

Enrich Forum on Sustainable Development (EFSD)

Cambodia-Japan Cooperation Center (CJCC)

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Welcome Remarks by Silas Everett

Country Representative, The Asia Foundation, Cambodia

His Royal Highness Samdech Norodom Sirivudh,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great honor to also welcome you and contribute to this forum.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to His Royal Highness Samdech Norodom Sirivudh, distinguished speakers from Cambodia and the region, the Enrich Institute, and the Department of Development Studies of the Royal University of Phnom Penh.

I would also like to thank the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) for the excellent coordination and organization of the Forum. And lastly I would like to thank the other financial contributors to this event for your generous support.

This year's forum focuses on "leadership and multi-stakeholdership for sustainable development".

Why sustainable development? Why talk about this topic in terms of leadership or multi-stakeholdership?

In the words of Don Tapscott, I would offer "In an age where everything and everyone is linked through networks of glass and air, no one - no business, organization, government agency, country - is an island. We need to do right by all our stakeholders, and that's how you create value for shareholders. And one thing is for sure - no organization can succeed in a world that is failing."¹

In short, sustainable development is simply about "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."²

¹ Don Tapscott, 7 Imperatives for Highly Successful Business Revolutionaries, INSEAD Convocation, 2012

² World Commission on Environment and Development (1987)

The big question is how do we get there?

In a study conducted on the CEOs of the top 30 publicly traded companies in Germany, the study found that the reputation of the company is to almost two-thirds determined by its leader.³

In fact it seems, as *prima facie* reasoning, impossible to reduce poverty and promote rural development without sustainable leadership in environmental, economic, educational, and civic sectors.⁴

If productive advancement of society in this century is leadership, finding effective ways to promote sustainable leadership is a development imperative.

From around Asia to the Mekong Region, The Asia Foundation is finding that “Smart Companies” and “Smart Governments” alike are moving from being a part of the problem to being part of the solution.⁵

Their success appears to directly relate to broadening the range of stakeholders in their work, thus expanding their understanding of the context, which leads to transforming their visions of development to breathe life into making contributions that better enables generations to come to better meet their own needs.

I’m reminded when I open up a newspaper whether reading the international or national sections that we have a long way to go, but I take solace in fact finding ways to support and promote sustainable leadership is not a destination, but it is a journey.

I hope the discuss that ensues today provides us all the opportunity for fruitful engagement along the arc of that journey.

Thank you.

³ Burson-Marsteller (2001)

⁴ Linda D. Grooms, SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT: A CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF A CROSS-CULTURAL BLENDED LEARNING PROGRAM, Regent University, 2011

⁵ Arlo Kristjan O’Brady, The sustainability effect: Rethinking corporate reputation in the 21st Century, 2005