

## **21<sup>st</sup> Century Global Governance: Broadening Participation in International Institutions**

Friday, October 30, 2009, 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 pm

[Center for Universal Education](#) at Brookings, 1775 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington, DC

While most international institutions involve only governments in their formal governance structure, a number of innovative institutions have emerged in recent years that engage multi-stakeholders in their governance processes. Some institutions now have developing country representation as a clear majority; others have civil society and developing countries as equal partners in the organization's governance alongside donor countries.

On October 30, the Center for Universal Education at Brookings hosted a roundtable with experts and leaders from a number of these innovative institutions. Among the participants were individuals with experience working with the Education for All Fast Track Initiative; the International Labour Organization; the Global Environmental Fund; the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation; and the Adaptation Fund.

The discussion highlighted the importance of including developing country voices in global governance. Expanding participation from developing countries is currently under consideration among a number of international organizations but some innovative institutions have put developing countries in the forefront. For example, the Adaptation Fund, which was established by parties to the Kyoto Protocol to finance adaptation projects that help countries deal with adverse affects of climate change, has a clear majority of developing countries in its governance structure. This has allowed the organization to incorporate many different viewpoints and has created a sense of equality among participants, which has in turn strengthened the organization.

Participants discussed the challenges and benefits of including diverse stakeholders in the governance of international organizations in a dynamic global environment. Among the potential benefits cited are more comprehensive decision-making procedures, stronger constituencies for resource mobilization, and deeper investment of stakeholders in successful implementation. Some of the challenges cited include the lack of resources in developing countries, including both time to devote to the organization's meetings and money to fund travel expenses and preparation time for meetings, that leave many developing country representatives at a disadvantage when sitting down to a board meeting among developed world counterparts, or participating in other such activities.

The participants also highlighted the impact of including civil society as full partners in the governance of international institutions. The International Labor Organization has included employer and labor organizations as full partners in governance for 90 years. The experience of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria suggests

that broader participation by civil society in governance can foster more successful resource mobilization and implementation that would otherwise not be possible. Including organized civil society constituencies seemed to be a more effective approach than including only individual members of civil society in governance.

The group's comments informed the Center's research on multi-stakeholder organizations, and the ways in which the lessons learned from institutions in other fields can be applied to improving existing mechanisms in the education sector. Engaging stakeholders from all areas of society is important to achieving development outcomes, as evidenced by the work of the institutions that were represented in the discussion.