

A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

**Speech by Kathleen Cravero
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Five reflections

1. The role of BCPR has never been more important.

The evidence abounds: the Administrator's Executive Board speech, the upward trend in disasters and violent conflicts, our IASC responsibility for early recovery, new donors, increases in unearmarked funds... We have never been more relevant, more needed or more challenged.

2. We are the "crisis people" of long-term development.

We have a stake in several different "worlds" – the humanitarian, the political and the developmental, to name just three. Our home base in UNDP gives us a special vantage point, as the advocate for countries that might otherwise get left behind; as the champions of MDGs in near-impossible situations.

3. Our business is to insist on "business unusual" within UNDP.

On almost every front we need to promote new ways of doing business earlier, faster, bigger and riskier. We need to do this without leaving governments and national institutions behind. For the humanitarians we are too tied to governments; for the development colleagues, we are not tied enough. This is what makes us unique – rather than avoid it we should embrace these challenges as our niche, our "competitive edge".

4. We can make a difference.

While we work through governments and institutions, we work for people. We work to make communities safe, to make justice accessible, to make mined-land useable, to make disasters manageable, to make nations viable. Those of us who have lived and worked in post-conflict and post-disaster situations remember the devastation and the rubble – but mostly we remember the faces, the faces of people who have lost everything but their dignity and value as human beings. I am convinced that we can and we will help them rebuild their lives no matter what or how long it takes. In the next few years I hope we will make a special difference for women. I hope that, when people look back on this moment in UNDP history, they will see at least the Bureau that took gender mainstreaming seriously – and helped transform nations as a result.

5. We can live our purpose, our values and our goals.

We can make them real. We can strive for the day when, if people don't know our purpose and values, they can guess what they are – by how we live, how we work, how we treat each other and how we treat them. Yes, we need top flight technical skills, we need policy experts, we need risk reduction specialists, we need resource mobilizers, we need good administrators. Of course we do. But most importantly, we

need people who truly understand our purpose and vision and who can make it real everyday. A magnificent vision articulates people's hopes and dreams, touches their hearts and spirits and makes them believe they can contribute. So we need people who are truly willing and able to advance peace and development by strengthening capacities to prevent and recover from crisis. We need people who are fully committed to respect, to partnership and to excellence. We need people who are convinced that they can be part of a world-class organization.

That's what these next three days are about. We are here to decide on the strategic directions through which we can reach our full potential and implement our vision, purpose and values. We are here to come together as a winning team – a team that will reach our goals or be bent back trying. It is not going to get any easier. The field in which we work is getting more crowded – with actors that are bigger, richer and maybe even smarter. So we need a team with a clear purpose, rock solid values, ambitious goals and a sense of invincibility.

I close with a quote that someone sent me when I was working in Burundi. It helped me survive a hard assignment and some tragic events. For the past six years I have pasted the same bits of paper into my annual calendar, so I can refer to them often.

“The only dream worth having ... is to dream that you will live while you are alive and die only when you are dead...

...Which means exactly what?...

...To love. To be loved. To never forget your own insignificance. To never get used to the unspeakable violence and vulgar disparity of life around you. To seek joy in the saddest places. To pursue beauty to its lair. To never simplify what is complicated or complicate what is simple. To respect strength, never power. Above all, to watch. To try and understand. To never look away. And never, never to forget.”

(Arundhati Roy)