



## Mateo Botero Pérez - Colombia

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We have talked about global problems throughout the day, and problems have been talked about throughout the history of mankind. We try to find solutions, and I'm sure that those solutions already exist, but do we really believe in them and in ourselves, or do we simply put our whole belief in the present system or money or any other external thing to excuse ourselves, and finally, to not achieve those projects? We see wars, poverty, hunger, people dying of cold, diseases, lack of education, and all the time we are looking at how to solve them. The truth is that I think it is so easy to solve it, but there is something missing: the internalization of these desires. Although many are sincere, in many other cases they are simply hypocritical desires; desires and projects that exalt us as humans, that exalt us individually and allow us and others to say 'Wow, what a good person he is, so creative!'

How many times have we dared to enter those places where people are really suffering? I know that many of us sitting here come from countries where really harsh things happen every day – and I'm not saying that the others are not also complex countries. But this allows us to be a bit more sensitive towards the current challenges we have as humanity. These problems that we talk about might even have been created by us, because we wanted to create them, or perhaps by a few of us who have decided for us all.

I believe that sometimes we remain in a state of insomnia, in a dream, as in a trance generated by the media, the cinema, by history, by the type of education given to us, and sometimes we do not really have our eyes open, or we simply repeat what they repeat, or we do not have the wisdom to go further, because we are cowards; we are afraid that these great masses will go against our position, and that position, the individual one, may be the true one or part of the solution.

I am not going to talk about changing the system, but about improving it, improving as people, improving as humans. We have already built a lot, and I think that for the ego of man it has been fantastic to see how much we have achieved. But if we lift that up a bit, we will find under the carpet a lot of dust that we have been hiding, so it is time to think and make a change as humanity. The private sector probably has much more power than several states, presidents, and among them I do not doubt that there are companies that duplicate in power and capacity the economy, like those of my native country, Colombia. Even so, if the private sector would begin to be more aware of the importance, the responsibility we have towards others, I do not doubt that we would really advance as individuals, both among ourselves and in our relationship with nature.

My proposal is very simple, and the truth is that there is almost nothing creative about it. In fact I might be repeating what many others have said here throughout the day, and I am proud of repeating it again. It is about creating an international agency for sustainable business, which could basically consist of a global fund, which anyone on the street can access when they want to create a project. In my city, Medellín, there are two very interesting projects, which have inspired me. One is called *Cerezos*, and the other is called *Capitán Semilla*. What they do is give a chance to people with less resources, less access to education, technologies, globalization itself, to receive advice and support to create their own company. If people who have a business idea are supported and advised – not necessarily with money; the answer does not always lie in money, although that is what they want us to think – if we support them, I am sure that developing countries will achieve their real potential. In a country like Colombia, the country with the second greatest biodiversity in the world, with access to both oceans, with amazon forests, with snow, with deserts, with everything you can imagine, the best emeralds, the best coffee, etc., one should ask who is benefiting and who is being impoverished from all of this. Is it the Colombians? Clearly not, we get the leftovers. So it is time to empower ourselves with our ability, with what we can do as individuals and be really responsive, and leave the hypocrisy aside.

Thank you.