

Memorandum

Nexus²⁵ Roundtable Discussion: Complex Crises and the World Bank Evolution Roadmap

Washington D.C. Event – Thursday, April 13th, 2023

Our most recent roundtable was co-hosted by Nexus²⁵, the Center for Climate & Security, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the Center for American Progress. It brought together senior representatives from governments, international organizations, civil society, and think tanks to discuss global and multilateral responses to complex crises of



insecurity, climate change, and migration. The event occurred on the sidelines of the 2023 World Bank Group and International Monetary Fund Spring Meetings and in the context of overlapping regional and global crises with far-reaching consequences for the world's most vulnerable. The conflict between Russia and Ukraine – the consequences of which are devastating and global – is creating a tectonic upheaval in food security which has significant implications for short- and medium-term crises. The current conflict and its global shock waves have proven the validity of complex crisis scenarios: food security must be recognized as an equally central issue in the critical future debates of climate change, migration, and regional stability.

International organizations, such as the World Bank, are developing new strategies and tools to address these challenges and are being asked to demonstrate a greater capacity to respond, especially in times of multiple crises. The [World Bank Evolution Roadmap](#) is re-assessing the overlapping challenges of climate change, population movements, and conflict that create powerful stress multipliers, feeding into discontent, further migratory pressure, and sometimes instability.

Here are some of the key takeaways from our conversation:

- **The impact of Covid-19 is still being underestimated:** The consequences of the pandemic at a time of increasing geopolitical complexities continues to affect international economies and growth. While international cooperation and multilateral dialogue have been reduced during the past two years due to the pandemic, climate change is accelerating, increasing the necessity of adopting innovative decisions and inclusive reforms to ensure the most vulnerable countries are not left behind. Inadequate cooperation between international and local actors not only prevents the solution of problems but adds further challenges.
- **A new approach towards local actors:** Large multilateral organizations like the World Bank must involve new partners and local actors. Existing mechanisms of cooperation often fall short of being effective in fragile contexts. Participants shared several examples of the challenges faced by the World Bank in its work on the ground, in many cases due to engagement with a limited set of local actors. While the participants acknowledged that many encouraging steps have been adopted in the last five years to reach ambitious goals, all agreed on the necessity to push forward the roadmap process.
- **Establishing a clear agenda without endangering cooperation:** Paying attention to the needs of local communities at the forefront of the crises is crucial to ensure their

participation and involvement. Implementing political strategies should be coupled with an adequate understanding of local communities' needs. Here, collaboration is vital, especially in remote and fragile regions. Civil society organizations should be involved to strengthen the credibility of multilateral efforts.

- **The need to maximize the impact of funding:** While mobilizing resources to finance projects is essential to move forward, several participants emphasized the need to maximize the impact generated by these resources. Appropriate funding management requires more innovative and systematic investments to produce more coherent results. As such, decisionmakers should work to (1) invest in pandemic preparedness strategies and technological advancements and make them accessible to the Global South, (2) push the most relevant donors to share decision-making power with all the actors involved, and (3) ensure new and faster solutions for climate resilience.
- **The definition of global public goods:** Participants stressed the need to provide a description not only in economic terms but considering concrete challenges and spillover effects for local communities.
- **The equivalence between food security and national security:** Food insecurity is a breeding ground for conflict, hence a challenge to most governments, particularly developing countries. The resilience of local communities has an impact on the stability of governance. As noted by several participants, a shift to address these challenges must be reflected in budget allocation. At the same time, organizations should rethink their country-based approach, appreciating the transboundary nature of these challenges regarding security and risk factors.

Global political actors must rethink the complex interplay between food security, climate change, transnational migration, and security in the early 21st century. The most recent crisis in Ukraine documents that nexus issues – the convergence of food security, climate risks, human mobility, and regional stability – require new policy strategies and economic interventions. The world must learn to master a three-dimensional chess game.

Participants: Sara Menker, CEO of Gro Intelligence, Niels Annen, Parliamentary State Secretary in the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Stanlake Samkange, UN World Food Program, Latitia Courtois, Head of the International Committee of the Red Cross in New York, Permanent Observer to the UN, Margherita Bianchi, Head Energy, Climate & Resources Program Institute for International Affairs (IAI), Daniel Dieckhaus, Director for Humanitarian Assistance, National Security Council, The White House, Swathi Veeravalli, Director for Climate and Environmental Security, National Security Council, The White House, David Wisner, Office of Global Food Security at the U.S. Department of State, David Livingston, Senior Advisor and Managing Director for Energy, Office of the Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, US Department of State, Marcia Wong, Deputy Assistant Administrator (USAID/BHA), Michael Krake, German Executive Director, World Bank Group, Joanna Veltri, Chief Partnerships Officer, Head Americas and Multilateral Relations, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Tobias Kahler, Head of Germany, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Sarnata Reynolds, Senior Fellow, Center for American Progress, Satu Santala, Associate Vice-President of the External Relations and Governance Department, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), William R. Sutton, Global Lead for Climate Smart Agriculture & Food Global Practice, Global Engagement Unit, The World Bank, Alejandra Portillo-Taylor, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Regional Delegation for the United States and Canada, Patricia Parera, Senior Research Fellow, The Center for Climate and Security, Neil Watkins, Deputy Director, Agricultural Development Policy & Advocacy, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Trevor Keck, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Regional Delegation for the United States and Canada, Elizabeth Campbell, Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration at the U.S. Department of State, Baisali Mohanty, Policy Office, United Nations World Food Program, Michael Werz, Co-Director Nexus²⁵