



**7th Global Conference on Human
Development**

***Unlocking the Potential to Create a New
World Together***

**11-15 November 2008
Atami, Japan**

Request for Facilitators

Civilizations come to birth and proceed to grow by successfully responding to successive challenges. They break down and go to pieces if and when a challenge confronts them which they fail to meet.

— Arnold Toynbee

The conventional view only serves to protect us from the painful job of thinking.

— John Kenneth Galbraith

Summary

The 7th Global Conference on Human Development: Unlocking the Potential to Create a New World Together aims to examine a central question confronting every person and institution engaged in international development: *Why have efforts to address development challenges failed to broadly realize the changes we wish to see?*

Organised by The Institute of Cultural Affairs International together with global partners, the 7th Global Conference on Human Development will bring together more than 1000 key stakeholders from civil society, government, academia, and the private sector in Atami, Japan. For five days, from 11-15 November 2008, participants will engage this central question in a dynamic, highly participatory process, and produce a pro-active agenda for the civil society organisations, governments, and businesses engaged in the conference.

Facilitated conference elements include:

Pre-Conference (November 2007-October 2008)

- Online workshops, conversations, polls, and other forms of information exchange, which identify the underlying issues and focus questions for conference working groups;
- Local workshop for communities, staff teams, and other groups that wish to prepare for the conference through in-person workshops

Conference Design (November 2007-April 2008)

- Serve as a member of the core facilitation team, working to design the structure of conference proceedings.

Conference Proceedings (11-15 November 2008)

- Facilitate or co-facilitate a conference working group and/or auxiliary conference sessions.

About the Conference

The 7th Global Conference on Human Development: Unlocking the Potential to Create a New World Together aims to examine a central question confronting every person and institution engaged in international development: *Why have efforts to address development challenges failed to broadly realize the changes we wish to see?*

Despite the enormous efforts made to overcome poverty, injustice, and disease – among so many other pressing challenges – the international community can point to only incremental impact on the status quo. Development efforts are overwhelmingly reactive, responding in piecemeal form to the endless challenges that emerge before us. Given the slow rate of change, many in civil society, academia, government, and the private sector have called for a re-assessment of the underlying assumptions employed in carrying out the work of human development around the world. Such an assessment – a kind of going back to basics – opens the door to envision the paradigm shift or shifts needed in order to put our collective efforts on an increasingly pro-active, outcomes-driven track.

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Key elements that make the 7th Global Conference on Human Development a vital contribution to the international conferencing dynamic include:

- *Outcomes-driven Process*
The ICA methodologies for communication, facilitation, consensus-building, and action planning provide a participatory, results-driven process framework.
- *Participatory Pre-Conference*
Pre-conference engagement of registrants in the identification of workshop topics and pressing questions to be addressed through the conference.
- *Gathering Momentum*
Framed in the context of ongoing global initiatives and processes, from the Millennium Development Goals to the World Social Forum, in order to add value, deepen the dialogue, and provide specific input into these efforts.
- *Commitment*
Conference workshops produce concrete action agendas, to be followed-up and implemented by a committee of the conference partners.

History of ICA Conferences

Every four years ICA International organises another historic global conference on human development:

1. International Exposition of Rural Development, India, 1984
2. Our Common Future, Mexico City, Mexico, 1988
3. Our Common Future, Prague, Czech Republic, 1992
4. The Rise of Civil Society in the 21st Century, Cairo, Egypt, 1996
5. Millennium Connection, Denver, United States, 2000
6. Weaving a New Society, Antigua, Guatemala, 2004

The 7th Global Conference draws upon the experience of these conferences, while launching a new model of partnership with other international development organisations, government, academia, and business in order to maximize the collective impact of conference action agendas on international development.

Goal and Objectives

The goal of the 7th Global Conference on Human Development is to *launch the paradigm shift or shifts needed to align global development efforts with the outcomes that the global community has committed to realize.*

In order to achieve this goal, the conference has the following specific objectives:

- Bring together 1000 key stakeholders from civil society, government, academia, and the private sector;
- Explore the diversity and interconnectedness of our most urgent global human development challenges, from the developed and developing world;
- Address the question of why so many development efforts have failed to produce the desired results;
- Analyze what development approaches are working, what's not working, what new options are available to us, and how we can overcome our limitations in dealing with development challenges;
- Serve as an incubator for ideas about how to enable the world's people to pro-actively shape their own futures, rather than passively responding to change;
- Produce the strategies, alliances, and partnerships across disciplines needed to realize the conference goal; and
- Synthesize and integrate working group outcomes into a holistic implementation agenda.

Eight Central Challenges

The preliminary lens for the 7th Global Conference is a set of 8 major human development challenges, which serve as starting-points for preparatory conversations:

- 1) Effective Governance and Protection of Human Rights
- 2) Persistence of Poverty
- 3) Environmental Degradation
- 4) Armed Conflict and the Arms Race
- 5) Access to Healthcare and Preventing the Spread of Disease
- 6) Literacy and Education
- 7) Consumerism and Over-Consumption
- 8) Disconnectedness and Barriers to Engagement

Gender inequity is recognized as a cross-cutting issue exacerbating each of these 8 challenges.

The 8 topics will serve as organising principals and starting-points for the pre-conference process. Details can be found in the Appendix at the end of this document.

Pre-Conference Process

A combination of unique pre-conference processes will engage participants in translating the 8 focus topics into specific focus questions that will be addressed by conference working groups. The process includes 2 principal components: 1) ***identifying the focus questions for working groups***; and 2) ***research analyzing the roots of failure in overcoming development challenges***.

1. Identifying the Focus Questions for Working Groups

From the initial list of 8 focus topics, a combination of pre-conference online activities, workshops, and projects will generate the specific focus questions that will be addressed by working groups during the conference.

Online

The conference website www.japan2008.org is presently being expanded into a wiki, combining technologies of electronic facilitation, social networking, and information sharing. Online facilitators will lead a series of online workshops, conversations, polls, and other forms of information exchange, which will identify the underlying issues and focus questions that will be tackled during conference working groups.

Local Workshops

For local communities, staff teams, and other groups that wish to prepare for the conference through in-person workshops, a *Pre-Conference Local Workshop*

Guide is now available to all conference registrants. Local workshop outputs will be incorporated into the online process.

Projects

Conference registrants may also wish to share lessons from ongoing projects and/or have experimental project ideas to implement in advance of the conference, in order to incorporate the project's lessons into the conference process. These analyses may be shared online and/or in local workshops, as part of the process of focusing the working groups, as well as in the conference documentation.

2. Research

Focus Topic Analyses

A leading scholar or development practitioner specializing in each of the major focus topics will be commissioned to produce a research paper on the global challenges in this area. One person will also be identified to produce a synthesis report on *Our Most Urgent Human Development Challenges*. The synthesis paper will be formally presented as part of the conference proceedings. The topical and synthesis reports will also be bound and distributed to all participants, and published as part of conference follow-up.

Case Studies

10 country case studies will be commissioned in order to conduct an independent evaluation of UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) implementation in 5 developed countries and 5 developing countries. Building on the range of other MDG 'progress reports' carried out to date, the purpose of these studies will be to share strategies and lessons learned from MDG implementation, in order to identify approaches and strengthen commitment for achieving targets by 2015. A scholar or practitioner will also be identified to produce a synthesis report of the case studies on *The MDGs in 2008*, which will be presented during the conference proceedings. The country case studies and synthesis report will be bound and distributed to all participants, and later published as part of the conference follow-up.

Request for Facilitators

A team of expert facilitators is required to assist with the pre-conference discussions, conference design, and the conference workshops. Experience and expertise in the following areas is particularly valuable:

- Online facilitation technologies and approaches
- Technology of Participation (ToP) methods
- International conferences with 1000 participants or more
- International development issues
- Coordinating teams of facilitators

Interested facilitators should send a cover letter and CV to Mike Watson, Director of Global Policy, at mwatson@ica-international.org. In the cover letter, please describe your experience and expertise in the arenas described above. Also indicate which aspects of the conference are of interest:

- Online and local face-to-face pre-conference facilitation
- Designing conference proceedings
- Facilitating conference workshops
- Coordinating the facilitation services internationally

Funding is being sought to support facilitation. However, currently no funds are available for facilitation services. Interested facilitators are asked to indicate what time commitment they are able to make in a voluntary capacity between November 2007 and November 2008. As funding becomes available, effective volunteer facilitators will be the first considered for paid positions.

Facilitator applications will be considered on a rolling basis.

Appendix

Eight Major Focus Topics

1. Effective Governance and Protection of Human Rights

Effective governance is a global challenge not only for societies in transition, but for all of our communities – from the highest levels of government to village and neighbourhood leadership. Central to the mandate of effective governance is protection of rights, from the right to live free of fear and persecution, to the rights to development, self-determination, and participation, notably among women, youth, Indigenous Peoples, and other traditionally underrepresented groups. Many important initiatives under the auspices of the United Nations, the World Bank, individual governments, and civil society organisations are currently underway to tackle the issue of governance and protection of the rights of all citizens. Yet often these initiatives face the criticism of being driven by outsiders bent on interfering in domestic affairs.

How can we ensure that citizens are empowered to demand good governance and protection of their rights from their leaders? How can progress be made in this arena in developed nations, where the focus is so often on improvement of governance systems elsewhere in the world? And how can people living in societies affected by conflict, corruption, dictatorship, ethnic cleansing, and/or genocide effectively take action for change? What concrete advancements are necessary at all levels of governance – from village associations to the international stage – in order to achieve effective governance and protect basic rights worldwide?

2. Persistence of Poverty

According to many observers, the world has made important strides in reducing global poverty. Yet the statistics on global poverty remain staggering. According to the World Bank, half the world's population — nearly three billion people — lives on less than two dollars a day. Thirty thousand children die each day due to poverty; that is 210,000 children each week, or just under 11 million children under the age of five each year. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the poorest 48 nations (a quarter of the world's countries) is less than the wealth of the world's three richest people combined.¹ Most gains in poverty reduction are found in a few specific countries and regions; in many of the most desperate areas, high population growth, stagnating economies, and increasing gaps in wealth mean that poverty is growing daily.

Will the grand schemes for rapid poverty reduction work? Is the only alternative to continue to struggle for small successes through a piecemeal

¹ "Poverty Facts and Stats" website: <http://www.globalissues.org>.

approach? What combination of policy change, technology transfer, grassroots development, and skills training will change the future for the poorest of the poor? What new paradigms and approaches can be applied to the many ongoing efforts to end severe poverty and ensure that the day comes when every person has the opportunity to live a healthy and fulfilling life?

3. Environmental Degradation

In the ongoing effort to improve our standards of living, human beings have been slowly destroying the planet's soil, water, air, and biodiversity, with disastrous human and ecological consequences. Deforestation continues at an alarming rate of nearly 13 million hectares per year.² If current rates of extinction continue, one-third to two-thirds of all species of plants, animals, and other organisms will be lost by the end of the 21st century. Chemical pollutants and toxins continue to be carelessly released into the environment and threaten local ecosystems and human health. The increasing human population and increasing human consumption puts ever more pressure on ecosystems, as people search for ways to increase production. And one startling consequence of our carelessness and indifference – climate change – may prove to be the biggest challenge we have ever had to face.

The world mobilized in Rio in 1992 to give voice to the growing problems and to create an agenda for sustainability. However, 15 years later, problems continue to mount, and solutions seem desperately far. The rhetoric is by now well developed, and most international institutions, governments, civil society organisations, and even business are now talking sustainability, and some are making important strides in that direction. But how can small success translate into the changes that are necessary? How can meaningful human development and environmental sustainability be achieved through our policies and institutions? What new economic and social models can help us solve seemingly intractable problems? What new forms of cooperation can best address both social and environmental challenges?

4. Armed Conflict and the Arms Race

Among the many enablers of violent conflict, perhaps none is so profound as the arms race. Military expenditure, including the arms trade, remains the largest category of annual spending in the world, at about \$1 trillion. Ostensibly aimed at protecting national security, in many countries this expenditure surpasses the amounts spent on social development, communications, infrastructure, and health combined.³ The arms race continues in new forms, resulting in an overall decrease in the security of

² *Global Forest Resources Assessment 2005* "Key Findings" website: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/32246/en/>.

³ "Poverty Facts and Stats" website: <http://www.globalissues.org>.

nations, and of individuals. Arms sales to human rights violators, military dictatorships, and corrupt governments proceed to fuel violent conflicts in some of the poorest corners of the world.

Concerned citizens, civil society organizations, and even governments from all corners of the world have rallied to denounce the devastating costs of conflict and the dangers of militarization. Important victories have been won, such as the international convention prohibiting land mines, but even this victory remains partial, as some countries refuse to join the global consensus. How do we support those people and organisations seeking to move from conflict to understanding and compromise? How can arms dealers (usually the world's wealthiest nations) be held accountable for the uses of the weapons they trade? Which approaches and mechanisms can halt the sale of arms to the world's worst human rights violators? How can balance be restored to national spending priorities? What are the practical alternatives to military intervention in conflict areas, and how can we ensure these alternatives are pursued vigorously? What new human networks can counteract the military-industrial complexes that perpetuate the cycle of violence?

5. Access to Healthcare and Preventing the Spread of Disease

Despite considerable advances in global healthcare, one billion people still lack access to healthcare. Millions die each year of preventable or curable infectious diseases – including, in 2005, approximately 3.5 million of AIDS, 1.75 million of Tuberculosis, and 1 million of malaria. Millions more are now living with these and other diseases.⁴ In many cases, drugs are available but not accessible because of high costs. In developing and transitional countries, for example, 6.8 million people are currently in immediate need of life-saving AIDS drugs; of these, only 1.65 million are receiving the drugs.⁵

The MDGs have made fighting diseases such as HIV and AIDS a priority. The Global Fund and the President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief, among many others, have given some muscle and increased hope to these efforts. Yet problems continue to plague the response, and millions continue to suffer. Economic policies and reforms imposed on many developing countries have played a major role in contracting government spending on health and other social services in these countries. And access to healthcare is not a challenge unique to the developing world; millions of marginalized people living in wealthy nations also suffer from poor health and little access to healthcare services. How can we ensure universal access to basic healthcare? How can new strategies prevent the continued spread of the most malicious diseases? What new alliances can be built and

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Figures from *UNAIDS/WHO AIDS Epidemic Update: December 2006*. Geneva: Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), 2006.

approaches implemented to realize preventative medicine and treatment for illnesses as basic, universal rights?

6. Literacy and Education

Education and literacy are the foundations of participation in society. Yet about 800 million adults are illiterate and 100 million children currently do not attend school. In developing countries, non-formal education constitutes the learning environment for the vast majority of children, youth, and adults.⁶ In the developed world, deep inequalities in education systems perpetuate long-standing social injustices. In other cases, reliance on a centralized, formal, standardized educational systems produce long-term, negative social consequences.

The international community has affirmed and reaffirmed, on numerous occasions, the right of every child to a quality education, and many thousands of people and organisations are struggling daily to make this a reality. Progress in education will be a victory in its own right, but will also yield enormous benefits in all other areas of human development. Why is progress so slow? How can the right to education be more fully realized? How can we ensure a focus on quality and not just quantity in educational outcomes? What are the standards that best assess educational processes and performance? How can emerging trends in education worldwide be harnessed to strengthen self-respect, emotional intelligence, self-awareness, teamwork, and personal achievement?

7. Consumerism and Over-Consumption

Throughout history, peoples have created and purchased consumer goods with the aim to improve quality of life. The world is now awash with consumer products, providing incredible choice and increasingly affordable prices. But too often, products are developed and sold with little or no regard for their social and environmental consequences. How societies consume, and for what purposes, drives how resources are extracted – and often produces pollution and waste. How and where products are made, how they are transported, and where they end up after they are discarded are critical questions that are only just beginning to be asked by consumers, governments, and business leaders.

The social and psychological context in which modern consumption occurs is also too often neglected. Businesses and advertising promote the consumption of products, driving up the psychological desire to consume. The resulting materialism inevitably take a toll on society as a whole. Issues of consumption relate to environmental degradation, poverty, hunger, personal debt, and even the rise in obesity and other 'diseases of affluence.' What are the root causes of excessive consumerism and who is responsible

⁶ "Poverty Facts and Stats" website: <http://www.globalissues.org>.

for them? How can new approaches be applied to reduce over-consumption? In the short term, which measures can be taken to diminish the pressures – social, environmental, economic – imposed by excessive consumerism?

8. Disconnectedness and Barriers to Engagement

The world has never been more interconnected by transport, trade, and telecommunications than today. Yet increasingly, individuals and communities are operating narrowly for their own respective interests; the individual rarely sees himself as responsible for the community and the community often makes little effort to represent all of its individual members. The related decline in citizen participation in civic life worldwide has been attributed to a number of factors, from the rise of television and the internet, to the digital divide in the developing world. Failures in governance at many levels, and the resulting suspicion and mistrust, clearly also play a role.

Social disconnectedness makes it ever more challenging for communities to address their most urgent problems together, in ways that incorporate communal needs. For many, this disconnectedness constitutes a major barrier to social engagement in any form, particularly for those already on the margins of society. What underlying factors account for this fragmentation, which appears to come with social complexity? What has been the role of this trend in exacerbating other social challenges? How can new networks and systems be created to support and advance communal efforts when they arise, as well as encourage a more lasting human interdependency?



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