

National Visions for the 21st. Century – Key Lessons

KDI Conference

Seoul, December 4-5, 2006

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National Visions Today

- Many stable and successful countries have invested in them
- To address and improve a country's global competitiveness.
- To address structural reforms of long gestation.
- To achieve consensus among a country's stakeholders on future goals and ensure policy continuity.

Major Cross-cutting Considerations

- Comprehensiveness and Priority choices
- Balancing national long-term needs and short term public and private actions
- Institutional arrangements for stakeholder participation
- Transparency of policy reforms and accountability for results

Comprehensiveness, Balance and Sequencing

- A comprehensive diagnosis will show that a nation's challenges cannot be addressed successfully through a few selected reforms alone.
- A sequence of reforms is needed which balance and reconcile the multiplicity of stakeholders interests.
- The method to assign priorities must also be agreed.
- Not all required actions can be pursued simultaneously.
- Partial but agreed progress towards a shared vision builds trust among stakeholders.
- The sequence in which reforms must be implemented matters.

A Shared Diagnosis

- The viability of a Vision depends on an agreement among stakeholders about the country's situation and main challenges.
- In building a Vision stakeholders must see room for their progress and participation.
- Agreement on needed reforms is essential.
- A common view of a nation's challenges is essential to overcome them through appropriate reforms.

Institutional Arrangements

- There is no single process or approach to building a national Vision.
- The Vision may result from the initiative of the government or other stakeholders, such as the private sector.
- The more formal and representative is the process the more effective and long-lasting.
- A Vision can produce benchmarks which bind national stakeholders.

Political Consensus

- A Vision must be built on participation and commitment of leading representative stakeholders.
- A Vision needs to satisfy the collective interests of stakeholders in a nation's future.
- It is a political process rooted in representative institutions.
- A Vision is not necessarily an agreed document. It can be a tacit agreement.

Role of Independent Institutions

- Often the introduction of reforms generate conflicts among groups.
- Independent institutions are needed to manage conflict and compensate stakeholders who might suffer short-term losses from reforms.
- In the absence of these independent institutions the established order tries to impose its own way; this creates instability and undermines the decision-making process.

Role of Social Dialogue

- Social dialogue is essential for setting priorities and achieving agreements on policies and reforms.
- There may be several forums for social dialogue
- Some priorities may require the participation of stakeholders who are particularly important for the topic. Success of the process may depend on this.
- Sometimes relevant stakeholders are not national, but regional or local.

Capacity for Dialogue

- Participation on an equal footing is essential to build necessary trust.
- Not all participants have the technical knowledge or preparation to participate in an effective manner in dialogue.
- The capacity of the weaker stakeholders must be strengthened, and this will pay dividends in terms of their commitment to the vision and its processes.
- If some stakeholders lack national organization or representation, this gap needs to be addressed.

Private Sector Support

- Private sector actors play a fundamental role in identifying priorities for action over the long and short terms.
- The private sector must be a central part of developing the vision and implementing the policies.
- Most innovations will involve private sector actors, and innovation is on the critical path in a nation's global competitiveness.

Public-Private Partnership

- Macroeconomic stability, international integration, and strong institutions are necessary but not sufficient foundations for sustained economic growth.
- Strong and predictable incentives for private sector innovation are needed;
- Continuous public-private dialogue on key long-term public and regulatory policies is essential.

Constraints to Business in East Asia and Pacific, including Korea

- According to the 2006 GCR the top areas of concern are:
 - Inefficient government bureaucracy
 - Tax regulations
 - Access to financing
 - Policy instability
 - Inadequately educated labor force
 - Restrictive labor regulations

Government-Parliament-Civil Society Relationship

- Governments can play a key role in convening dialogue on key policies between parliaments and civil society organizations and is important that they do.
- Independent forums can be established to foster this type of dialogue on a continuing basis.
- Governments can empower them by providing finance, expertise, and encouraging them to set the agenda for discussion.
- Decisions emanating from agreements among these parties enhance constituents trust in their formal governing institutions.

Parliamentary Role

- When Parliaments become committed to a national Vision, it is likely that the required government actions will be funded under the national budget.
- The existence of a formal body within Parliament that helps define the Vision can also follow and accelerate the implementation of the Vision through legislative actions.
- This type of Parliamentary bodies also evaluate the results along the way, take corrective actions, and increase overall accountability of public bodies.

Transparency and Credibility

- Parliamentary and civic oversight enhances the transparency of government activities and strengthens stability.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the explicit goals being pursued and transparent reporting will enhance the credibility of the Vision and enhance its achievement.
- Visions usually imply a transformation of the way public policies are designed and implemented, and require systematic and open discussion and revisions along the way.

External Support

- International and regional institutions can play a reinforcing role in countries that are developing their Vision.
- They can provide cross-national perspectives and experience.
- They can help identify successes and how they have been achieved.
- They can provide technical expertise to facilitate national dialogue on key issues.

Lessons and Policy Implications

- A vision is essential to bridge short term actions and long term goals.
- A Vision is achieved through a sequence of short term actions.
- Long term goals and short term actions must balance and reinforce each other.
- Institutional arrangements are needed to order priorities and make progress towards a vision.

Vision and Policy Stability

- Agreements reached with the participation of civil society organizations are more binding and viable.
- Agreements that are the product of social dialogue establish legitimacy in the eyes of the public and create political viability for reforms.
- Parliaments are more likely to commit to the Vision, if its major tenets have these type of support.
- It is equally important that the agreements are publicly disseminated.

Summing up

- Many successful countries have Visions that guide the internal transformation processes.
- There is a strong case that indicates that a Vision is a prerequisite for stable and long-term development.
- A Vision is the product of strong interaction among key stakeholders, and not a technocratic exercise.
- A shared Vision of future national aspirations is an essential element in ensuring a country's long-term competitiveness and the welfare of its people.