



**SID NL Closing Conference:
'The State in a Globalizing World: providing Water in Africa'**

Date: Friday 14 September 2012 from 9:30-14:00
Location: De Glazen Zaal, The Hague
Language: English

Background

The SID NL Closing Conference 2012 is organised on Friday September 14 in cooperation with the African Studies Centre (ASC) and Vitens Evides International (VEI), supported by NCDO and the Worldconnectors.

It is the closing session of the SID 2011-2012 Lecture Series 'The State in a Globalizing World: problematic, yet indispensable', in which we aim to understand the changing role of the nation state, and its relations with other actors including other states, corporates and civil society. This conference is looking at a concrete case: the cooperation of a private partner with both the Dutch and an African State (Mozambique) in providing drinking water to households. What works and what does not? What is the potential of private sector involvement, and which role should the state have herein?

Introduction: the lecture series

In November 2011 SID began the 2011-2012 Lecture Series 'The State in a Globalizing World: problematic, yet indispensable' with an inaugural lecture by Stephen Ellis, Senior researcher at the African Studies Centre. He discussed the paradox of failing states and dynamic growth in Africa. Ellis pointed out a few important emerging trends that influence the changing role of the state in Africa: commercial and political interests of new powers such as China; financial instability; (agricultural) land investments; and the increasing intertwining of politics and organised crime. Ellis argued that while the state has always been expected to provide an environment in which other sectors can do their work, with the state having a regulatory role, this notion of 'developmental state' is now disappearing. We see states developing into market states: regulating markets, instead of providing basic welfare services. Ellis stated that since the financial revolution in 1970, there is no state in the world with real sovereignty. A new generation has emerged with new types of political claims, which we may consider more democratic, but the idea of classic democracy is gone.

In a discussion on fragile states with Seth Kaplan (author of 'Fixing Fragile States'), Ruud Treffers (World Bank) and René Grotenhuis (Cordaid/SID) in December, it was pointed out that a strong state is indispensable for a country to develop in an inclusive and sustainable way. In addition, however, the state needs civil society actors, as they are the eyes and ears on the ground and are also important from a political perspective (bringing social, economic and political issues to the foreground). The private sector is of utmost importance as they can create innovation and provide jobs. Also, it is (youth-)unemployment which often leads to major problems in society, such as criminal activities, and thus to fragility.

Then, in an increasingly multipolar world, how can states increase their leverage? Are regional alliances between states, such as Mercosur, becoming increasingly important in the future? Alcides Costa Vaz, Professor of International Relations at the University of Brasilia, tackled these questions. Costa Vaz argued that regional alliances are important for emerging powers, but that international and multilateral coalitions have become more relevant as immediate options. However, if Europe would fail to find regional answers to its challenges, it will be interesting to see the implications for other examples of regional organisation. On the other hand, the current crisis may come to demonstrate that national policies may no longer successfully respond to global challenges.

We subsequently focused further on the challenges posed to Europe and Europe's place in the world. Ummu Salma Bava, Professor of European Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University (India), argued that the process of

globalisation is impacting both the individual member states and the EU collectively, with an extreme balancing of interest going on. According to Bava each state has a different capability and capacity to respond to the multiple processes that are happening simultaneously. As an Indian scholar, and expert on Europe, she gave us a unique perspective of Europe. She argued that the EU is considered a global power in the sense that its actions - and indeed its very existence - have come to have a significant effect far beyond its borders. She argued that Europe portrays ideas of how to politically organise democracy, rule of law, market economy and respect for human rights. She argued that the danger in Europe is that some elements of nationalisation, on national identity and interest, creep back into the equation. Europe's challenge is where to hold these different views of the collective and the national together.

This conflict between the collective and the national was further explored in March with René Cuperus, Senior Research Fellow at the Wiardi Beckman Foundation. He addressed the tension between the state and its citizens versus the global world order, as well as the new polarisation between so-called globalisation winning elites and globalisation losing 'localists'. Cuperus argued that the divide between those who feel connected to the new world of globalisation, and those who feel threatened by these new world developments, is undermining the state in a globalising world in an existential and dangerous way. However, this does not mean the end of globalisation. Cuperus argued for a new Bretton Woods System of moderate globalisation. Here, countries would be able to follow their own, possibly divergent paths of development that leaves substantial room for manoeuvre by national governments.

Subsequently, the challenges for international relations dealing with the increasing demand for global common goods and services were addressed by James Cameron, founder and Vice Chairman of Climate Change Capital. As resources decline and prices escalate, the interdependencies among countries for food, water, energy and migration will become a reality. Cameron discussed how these changing interdependencies affect the concept of nation and state. He suggested that we should create a space where policymakers and implementers can gather. A space where we can see the cooperation and the competition that is necessary for a big transformation of society transcending the role of governance. Specifically designed institutions embodying this concept, which he calls Public Good Enterprises, already exist such as the Green Development Bank. The state will still play a role and would still be essential, but not sufficient. Technological, financial, social and cultural resources need to be brought together to resolve the problems in this resource constrained world.

William Savedoff, senior fellow at the Center for Global Development, was invited in April for a discussion on whether the existing multi-lateral framework is effective to create the necessary instruments to manage global issues. Savedoff argued that the future of international cooperation is not so much a future of global governance, but a future of mixed coalitions where fluid assemblies of interested parties focus on specific initiatives. Mixed coalitions are promising because they are agile and can pull on a broader range of resources, including the rapid innovations in information and technology. The people, NGOs, private foundations, for-profit firms and countries that want to take action, get together and move. Mixed coalitions are part of a global conversation on acceptable social norms and standards: Is it acceptable to allow people to die in famines? Or to pollute the oceans? Savedoff argued that mixed coalitions are effective precisely when they move these kinds of debates forward, resulting in slow but persistent improvements in global norms. At the same time, he acknowledged that mixed coalitions are highly problematic. He argued that we still need global government institutions in the sense of unanimous binding action. We need them for certain kinds of issues that involve irreversible damage. For example, in health one of those issues that cannot wait is antibiotic resistance.

Tak-Wing Ngo, Professor of Political Science at the University of Macau (China) focused on the core theme of this series: the relevance of the state in a globalising world. He argued that a very important adaptation of the modern state during the past few decades is the rise of the sub-national state. In contrast to the national economy as the main unit of growth in earlier times, sub-national territorial units have increasingly become the source of growth, competition, and political contention in a changing global order. This happens in tandem with the current development in the global capitalist economy where cities and metropolitan regions have become the focal points of exchange and accumulation. Ngo highlighted the case of China, where a decentralised system with multiple levels of administration has allowed regions and local authorities to have extensive fiscal and administrative responsibilities that can be divergent from the national policy. This creates both competition and cooperation between regions, within as well as across national boundaries. Ngo stated that we are now talking about sub-national diplomacy. This form of diplomacy can, for example, avoid certain sensitive political issues that play on a state to state level. State re-scaling redraws the boundary of political contestation, and prompts us to reconsider the units of political agency. We will have to be extremely innovative in redefining, not just the role of the state, but also concepts such as

sovereignty, territoriality and citizenship. These concepts are being loosened, and eventually the entire foundation of the modern state will be shaken.

The concluding lecture of this series is delivered by Hilary Wainwright (Transnational Institute and Red Pepper magazine) in June, in which she will focus on the role of the state in dealing with global challenges vis-à-vis civil society as a strong actor in , and the role of the state.

The closing conference of the 2011-2012 lecture series is where all the knowledge comes together and where we apply it on a vital theme: water. The closing conference will go back to the inaugural lecture with a focus on Africa, and will look 'beyond the state': who is responsible for what within the reality of multi-level-governance, amidst a variety of actors?