. In the research segment the researchers would provide information what research findings they can provide to contribute to their needs and to implement the Post 2015 agenda. Several of the Ministers participating in this event have hosted MOST Regional Forums of Ministers which is the flagship activity of MOST, gathering Ministers and researchers for dialogue within a key development theme and which outcome is a Ministerial declaration.

Keynote speaker: The Ambassador of the Republic of Kenya in South Africa on behalf of Cabinet Secretary Jacob Kaimenyi, Minister of Education, Science and Technology, the Government of the Republic of Kenya

The Ambassador informed that MOST Forum was co-hosted by Kenya's Ministries of Education, Science and Technology, and Devolution and Planning and with the support from UNESCO, from 24 to 26 February 2015.

The Nairobi Forum which involved 13 Eastern Africa countries, East Africa Community Secretariat, and African Union Commission, two ministers from Ecuador and Ghana and many researchers, mainly focused on "*Global Justice*", with specific focus on inequalities and poverty.

The Durban Forum feeds very well into the efforts we made early this year and provides our countries and organizations with an opportunity to further share experiences and reflect on our challenges.

She informed that the Nairobi Forum was very concerned about the growing inequalities within and among nations that continued to hinder progress towards poverty eradication and attainment of internationally agreed goals. Extreme inequality in the world that contradicts fundamental principles of human rights and social justice need to be addressed by all of us as we set the post 2015 development agenda targets.

The lack of equal opportunities for all across the world is a serious concern to all of us. This consequently undermines sustainable development, to the detriment of youth, women, people with disabilities, older persons and other persons in vulnerable situations.

Challenges posed by population growth, the youth bulge, unemployment, urbanization, HIV and AIDS, the growing incidence of non-communicable diseases, gender-based violence, and climate change, call for properly managed social-economic transformation.

We need to scale up commitments and investments designed to enhance economic and social empowerment of our people, provide justice, respect human rights, and promote equity, equality, dignity and mutual accountability. We need to further commit to these values as we move forward in the post 2015 Agenda.

We need to support the African Union Commission in the implementation of the Social Policy Framework for Africa. Member States need to fast-track the implementation of the African Union Assembly Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development, as adopted in January 2015.

The Nairobi MOST Forum highlighted the importance of education at all levels and stressed on the need for governments to support science and technological advancement as key drivers of development.

She urged UNESCO to continually organize such Forums where minister can interact and brainstorm on really issues that affect our people with the goal of facilitating and supporting social policy dialogue.

No society can develop without investment in Education. Kenya is committed to strengthening access to universal primary education and secondary education.

The Government is committed to make Kenya a regional health services hub, and to encourage new local and foreign investment in medical research, pharmaceutical production, and modern hospital care. Kenya is also committed to addressing challenges of high population growth, rapid urbanization and high cost of housing.

Kenya has a young and growing population that is urbanizing rapidly. Urban housing and improvement of rural homes are priorities in the social pillar. In association with the private sector and county governments, the national government will aim at increasing the supply of modern housing units especially for the low income segment of the market where supply lags behind demand.

The Kenya Government will also increase support for policies and institutions devoted to promoting gender equity. It will increase allocation of resources to enterprises led by youth and women.

Kenya has also committed to fully implement policies for protection of rights for vulnerable groups. The government will also identify and nurture talent, especially among youth, and support commercialization of talent in order to raise personal incomes and widen employment opportunities. It will also provide the necessary infrastructure at national and county levels to nurture youth talents in sports and entertainment. The government will strengthen education against female genital mutilation and Gender Based Violence.

In conclusion, she stressed that Kenya is very committed to the development through the use of research findings. That is why it has strengthened the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation to support research. Our Universities also continue to spearhead research at various levels. The Ambassador stressed that she believes that through such Forums provided by UNESCO; we can truly link research and policy making in Government.

Dr Wiseman Magasela, Deputy Director-General, on behalf of the Minister of Social Development, South Africa (it should be noted that Dr. Wiseman also chaired, in his own capacity, the research segment of the Plenary Panel).

From the outset he informed how importance policies are to contribute to a just world as exemplified by the Post 1994/apartheid era in South Africa and the combat of Nelson Mandela to provide e.g. housing to poor and colored, ensuring energy sources, contribute to reduction of hunger etc. However, research and statistics shows that there is still a lot to do, and that there are less colored that white who attend universities and graduate etc.

The National Development Plan (NDP) offers a long-term perspective towards 2030.

The NDP aims to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030. According to the plan, South Africa can realize these goals by drawing on the energies of its people, growing an inclusive economy, building capabilities, enhancing the capacity of the state, and promoting leadership and partnerships throughout society.

The Government of South Africa provide several services as concerns health, education etc. It also does a lot to create the fiscal space need. There is a need for a sound socio-economic framework based on democratic principles and dignity to advance development and contribute to a just world.

H.E. Mr. Paul Quist, Minister of National Planning, Government of Nicaragua

He explained that the Nicaraguan government has acknowledged gender equality as a strategic component to further representative and participatory democracy and to construct a more fair and equitable society. It has also recognized that integrating a gender perspective in policy-making implies, among other things, promoting redistribution of public resources, power positions of authority and recognizing the blue of women's work.

In 2012 the Parliament approved law 786 of Reform of the Law of Municipalities, which introduces the principle of parity in the election of local authorities and the integration of a gender perspective of the elaboration of local budgets.

In the 2014 Global Gender Gap Report, published by the World Economic Forum, Nicaragua is ranked 6th (after Iceland, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark) out of the 142 countries measured with a score of 78,94 percent out of a possible 100. Nicaragua has remained in the top 10 for the third consecutive year, advancing 4 positions from the last report.

The country's key strengths are on the Educational Attainment sub-index, where it has closed 99.96 percent of the gender gap, and Health and Survival, where it closed the gender gap fully. Nicaragua has also closed 54 percent of the gender gap on

Political Empowerment, which given low global standards, places in it in the 4th position out of the 142 countries, only behind Iceland, Finland and Norway.

According to the report, being one of the 10 most advanced countries in the world in terms of gender equality comes from the returns of investment in women's health and education.

He informed that more girls and women have entered the educational system in Nicaragua, and a solid framework of laws has been approved to support and guarantee women's rights.

Preschool, primary, secondary and university education enrolment rates in Nicaragua are now higher for women and girls than for men and boys.

"Enrolment in primary, secondary and university education has grown significantly in the last 10 years," Renzi said. Between 1997 and 2008, secondary education coverage rose from 29.9 percent to 48.1 percent of girls, and from 24.8 percent to 42.9 percent of boys.

The Nicaraguan constitution states that education is a basic universal human right that is both free and obligatory.

Nicaragua has for several years had a problem of domestic family violence with the husband hitting their wife's. In order to contribute to combat that the Government of Nicaragua, in addition to having legislation that it is illegal, has ensured that to make it easier for women they can report to female police officers. More men are convicted for violence than in the past, however many women regret that they announce their husbands for violence as it creates new problems if the husband goes to prison in terms of losing the family income etc.

H.E. Mrs. Betty Tola, Minister of Economic and Social Inclusion, Ecuador, and Vice-President of the MOST IGC Bureau

The Social Sciences have a key role in reflection, researching and defining strategies to achieve sustainable development objectives and the satisfaction of these and other needs to achieve the post-2015 development goals.

She provided an overview of Latin America and inequality reduction.

In the 1980s and 1990s it was a significant growth in inequality due to stabilization policies and structural adjustment of neoliberal character which focused on;

- Relegated social investment from the priorities of public policies;
- Legislation and state actions to the benefit of the market, the capital and the elites, not to the equality among the society;
- Subordination of social policy to the economic policy.

However, from the 2000s there has been a reduction of inequality characterized by national projects claiming the human being;

- High social investment
- Tax reform towards equity

- Redistribution of wealth (social services, education, policies of universal coverage and targeted interventions)
- Generation of capacities and reduction of wage gaps
- Integration between economic and social policies

She provided an overview of the evolution of the Gini Coefficient in Latin America comparing the 1990s, 2000 and 2010. From 2000-2010 it has gone down in all countries apart from Honduras when it has been increasing.

The constitution of 2008 points out a new era that leaves behind the neoliberal phase characterized by the dominance of the market over society and the economy as exemplified by the following articles.

Art. 1. Ecuador is a Constitutional State of rights and justice, social, democratic, sovereign, independent, unitary, intercultural, plurinational and secular.

Art 10 People, communities, nationalities and collectives are entitled and shall enjoy the rights guaranteed in the Constitution.

Art.85 Equitable and inclusive distribution of national budget and public services with the participation of individuals, communities, peoples and nationalities

Art.283 Economic and solidarity system; in harmony with nature

Art 341 Conditions for integral protection of their habitants throughout their lives, equality in diversity and non-discrimination

There are also social policies focusing on the well-being:

- Surpasses the reductionist view of development as economic growth
- New vision, the central point of development is the human being to achieve the Well-Being
- Integration of social and economic policy
- Expanding capacities (education, training, health, housing) must be accompanied by full access to opportunities (employment, credit, access to the information markets)
- Strengthening the social and solidarity Economy
- Reaching changes in the generation of knowledge and education (linking higher education to the National Plan for Well-being)

The ratio of the average income of the richest 10 percent compared to the poorest 10 percent was 42 times in 2007 compared to 22 times in 2014.

Poverty in satisfied basic needs has reduced 16.2 percentual points between 2006 and 2014.

Access to Superior Education, research and knowledge generation has increased positively:

- Reduction percentage of people who do not attend to the superior education for economic reasons was 45 percent in 2006 while 26 percent in 2013.
- The number of researchers increased from 2142 in 2009 to 3.607 in 2011.
- Increase of published articles in indexed journals per 10,000 habitants. From 2.11 in 2006 to 4.14 in 2013.

There has been significant investment to promote high-level scientific production on Social Sciences, the Exact Sciences and Life.

GDP allocation for Superior education was 0.72 percent in 2006, and 2,12 percent in 2014.

This identifies Ecuador as the country that invests the most in superior education throughout all of the region

She continued by providing an overview of investments for the research projects and empowerment of the country's scientific production (millions of dollars) which was 8.5 percent whereas it is 81, 5 millions of dollars today (the period 2007-2013).

The role of Social science in Latin America is huge and to use it is the pragmatic options of several Governments.

Some achievements in Ecuador have been the following which is relevant for social development;

- Creation of INFOMIES: Virtual knowledge headquarters. Institutional knowledge management

There have been undertaken 40 investigations about:

- Economic inclusion: Non contributory assurance, social protection floor, popular and solidarity economy, family support etc.

- Social inclusion: Child development, older adults, special protection

Minister Betty Tola went on to inform that Ecuador was the Headquarters of the X Ministers of Social Development of Latin American Forum of the MOST Programme

The Forum focused on strengthen the exchange of experiences in social transformation processes of regional cooperation and dialogue encouraging strong actions to overcome social inequality in Latin-America, encouraging debate and discussion among public decision-makers and institutions of social sciences in the region strategies, and introduced the discussion of global development goals post 2015.

She informed that there was a:

- Commitment to regional integration

- Position the experiences of Latin America, concerning will and political choice to confront inequality and fight poverty, claiming to human being.

She stressed that in addition to the Ministers, both CLACSO, FLACSO and CEPAL participated.

The Declaration of Quito reached among others the following agreements:

- Creation of the Technical Secretariat

- Institutionalize and monitoring the officers network

- Implementation of the Strategy of Cooperation to make progress to equity in LAC. Implementation of the Strategy of Diffusion to overcome inequity in Latin America and the Caribbean

- Strengthen bonds with the Academy and public decision makers

-Promote research to measure in an innovative and logic way the multidimensionality of inequality, the form and implementation and evaluation of the impact of policies

-Incorporate the debate of the consequences on climate change, natural disasters, care systems, prioritizing social investments and quality management

She informed that the creation of the Pro Tempore Presidency has lead to:

-Structuring the Technical Secretary

-Development of tools for monitoring the agreements: www.xforodesarrollosocial.com

-Cooperation catalogue, with 39 cooperation offers

-“Strategy of Diffusion for Overcoming inequity in Latin America and the Caribbean: About 50 official documents of Ecuador and 8 from Honduras; document from FLACSO about inequalities and the link with public releases of the social Development Division of CEPAL

-Permanent improvement of information systems, monitoring and focalization: Ecuador-Paraguay

H.E. Sheik Mohammed bi Said bin Saif al Kalbani, Minister of Social Development, Oman

He informed that there are noticeable changes in Oman on social and economic aspects under the leadership of his Majesty Sultan Quaboos, the Sultan of Oman. In addition, articles of the Basic Statute of the State Constitution, which was issued by Royal Decree No (101/96) ensure the rights and freedoms of Omani society members.

Article 10 calls for the establishment of a sound administrative system that ensures the justice and equality for citizens, the respect of public order and the public good of the country. Therefore, there is a line for social principles in the Basic Statute of the State where Article No. 12 states that justice, equality and equal opportunities between Omanis are guaranteed by the State. However, the family is considered as the basis of society and the law shall regulate the means of protection and preservation, strengthen its ties and values, and care for its members in order to develop their abilities.

He drew the attention to that their Oman’s income depends mainly on oil and gas revenues to fund these programs and the fact that this source is not permanent, thus the State has focused on the development of human resources through training and education, therefore it tries to provide financial support to establish projects that enable them to work and compete in local and regional markets through providing competitive and challenging environment in order to involve national labour effectively in economic sectors.

Since the beginning of the 1970s Oman begun to spread the education in all the towns and villages without discrimination in order to educate citizens and at the same time working to build an education system with international standards. Therefore, this system gives opportunities for students to develop their abilities and it encourages them to think and innovate. Moreover, it strengthens family cohesion and the respect for the customs, traditions and heritage. Also it calls to deal with others peacefully and without discrimination of their sex, color or religion.

For the purpose of improving people's health, the government has built hospitals all around the country in order to provide health services and free treatment to all citizens with a focus on improving maternal and child health.

He informed that Oman seeks to improve the social sphere through the development of individual capabilities to be able to cope with life demands and to create cohesive families. Actually, we believe in the value of the role of women in the daily life and and the participation in economic and political decision-making. Therefore, the government has completed the development of an integrated social policy for the next phase. The eight five-year plan 2016-2020 focuses on developing the social sphere and in all its aspects. In addition, the ministry of social development is working to develop a strategy for social world in line with the Government and with relevant stakeholders. The government's future direction is to focus on social aspect and to develop this sector in accordance with the directives of His Majesty. Achieve social justice is the goal of every Government.

The Minister ended the intervention by indicating that without effective international cooperation, countries will not be able to deal individually with the effects of environmental degradation resulting from human activity or natural disaster.

H.E. Dr. Abu Bakar Mohamad Diah, Deputy-Minister, Ministry of Social Transformations and Innovation, the Government of Malaysia As a young nation we transform our country from less developed to one of the fast developing countries in Asia Pacific and now we are heading for a high-income nation by 2020. A Development Plan to eradicate poverty as well as reduction of inequalities began already back in 1950s. In 1971 the Government launched the long term development plan followed by a more expansive Outline Perspective Plan in 1991, and the last one in 2001 to ensure all government targets and objectives to become a fully development country in the year 2020 to be materialized. Meanwhile the Government also introduced Vision 2020, a 30 year plan to transform Malaysia into a fully developed country along all dimensions- economically, politically, socially, spiritually, psychologically and culturally by the year 2020.

Malaysia's national per-capita income expanded more than 25 fold from USDdollar 402 in 1970 to USD 10, 796 in 2014.

Our consistency in implementing national policies has improved our people's socio-economic status. The incidence of poverty in general was reduced from 49.3 percent to 0.6 percent between 1970 and 2014.

The mean household monthly income increased more than 20 fold from RM264 in 1970 to RM6, 141, in 2014. Income inequality has also narrowed, as reflected by the Gini coefficient from 0.513 in 1970 to 0.401 in 2014.

In terms of education, our public school is free and the government has been injecting billions to subsidize the higher education of its citizens.

Malaysia acknowledges that Social Science and Public policies continue to play an important role in leading Malaysia to a path of inclusive, sustainable and resilient development.

Malaysia has recently launched the 11th Malaysia Plan (2016 until 2020) to spearhead the nation towards realizing Vision 2020. The Eleventh Plan is a strategic plan that paves the way for Malaysia to deliver the future that the person deserves. It is a government's commitment to fulfilling the aspirations of the people. With the

theme “anchoring growth on people”, this plan has six strategic thrusts and six game changes that will transform ideas into reality and address the goals set out in Vision 2020.

The six Strategic Thrusts defined by the Government are the following:

- Enhancing inclusiveness towards an equitable society;
- Improving wellbeing for all;
- Accelerating human capital development for an advanced nation;
- Pursuing green growth for sustainability and resilience
- Strengthening infrastructure to support economic expansion and;
- Reengineering economic growth for greater prosperity.

The six Game Changers are as follows:

- Unlocking the potential of productivity
- Uplifting household towards a middle class society
- Enabling industry-led Technical and Vocational Education and Training
- Embarking on green growth
- Translating innovation to wealth and
- Investing in competitive cities

Malaysia is focusing on the performance of participation, inclusion as well as strengthening capacities and partnership.

Further to enhance socio-economic development of people, the Malaysian Government through the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI) has created the Social Innovation Fund. The proposal should consist of projects of economic value and improves the societal well-being of the community. The

The Ministry’s Social Innovation projects include ideas, products, services, models, processes, technologies, legislation, social movement, intervention as well as solution to social problems. Our initiatives intend to resolve social problems and societal challenges with the hope to create new social affiliation and collaborations among people to enhance society’s capacity. An example of an initiative is:

Fish Side Identification (FSI) system under the National Remote Sensing Agency. Through FSI system, fishing sites are identified based on surface temperature and phytoplankton parameters which are extracted from remote sensing satellite images. Fishermen will have the accurate information on the areas that fish are expected to congregate.

Malaysia is also playing an active role in the regional as well as multilateral platform. Malaysia as a chair of ASEAN 2015 is working closely with other ASEAN member countries in overcoming poverty as well as reduction of inequalities. Regional integration under ASEAN platform is one of the ways to improve socio-economy of our people.

ASEAN’s Plan of Action on Science, Technology and Innovation is expected to pave the way for more joint collaboration among member countries on science, technology and innovation which will bring mutual benefits to Member States. Besides ASEAN, Malaysia also plays an important role in APEC and UNESCO in its efforts to improve its citizen’s socio-economic status.

Our experience shows that social science plays an important role in public policies. To develop strong and continuous public policies on eradication of poverty and

inequalities, we need to mobilize public sector, private entities, academician as well as social scientists' thoughts and mind to reach the target group.

Malaysia is also playing an active role in the regional as well as multilateral platform. Malaysia as a chair of ASEAN 2015 is working closely with other ASEAN member countries in overcoming poverty as well as reduction of inequalities

Mr. Pablo Prospero, Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Argentina, on behalf of Her Excellency Alicia Kirchner, Minister of Social Development and President of the MOST IGC

The first part of the intervention focused on Argentina's national policies to contribute to a just world, with a strong focus on social inclusion and human rights. A particular focus is also given to children, youth, women and people with disabilities.

He drew the attention to the importance of the interlinkages and mutually dependent need to focus on socioeconomic policies.

Mr. Pablo Prospero furthermore focused on the high value Argentina gives to regional cooperation through UNASUR, MERCOSUR and CEPAL to advance the socioeconomic conditions of people.

A focus was also on the Post-2015 agenda and it was stressed that its relevance will depend on inter alia the respect of human rights (economic, social and cultural as well as political and civil rights).

In the capacity as President of MOST IGC the focus of the statement was on the objective of the MOST Programme about creating the research-policy nexus, and that since the election of Kirchner as President of the IGC in 2009, she has worked on strengthening and reaffirming this, and especially in the field of social development to create more just societies.

Argentina proposed that social inclusion should be a key focus of the MOST Programme, a theme which is also of high relevance to UNESCO in general.

Mr. Prospero continued by stressing that the MOST focus has three mechanisms for the research-policy nexus; the Ministerial Forums, the MOST Schools and the MOST National Committees (and information was given about each of these activities).

The statement informed that Argentina launched/established a MOST National Committee last year, led by the Ministry of Social Development with the objective to propose and promote initiatives at local, national and regional levels, and the focus is on social inclusion and to work collectively. Members of the Committee are apart from the Ministry of Social Development, the National Council for Coordination of Social Policies, researchers and social organizations). This is a successful experience which could be replicated in other countries.

As concerns MOST and the Post 2015 agenda reference is made to the synthesis Report of the Secretary-General on the Post-2015 agenda issued in December 2014 and two of the "cluster areas" proposed (at that time) for the SDGs namely on "Dignity: to end poverty and fight inequalities" and "Justice: to promote safe and peaceful societies, and strong institutions".

Among the 17 sustainable development goals (which are accompanied by 169 targets) are the following of strong relevance to UNESCO's MOST Programme.

Goal 1 "End poverty in all its forms everywhere"

Goal 5 "Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls"

Goal 10 "Reduce inequality within and among countries"

Goal 13 "Take urgent action to combat Climate change and its impact"

Goal 16 "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels"

and Goal 17 "Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development".

It also refers to in the statement on behalf of Kirchner to UNESCO's Strategic objective 6 of UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy for 2014-2021 reads "Supporting inclusive social development, fostering intercultural dialogue for the rapprochement of cultures and promoting ethical principles". The Strategy, under this objective, reads: "With a view to contributing to the post 2015 development agenda, UNESCO will seek to develop a future-oriented understanding of the dynamics at work, based on the approach of sustainability science, to assist countries in the design and review of inclusive evidence-based public policies. At stake is the management of social transformations to support the universal values of peace, justice, non-discrimination and human rights. Strengthening UNESCO's role in promoting the social dimension of sustainable development will help to harness new opportunities for inclusive social progress in education, the sciences, culture, communication and information".

Commentator: H.E. Zola Skweyiya, former President of MOST IGC (2005-2009)

He indicated that the views and perspectives provided by the Ministers of Social Development from the different regions of the world are very precise, instructive and informative. From the different contributions it is clear that we share the ideal of a just and fair global society in which every child, each woman and man, every mother and every father, all persons with disabilities, the elderly, and all citizens of our countries are equally afforded the opportunity and resources to develop to their full potential and enjoy lives with dignity.

It is crucial that we bear in mind the UNESCO global initiative through the MOST Programme to foster comprehensive human, social and economic development through the use of evidence from research for policy formulation and for informed policy choices.

We meet at a time when the world is facing unprecedented social, political and economic challenges at the global level. Poverty, war and conflict continue to be part of the lot of the human condition and circumstances. All regions of the world are affected in different ways as those who are committed to a just world try to find solutions to the many problems. It is in the provision of lasting solutions to these problems that we find a crucial role to be played by the social sciences in the formulation of effective public policies. In this regard we look up to the leadership of Ministers of Social Development as they carry the duty and responsibility to bring together research and knowledge from the social sciences to the policy making process and influence the political choices that are made by our different governments and societies.

The 21st century bears witness to the remarkable achievements that have been made by the human race. Advances have been made in science and technology, in health

and medicine, in agriculture, in human nutrition, in early childhood development and many other areas and fields that have been proven to bear positive outcomes for human societies. Some regions of the world are experiencing unprecedented gains in life expectancy, in the elimination of rampant infant mortality and the increase in GDP per capita in many societies. As we continue to measure human progress and advance through tools such as the Human Development index we are witnessing societies that show us that social, economic and gender equality are achievable.

However, these great advances of the human race are not enjoyed by all of humanity. The remarkable achievements are not equally enjoyed by all members of all societies. In many societies some social groups remain marginalized and vulnerable, without social protection, without incomes and often with poor social services. We are increasingly becoming an unequal world. Our societies are becoming a disturbing theatre of the haves and the have-nots. The OECD Report on Growing Inequalities attests to the inequalities in a range of domains such as household wealth, consumption and public services.

It is social science research and the knowledge gained that should guide our decisions and choices as we build a just world within the framework of the post-2015 agenda.

The ideals that we strive for, the vision of society that many in the world continue to struggle for is the one informed by the principles and concepts of social justice, economic justice, fairness, equity, human rights, social and economic rights, human dignity, the elimination of all forms of discrimination, peace and security, the prevention and resolution of conflict and the commitment to the improvement of the quality of life for all citizens of the world and all the members of our societies. This is what informs and underpins the United Nations' commitment to the ideal of a Society for All. The research and the policy choices we make have to be about the attainment of these ideals and principles.

To advance the global social development agenda let the Member States be active in the UN system and its various bodies. Ministers of Social Development and Social Affairs have been meeting in the different regions of the world with the aim to advance comprehensive and coherent approaches in human, social and economic development. These forums bring together researchers, academics and the political leadership at the regional level. The WSSF is one of the key platforms that provides opportunity for researchers, policy makers and political leadership to engage and share experiences.

Partnering with civil society organizations and affording community based collectives a voice in policy making can only ensure greater ownership of the policies we design and implement. Governments that work with their civil society organizations build trust in state institutions and promote social cohesion.

He highlighted the critical issue of the funding of UNESCO, national social science research councils as well as research commissioned by Departments of Social Development and Social Affairs. Member States must support and ensure that UNESCO is properly funded and UNESCO is able to discharge its mandate in full. National social science research councils should not be allowed to become like consulting firms competing for funding from government departments. These bodies need strong support and partnership with their governments. The role of social

science research in improving the human condition in this world cannot be over-emphasized and we can only ignore it at our own peril.

There are no better placed political leaders to advance the momentous post-2015 agenda than Ministers of Social Development and Social Affairs in all the regions of the world!

Research segment WSSF

Opening words: Dr Michael Woolcock, member of the MOST Programme's Scientific Advisory Committee, Lead-Researcher, Social Development, the World Bank, lecturer at Harvard University

He stressed that he would present some remarks on the role of evidence in shaping development outcomes, particularly as it pertains to justice and attaining the Sustainable Development Goals.

Evidence can certainly be used to inform policy, or what governments should do or aspire to do, but the frontier issue for development in the early 21st century is using evidence to improve implementation, or the capability of governments to actually deliver on those policies. Wherever one goes in developing countries today, one can find wonderfully articulated policies, and often at least a partial realization of those policies, certainly in domains that can be addressed via technical or logistical skills (i.e., accounting, engineering, elite decrees – e.g., erecting buildings, raising/lowering interest rates).

In a recent visit to the province of Aceh in Indonesia, for example, our team drove for five hours from the capital city to villages that felt like they were literally in the middle of nowhere, but even here one could find functioning schools and health clinics, at least as measured in terms of buildings constructed, materials (textbooks, basic medicines) provided, and trained staff present. If the provision of those initial key 'inputs' was the first development challenge, the next – and more difficult – challenge is to *combine* those inputs into a robust system that consistently generates high-quality outcomes for all citizens, despite frequent pressures to do otherwise. To use a simple analogy: it is one thing to assemble the ingredients for the cake, but it is quite another to know how to bake the cake; doing so requires very different skills, ones that bureaucracies inherently struggle to cultivate. *The 21st century development challenge is figuring out how to go beyond articulating policies and strategies to building the state's capability to implement increasingly complex and contentious tasks.* That is true within sectors such as health and education, but is especially so in those sectors which are the most complex and contentious of all, such as regulation, taxation, land reform, and justice – because everyone wants better schools and hospitals, but very powerful groups often actively fight against being regulated, taxed and subject to the rule of law.

In short, the development policies of most governments around the world for sectors such as education and health care are often clear, noble, and well-informed; as *policies*, they are fine. The binding constraint on realizing those policies, however, is weak implementation systems. Teaching millions of children for six hours a day, for 200 days a year, for ten or more years to enable them to get an education that minimally prepares them for life in a global world, is really hard. As with all complex problems, the quality of the responses to those problems by implementing agencies varies enormously: the essence of complex problems – even when they are fully funded, politically supported and faithfully implemented (which is often not the case) – is that they generate highly variable outcomes. Documenting, exploring, explaining

and learning from this variation is, I would argue, where ‘evidence’ (and research more broadly) can have the highest impact. Too often today, however, (elite) researchers present themselves as arbiters of “what works”, conducting “rigorous evaluations” of programs with a view to cataloging an array of “verified” instruments from which a busy policymaker can choose with confidence. Such an approach may be useful in very limited circumstances, but if the key challenge is building capability to implement key mandates – such as health, education and policing – then the task of research (and evidence) is quite different.

He informed that a recent book on improving service delivery in the Middle East and North Africa that he co-authored with colleagues at the World Bank, they showed just how wide the variation in the quality of implementation actually was. We are familiar with bar charts showing the differences in performance *between* countries (e.g., Egypt vs Morocco vs Yemen), but there is even wider variation *within* countries, from regions and towns right down to individual schools and clinics. In Yemen, we showed that absenteeism across the country on any given day ranged from 8% to 92%. When salaries, training, and curriculum are identical across a country – i.e., where the “policies” are identical – how do some schools manage to produce students who excel (as measured by their performance on international tests) while others do not? In birthing centers, why are the wards at one end of the building squeaky clean while those at the other end are filthy? The answers to these questions cannot be resolved by “better policies”, but they can be addressed by generating “better evidence”, if that evidence is used to map, understand and learn from the local sources of variation in implementation quality. Under this model, the purpose of evidence is to help an implementation system learn how to improve by providing real-time ‘feedback’ on performance, and to share the strategies of those who – somewhere, somehow – have figured out how to make the prevailing system work a little better than others.

By celebrating and sharing those successes, the system itself expands its ‘possibility frontier’ to improve its overall quality for everyone. This is how individuals learn complex tasks like speaking a foreign language, playing a musical instrument or even swinging a golf club: at first we are awful, and then gradually, with constant practice, emulation and guided feedback, we get better. Institutions also “learn” like this; we should never cease to be amazed at how seemingly everyday tasks such as drinking clean water, flying in an airplane, turning on a light switch or withdrawing money from an ATM machine actually rests on a vast, complex institutional infrastructure. But as extraordinary as these now-routine activities are, even more amazing (and more complex) are institutions that constrain elite power, that ensure that everyone is subject to the same rules, that combine scientific knowledge with its customized application to help respond to the specific concerns of specific people in specific places (patients, students, crime victims, immigrants). These systems are complex because the knowledge and practices on which they rest can only partially be codified and standardized; having been painstakingly acquired in a particular time, place and circumstance, it cannot be assumed that they be ‘exported’ elsewhere, and even within a given context they can be rapidly “unlearned” or delegitimized in the face of novel challenges, rising external pressure or internal complacency. Generating useable, high-quality evidence to inform *these* challenges is the next frontier in development research and practice he indicated. It is most pressing of all in the field of justice, where the stakes are so high, the pressures so great, the complexity so ‘wicked’, and the knowledge required so idiosyncratic. Building a more just world certainly requires evidence to inform “better policies” but even more important is cultivating evidence that improves the quality of implementation for all.

Dr. Ebrima Sall, Executive-Secretary, CODESRIA

Dr. Sall complemented the very good presentations by the Ministers and their representatives. He stressed that MOST provides a lot of value as we live in knowledge driven societies and that there is a need for dialogue between researchers and policy-makers at national level, regional level and international levels.

The Post-2015 agenda is about social transformations. He stressed that Ministers and scientists should “engage in such a way that policy and social science maintain an ongoing conversation together”. He indicated that in Africa for example, countries emerging from serious conflict will not be able to meet the goals, which expire this year and are to be replaced by SDGs. Mr Sall stressed that we are not just looking at successes, but also analyzing how we achieved success, whether it is sustainable and whether there are new trends of exclusion emerging.

Mr Sall informed that he was very pleased to participate in the Forum of Ministers in Kenya and to engage with policy-makers there. In the Ministerial Declaration adopted Ministers agreed to support the World Social Science Forum. He thanked MOST for having followed-up this recommendation by inviting Ministers to participate in this panel allowing for Ministers to interact with researchers and vice-versa.

Dr. Shami Seteney, Executive Director, Arab Council for Social Sciences

She informed that the Arab Council for the Social Sciences is a very new organization that has been in operation for only 3 years as of August 2012 and the youngest sibling of the Regional Research Councils represented in the Panel.

The focus of the Forum on Inequality and justice is at the heart of the concerns that drive the Arab Council for the Social Sciences (the ACSS) and of many organizations, movements and individuals across the Arab region who are struggling for equality and justice with all the weapons available to the weak in the face of the increasing retrenchment of authoritarian regimes. The democratic spaces that were opened up through massive uprisings across the region have been firmly closed down either by increasing state authoritarianism and internal repression, or in other cases a spiraling down into tragic civil wars. Fully 10 of the 22 countries of the League of Arab States are in a state of turmoil.

An important focus of the ACSS and the research is promoting to remove the region from the lens of exceptionalism with which it has been tarred for decades. This exceptionalism is compounded by culturalist explanations for a multitude of phenomena from political authoritarianism to religious conservatism to gender relations. We would like to replace such a lens to one that sees the region as central to the production of new global economic orders (not least through its oil wealth) as well as illustrating some of the effects (negative or positive) of these economic orders. The devil, of course is in the details of these multi-scalar connections.

Dr. Seteney informed that theme of the ACSS conference last March was, coincidentally or not, was “Questioning Social Inequality and Difference in the Arab region”. The ACSS is based in Lebanon but works across the 22 countries of the region from the resource rich countries of the Gulf to the middle and low income countries across the Arabian peninsula, the Middle East, the Nile Valley and North Africa. There are so many different forms in which inequality takes place across these diverse settings and the calls for justice address many different specific national and local forms of oppression. Yet, across our conference regional themes

did emerge: As expected, issues of Labor, of Gender, of Class, of Education and of Citizenship were of high interest. However the themes of law and judicial processes also emerged as a major interest of researchers across the region and another paramount theme was the issue of spatial, territorial and sub-national inequalities.

She went on to say that the issue of unequal development within states and the unequal distribution of resources between metropolises and the hinterland has been quite clear in the trajectory of the Arab uprisings that broke out starting in late 2010. While international and national attention has been riveted by the scenes of hundreds of thousands of protestors congregating in central spaces of capital cities, yet the sparks that led to these massive mobilizations are in almost every case rural and provincial. The impact of the deterioration of rural livelihoods, the depressed economies of small towns and the effects of drought and environmental degradation are high on the list of root causes of the unrest. Of course what turns unrest into revolution is when the cry for equality and justice echoes across class and spatial divides – however understanding the multiple causes of the movements that have taken place need to take seriously the provincial as well as metropolitan sources of the uprisings.

That said, the language of the uprisings have been remarkably similar across the Arab region: bread, jobs, democracy, civil state, freedom, end to corruption and a call for dignity – individual and collective dignity, social and cultural dignity, political and economic dignity, gender dignity, ethnic dignity. The language of the uprisings have shown a wonderful diversity of mixing Arabic, English, French and other language to introduce powerful new words into the regional vocabulary.

She explained that the latest entrant into the Arab uprisings is in Lebanon as the movement started last July has begun to swell - under the slogan “you stink” – a phrase quintessentially Lebanese in its evocative colloquialism that succinctly captures the moment and transcends it. You Stink translates remarkably well across languages, stressing in its Arabic version the deep rottenness of the political system and implying in its English version the profound incapacity of the political elite.

In Lebanon this summer a crisis developed around garbage services in the capital city and the most developed parts of the surrounding countryside. The halt of garbage collection during the hottest days of the summer was a result of bickering among leading politicians who, it turned out, had major interests in the private company that is contracted by the government to collect garbage. These members of the political elite could no longer agree on how exactly to divide the garbage pie – furthermore the rural areas where garbage had been dumped for decades and who had been protesting for years, finally rose up to refuse having the refuse of the country dumped on them. The inability of the municipality, or the ministry of environment, or of health to come up with any solutions and worse, the ignoring of the problem by authorities and irresponsible statements to the effect that citizens were to blame for producing so much garbage in the first place and that they should be responsible for finding solutions etc. made even the most cynical of Lebanese rise up in anger that their lives and health were of so little importance to the political elite.

As garbage piled up in the streets, the crisis took on sectarian dimensions as alternative landfills were rejected on the basis of which sect's garbage was being dumped on whom. Class issues emerged through jokes that the wealthy were ashamed that their garbage were collected in the same black bags as the common folk and began to use Louis Vuitton garbage bags. The area around the airport began to be used as dumping grounds which led several airlines to threaten to stop

their flights to Beirut. Germany and China offered to buy Lebanese garbage but there was no political will to explore these options.

She explained that the last demonstration before she left Beirut to come to the WSSF drew thousands of protestors in front of the parliament building in downtown Beirut to protest the inability of the political elite to reach a solution.

On that day the unprecedented heatwave that has held the region in its grip over the past month, with temperatures soaring up to 40 Celsius in Lebanon and more in other countries was compounded by a strange sandstorm that lasted more than 3 days, with particles of dust hanging in the humid air – all leading to an atmosphere and context that can only be called suffocating.

Yesterday, in one of the panels, the work of George McBean was mentioned on how the local problem of garbage becomes a global pollution problem. In Beirut over the past months, this connection has been clear to all those living there. If any occasion brings together into one framework issue of poor governance, corruption, environmental degradation and climate change, it is the current situation in Beirut. As classical social theory has taught us, it is when the relations of exploitation become transparent that resistance becomes targeted and effective. In the Forum, there have been some statements to the effect that such local/global connections need to be made clear to people so that they will act. Yet the You Stink campaign shows that the people understand very well how these connections are working to the degradation of their health, their wellbeing and their future.

It is therefore a breath of fresh air to be in Durban (despite what Desmond D'sa told us in the opening session about air pollution) and to hear about positive stories and successes from different corners of the world.

Another aspect of the implosion of the Arab region is the millions of people who have been flung out of their homes and lives by the multiple conflicts. This is another issue that has been mentioned several times during the discussions in the Forum with reference to "The refugee / migrant crisis in Europe", "the worst since WWII." While one certainly applauds the generous response by the people of Europe as opposed to their governmental policies (though the image of cheering locals as refugees arrive at a train station is a little bizarre, reminiscent of spectators at the finish line of a marathon race), however we need a few figures to put things in perspective:

In term of the Syrian refugees alone, the countries hosting the largest number of refugees are Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey, each with more than a million Syrian refugees. This is not counting the undocumented refugees and not counting those individuals and families with resources who have been settling into these countries and are able to build lives and livelihoods.

Dr. Seteney drew the attention to that globally, we should remember that the top 5 countries hosting refugees/IDPS are in order of magnitude: Pakistan, Lebanon, Iran, Turkey and Jordan.

If we list the countries according highest refugee in ration to the overall population, then:

Lebanon – 1.1 million Syrian refugees in a country with a population of 4.5 million

Jordan – close to 1 million Syrian refugees in a country with a population of 6.5 million

Chad

Djibouti

South Sudan

So as scholars of refugee studies know well, it is the South that suffers most from the refugee crisis both as sending and receiving countries. We also know that refugee issues are not a matter of humanitarian aid – research over decades has shown that refugees are not simply helpless people sitting in a tent, but struggle to make the best of their situation, take up any economic opportunities that are available and often turn refugee camps into centers of economic activity. In Lebanon, local researchers have been showing how, despite official discourses about the Syrian refugees as a burden, the refugees in fact have been contributing positively to the Lebanese economy.

She indicated that when she hears in this Forum that it calls to the intellectuals and social scientists to rally to the Millennium Development Goals or to dialogues with policy makers or civil society, she is struck by several perhaps contradictory thoughts:

- First, why are researchers and intellectuals in general seen as somehow removed from the very systems of inequality and injustice that they are being asked to enlighten and guide? Social scientists are part and parcel of the systems of repression and of opposition that are at play. Some are and have been complicit with political elites, others have courageously called for freedom from within their societies, from its prisons or from exile. But the point is that, we need to understand the intellectual landscape of a country or region is imbricated into its political economic and social realities
- Secondly, the Arab uprisings are remarkably complex phenomena that show the multiple ways in which local, national, regional and global dynamics are intertwined in the production of (among other things) inequalities as well as the spaces of dialogue and the making of new meanings. Decades of clamping down on universities and research and free speech means that there are not necessarily cadres of researchers ready to step into the breach and come up with analyses and explanations that feed into policy. This lack of strong research communities within the reachers leaves the door open for analysis to drift into easy uni-causal explanations – Islam, hatred of the west, fundamentalism.
- Finally, we have acknowledge that the global structuring of research and academic work still does not reward research that speaks to activism or to policy and thus there is little motivation for young researchers who are ambitious and wish to participate in global social science to gear their research towards policy.
- Infrastructure: In the Arab region more than 70 percent of universities established after 1990 and only around 50% have social science faculties. This adds to the weaknesses of regional research communities and their ability to respond to both local and global demands for social knowledge.

It was not always thus in the region and it does not need to be so in the future. The coming period requires, among many other priorities, a reconstruction of intellectual life, a recreation of spaces for establishing scientific community, and dialogue and critical reflection. For this national, regional and global solidarity and collaboration is essential.

Mr. Mathieu Denis, Executive Director, ISSC

1. What makes the current moment unique is the confluence of critical problems which cannot be disentangled and that are happening at the global scale. It no longer makes sense, from a scientific point of view, and I believe, from a political point of view, to disentangle global environmental change from other social, political and cultural problems, including poverty, inequality, discontent and corruption. These are not disconnected problems that compete for our attention. They do not occur in discrete autonomous systems rooted in the physical environment on the one hand and society on the other. They are part of a single, hyper complex social-ecological system where the environmental, political, social, cultural, economic and psychological dimensions of our existence meet and merge.

2. To say that we find ourselves in the confluence of global and interconnected which we must understand and tackle in their interactions, is very similar to the views at the core of the post-2015 agenda. It has major implications for the design processes of policies, and for the way in which we produce knowledge that should inform such policy making design.

3. Together with our colleagues from other international scientific bodies, like ICSU and WFEO, the ISSC is being involved in the post 2015 agenda at various levels, and through different channels.

The SDGs is certainly the Agenda's component in which we are the most active, through our role as co-coordinator of the Science and Technology Major group, and our involvement in the Open Working Group in charge of designing the SDGs.

4. We have collaborated for example on a systematic review of the 169 targets for the SDGs, from a scientific perspective. The assessment was coordinated by ICSU and ISSC, and brought together a team of about 40 international experts that assessed whether the targets are backed up by scientific evidence, whether they address the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, and whether they are sufficiently specific to be effectively implemented and monitored.

Examples.

Goal 1 – End of poverty in all its forms everywhere

The assessment highlights what we know from the work of poverty experts:

- namely the importance of gathering a multiplicity of measurements to have an appropriate view of the poverty numbers in a certain region (e.g., access to education, health, natural resources, energy and sanitation), as well as national “definitions” of poverty and poverty lines, to ensure international comparability and consistency.

Goal 10 – Reduce inequality within and among countries

The main criticism here is that the goal lacks qualitative or quantitative endpoints, and need measurable targets.

- The recommendation is to involve participatory monitoring and accountability networks to ensure feedback on progress from citizens and enhance monitoring and evaluation.
- Specific recommendations are also made about the kind of indicators needed, including the development of new metrics.

5. The SDGs will be adopted next week; this does not mean the end of the process, perhaps rather its beginning, as we are entering the long period of implementation of

the goals at the national level. And I think it is now that our role of mobilisers and coordinators of research becomes most relevant.

Together with our colleagues from ICSU, and from the numerous international programs that we coordinate - including Future Earth, the global platform for research on environmental change -, we are in a position to help and support the efforts of implementation of the SDGs at the global and the national level:

- We can help identify national targets and indicators, assess their viability and potential for integration
- We can provide essential research and synthesis in support of monitoring and review

We assess that a platform like Future Earth involves about 60 000 researchers worldwide.

6. We must acknowledge that the post 2015 Agenda is primarily and fundamentally about people. People are triggering the problems and they will have to be the drivers of transformations. Acknowledging that it is people – individually and collectively – who take centre stage, implies that:

- We must build and support access to social observation systems that will provide place-based and disaggregated data, analysis and monitoring of peoples' experiences of and responses to problems of sustainable development, including issues of inequalities and justice, conflict, etc.
- What counts as evidence also includes the kind of context-sensitive, qualitative knowledge about the human world that social and human sciences in their diversity can provide. And hence it is critically important to prioritize the appointment of a broader spectrum of social scientists (beyond economists) in advisory bodies, expert groups and working committees intended to provide counsel on the implementation and monitoring of the post 2015 agenda.

Fernanda Saforcada, CLACSO

She indicated that nowadays, Latin America constitutes a region with a great diversity of political processes in motion. In many of our countries, progressive governments have repositioned the State in its sole as the guarantor of rights and the central actor in the development of policies to build more just societies. This has allowed a vast progress in terms of processes of social inclusion and recognition of rights. However, Latin America continues to be one of the most unequal regions of the planet. Inequality is presented to us in all its complexity.

In this context, it is essential that the production of knowledge about the processes of production and reproduction of inequalities, as well as exchanges and dialogs between the social sciences and the fields of decision-making of public policies. We understand that, at present, all production of social knowledge is relevant, but we identified some priorities. First, the study of social inequalities in its multidimensionality and the ways to deal with them from public policy. Secondly, the role and models of the State as well as the models of development in dispute. Third, the study of the environmental problems from a social perspective: the causes, consequences, and social implications of environmental problems, as well as the public policies in the environmental field. Fourth, education and democratization processes of knowledge, in a world in which the tendency to the privatization of education is increasingly strong. Fifth, the analysis of migration and mobility, and policies and regulations related to this issue, which generates situations becoming increasingly critical. Finally, the violence and the security of citizens. These six themes, should be addressed considering three transverse axes: a southern

perspective on the study, a perspective from the human rights and the dimensions of gender and youth.

She indicated that CLACSO has been able to define these priorities and crosscutting themes from the work that develops CLACSO, the Latin American Council of Social Sciences, which is a network of more than 430 social research centers in 27 different countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. CLACSO has defined as one of its priorities to strengthen the bridges between the social sciences and public policy. For this purpose, CLACSO has been developing activities that favored social exchange between researchers and policymakers relating to social organizations. We believe that there is knowledge as well as social commitment in all of these areas. It is not a question of deepening divisions between some and others by placing knowledge on one side and the social responsibility at the other. In different ways, there is knowledge in the social sciences and also in public policies. There is commitment and responsibility with social realities in the policy makers and researchers. What we need are strategies and devices that enable more dynamic and sustained exchanges; that allow deep dialogs and discussions to enrich everyone involved; and allow us to think together. CLACSO has been developing a series of initiatives and experiences in this regard. We believe that this must be one of the horizons and the commitments that must draw the social sciences, such as the social sciences become politicized and compromised with their societies.