THE CONTOURS AND POSSIBILITIES OF OPEN DEVELOPMENT

BY SANJAY PRADHAN AND SINA ODUGBEMI

The organization, India against Corruption, forms a human chain to demand comprehensive reforms of anticorruption systems in India. Several eminent citizens of India, including religious leaders, Right to Information activists, social reformers, and bureaucrats, have come together to force the Government of India to enact the Jan Lokpal Bill.

s the idea of *open development* another vague, endlessly elastic term capturing what is merely a passing mood, a fad? The goal of this issue of *Development Outreach* is to strike a resounding *No*. We will define open development in a clear and robust manner; and we will show that, rather than being a passing fancy, the idea of open development actually captures an emerging paradigm shift in how development is being done. We are also going to show that this new paradigm will endure. Before we define what open development is, however, we need to understand what the vanishing development paradigm has been.

THE OLD REGIME: AN IRON TRIANGLE OF TECHNOCRACY

THE BUSINESS OF DEVELOPMENT used to be exceedingly simple. Experts identify a development challenge in Country X, a developing country; they do their technical analysis; they choose a policy option; a program is designed; funding is provided; and on to implementation. These experts often belong to an *iron triangle of technocracy*: technical experts from the relevant ministry in Country X, technical experts from international donor organizations or OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries and, sometimes, technical experts from international nongovernmental organizations. In addition, the solution to the perceived development challenge is likely to be some OECD country model. What is best practice from the global North? That is what we do in Country X. Development has not been about best fit, taking into account the unique circumstance of each country context; rather, it is about wholly transplanted models.

Above all, development is something you do *to people*—the beneficiaries of the intervention—not what you do *with them*. Now, is this a stylized picture? Only up to a point. For elements of the old paradigm still exist. Think how often the key stages in the policy reform process in developing countries is held to be the exclusive preserve of experts, both domestic and foreign: problem identification, the specification of policy options, and the selection of the policy response. Then, after the intervention has been designed, it may be decided that it is a good idea to

consult carefully chosen representatives of the people in a mere box-ticking exercise. For too many development practitioners the perfect reform is one that experts can agree on and implement without too much hassle...hassle meaning *citizen engagement*.

This picture is changing and we need to understand what is driving the change.

DRIVERS OF CHANGE

THE FIRST DRIVER of change is that autocratic state forms and authoritarian patterns of rule are both under attack. Citizens almost everywhere are pushing for new social contracts. According to the Economist Intelligence Unit's *Democracy Index 2010*: while "2.5 billion people, more than one-third of the world's population, still live under authoritarian rule...,"¹ it is striking nonetheless that "one-half of the world's population now lives in a democracy of some sort." Note that this index was published before the explosion of the Arab Awakening, where citizens in country after country in the Middle East and North Africa have risen up against long-established autocracies. What this means is that we now have in our world a majority of countries where leaders have to worry about public opinion, and are now more aware of the price that governing elites might have to pay if they ignore the wishes of the preponderance of their citizens.

In addition, there has been stupendous growth in the size and capacity of civil society, which has become a critical force in international development. The not-for-profit sector worldwide is now estimated to account for expendi-

tures of some US\$1.3 trillion annually;² it employs over 40 million people;³ and channels roughly US\$20 billion annually in development assistance.⁴ This means that governments have to become more open to contestation by these countervailing centers of power and influence.

THE SECOND DRIVER of change is that more and more citizens are solving their problems through collective action: they are getting better at banding together and pressing for change. As we learn from Clay Shirky's *Here Comes Everybody*,⁵ the spread of the Internet and of mobile phones is putting tools for collective action in the hands of millions of ordinary citizens, not just governments and powerful corporations. As a result, processes of change are becoming more democratic. A local issue or dispute can become global within minutes as networks of citizens mobilize; and, in the same way, a global issue can become a local storm in no time. Should they so desire, citizens are now able to challenge hierarchical institutions or ignore them entirely and seek to solve their own problems...collectively. This is the big lesson of the Arab Awakening. And all this has implications for top-down, experts-know-all approaches to development.

THE THIRD DRIVER of change is the increasing multipolarity of the global economy: that is, *more* economies now drive global economic growth. For instance, according to the World Bank's report *Global Development Horizon 2011: Multipolarity—The New Global Economy*, the "share of developing countries of international trade flows has risen steadily, from 30 percent in 1995 to an estimated 45 percent in 2010."⁶ Not only that, whereas a decade ago advanced

economies held two-thirds of all foreign exchange reserves, now emerging and developing economies hold two-thirds of all foreign exchange reserves. The report also contains this arresting forecast: "By 2025, global economic growth will predominantly be generated in emerging economies...six major emerging economies—Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, and the Russian Federation—will collectively account for more than half of all global growth." All of this is epitomized in the rise of middle-income countries among the G20. The key point is that multiple poles of growth bring with them multiple sources of development knowledge. Developing countries seeking good examples are no longer restricted to OECD models. Knowledge is flowing in all directions—South to South, even South to North—and through open-source platforms.

THE FOURTH DRIVER of change is that sources of development knowledge are less hierarchical, less restricted, less linear. Rather, they are becoming more lateral, more open, more networked, and more collaborative. As World Bank President Robert Zoellick noted in a 2010 speech on Democratizing Development Economics:

"We need to recognize that development knowledge is no longer the sole province of the researcher, the scholar, or the ivory tower. It's about the health-

care worker in Chiapas recording her results; it's about the local official posting the school budget on the classroom door so that parents can complain when their children are shortchanged; it's about the minister, the academician, the statistician, and the entrepreneur comparing notes on the impact of incentives."⁷

He called on all those working in international development to move beyond an "elite retail" model of research to one that is wholesale and networked.

THE EMERGING PARADIGM OF OPEN ENGAGEMENT

AGAINST THIS BACKDROP we can begin to describe the emerging open development paradigm which is the subject of this issue of *Development Outreach*. At its heart, open development is about more collaborative governance. It is a recognition that in every developing country there is a complex variety of actors, stakeholders, confessions, and persuasions. It is also a recognition that while governance is often, at bottom, about coercion—since the state requires a monopoly on violence—and the manipulation of economic incentives, it is also fundamentally about collaboration. A number of pressing development

challenges—for example, better management of natural resources, or citizen feedback to improve public service delivery—require collaborative actions between state and nonstate actors.

As Mr. Zoellick said earlier this year: “Institutions matter but so do citizens.... Our message to our clients, whatever their political system, is that you cannot have successful development without good governance and without the participation of your citizens.”⁸ In this issue, we dramatize this fundamental shift to collaborative governance through a pointed debate between Ariel Fiszbein of the World Bank and Rakesh Rajani of Twaweza.

Open Development, then, is a bill of six particulars:

1 It means **OPEN GOVERNMENT**, characterized by transparency, citizen access to official information, and responsiveness. In this issue, Anupama Dokeniya explains how to enable open government, pointing out that it is, at bottom, “an enterprise of government transformation.”

2 It means **CITIZENS ARE ENGAGED IN DEVELOPMENT**, or what, in this issue, Angge Gregorio-Medel calls “the co-equal ownership of development.” You achieve this in part by unleashing “the power of public discourse” as both Kavita Abraham and James Deane point out in their contribution.

3 It means **COLLECTIVE ACTION BY CITIZENS** to tackle their own development challenges. New information and communication technologies are vital to this process because, as Steven Livingston points out in his interview, they lower transaction costs for citizens. But, as Ivan Sigal reminds us, we must never forget

that “people rather than tools bring about change.”

4 It means **TAKING ADVANTAGE OF MULTIPLE SOURCES OF DEVELOPMENT KNOWLEDGE** in our new multipolar world. In this edition, Ajoy Datta and John Young describe how think tanks and knowledge networks today are shaping the knowledge agenda in development in ways that are new, challenging, and full of promise.

5 It means **THE CO-CREATION OF DEVELOPMENT SOLUTIONS**. As Venkat Ramaswamy points out, this means three things: inclusive, creative, and meaningful engagement; mutual expansion of values and freedoms; and a strategic architecture of engagement platforms.

6 Finally, it means that **INTERNATIONAL DONORS AND DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTIONS HAVE TO EMBRACE OPEN DATA, OPEN KNOWLEDGE, AND OPEN SOLUTIONS**. In this issue, Alasdair Wardhaugh describes the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI); and Björn-Sören Gigler, R. Bedford Tanner III, and Johannes Kiess discuss early results from the World Bank’s Open Data initiative.

We hope you enjoy this issue of *Development Outreach*, and that you will find it useful in your work.

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Endnotes

¹ *Democracy Index 2010*. Economist Intelligence Unit. http://graphics.eiu.com/PDF/Democracy_Index_2010_web.pdf.

² Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project estimate in 2004 US dollars. See United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, CTITF Working Group Report: *Tackling the Financing of Terrorism*, p. 16. October 2009. New York: United Nations. Available at http://www.un.org/terrorism/pdfs/CTITF_financing_ENG_final.pdf.

³ Ibid.

⁴ OECD estimate in 2006 US dollars. See United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, CTITF Working Group Report: *Tackling the Financing of Terrorism*. October 2009. New York: United Nations. Available at http://www.un.org/terrorism/pdfs/CTITF_financing_ENG_final.pdf.

⁵ Shirky, Clay. 2008. *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations*. New York: Penguin.

⁶ *Global Development Horizons 2011: Multipolarity—The New Global Economy*. <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTGDH/Resources/GDH-AdvanceEd-CompleteBook.pdf>.

⁷ Zoellick, Robert B. “*Democratizing Development Economics*.” Speech at Georgetown University, Washington DC. September 29, 2010.

⁸ Zoellick, Robert B. “*The Middle East and North Africa: A New Social Contract for Development*.” Speech at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, Washington DC. April 6, 2011.