

## **Helen Clark Public Lecture**

**Date: 21/01/2014**

**Time: 5-6pm**

**Venue: Old Theatre, Old Building, LSE**

On 21 January 2014, the IGC and the LSE hosted Helen Clark in her fourth appearance at the school. The head of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was presenting on the topic of "The Next Global Development Agenda: From Aspiration to Delivery". More specifically, the talk revolved around the next set of Millennium Development Goals (MDG's), known as the "post-2015 agenda".

Opening with the question; "What should follow the MDG's?" she then proceeded to cover the UNDP's wide ranging agenda for the next phase of development goals. Primarily, she emphasised sustainable development, the need to achieve peace and security, democracy, human rights, gender equality and rule of law, while promoting environmental sustainability. This is to be concentrated in a single framework with overarching targets; applicable to all countries while recognising the different circumstances in which they are in.

Firstly, she spoke about the collective responsibility to equality at the global level. Currently, there is high income inequality and this has massive impacts on economic inclusion. When you combine this with social exclusion and political exclusion, this results in the kinds of social unrest seen in the Middle East. This goes hand in hand with other forms of discrimination, including based on gender, age, disability and religion.

Secondly, she addressed the job crisis – 600 million jobs are needed worldwide to keep unemployment at the current level.

Thirdly, she focussed on climate change, a strong theme of her whole speech. Natural disasters have cost \$2.5 trillion since 2000, so while the cost of action might be high, the cost of inaction is surely even higher.

Fourthly, she addressed war and conflict, especially in places such as South Sudan, Central African Republic and Syria. War is devastating for development, for example, Syria has lost 35 years of development due to the recent conflict. Currently, 1.5 billion people are in regions of conflict and fragility and our efforts must be wide-reaching.

Fifthly, she analysed crime and citizen insecurity, especially in Latin America and the Caribbean. She argued that a more developmental approach needs to be taken and that these five issues must be addressed.

Interestingly, she then spoke about the process involved in negotiating the current MDG's. While they stemmed out of the Millennium Declaration, it was an "elite process", possibly a reason for the lack of global traction on these indicators. A global conversation was recommended for the next MDG's and millions have now made their views heard in the "1 million global voices" report. This consultation is now in the member state process.

She then brought out a number of important issues that are hampering progress on the MDG's.

- While access to education has rapidly increased, quality of education has not. We must focus on what children are actually learning.
- People and groups are lost in "average" statistics – we need better data and information.
- Better governments are needed in both rich and poor countries. Citizens need to be able to hold their governments accountable for results.

She then outlined her priorities. Most importantly, we need to focus on eradicating extreme poverty, hunger and avoidable child deaths ("leave no-one behind") while making targets applicable to every unique country situation. We need to focus on fragile states, working on reconciliation, rule of law and social cohesion. This contributes to a new joined-up development agenda, focusing not only on social policies, but also on trade, finance, and environmental sustainability. Countries such as Ethiopia with its new green strategies have proven it is possible to lift human development while maintaining environmental standards and they are an inspiration to other countries.

The IGC thoroughly enjoyed her public lecture, especially the two main takeaways:

- 1) **Don't give up on the MDG's** – they are vitally important to development progress. Broadly speaking, progress on the MDG's has been good. Even though she is not presuming cause and effect, target setting is good for development impetus.
- 2) **Stay engaged!** – member states need to hear from citizens and civil society post-2015 and it is vital that people stay involved.