

“To build up and support a human-centred infrastructure and global common goods, which focus on community building and solidarity in and between societies, is critical. To this end we need strong coalitions between governments and civil society.”

– Dennis J. SNOWER, Global Solutions Initiative

Image Source: Construction of the suspension bridge between Vladivostok and Russky Island, ahead of the 2012 APEC Summit in Russia.
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Foreword

Dear friends and partners in global problem solving,

2020 has proven the urgent need for a holistic approach for addressing global challenges. International cooperation and multilateralism are the precondition for problem solving. Therefore, I am grateful to address you in this book directly. I wish especially to thank Nicolas Buchoud for his outstanding engagement in the process and the GIZ for making this book possible.

The decoupling of economic and social progress in and between societies, the decoupling of technological and environmental progress and the decoupling of societal progress, wealth and health are main factors fostering global crises such as the current pandemic while placing great strain on efforts to solve challenges collectively. As long as societies are divided and the opportunities between social groups are unequally distributed this problem will remain.

At the same time the intensive scientific exchange to tackle COVID-19 and the rapid development of a vaccine proves that we have great power and opportunity if we work in solidarity. One learning of the current crises is certainly that we need to have a new understanding of wealth. Our societies and economies will only become resilient and sustainable if we integrate environmental and social aspects in our thinking, in our measurement and in our action. We must overcome the growth-oriented thinking which measures wealth solely in terms of GDP as well as the business focus on shareholder value. With the recoupling dashboard, unveiled in 2020, the GSI has proposed an alternative which reimagines our measurement of prosperity and thus our picture of social wellbeing to include crucial environmental and social factors. We welcome you to join us as we develop this new tool together.

To build from these lessons into a more sustainable and resilient future we need to agree on a future multilateralism which overcomes silo-mentalities, opens itself for a multi-stakeholder approach and guarantees a diversity of stakeholders in the decision-making process, and accepting the global power-shifts which have taken place in the last decades. A holistic approach for the future can't be a western approach.

The trend towards sustainability and resilient societies is not only deeply integrated in international governmental thinking i.e. the G20, but is also fostered more and more by

private investors and thought leaders in business, who are shifting towards a long-lasting perspective instead of short-term objectives. To build up and support a human-centred infrastructure and global common goods which focus on community building and solidarity in and between societies is critical and to this end we need strong coalitions between governments and civil society.

It is encouraging that the current Italian G20-Presidency and its related engagement groups (in particular the T20) and the upcoming Indonesian and Indian Presidency share this perspective and encourage the civil society to engage in the G20-process. So, let's strengthen our common efforts!

I am both delighted about and grateful for this project, which is powered by the GIZ and the Global Solutions Initiative. Together we will continuously work on global problem solving by integrating regional and local perspectives to realize the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Yours,
Dennis J. Snower