

Governance and the 2030 Agenda

Conversation with Pietro Sebastiani



On 15th of March we had the privilege of welcoming Pietro Sebastiani as a speaker for a conversation about the Governance and the 2030 agenda. The ambassador Pietro Sebastiani is the general director for the cooperation and development in the Italian's Ministry for Foreign Affairs. He graduated in Political Science with a major in International Law and took courses in International Economics at Harvard University and in International Journalism at Columbia University. Such a varied background makes him a valuable source of knowledge for us students of Global Governance.

He first introduced the concept of "development" and how its meaning evolved through time. He distinguished five phases. The first phase, until the 90s, limited the idea of development and the subsequent actions, to an economic perspective.

Then, the "Human Development Report" written by Mahbub ul Haq and the Nobel-winner Amartya Sen introduced a new approach for advancing human wellbeing. In this phase human development is about expanding the richness of human life, rather than simply the richness of the economy in which human beings live.

During the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, a third pillar breaks in: the environment. In that occasion governments recognized the need to redirect international and national plans and policies to ensure that all economic decisions fully took into account any environmental impact.

After twenty years, there was a turning point with the Rio+20 conference and the resulting declaration "The Future We Want" sets out a common vision, renewing political commitment, elaborating on how the green economy may help achieve sustainable development, addressing institutional framework issues, articulating a framework for action. Governance appeared as the 4th pillar of a sustainable development. The last phase he identified is the one we live in, which started with the "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" adopted on 1 January 2016.

But how could the 2030 goals be reached? According to our guest, the ambitious



achievement requires a global partnership that brings together governments, the private sector, the UN and other institutions, creating an empowered governance that could revert the meaning of sustainability and establish "self-fueling, growing, cycles of wellbeing and a healthy, durable relationship with each concrete territory".

He then focused on Italy, and how governance is becoming a cross-cutting theme in Italian Development Cooperation (education, infrastructure and more) and, as a stand-alone sector it's the largest in terms of expenditure. For example, Italy supported the strengthening of tobacco taxation policies in a number of selected countries (Ethiopia, Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda) to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development goals. And more, Italy contributed to the Multi-Partner Somalia Infrastructure Fund for new infrastructures and to the Trust Fund of United Nations for Somalia in favor to the program of supporting the electoral process.

The development of this sector entails of course an increase in the working opportunities, more and more jobs are being created in the field of development to support the implementation of consistent funds and also the private sector is increasingly engaged in development.

Pietro Sebastiani underlined that an expertise in Governance is highly demanded, in Italy as abroad. His point of view on development and the prospect of so many possible careers suitable for us, made this conversation very interesting and useful.

Anita Pesoli and Melani Perera