

**Civil Society Intervention in the Strategy Panel 2: Creating More with Less, 17 November 2011, Bonn Nexus Conference, by Shiney Varghese, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy**

My intervention is in the context of the discussion around growing more out of less, or in other words, a green economy whose primary focus is on resource efficiency improvement.

Such a perspective can work very well in certain contexts, where social concerns are irrelevant, where inter-relationships are absent, where it is a single sector that we are concerned with. Improving the design of showerhead to reduce water use, and reducing the carbon footprint by switching to fluorescent lamps are good examples of this approach that even allows us to continue with our lifestyle without really affecting us.

In other contexts, this single sector approach allows us to sidestep the question of over-consumption, and allow us to continue our current patterns of consumption through adoption of a new technology. The pursuit of Biofuels or hydrological fracking as a clean energy options are case in points.

For food sector, resource efficiency improvement implies that certain kinds of agriculture that are currently energy intensive and water intensive must change to the kind of agriculture that uses resources more efficiently. A similar change must happen in food processing and retailing sectors as well.

This focus on resource use efficiency improvement in agriculture is very relevant in some contexts, but may be not in others, where resource use efficiency is already there. In fact many Indian languages have words that imply resource use efficiency in the context of water management. Where there is little irrigation or very little land, resource use efficiency is already key to food security.

This difference in two types of agriculture has implications for implementation and I will come to that in a second.

Why is this difference? For many communities agriculture is not only a sector that provides multiple benefits with food at the center— but also a way of life. When we talk of green economy in agricultural sector we have to assess the implications of adopting a resource use efficiency oriented solution not only for food production, but also on each of these benefits— social, environmental, cultural, economic benefits. This would be a double nexus approach that is rather unique to agricultural sector. 70 percent of the worlds' poor live in rural areas and are dependent on agriculture for their livelihoods at least for part of the year. Resource use efficiency has to take account also of what was called as water cascade.

At implementation level, what are the technologies that we have at our disposal to achieve this resource use efficiency in food and agriculture systems? Does it open the doors for use of nano-technology, and synthetic biology whose long term implications are hardly understood even by scientists working on it? Or are their other options? It is at this implementation level that differing perspectives green economy emerges and it has differing implications for small holder farmers and larger farmers.