

Paris Meeting Closing Summary – Mark Moody-Stuart

We have come to the end of the meeting and I will try and summarize the main conclusions we reached and outline the way forward for BASD.

What is success at Johannesburg?

When BASD was formed we were clear on the aims of the initiative – to ensure that the voice of business is properly heard in Johannesburg, to identify areas where business can play a constructive role and to demonstrate that business has many initiatives and partnerships promoting sustainable development. Here we rightly asked what would be a successful outcome of Johannesburg for us. We in business know that we cannot progress sustainable development on our own or in isolation, so I think I would define success from a business point of view if others attending, whether from national governments, local governments, communities, labour organisations, NGOs left Johannesburg saying “I have seen examples of how business is contributing, not enough perhaps, and there are ways that I feel it could be done better, but I see the constructive role that they play and I would like to work with business to see how we can spread the good examples, and make them even more effective and relevant” For us in business, we will see after open discussion and even criticism how what we think are our best examples could be made better and multiplied, and we will have learned from others and each other.

Gaps in our ranks

During our meeting we noted that there are gaps or weaknesses in the representation – in the Finance sector and in health and pharmaceuticals as well as GMOs. We resolved to go out and through our own contacts address this.

Representation on Decision taking

As has often been said during the meeting, we have a lot of decisions to be taken rapidly. Taking decisions in large groups or in groups of representatives of large groups can either be relatively simple or very thorough and time consuming. We have a small BASD steering committee, chaired by me and with Lord Holme as Vice Chairman, with representatives from both the ICC and WBCSD. That body has taken all the decisions so far and functions effectively. As Richard Holme said, we already have contributions from many of the organisations here present and we need the support and input of all the organisations here, as well as those not. This will widen the representative base. Richard suggested that every organisation gave between one and five thousand dollars, depending on size.

We cannot clear everything through all contributors. But as BASD we commit to keep you regularly and thoroughly informed, to make sure that all of you from contributing member organisations a proper chance for input and comment. And you should feel free to comment either to Eric as administrator or directly to me. I always regard myself as reporting on behalf of BASD to the heads of ICC and WBCSD – Dick McCormick and Chad Holliday. But although through this and the steering committee composition we have representation from Africa, Europe and North America, we need wider guidance with a broader base, so we decided as a steering committee to form an

advisory group, to which we would invite key players in the regional organisations of the WBCSD and the ICC. In this way we can retain a small effective committee but benefit from wider advice.

Criteria for Examples

As many of you said, an urgently required decision is on common guidelines or criteria for projects which BASD will promote. Out of the discussions this morning and the report backs, there are clear common themes which I feel represent a common view.

First projects should address all three pillars of sustainable development –the economic, the environmental and the social. Second, projects should embody the notion of partnership. And third, they should have measurable or demonstrable outcomes, credibly presented – not necessarily numerical verification, but perhaps third party evaluation or comment.

Some of you have suggested that all the data be sent to the BASD secretariat who will sort it out. Plainly examples have to be presented by those who lived them. BASD is an initiative, an amplifier, not an organisation. There will be many opportunities to present examples, and many business organisations will be presenting their own separately. But it will be much more powerful if every organisation and presentation concentrates on these simple criteria – the three legs of sustainability, partnership and credible concrete results so we cannot be accused of greenwash as our friends the demonstrators yesterday did in general terms. Multiples of concrete examples delivering results are difficult to argue with. We may all agree that we need even more, but we will have a strong common base to build on.

A programme forming in Johannesburg

Out of our discussions and the feedback from Nitin Desai and others we can see a programme emerging. In the first week of Johannesburg Nitin has said that he sees stakeholder dialogues, where business with others contributes on issues which are still being chosen. BASD will keep in close contact, feeding back to members opportunities and needs for input to such dialogues. Topics will emerge as we go through the preparatory process, and we will have to be ready to select from our sector examples matters which demonstrate business contribution to the chosen issues. This will require alertness and flexibility. We do not (and should not) control the agenda.

But business needs a focus and an agenda which we control. So BASD should organise a business day at the beginning of the second week when the Heads of State begin to arrive. This can be a focus of business activity. Clearly it is impossible to compress the countless examples we have heard, so we will have to be very selective. Perhaps in addition to applying the common criteria and ensuring a representative sector and regional spread, we should give preference to those which can be presented at least in part by partners. How better to exemplify businesses outreach to partners than to have a day with examples of business sustainability presented largely by partners?

The business day would allow a transition into the second week where Heads of State will be present and there will be an opportunity for CEOs to interact with the intergovernmental actors at that level.

So what will BASD actually do at Johannesburg?

Throughout the event BASD will provide a really professional press suite, ensuring dissemination of information from business organisations and individual businesses, with daily press conferences as appropriate and interview rooms. There will be a linked business centre supplying services to business.

BASD will organise the business day or days, securing an appropriate venue. BASD will have the unenviable task with business organisations of selecting examples and building a representative programme based on the common criteria, and work to get CEOs into appropriate slots in the Head of State Section.

As Richard says this will require contributions from those present, both in kind and in financial terms. Contributions of up to \$5,000 per organisation could be needed at that stage, decreasing with the number of contributors – so recruitment is important. This and earlier contributions will be fully accounted for to participants.

In the meantime BASD will continue to be represented at the regional preparation meetings to ensure both input and up to date information.

Publications

Apart from the few examples selected for presentation at the business day, there are very large numbers of examples from individual businesses and organisations. Through the BASD-action.net website, BASD can provide a portal to guide people to these examples. We cannot rework them, and it would be a waste of effort, but we can provide direct links in a structured form so that we all have examples to quote.

It has been pointed out however that electronic access is not so freely available in parts of the developing world – there is still a big role for printed material. We have heard of the WBCSD workbook, the ICC project, the USCIB case studies and the UNEP case studies. I believe it would simply be duplication to try and produce a separate BASD book. We can act as a channel to this excellent material. There may be a role at some point for some very simple additional material. We will keep this under review.

South Africa's needs

Reuel Khoza in his opening mentioned the three areas of possible contribution - sponsorship of the summit as a whole, the best practice exhibition and the legacy projects.

BASD has made clear in both public and private that funding for a global intergovernmental summit should come from developed country governments. South Africa should not bear the burden, but if business funds it this will arouse suspicion. From much experience we know that much of society is concerned about business

influence through funding on government. From the demonstration yesterday we heard of fears of “privatising the UN”. Any funding of the summit will only re-inforce these suspicions. So all of us must go to our home governments and tell them of the need for them to play their part and of the dangers for business and the summit if they fail to do so.

The exhibition is still in a process of development. We know where it will be. We only have indications of the cost. From discussions we think that ideas of screening criteria for companies –other than broad guidelines for exhibits – are likely to be dropped. Space will be available on a commercial basis to businesses and organisations to demonstrate what they believe are examples of best practice. Decisions will be up to each organisation although BASD in conjunction with the South African business Forum will make sure that all are kept updated. BASD continues to point out to the organisers that the timing is getting very tight, with real costs not available until late November and very preliminary costs looking high. Without early firm commitments based on real costs it would be foolhardy to proceed with the exhibition.

The most appropriate input that business can make is to look to funding legacy projects which ensure that a lasting memorial is available after the disruption of the Summit. The city of Johannesburg has many small and large urban renewal projects for which they seek partners. In addition there are other projects around South Africa, and a need in Africa as a whole for increased awareness of investment opportunities and infrastructure, in line with the New African Initiative. Legacy projects or investment are not only the most appropriate channel for business support, but in the absence of businesses supplying core funding to the intergovernmental project, and with the exhibition still unclear, there is no doubt that pressure to fund significant legacy projects will increase.

Where does business stand on the idea of a “Deal” between stakeholders, with mutual commitments?

There may well be pressure on business to make commitments. Clearly individual companies and some sectors set targets and report progress, but there is relatively little that business as a whole has committed to and any mechanisms for reaching such commitments are very difficult and time consuming.

From what has been said here today, business is clearly very open to working in partnership with others towards clearly defined. We are also committed to the broad principle of setting targets and reporting openly against them, and being held accountable for our performance.

To those general commitments we could perhaps add words on the subject of transparency (corruption), possibly being able to express support for something such as the OECD Convention, for which G8 governments have firmly declared their support.

What Next

BASD will put these conclusions and other material on the website. We will continue to be represented at the regional summits, reporting back on results. Based on estimated requirements for the press centre and the office and planning for the business day we will book the necessary space. We will establish dialogue with some of the larger NGOs. We may not have another plenary meeting but will almost certainly require a series of smaller working groups.

BASD is your organisation. With your participation we can assist all of you to present a face of business to Johannesburg which is more than just the sum of its parts.