



Infrastructure and Sustainable Development: Planning Now for a Future World

Address by

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at:

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and
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Infrastructure and Sustainable Development Worldwide: Planning Now for a Future World

by Katherine Sierra¹

(Abridged version)

I believe there is a common commitment among the World Bank, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) and the World Federation of Engineering Organizations (WFEO) to sustainable infrastructure and to promoting a better quality of life to all of the world communities. The stated vision of the ASCE is “to position engineers as global leaders building a better quality of life.” And, at the World Federation of Engineering Societies, one of the goals is “to foster peace, socioeconomic security, and sustainable development among all countries of the world, through the proper application of technology.”

These are eminently laudable goals: building a better quality of life, fostering peace, promoting sustainable development, and using technology to do so. And these are goals that we share at the World Bank. Our mission statement is summed up in eight words: “Our dream is a world free of poverty.” In fact, today's Bank emphasizes poverty reduction as the overarching goal of all of our work. To that end, we are integrating our infrastructure work with our colleagues working on the environment and social development.

This approach is designed to show that durable, sustainable poverty reduction is a comprehensive effort, requiring the “hard” components of dams and roads and railways and water treatment plans, but also the “soft” components that touch on every part of our work: a respect for the environment, an understanding of how societies evolve, and an engagement behind reforming today so that people’s lives will be better, and permanently better, for decades to come.

The Twin Pillars

At the Bank, we have what we call a “twin-pillar” strategy to support our overall goal of sustainable poverty reduction. One pillar of our action concerns what we call “the investment climate” – the investments needed in developing countries to create growth, provide jobs, increase output, and raise productivity. This pillar encompasses much of the work we do in the Vice Presidency I lead at the World Bank – but it also includes helping to shape the investment climate with sensible economic policies, good governance, strong institutions, and the rule of law.

The second pillar of our strategy revolves around empowering and investing in people. Here, we are helping countries to give people the ability to shape their own lives, to take decisions on their own, for themselves, their families, their communities, and their country.

***Key Question 1** - How should engineers work with other professionals such as economists, environmental and social specialists, lawyers and financiers to help assess the soundness and cost-effectiveness of proposed projects?*

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