

COMMENTS BY DR. ADAMOLEKUN

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Thank you very much. I guess I came to manage the previous discussions. I am going to highlight few points from different presentations that were quite striking.

The World Bank's relationship with the NGOs is quite long and it's very consistent to see how NGOs are continuing to evolve. So what we have, there is a case of one of the situations in the East Asia and Pacific. What I would draw is, as I said comment on these presentations including one commenting on last speaker. What I found interesting is that Professor Kataoka's feedback and that by Mr. Nanri. There were some conceptions, which focus on conceptual issues. Professor Kataoka for instance made a comment about the space that exists for NGOs to operate as a result of government's focusing on universalism and their uniformity. Thereby leaving NGOs space to focus on the needs of stakeholders as well as gives us impedes. That is very useful and very important point. And the second point of his paper, which is also very important, is whether NGOs can initiate social networks to better carry out their activities. I think these two ideas, which I got from his paper, help us to focus sharply on how NGOs contribute to the development process.

Now, the use of e-governance is a tool they use if like ICT both in making use of that space as well as their networks. Social networks in fact are facilitated by the use of ICT. The conceptions that Mr. Nanri emphasises are truly interesting. They take us to legitimacy, transparency and accountability in the relationship between NGOs and states and also with CSOs as Professor Colette pointed out. He also called them CBOs and NGOs. After all it's extremely interesting because all speakers have attempted to form and tried to triangulate a relationship of NGOs to CSO and state relationships. The focus was on two key elements - information and communication. And in fact by tiny virtual information and communication, all you have to do is to make use of higher technology and this is the theme of this IIAS congress. The natural fact in the partnership that we talked about information is pusher both for interaction between the CSOs and the states. Now, once you get the information, you have to communicate it and disseminate it as printed out and ICT is going to be a very useful tool. So, I found those two conceptual papers very useful for this discussion.

Now I will draw our attention to two case studies- the Korean case study and the Hong Kong case study, unlike the other two which are likely conceptual. These are the illustrations of what has happened in the ground. What I take from Professor Park's paper, very interesting paper actually, is on page 17 of his presentation. It gives family relationships with NGOs and government and necessity of NGOs. Actually this is not just on his paper. In fact, I think this is a very important point probably through the entire IIAS congress, which is how the e-governments have facilitated direct contact with citizen and governments.

I think it is very important point that the citizen's direct and random accesses to the information and to professional expertise on the Internet. And not to make the bypassing of NGOs happen, the NGOs have to raise the level before citizens in fact continue to see there as relevant and as useful and familiar roles. I like the idea of chat rooms that citizens are not doing it as individuals. They can in fact use chat rooms to bring together some discussions on going policies like the oppositions in government's initiatives and so on. It is not intermediated by NGOs but in fact through groups of citizens who chat in the Internet. I have mentioned what I saw in the exhibition held at this convention complex, which is about a country where that kind of citizen chat rooms on the Internet exists in secret places and I think it seems to be interesting. I don't know whether they are really attracted by the NGOs but I found that it deserves their attention.

Finally let me turn to the case study on Hong Kong, I think there are several messages. One is the role of government in providing funds to NGOs in developing their ICT capacity. Another paper was presented at the IIAS congress. The question was who should bear the cost of e-governance; the individual users, the affected parties or public sector that is taxpayers? Now the answer in Hong Kong is that is taxpayers. When you are showing what individuals can do, they are demonstrated both in terms of salary differences as well as education differences. And more or less with this point that is given certain differences, particularly the emphasis plays on the entirely the disabled and poor. Clearly there is a role of government but the dynamic of the outcome depends on the emphasis on NGOs relying on the states. I am not sure and I don't know whether it comes out clearly or not, whether the resources are kept to be available to everyone.

I really want to comment the availability of data in Hong Kong and policy that was institutionally published in 2001 and some revised policy in 2003 which takes us to all the recent changes. Focal comment on this is what last speaker called “digital divide paradigms”. I will put it as possibly as higher level. People are handed by fairly states; concept of fair states. For that, we also need the concept of virtual states that is the states that can communicate with cyber states. You can not have a greater paradox and that kind of gap and they are so solid that they are in fact called virtual. That is the extreme of gap but all is not lost because in fact that is their stock. If you take the Democratic Republic of Congo as an example of fair states and it is trying to re-establish itself. At the peak of its failure, it was NGOs that were providing health services, maintenance and educational services. The NGOs of course again were using their ICT and their social networks. Both national and international NGOs obtained success to meet and maintain both health and educational services. So in a sense, whether it is a fair state or virtual state, we find that NGOs, CSOs and CBOs have their roles to play.