

Regionalism Will Be the “ Growth Industry in Governance”

19 November 2013

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- In the absence of strong global governance, regional organizations will have a major role to play in addressing global challenges
- Concurrent to the Summit on the Global Agenda, the World Economic Forum has convened a meeting of regional organizations to exchange ideas and discuss inter-regional cooperation
- More information about the Summit on the Global Agenda 2013 is available [here](#)

Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, 19 November 2013 – The role of regional organizations in addressing global challenges will increase as global governance institutions remain weak or fail to reform, national government and regional organization leaders agreed in a session on regional perspectives at the World Economic Forum’s sixth Summit on the Global Agenda. “ We are moving to a world where multiregionalism will be the growth industry in governance, ” said Carl Bildt, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden.

With legacy institutions of global governance typically incapable of achieving more than least-common-denominator solutions and the capacity of nation states to tackle global issues limited, “ there is enormous potential for regional institutions to fill some of these gaps, ” Kevin Rudd, Member of Parliament in Australia, argued. “ There is a distinct role for small and middle powers – constructive and creative powers – to sustain, rebuild and renew the global order. There is no longer a one-size-fits-all mechanism to deal with great challenges. It’s a coalition of the policy willing. ”

But others on the panel warned that some regions are not yet well integrated and that the goal should be to achieve multilateral global agreements such as the conclusion of the Doha Round of trade negotiations rather than piecemeal regional arrangements. “ We don’t think that regional economic integration is a panacea, ” said Igor V. Finogenov, Chairman of the Board of the Eurasian Development Bank in Almaty. Alicia Barcena Ibarra, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in Santiago added the following: “ The regions are reorganizing themselves and we in Latin America are still on the periphery of the periphery. Our region is still very fragmented. ”

Asia, for its part, has many challenges that countries in the region cannot handle on their own, panellists remarked. The US, for example, has an important part to play in Asia’s security. “ China is rising and we are not sure what its foreign policy intentions are, ” said Yoriko Kawaguchi, Member of the House of Councillors of Japan and Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs from 2002 to 2004. In trade, she observed, regional arrangements have not been to the exclusion of other economies. “ Regionalism today is open. We seek the same thing that the World Trade Organization is seeking but doing it within the region gets us there quicker. We hope that other regions do the same thing and we will get to the global goal. ”

The regional perspective on global issues is essential, said Fathallah Sijilmassi, Secretary-General of the Union for the Mediterranean in Barcelona. “ Within the framework of commitment to the global agenda and respect for national priorities, we need to have this ‘ helicopter height ’ for a regional perspective of the major challenges. If you want long-term solutions to long-term challenges, they are in regional integration. ”

Concurrent to the Summit on the Global Agenda, the World Economic Forum, in conjunction with the Government of the United Arab Emirates, has convened a meeting of regional organizations to exchange views and discuss ways of cooperating. At a session today on security challenges, participants determined that regional organizations

have an important role in conflict prevention and establishing norms that will reduce the number of conflicts. Regions can be effective platforms for resolving or preventing conflicts through a gradual approach by engaging member states on socio-economic issues and implementing trust-building measures that enhance security, participants concluded.

Notes to Editors

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