
This is a raw transcript of the In Conversation—Governance in Sustainable Development forum of the World Cities Summit, held at Marina Bay Sands, Singapore, on 2 July 2012. The panel comprised:

- **Tommy KOH** – MODERATOR
Ambassador-at-Large, Ministry of Foreign affairs, Singapore
- **Helen CLARK**
UNDP Administrator and Chair, former Prime Minister of New Zealand (1999-2008)

[Start of Transcript]

Prof Koh: “Good morning Your Excellencies, Ministers, ladies and gentlemen. It is a very great privilege to moderate this session. If I could be mischievous and say that I was a bit disappointed by the music that was played earlier. I wish they’d played some Maori music and I banished the water bottles. In a city where water’s potable, there is no excuse for drinking bottled water. I also want to embarrass the management of Marina Bay Sands and say they should be more responsible in the use of air-conditioning and now I will behave myself.

It is a very great privilege to introduce a person I’ve admired for many many years. Miss Helen Clark was Prime Minister of New Zealand three times and during her decade-long leadership of New Zealand, she brought about a transformational change to the country. New Zealand became more globalised, more competitive, more green and more inclusive. I was therefore very happy when she accepted the UN’s invitation to be the administrator of the UN Development Programme.

She is concurrently Chairman of the UN Development Group which brings together all the UN programmes and funds devoted to development. I’d like to begin if I may by asking you two questions, then I’m opening it up to the floor. You were in Rio recently for Rio Plus 20. The popular media has been negatively critical. Could you share with us your assessment of what was achieved at Rio?”

Vide: Day2 In Conversation 01 HELEN CLARK

Ms Clark: “Thank you Tommy and good morning everybody. Well the first cut of the international media on Rio Plus 20 was somewhat negative as you say but I have a more positive view of it and a more nuanced view of it. I saw a wonderful blog in the Huffington Post in the last week or so which said that if you think of Rio Plus 20 as a black and white movie on a small screen, you’ll be disappointed. If you think of it in 3D and full colour, you will see the richness of what it was about and the truth is that it brought together tens of thousands of people from every level of society and government to talk about the future of our world and extremely important topics and not only did it physically bring those people to Rio, but all up there were millions of people who were involved online in dialogue about what Rio meant and what personal changes in their lives or commitments they might make.

I think in the current polarised international environment, it’s not so easy for big international summits to reach binding agreements of a comprehensive kind but what you had out of Rio was around 700 voluntary commitments amounting to about \$500 billion, which is not petty cash. I think we also saw that while the world’s governments of member states are having trouble coming to these firm and binding agreements, the world’s communities, civil society organisations, many local governments, sub-national governments are way out ahead and a lot of national governments are way out ahead as well but of course to get agreements you often come to the lowest common denominator around a formal document.

I think that there was a real prospect that there might not have been an outcome which would have been a disaster. There was an outcome and Brazil put its full weight behind that outcome. Yes, each of us riding it ourselves wishlist would have made a difference and stronger, but I don’t think we should discount Rio Plus 20. I think the outcome is a platform for anyone who is serious about endeavouring to integrate across the economic, social and environmental strains of sustainable development to actually build a different future in their own community, business, organisation and country. So that’s the spirit of Rio Plus 20 which I hope we’ll remember it for.”

Prof Koh: “The two focal points in Rio were to promote the green economy and to strengthen the institutional institutions. Could you just say a word on each of those?”

Ms Clark: “Yes, so the twin themes, the green economy and the institutional architecture. On the latter which I’ll deal with more summarily, the commission on Sustainable Development spawned by the Earth Summit is filled to a struggle, struggle not really getting a good outcome at its last meeting last year. So the summit said this is to be replaced by a high level forum on sustainable development within the economic and social council.

Of course if you're rewriting the UN Charter today, you wouldn't have an economic and social council, you'll have a sustainable development council bringing the environmental pillar in but this understandably was not top of mind in 1945 when people met in San Francisco to write the Charter. The world was coming out of a devastating World War. The vast majority of the world's people were living under colonial rule. There were other issues but now we can't really plan for a sound economic and social future unless we take the environmental pillar very very seriously indeed.

So how this forum develops will be subject to more discussion in the General Assembly but I think it's a positive thing. The UN Environment Programme also got agreement to move to a universal membership and I think given the importance of the role it has, that's appropriate.

As for the green economy, I think in the Rio Plus 20 outcome document, there's plenty of pointers to what needs to be done to green the world's economies and societies. It's not prescriptive. It calls on people to follow their own map, their own pathway towards that and of course this applies to developed and developing countries, heavy responsibility in my opinion on developed countries to get this right because the legacy of pollution with greenhouse gases is one very much bequeathed by the old industrialised and developed world to us all, but what the developing countries focused on at Rio Plus 20 was means of implementation. Don't just tell us what to do, there's actually a need for support and that can come partly through developed countries keeping their word on the proportion of gross national income they spend on official development assistance that may come through support of the green climate fund. It will come from development assistance being a lot smarter than in the past, much more catalytic than in the past, but in essence I think it's positive about the green economy road map but in the development field, we're going to have to redouble efforts to support countries to walk that road."

Prof Koh: "I have one more question, then I'll open it to the floor. You personally and UNDP played a very important role in developing the millennium development goals and targets. The target date for achieving the seven millennium goals and the 10 targets is 2015. Could you share with us UNDP's report card on how are we doing and could you also explain the difference between the millennium development goals, which will expire in 2015 and in Rio to develop a new set of sustainable development goals."

Ms Clark: "So the conversation at Rio was very relevant to how the post-2015 development agenda's going to be defined, what will be the goals and targets. For the millennium development goals, they do cover the three strands of sustainable development but a little weak, a little light on the environmental strands. So when the next set of goals and targets is designed, that will need to come more to the fore than it has been.

I think the overall verdict on the millennium development goals is that they have undoubtedly been a success and that they were few in number, they were measurable, you had a time target and they were very easy to communicate. Now those were precious things because so many international summits set so many different goals and none of us can remember them because they're too many, too complex, but the MDGs were very concise and enabled developed and developing countries to mobilise and plan around them.

As for the verdict, the target of reducing the numbers of people or the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by half is likely to be achieved, has probably already been achieved according to World Bank figures which is great if you're in the half that moved out of extreme poverty, but not so great if you're in the half that didn't and that points us to the fact that the next generation of development goals has to look at the unfinished business from the MDGs and that is a legacy still of very large numbers of people living in extreme poverty and in outright hunger.

Still far too many women dying in pregnancy or in childbirth, still not reaching a number of the gender in parliament targets, sanitation goal really a bit of a sad story but there are successes. Almost every child in the world is in school but we have to get to the last mile so I think when the process starts now to define what comes after 2015, are the big called sustainable development goals? Yes they need to build the environmental pillar up more but they must not overlook these core issues of lack of opportunity and outright deprivation. We have to go to zero on extreme poverty and hunger to have any hope of building a more hopeful and just world."

Prof Koh: "Thank you, I will not invite you to ask questions. You can do it the old fashioned way and put up your hand and somebody will come to you with the wireless microphone or you can send your questions in electronically. I see a hand there, could somebody please give him a microphone? And another hand there, yes."

Video: Day2 In Conversation 02 Q & A

Question: "Thank you Professor Koh. On behalf of the members of the International Water Association and as the President of the Association, I'd like to turn to the developing countries and specifically the topics of not only water and sanitation but especially waste water and water resources which are issues that are emerging and recognised as also being significant. And the question I would like to ask is how water professionals and associations such as ours can work together much more effectively with organisations such as yours because I think we all realise that we need a paradigm change, we need to change the way in which we're making progress in these particular areas."

Prof Koh: “Thank you, Glen Daigger is the President IWA. There’s a question here which is sort of on the same subject.”

Ms Clark: “And indeed the question that came in through pigeonhole was very much along the same lines, around water and sanitation. How long would it take would it take everyone to get the basic water and sanitation needs, what should be done, how can international institutions like UNDP help to achieve this. So the millennium development goal also set a target for improved water quality and at the headline level, I understand that goal’s achieved but it doesn’t mean that everybody has access to drinkable water, slightly lesser achievement than that.

So I think there’s a lot of players in the water field. UNDP is one of many and we tend to focus on water governance. If I can decode that, at the most micro level, often water infrastructure’s put in place but not the capacity to maintain and sustain it, so well intended initiative works for awhile but because the capacity to sustain it, fix it etc wasn’t built, it doesn’t succeed for the longer term.

So I think in looking at water, it’s not just technical and technological solutions, it’s that basic building of capacity, of governance of who’s accountable here that has to be put into the whole mix and I strongly believe in multi-stakeholder approaches to this. There are clearly different levels at which you can organise for universal water provision, sanitation, energy, horses for causes, what will work in the furthest most remote village, what will work covering a large conurbation. There has to be a multi-stakeholder approach which brings together institutions of governance, civil society, community representation, private sector, social entrepreneurs to get strategies that really will reach everybody.”

Prof Koh: “Thank you, who has a second question? Yes you, could you introduce yourself to Ms Clark and then post your question?”

Question: “Good morning Professor. I’m Greg Clark no relation to Mrs Clark, but it’s a common name in English. We had a wonderful meeting here yesterday of 105 mayors and deputy mayors from countries around the world and there is a broad agreement that cities are a key focus for either achieving sustainable development or failing to achieve sustainable development, but if we want to integrate the systems of transport and energy and water, we need cities that have stronger levels of city governance, in other words, the cities that can integrate the systems that produce sustainable development are powerful cities. Is there an agenda that we can promote together with the UN to improve urban governance so more cities can be more smart?”

Prof Koh: “Thank you very much, Greg. There are two questions here which has...”

Ms Clark: “Let’s tackle that one because it’s music to my ears. I think the role of cities, towns and cities is incredibly important and as I said, so often now we see towns and cities actually ahead of a number of national governments in terms of the vision they have for sustainable development. I think for example the message that towns and cities took home from the original Earth Summit in 1992 with agenda 21.

Mayor Bob Harvey who is head of Waitakere City in my own country for so many years, I always remember coming back from the Earth Summit and saying this is the way to go and making his city an eco city and those cities around the world that did that and were determined to integrate their decision making so that they didn’t just go all out for any one pillar of sustainable development. They said we’re going to do it together. So it does require a lot of building of capacity within the city structures, its public service and a lot of accountability and feedback loops with its population as well because this has to be an inclusive process.

We have to be listening to our publics, what is the future they want, what’s the vision for the city. So if we can build capacity in the institutions, the people, the accountability and then that all important ingredient of leadership because no vision was ever realised without leadership and that needs to be supported and nurtured too.

UNDP is unique within the UN development system for the mandate it has on governance, on democratic governance and we work in very challenging environments around the world on that but really very committed to building the capacity of the sub-national level of government to tackle these big crossing cutting issues.”

Video: Day2 In Conversation 03 Q & A

Prof Koh: “Thank you. There are two good questions about cities. So I’d like to just read them out. Question number one, what are the governance priorities for a city with high population growth but slow economic growth? And the next question is what are the lessons from Rio Plus 20 that cities can learn from in achieving sustainability? Two kind of different questions.”

Ms Clark: “Well, I think the lessons from Rio is back leaders with a vision, back cities which are working to put into place visionary plans which are sustainable, involve the public fully as I said. You know our world population is due to expand by more than two billion people by mid-century and overwhelmingly those new inhabitants on earth are going to live in cities.

The critical importance of capacitating city governments and improving planning and taking inclusive approaches is just so pressing. I think that’s the message of Rio, prepare for what is coming. We may think the challenges our cities face now

are big, they're going to be a lot bigger but with that also comes opportunity and as Tommy, you and I were discussing briefly before we came in, let's not see cities as problems.

Cities are huge opportunities. Cities are sources of innovation, of creativity. They can be the drivers of prosperity and better living standards for the whole country. So let's work with cities to maximise their potential for the people."

Prof Koh: "Thank you, yes please."

Question: "Good morning. Thank you Ambassador Koh. Good morning, Mrs Clark. I'm from UNEP, United Nations Environment Programme. You're heading UNDP but you have always been a great advocate for environmental issues and UNEP some years ago awarded you as Champion of the Earth and we're glad that this was done. I have several questions in one if you allow me.

Rio has further confirmed the necessity for considering the three pillars of sustainable development in an integrated manner. How do you see green economy contributing to advancing the transition to sustainable development? This is first. And what measures should be taken at national, international level to ensure that green economy effectively supports the environment pillar? During your mandate as Prime Minister, you have certainly had the, to take difficult decisions in what we call today green economy. What were tradeoffs in those circumstances and from Rio Plus 20, what UNDP intend to take in order to implement further the outcomes of Rio? And the last question, I'm sorry for too many. There's one element in the outcome document that said we adopt, which is the 10 year framework of programme on sustainable consumption of production, what does this mean for UNDP?"

Prof Koh: "Can you remember five questions?"

Ms Clark: "No, but I'll try my best. Well I think when we talk green economy, we must always talk green and inclusive economy because people matter a great deal, to me the matter has to be put at the centre of development, but at UNDP we have been advocating that we see achieving greater equity and greater sustainability as absolutely linked themes that we will not achieve one without the other and we devoted a human development report to that last year and looked at various scenarios where we modelled what would happen with human development if you went to worst case scenarios on growing inequality which is a lot all around our world and quickening trends of eco-system degradation.

I mean this is not a good outlook, so the green and inclusive economy's a way of turning this around and I think at UNDP we've been pushing very hard on what we call triple win approaches to sustainable development where countries in the design of initiatives are looking to advance across the three pillars or three strands of sustainable development simultaneously and going forward, we think

we need to be very very active in sharing best practice around how this is done which is a reason why with Brazil we've announced the intention to put a World Centre for Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro as a legacy of Rio Plus 20, bringing in a range of partners within the UN, private sector, Brazil itself and other players.

So we look to highlighting examples of what we consider inspirational in setting direction for a different kind of development path. Take Ethiopia which launched at Durban last year. It's low carbon, climate resilient, green economy strategy, like getting three sort of things in one there, but Ethiopia's the least developed country. It's people per capita GDP are among the poorest in the world and it is saying, yes we want to change that but we want to change it in a way which won't wreck the eco system on which we depend.

We see many other specific examples of countries which have gone out of their way to say well if I designed an initiative for work creation, how can I make that socially equitable and how can I put environmental benefits into it as well and of many examples, probably the one which is the largest scale in the world is India's Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act which now benefits directly some 50 million households in India with guaranteed income, social inclusion of women and marginalised groups and prioritising work on conservation, water retention irrigation, to make life more sustainable for people living in poor rural villages.

So I'm one of life optimists. I see out there incredible things happening for sustainable development across the strands, from the poorest countries to the richest countries and I think we have to spread the message that this is possible, that we need to learn and share from each other and the role I think of UNDP and UNEP which must have a very very strong collaborative working relationship is to take these great examples, showcase them and support others to walk this road, then we can dream about a sustainable world.

Prof Koh: "Thank you, any questions from this side of the hall? Dr Seetharam is here. Okay ya I'm glad it's a woman. Please introduce."

Video: Day2 In Conversation 04 Q & A

Question: "Good morning. Kathy Shandling, the Executive Director of the International Private Water Association about public private partnerships. This morning I had the privilege to be at the Mayor's breakfast in which they talked about partnership in collaboration and I think a potential partnership and collaboration that can go on with just within the UN system What can you do at UNDP to help a better collaboration with UN capital fund to help empower sub-sovereign municipalities to be more sustainable in the way they finance infrastructure, implement infrastructure in order to achieve long-term sustainability."

Ms Clark : “I’m happy to say that the UN Capital Development Fund is actually a small fund within UNDP and I’m its boss. It has a Director of course but it focuses on least developed countries and on the sub-national level, two main strands of work, one supporting at that municipal sub-national level capacities, but also micro-credit. So those, it’s two sort of stocks and trade, but very important niche programme for us with some core funding from us and then raising its funding also directly from other donors.”

Prof Koh: “Thank you, the next question from Dr Seetharam is a Director of the Institute of Water Policy here in Singapore.”

Question: “Thank you Professor Koh. About five years ago, the Asian Development Bank did a report together with Professor Tommy Koh where when we looked at the water in Asia, we recognised that the problems are not so much to do with physical scarcity or even lack of funding, but more to do with governance and you alluded to that at the beginning of your conversation remark. Governance cuts across various domains, so as the administrator for UNDP, what is your vision for the region to really improve governance across sectors, particularly with the ambition to now achieve the newly agreed sustainable development goals?”

Ms Clark: “Well governance is fundamental and in my last visit to Singapore three months ago, I was privileged to give the annual Singapore lectures precisely on the subject of governance, the importance of governance for sustainable development because with poor governance you can’t make decent decisions and you can’t make them stick, you can’t implement and you can’t deliver the services that flow from it and Singapore is a very good place to be talking about this because at the outset from Singapore’s independence, it placed a very great emphasis on non-corruption and on a strong expert specialised public service to help it design quality decisions and implement them. When I was here three months ago, we signed a letter of intent with the government to establish a new global centre for excellence and public service and we’re advancing that a step further today with the government of Singapore but we really feel that in development, to make things stick, to make them durable, to make them sustainable, you cannot neglect the quality of governance, you have to make this a huge priority. So that (inaudible) at the national government level, sub-national, regional, local, then when I think when you get to water governance at the very local level of the sub-unit, the small village again, how you structure, who’s responsible, who’s accountable for maintaining the water infrastructure that has been put in as extremely important.

If I could just make one other point about water and the difference it makes between life and death to put as the most simple, I was in the West African nation of Niger in February and it is experiencing another devastating drought just two years after the last devastating drought cleaned people right out. So

when something like this happens again two years later, the level of resilience is understandably pretty shaken and I went with the UN's Emergency Relief Coordinator to two villages.

One had had the advantage of support for water infrastructure with a large reservoir which even a lot of months into the drought still had water and a basic well which was functioning and a big vegetable plot which also required quite a capacity skills transfer because the people there are pastorals. They don't often have big vegetable gardens. So the people there, even in the middle of a crippling drought, they were getting along. A drive 10 to 15 minutes to the village with no such infrastructural or capacity and seeing the very very distressing sights of extremely hungry and frail mothers and babies was very disturbing.

So it's not rocket science is it what the difference between life and death is and you feel when see this stark contrast just how urgent it is to support countries to get the space for infrastructure in place and the skills which will enable the positive story to be repeated in villages and communities around the world."

Video: Day2 In Conversation 05 Q & A

Prof Koh: "Could I ask you a question about sanitation because in the millennium development target number 10, the aspiration was to reduce by half the people that do not have access to safe drinking water and to basic sanitation? We've done well on water but we've not done well on sanitation. Why can't we do more to make this which is so important to public health to the dignity of human beings, to the safety of women you know?"

Ms Clark: "Sanitation has to become a priority. The lack of achievement on that millennium development goal is disgraceful. Far more people have access to a cell phone than to a toilet now. I mean what is wrong about our priorities? That very basic point was made to me by India's wonderful Minister of Rural Affairs, Jairam Ramesh, when I was in India in March as well and he has a vision, a commitment, a passion for dealing with this issue of sanitation, but you're right, it's an issue of basic dignity, it's an issue of health. So many of our fellow citizens around the globe face open defecation as a daily reality and any of us who occasionally go into the outdoors where there's no toilet will know how uncomfortable that is but it's daily reality for a tremendous number of people. So I really urge that at the level of national government, it becomes an issue of strategy, of working with the different layers of government down to communities to prioritise this because we really can't hope for a world where everyone lives in dignity if something as basic as a toilet is missing."

Prof Koh: "Thank you. Yes, there."

Question: “I’m Arun Gupta from India and also the President Indian Water Works Association. We are 126 billion of people, one-seventh of the global population. We are also with a great number of cities. Now our problem is that our asset is that we get adequate green fund. We have adequate fund, the government of India has taken as Mahatma Gandhi (37:34) mission and they provide 80 percent of the total grant. We are short of the technology, new technology and we are going with the conventional technologies only.

The new technology to come takes a lot of time in country like ours and in other countries too. So new technology is foolproof technology that we have been learning here and it can also reduce the infant mortality rate. So my request to the forum is as to how bring this new technology to this country as early as fast and not that it takes decade of time. So to that subject, our request is stands if it is expedited, it will save a lot of human resources, GDP, etc etc everything, thank you very much.”

Ms Clark: “Good point. Could we do for sustainable technologies what ICT has done for the telecommunications revolution and I think that appropriate technologies manufacturing close to where these potential vast markets are, all these things need more attention.”

Prof Koh: “I’m sorry, I didn’t quite understand, I did not understand your question. What are the barriers, what are the barriers against the acquisition of technology by India?”

Question: “It is transformation of the technology. Say you are great in water technology. Tokyo as well. So if want to take it, we can carry it to one of these cities like Mumbai or Delhi. So the technologies itself if you have great training or great I mean nice training everywhere through ADB or some organisations, then this can be transferred very easy.”

Prof Koh: “No sorry, with great respect to you, the difference does not lie in technology and I give you two examples. The capital city of Cambodia in Phnom Penh, several years ago the water situation in Phnom Penh was a disaster but with good leadership, good governance, the support of bilateral donors and the international community, the Phnom Penh water supply authority solved the problem of water in Phnom Penh. It is a role model for developing countries.

Take a case of Manila where the government was not able to deliver good water services to the citizen. It was corporatised and the Manila water company has solved the problem. So it’s not technology you know. My question to you is if Cambodia can do it, if the Philippines can do it, why can’t India do it? What’s your problem?”

Question: “See so many Philippines will make on India. So we’re very vast, we need additional input, that is the word. I said earlier that it will go to just our mega cities but it will not be going to say thousands of cities. “

Prof Koh: “No my point to you is that the difference between Phnom Penh’s success, Manila’s success and Mumbai or Delhi is not technology. It is good leadership, it is good governance and the political will, whether you have the political will that every person no matter rich or poor is entitled to affordable safe drinking water.”

Question: “See tomorrow our Minister is coming probably, Minister Kamal Nath.”

Prof Koh: “I will ask him that. Okay another question please. Any from this side? Ya. Please identify yourself.”

Video: Day2 In Conversation 06 Q & A

Question: “Good morning. I’m Cheong Suk Wai from The Straits Times. My question relates somewhat to the gentleman from India. In summits like these, we hear a lot about new technologies, good governance, barriers, fresh ideas, urban solution, but this morning Ms Clark you touched on building capacities and I think that before we really drill deeply into new technologies and what not, we should be placing more emphasis on building capacities because to do otherwise would be really putting the cart before the horse. So could you please share with us what capacities could we tackle immediately and in what areas and how you think UNDP can work together with cities to do this and very quickly, given that cities are going to power global growth from now on in terms of economic growth, how will this shift from country to city complicate the building of capacities further. Thank you very much.”

Prof Koh: “Did you get the question?”

Ms Clark: “Ya. I mean many of the world’s cities of course are so vastly larger than many of the world’s countries, I think the importance of cities being seen as a source of and driver of solutions is absolutely critical and of course many cities are well ...but others are still struggling first with the vision, then with the strategy that flows from the vision, then with the plan that flows from the strategy and benchmarks and the goals.

So how to tackle this? Go back to the points I made at the beginning. Leadership is critical, building the structure of the city government’s capacities to do this planning, building the service delivery capacity, recognising that for the future, private public partnerships are going to be very critical, looking at what the role of the civil society, NGOs is going to be and always keeping in touch with the

citizens. Autocracy in cities isn't going to work, it's going to need enlightened and participatory governance to take it forward.

Look we work on these issues around the world at all levels and if I could take one of the world's newest states, I guess the newest state South Sudan, one of the things we've done on building capacity in government is to bring on loan from neighbouring countries whether it's Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, others in the neighbourhood, people who are movers and shakers in their own public service to come and sit in and mentor and transfer skill to people in the nascent and very fast growing department.

So that's the sort of approach we take, sort of show by example. Support people to take on the skills that are needed to drive these kinds of policies forward."

Prof Koh: "We're running out of time but we'll just take one last question please."

Question: "I would just like to first of all endorse the proposition that it's not finance, it's not technology, it is governance and capacity that is needed if we want to attain better public service delivery, including that in water and since you mentioned Phnom Penh, I'm very happy to share this with you that exactly one year ago I had written in a column in a national newspaper after visiting Phnom Penh and seeing what they have achieved and while I'm very happy to see some public private partnerships working to improve the situation of water in India, I wait for a day when we will see a public sector turnaround of the kind that we have seen in Phnom Penh and I'm very happy to say that about three months ago I wrote another column for a small town called Malkapur (?) in Maharashtra where a public sector turnaround of the kind that we saw in Phnom Penh has happened and that town of 40,000 people now has 24/7 water and people are actually paying water tariff that is higher than in Delhi where I live.

So my only purpose of making this intervention is that yes the challenge in India is enormous but because we now have our municipalities on the move, if the state government provides an enabling environment, then with the nudging from the government of India and some finance from the government in India, the opportunities are tremendous and a lot of it is actually happening where with the help of technology, there are enough places where now capacity is being built, governance is there and we can actually make a difference. Thank you."

Prof Koh: "Thank you very much for your inspiring statement. I think we should conclude with a question from the audience about the people. Ten people in the audience agree with this question. They said that one constituency is missing from this conference and this is the ordinary people and we can't succeed in achieving sustainable development and even conservation of water, of living in harmony with nature if we're unable to reach out to the people. So what is the best way to engage the people in order to help us achieve these laudable goals?

Ms Clark: “Well I think perhaps for the future, some thought could be given to how to build in participation from the grassroots of the world’s communities and we saw at Rio that this makes for an incredibly energising international meeting. I mean the energy was out there in the civil society meetings, the side events, wonderful events where people from every corner of the world’s communities came. Indigenous people, people representing the slum dwellers and the waste pickers, people representing local communities from around the world and really bringing perspectives from those community levels all the way to the highest decision makers.

So I’m strongly in favour of taking a very inclusive approach to summits and as I said, we go back to the very first question, what was the outcome of Rio Plus 20. For sure, governments are having trouble coming too strong and binding agreements among themselves, but many of the world’s people’s civil society organisations, communities, local and sub-national governments are way ahead. They’re getting on and doing it and no one should wait for a national government to do anything. Everyone can at their own level take action which will make a difference. It’s good that when that then moves the mountain and national governments and multi-lateral negotiations but I think creating this incredibly strong base of participation, interest engagement and just doing it is what will move those mountains.”

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