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Transcript of the address at the Hangzhou International Congress, as delivered.

15-17 May 2013, Hangzhou, China

Thank you Madame Director General and thank you for inviting me to this Conference. In an interview in 2009 in BBC Hard Talk I said that the purpose of development is to change culture. I said that and many people asked me what I meant by that and this Conference provides me an opportunity to explain myself. It is not against the Conference theme: “that culture is the key to sustainable development”. I said that in the context of Afghanistan’s exclusion of girls from education, and I said that because I felt that one had to do something which is culturally appropriate in order to educate girls in Afghanistan. Now over these years I’ve set up 4.000 girls’ schools in Afghanistan, trained hundreds, in fact thousands of female teachers, engaged older women as chaperon to take girls from their homes to school and bring them back to their homes after class. As a result of which now 280 000 girls are being educated in Afghanistan. What is happening is that they are getting an opportunity to learn, they are being taught well. Hopefully this particular generation of girls will be well educated, and the next generation of children will not face the kind of exclusions this generation faced. And I hope that the Afghan women’s life and livelihood will probably change in the next generation and we hope that automatically the exclusion that girls face now in Afghanistan will not be faced by the next generation.

Let me explain from an example that we have experienced in Bangladesh, as to how culture becomes absolutely essential in terms of designing programs that work. In 1979 it was the international year of the child. At that time in Bangladesh infant mortality was: under one year old mortality used to be 135 per 1000, and under five years old mortality used to be 252 per 1000. We thought that we need to something about that, we found that diarrhea kills more than half the children, under five years old. So we have to tackle diarrheal mortality in Bangladesh. We took up the program to go and teach mothers how to make oral rehydration fluid at home in order to combat diarrheal rehydration and death in the households. So we decided to set up a group of oral rehydration workers who would go and teach one woman in every household how to make oral rehydration fluid at home and how to administrate it.

So first 30 000 houses was visited by our oral rehydration workers and we sent out a group of monitors to test how many of the families who have been taught were using oral rehydration in their household. We found only 6% per cent in the households visited used oral rehydration to combat diarrhea in their household, we were very disappointed but very quickly found out that our oral rehydration workers themselves did not believe in oral dehydration. Therefore if the teacher doesn't believe in something the kind of teaching that it goes on is not very effective and persuasive, so we had to bring up all oral rehydration workers and teach them exactly how efficacious oral rehydration program is, once they were convinced they went back again and then they went to another 30 000 households we again sent out a group of monitors to find out how oral rehydration programmes were used and at that time it came up to 19%. We were very unhappy about the results of this programme because 81 % of the households who had diarrhea in the household did not use oral dehydration.

So we sent out a group of anthropologists to check why 81% of the women having diarrhea in the household did not use oral rehydration and we very quickly found out that the men in the household did not encourage the women to use oral rehydration because they had not been told anything about this programme. We had to redesign the programme, bring men in that, so our programmes were designed only for women teaching women and hoping that the women in the household would take action. Then we redesigned the programme before we went from house to house, we decided to have meeting with all the men in the village tell them exactly what we are teaching the women, and how oral rehydration works. Then we visited mosques we went to market places went to many congregates we taught on about oral rehydration and then suddenly the oral rehydration use rate started growing up dramatically and we followed up with spots and interviews in television and then it went up to 67% to 80% use rate. Over a 10 year period we went to every household in Bangladesh, quarter million households spent out an hour with each woman in the household, and so oral rehydration therapy became used by everybody and diarrhea mortality went down dramatically our infant mortality rate of course now is one of the lowest in South Asia, its less than 40, and under 5 mortality is less than 50.

What I wanted to say is that if the programme is not culturally appropriate then it doesn't work and many of the programmes are not culturally appropriate tend not to work but we

were lucky that we were only telling everything that it was going on and as result of it this programme became, of course now Bangladesh has got the highest use of oral rehydration in the world and oral rehydration therapy has become part of the culture itself so when a development programme and the outcome of the programme becomes part of your culture then it became sustainable so what I wanted to say is that in order to be sustainable, sustainable development means in fact at the level of culture a change must take place otherwise it is not sustainable.

What Mme Bokova just asked me, with regards to violence against women, child marriage, and all kinds of social ills that we see in our society. We have now set up 400 theatre groups, popular theatre that enact in the Bangladesh countryside and village. People enjoy that because it is kind of education and entertainment at the same time, but we find it extremely effective in terms of transmitting values and messages and perceptions about social problems, and more than 150 000 theatres take place every year in Bangladesh and we are trying to change people's values, perceptions and way of looking at things in these problems we face now in society.

We also have revived dying cultures in Bangladesh, dying particularly crafts & local art. We have set up a chain of marketing outlets in Bangladesh which is now becoming more than 90 million dollars programme with more than 70 million dollar revenue and we make what 10 million dollar profit out of this. It has created 300 000 jobs in the rural Bangladesh we have redesigned some of the crafts for kind of new life style people who can use products with a new design, with modern outlook, and most of the artisans who used to produce this artisanal products and craft products and now found a new market for their crafts as a result of which of course we have been able to get a large number of people employed, revenues coming out from these shops, art created jobs and it is not only now the most popular shopping chain in Bangladesh but also a must-visit for tourists who visit Bangladesh. What I want to say is that by the post 2015 agenda what we need is sustainable development and if it's going to be sustainable then it must affect the culture itself so Sustainable Development means cultural change to an extend that it incorporates development itself and then It becomes sustainable

Thank you so much