

WORLD SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT

FEBRUARY 11-13, 2019

LEADERSHIP PANEL

"A VISION FOR A SECURE AND SUSTAINABLE WORLD FOR ALL"

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SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION

By

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Cassam Uteem has outlined the vision of the Members of the World Leadership Alliance-Club de Madrid: A Shared Society – “a world safe for difference”. What does this mean in practice?

My starting point is that a Shared Society, which respects the dignity of all those who live there, is not only the right thing to do, but is the most effective way to progress economically, socially and environmentally.

Fatima Mernissi, the Moroccan writer, captures it so well:

Dignity is to have a dream, a strong one, which gives you a vision, a world where you have a place, where your participation, as minimal as it is, will change something.¹

In a Shared Societies everyone can find their place and we have identified Ten Commitments that provide a framework for action to bring that about.

But if we feel our dignity is not respected, we can become angry or dispirited and lose the capacity to make that contribution however minimal.

Agenda 2030 reconfirms that vision. It is based on a **holistic and inclusive approach**.

¹ Fatima Mernissi: Dreams of Tresspass

We agree with the catch-phrase associated with Agenda 2030 – “**Leave no one behind**” but even more important is another phrase: “**Realising the future we want for all**” which implies everyone has an active role in identifying that future and playing a part in making it happen.

We need sound policies and action from the top, but also an enabling leadership that encourages citizens to get involved, sometimes challenging recalcitrant leaders.

For example when we looked at the economics of Shared Societies, we could see a virtuous circle: if people are helped to pursue their own vision, dreams and ambitions, they will contribute to building a strong society which in turn can ensure the wellbeing of all its Members and so the cycle continues.

However the opposite is also the case. If people are excluded, the contribution they could make to society is wasted.

We can also see this in relation to the environment. If people think that their contribution is not important then they will be careless about how they treat the environment.

Recently we convened a very diverse working group to consider the link between environmental Sustainability and Shared Societies and its conclusions can be found on our website: www.clubmadrid.org.

The group concluded that the present development paradigm, or vision, is compounding environmental degradation and climate change. It is based on competition and short term without consideration of harmful consequences. It leaves too many behind.

So a vicious cycle is perpetuated which we will have to break if we are to halt the deterioration in the environment.

The way to do that is through a more inclusive approach, listening to those who are most affected by environmental issues. As the working group said:

The stories of the weakest, the less articulate and those without access to media are not heard, but they may have important insights to share.

A member of an indigenous tribe living deep in a tropical jungle may understand the consequences of indiscriminate logging, but his or her voice is not heard.²

It went on to note that there is also insufficient attention is given to the experience and insights of Inuit people, Pacific islanders, and people in a declining industrial area, or, on the other hand, to communities implementing effective approaches that respect the planet and build Shared Societies. The World Sustainable Development Summit provides a platform for redressing the balance.

If our approach becomes more inclusive and reflects the needs of such people, then it will become more long term; sensitive to the environment; and focused on the wellbeing and prosperity of all.

² A new Paradigm for Sustainable Development?

These issues cannot be resolved solely within national boundaries, which brings me to my final point.

The global system is not inclusive or holistic. It often works against the efforts of individual states to address environmental issues. It is not ensuring that “no one is left behind” or that “we are realising the future that we want for all”.

We also need a paradigm shift and a new vision at that level.

In 2012 with our partners we brought together experts from the main intergovernmental bodies to consider how the global system needs to change and together we produced “A Global Shared Societies Agenda”, which is also on our website.

At all levels we need to be clear about our vision and recognise that much of what we do today is incompatible with that vision.

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