

Taking Action for the World's Poor and Hungry People

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SPEAKER SUMMARY NOTE

Session: **Changing Roles and Partnerships for Poverty Reduction: Actors and Institutions**

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Title: What Works and Does Not Work for Different Actors and Institutions in the Reduction of Poverty and Hunger

I want to approach this topic in a holistic manner. In considering what works and does not work in the reduction of poverty and hunger, it will be helpful to examine how people get impoverished or the causes of poverty. If we can isolate the causes, we may be better equipped to proffer solutions and determine what works and what does not work in the fight to reduce poverty and hunger.

I will briefly break this presentation into three main subtopics for clarity.

1. Understanding the concept and Causes of poverty
2. Suggestions on Empowering the Poor and Hungry
3. What the Private Sector Advocates.

Understanding the Concept and Causes of Poverty

People are impoverished when they do not have or are denied access to factors of production, especially land and knowledge property, through which they can create a product or service to earn. Without this fundamental requirement, individuals, families and nations are denied the control of their destinies and rendered irrelevant or become mere pawns in the process of wealth creation.

Suggestions on Empowering the Poor and Hungry

- People must be guaranteed ownership or access to land and opportunities for equitable, auditable and predictable laws and policies that regulate the distribution of resources.
- Those entrusted with power and authority (political and economic) must ensure good governance where vital resources are equitably distributed for the use and benefit of all.
- The private sector is most suited to create wealth, through providing sustainable businesses where people are employed and earn decent wages.
- Where the right policies and framework for investments are put in place, businesses are willing to take risk. ABR and NGB advocated for improved business climate in African Countries for positive impacts for economic development.
- ABR/NBG is spearheading awareness for improved productive capacity, especially value added processing of agricultural products, a sector which engages most of the poor in rural areas.
- Provision of micro-finance facilities to encourage rural cooperative societies to move from subsistence farming to commercial farming through establishment of farm gate SMEs
- Working with donors to channel funds directly to private sector projects that enhance or has direct bearing on trade, investments and rural development. Our main focus is on infrastructural projects that enhances productivity and competitiveness.

- Assisting to build the capacity of the informal sector through education and training thereby enabling them to build sustainable businesses with greater growth potentials over time. This will also equip the poor with requisite skills and application of modern technology to enhance their competitiveness.
- Bringing development initiatives and programmes to rural levels where most of the poor live. NBG is being formed at country levels, and in Countries like Nigeria and Cote D'Ivoire where this group is effective, they are impacting positively on private enterprise in such countries.

What the Private Sector Advocates

The private sector advocates Good Governance and clear, predictable laws that guarantee individuals and families the benefit to own, control and manage vital resources. This will enable them make choices on what to produce or services to offer and earn decent wages.

What Does Not Work

- Donors and Multilateral institutions' designed programs that do not take cognizance of peculiarities of each country and locality, often fail to have the desired impact of taking many out of the poverty trap, thereby leaving a majority still hungry. Each Community should be engaged and involved in determining their priority projects right from policy or project formulation to execution.
- The policy of acknowledging the private sector as the engine of growth, yet refusing to engage with and strengthen private sector institutions to promote business and projects that have direct impact on poverty reduction.
- The Policy of engaging and channeling funds to projects only through Government Agencies leaves much to be desired as red tapism have often hampered delivery of well conceived development plans.