

Just Governance for Human Security.

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As I was preparing to leave my busy emergency department two nights ago to come to Caux, I was asking myself a few questions: what is good governance? Why should it be of interest to me personally and to IofC International?

I am a scientist who likes to start at the beginning, so I started searching for some definitions.

What is governance:

Process of decision-making, which governs the conduct of public affairs, manages public resources and guarantees the realization of human rights.

8 elements of good governance:

1. participation
2. respect of rule of law
3. transparency
4. responsiveness
5. consensus seeking
6. equity and inclusive
7. effective and efficient
8. accountable

Three characteristics of good governance:

1. free of abuse and corruption is minimal
2. view of minorities are taken into account
3. the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision making

Why am I interested in the question of just governance?

The answer to this is at two levels: one with my IofC International hat and one personal.

For those of you not familiar with Initiatives of Change, it is a worldwide movement of people of diverse cultures and backgrounds who work towards a just peaceful and sustainable world. Our mission is to inspire, equip and connect people to address world needs starting with ourselves and our own behavior and motivation.

At the heart of our approach are four elements:

1. taking time to reflect and seek inner wisdom to discover the inner tools that can unlock the creative potential in each person
2. examining our own motives and behavior to develop a culture of moral integrity in our own personal lives
3. reaching out in dialogue to build authentic relationships with others based on trust
4. taking focused action to act to meet local and global needs

As an international work we feel we have particular expertise to bring to bear on three key focus areas: trust building, ethical leadership and sustainable living.

We believe that a leadership culture based on moral integrity, compassion and selfless service is at the heart of developing good governance at every level.

So it is not surprising given this focus area that IofC International is interested in this area of good governance.

At a personal level, I feel good governance is too important an issue to leave to our leaders and those in government positions. Good governance is relevant to anyone who has a passion, vocation or wants to make a difference in any field of interest.

When I was a teenager, I was angry at the corruption and dishonesty I saw around me in the Middle East and wider world but I thought it was something that politicians and governments should deal with. I realized that dishonesty in small things was the stepping-stones to corruption and dishonesty on a large scale.

Was I prepared to do something about the small dishonest things in my own life, if I wanted a solution to corruption at a larger scale? So the starting point for me was to be honest with my father that I had taken change from his dressing table without asking his permission. A second step a couple of years later was to return money to my hospital when I was overpaid by mistake for a shift I had not worked. This extends to decisions each day not to use public resources for private things such as: the hospital phone for private calls or use my own paper if I am printing personal things at work. You can't deal with the big issues of governance unless you deal with the little issues of personal governance as well.

I met IofC through the late Kim Beazley who was Minister for Education at the time in Australia. I remember a quote from him, which is one of my litmus tests of integrity: "nothing to prove, nothing to gain for myself and nothing to justify". Another test of personal integrity is whether my decisions stand up to scrutiny against absolute values of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love. So my personal interest in the question of good governance is about this daily search for integrity, a value based leadership that is at the heart of my professional medical life, my management role - to be able to feel that I can have a constructive role to play in the wider issues of good governance at national or global level.

I am sure that in the coming days we will all learn from each other's experiences and examples of ethical leadership and the application of good governance in different contexts and settings. We will take away some transferable solutions to our different settings. I am sure we will also learn more about some of the personal qualities we have to embody ourselves if we are to make a difference and how to deal with our own credibility gaps. But I also hope that we will each take time to reflect and discover the - still small voice inside each one of us - that is the well from which we can derive inner resource that can sustain us in our individual calling to make a difference both locally and globally.

Neil Buhne, Director, Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Recovery, UNDP

Speaking at the conference on Just Governance, Caux, July 2013

We are all affected by resource extraction. It is not just a matter for fragile states, developing nations, it is a universal issue. The exploitation of non renewable natural resources provide strong opportunities for development. But it can also trigger violence and a cycle of fragility and exclusion. Violent conflict is most likely where local communities have been systematically excluded from decision-making processes, when the economic benefits are concentrated in the hands of a few, sometimes a few within the country, sometimes a few from outside, sometimes a few from inside and outside working together.

Violent conflict is most likely when the burdens associated with extractive industries clash with local social, cultural, religious and environmental norms or reinforce existing tensions within society, whether regional, tribal or class-based. The price paid by society for this is long term tension, lives lost or touched by conflict, fractured relationships, sometimes weakened institutions within societies, destroyed infrastructure and frustrated or lost hopes.

When a country has large natural resources, its citizens expect this to benefit their future, and if it doesn't that is a profound frustration. So the effective management of natural resources is a priority for all those committed to conflict prevention and sustainable development. It should be a goal for us here in Caux.

A number of international partnerships such as the European Union and the UN are working together to transform potential conflict over natural resources and enable cooperation, trust-building and development. The UNDP and the UN Department of Political Affairs have launched small to medium-size projects to help national governments to strengthen government capacity and civil society capacity. For those connected with consulting firms, there is a EU/UN call for proposals, out of which a number of civil society organisations will work to better understand and manage conflict over land and natural

resources in Rwanda, DRC, Uganda and Burundi. It is an issue that international organisations are concerned about. And they should be.

Where can we help? How can big organisations or individuals make a difference? Preventing conflict is not just about legal frameworks. It also depends on the processes in the industry, on engagement with community leaders and stakeholders. Where communities are excluded they are almost certain to oppose the development. Where benefits are shared unfairly, that is going to promote conflict.

There needs to be more awareness of labour standards and corporate social responsibility. And we can all help. Where I buy my coffee, what phone I use, can make a difference.

In many places, extractive industries seem to inspire a mania of greed. An essential part of any peace agreement, and essential for sustainable peace, is agreement on high-value natural resources. Yet in many countries good management of extractive industries has laid the base for infrastructure, education, human development. For that to happen, there have to be laws and norms governing use of extractive industries, checks and balances on use of those industries, and not just there but also internationally. There is not enough of that.

But there is progress. Look at the growth of Fair Trade. And look at the region of Switzerland where the mining giant Glencore Xtrata has its headquarters. Many residents of the region argue that some of the taxes they receive from Glencore should go to charities in countries suffering the consequences of mining. This exemplifies a growing view in the developed world that extractive industries are exploiting developing countries, and this recognition could help reduce conflict over resources.