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A TRILOGY OF BASIC HUMAN CONCERNS: HUMAN RIGHTS; SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT; HUMAN SECURITY*

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Lasting peace, security and prosperity of people depends on a new paradigm - the trilogy of basic human concerns, which consists of:

- a) Human rights for development;
- b) Sustainable Human Development, and
- c) Human Security.

The realisation of this paradigm will not only generate economic growth world-wide, but will also distribute its benefits equitably. It will regenerate the environment, instead of destroying it. It will empower people rather than marginalise them. It will enlarge people's choices and their opportunities and provide them with opportunities to participate in decisions that affect their life.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Human rights must be recognised as the first basic human concern. The primary basis of today's activities at the United Nations and its member Governments is to promote, protect and monitor human rights and the fundamental freedoms that derived from the International Bill of Human Rights, which has developed successively through the years. The Bill comprises three documents: a) the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948; b) the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, promulgated in 1966; and c) the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, launched during the same year.

These instruments enshrine global human rights standards and have been the source of inspiration for more than 60 supplemental United Nations human rights conventions, declarations and legal instruments. The latter has established international rules, guidelines and other universally recognised principles that cover a wide range of human concerns, including: the right to development, women's rights, protection against racial discrimination, protection of migrant workers, the rights of children. Through the years, the totality of this international human rights law has been designed to promote and protect the basic concerns of people to have freedom, safety and a healthy life.

The right to live a dignified life can never be attained unless all basic necessities of life - work, food, housing, health-care, education and culture - are adequately and equitably available to everyone.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

This year, 1998, marks the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Following the most destructive conflict of all time, the Second World War, the members of the international community came together in 1945 in San Francisco to establish the United Nations Organisation. Its mandate was to ensure an enduring peace, each country's faith in fundamental human rights, and to promote economic and social progress and better standards of living for all. Thus, its Charter outlined for all members of the human family the foundation of freedom, justice, prosperity and peace. Three years later, the United Nations met at the Palais de Chaillot in Paris, France, and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, on 10 December 1948.

This document constitutes one of the greatest aspirations by the international community, with the intent of being implemented at both national and international levels. It embodies the hopes and dreams of people who suffered, during the same century, from the devastating impact of two ravaging and bloody World Wars and an equally damaging Cold War.

A Historical Background

During the late 1940s, the armies of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy occupied Western Europe. In Asia the militarists of Japan were on the march. It was during these dark days of the Second World War that American President Franklin Delano Roosevelt appeared before the Congress of the United States, on January 6, 1941, and told his people that they were facing an unprecedented threat to their freedom:

“... As men do not live by bread alone, they do not fight by armaments alone. Those who man our defences and those behind them who build our defences, must have the stamina and courage which comes from an unshakeable belief in the manner of life which they are defending...”

Then, the late President presented his ambitious humanitarian vision of a post-war world:

“... In the future days, which we seek to make secure, we look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms: the first is freedom of speech and expression - everywhere in the world. The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way - everywhere in the world.

The third is freedom from want - which means on a global scale economic understandings that will secure for every nation a healthy peace time life for its inhabitants - everywhere in the world.

The fourth is freedom from fear - which means on a global scale a world wide reduction of armaments to such a point, that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbour - anywhere in the world.

That is not a vision of a distant millennium. It is, however, a definite basis for a kind of world attainable in our own time and generation... The world order which we seek is the cooperation of free countries, working together in a friendly, civilised society”.

As highlighted in this statement, the post-war world order had to be based on three main foundations - collective security, economic cooperation, and human rights. These elements jointly formed the main framework of the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and

achieved concrete expression in global and regional institutions that remain with us today.

Freedom from want, the right to development and economic cooperation were among the essential elements of the post-war world order. As a matter of fact, President Roosevelt told his country that American democracy could not survive if one-third of the nation was ill housed, ill clothed, and ill fed. In his view, the Second World War was caused in part by dramatic currency disorders, mass unemployment and economic despair that brought Hitler and Mussolini to power.

Vistas of the Universal Declaration

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights reflects all four of the essential human freedoms. It proclaims the fundamental freedoms of thought, opinion, expression and belief, it enshrines the core right of participatory and representative governance. Just as firmly and with equal force, it emphasises the necessity of freedom from wants - economic, social and cultural rights and the right to equal opportunity.

The Declaration solemnly recognises that everyone, as a member of a civilised society, has the right to social security and is entitled through national efforts and international cooperation, to the economic, social and cultural rights for his or her own dignity and the development of his or her own personality. Everyone has the right to work, to the free choice of employment, a right to equal pay for equal work and to protection against unemployment. Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for their health and well being including: food, clothing, housing, medical care and necessary social services. Everyone has the right to education that is free and compulsory, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages.

The Declaration also recognises that human rights must be regarded as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations. Similarly, they are indivisible, inalienable and universal. The emphasis on one aspect of human rights cannot be used to detract from the promotion and implementation of any other aspect. The rights and freedoms set in the Declaration are to be enjoyed by all, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin.

However, contrary to the well-defined guidelines above, in practice, a biased approach has been adopted by some governments and academics. Civil and political rights (e.g. the right to life, liberty, security, political rights to vote, freedom of speech and press, the right not to be discriminated against on the basis of race, sex, colour, language, religion, etc.) have received more attention, codification and judicial interpretation. They have been instilled in public consciousness to a far greater degree than economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development. Deliberately and wrongfully, it has been presumed that only civil and political rights can be subject to violation. As a result, economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development have often been evaluated as “second-class rights” - unenforceable, non-justifiable, only to be fulfilled progressively over time¹.

It is therefore that the United Nations General Assembly, by its resolution 32/130 of 16 December 1977, asserted that:

“... All human rights and fundamental freedoms are indivisible and interdependent; equal attention

and urgent consideration should be given to the implementation, promotion and protection of both civil and political, and economic, social and cultural rights... The full realisation of civil and political rights without the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights is impossible.”

Similarly, the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, on 25 June 1993, reasserted that, “all human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent and interrelated. They should be treated globally, in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing, and with the same emphasis”².

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights was adopted and opened for signature, ratification and access by the United Nations General Assembly through its resolution 2200A (XXI) of 16 December 1966, following almost 20 years of drafting debates. It finally gained the force of law a decade later.

The Covenant is a legal instrument. Thus, when a State ratifies the Covenant, it becomes a “State Party” to it. Thereby, it is wilfully accepting a series of legal undertakings, to apply solemnly each of the obligations embodied therein, and to ensure the compatibility of their national laws with their international duties.

This Covenant codifies in detail the economic, social and cultural rights defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and contains some of the most significant international legal provisions. These provisions have established economic, social and cultural rights; including rights relating to work in just and favourable conditions, to social protection, to an adequate standard of living, to the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health, and to education and the enjoyment of the benefits of cultural freedom and scientific progress.

At the end of May 1998, 137 States have ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, thereby, voluntarily undertaking the obligation to implement fully its norms and provisions. Contrary to the aspirations, guidance and leadership of President Roosevelt on the importance of freedom from want, the United States Government, to date, has not become party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Similarly and unfortunately, the Republic of Turkey has not yet signed nor ratified the Covenant.

Compliance by States parties with their obligations under the Covenant and the level of implementation of the rights and duties in question are monitored internationally by the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, established in 1985.

Right to Development

A balanced and integrated economic and social development contributes towards the promotion and maintenance of peace and security, social progress, better standards of living and the observance of and respect for human rights and fundamental freedom. The International Conference on Human Rights, held in May 1968, in Teheran, elaborated on this theme. It declared that the enjoyment of economic and social rights is inherently linked with any meaningful enjoyment of civil and political rights, and that there is a profound interconnection between the realisation of human rights and development. Subsequently, the United Nations General Assembly adopted in December 1969 the Declaration on Social Progress and Development and in December 1986 the Declaration on the

Right to Development.

The latter document not only recognises the right to development as a human right but also elaborates on its several dimensions. According to this Declaration, development is a comprehensive economic, social, cultural and political process, which aims at constant improvement of the well being of the entire population and all individuals. The human person is the central subject of the development process and development policies should therefore make human beings the main participants and beneficiaries of development. The creation of conditions favourable to the development of peoples is the primary responsibility of the States. All human beings have the right to development, individually and collectively. States should undertake all the necessary measures for the realisation of the right to development and ensure equality of opportunity for all in their access to basic resources, education, health services, food, housing, employment and the fair distribution of income. Appropriate economic and social reforms should be carried out with the intent to eradicate all social injustices.

Thus, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the Declaration on Social Progress and the Declaration on the Right to Development, as a whole, constitutes the main legal framework of Human Rights to Development.

SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable Human Development is the second basic human concern. All development must be seen as a process through which one lives, learns and participates, rather than a static phenomenon. In the post-war era most development efforts were based on the neo-classical belief that successful growth could best be ensured through capital investment which would permit urban industrialisation and modernisation. Later, in the 1960s and 70s, while recognising the continuing need for sustained capital investments, national or international, the importance of better terms of trade and increased trade flows was highlighted. In the 80s, the monetary aspects of the development process gained prominence. Each of these aspects, albeit highly relevant to the process of development, was a means to achieve development but could not be considered as the objective of development. It has frequently been overlooked that individual people are at the core of all development processes, and that human skills and human capacity determine the success or failure of these efforts. The deficiencies and shortcomings of policies and strategies that relied more on capital and natural resources and neglected the human dimension (both as an input and as an objective of development) have become increasingly clear.

Since the mid-1980s, the United Nations Development Programme has played a prominent pioneering role in promoting a new concept of development - sustainable human development, and shaped appropriate strategies to ensure its implementation, especially by convening several prestigious Round-Tables and publishing global and national human development reports. Through extensive research and the publications of UNDP it has become apparent that there is no one and only way to ensure development. Development is a complex process. Each country varies in size, political system, population, climate, resources, heritage, etc. Each may have needs that vary according to their stage of development. However, one fact has become clearer. In the development process, solutions that do not consider the human dimension properly or do not put people at the centre of all concerns fail to provide an enduring answer and real development achievements. Literate, educated, healthy, motivated people are at the core of development.

Definition

The UNDP 1990 Human Development Report said, human development is the process of enlarging people's choices. In principle, these choices can be infinite and changed over time. Its parameters are changing with time. But at all levels of development, the three essential choices are for people to lead a long and healthy life, to acquire knowledge and to have access to resources needed for a decent standard of living. If these are not available many other opportunities remain inaccessible and many other possibilities will not be realised.

But human development does not end there. Additional choices highly valued by many people range from political, economic and social freedom to opportunities for being creative and productive and enjoying personal self-respect and the guarantee of human rights.

Human development has two sides: the formation of human capabilities - such as improved health, knowledge and skills, - and the use people make of their acquired capabilities - for leisure, productive purposes or being active in cultural, social and political affairs. If the scales of human development do not balance the two sides, considerable human frustration may result.

According to this concept of human development, income is clearly only one option that people would like to have, albeit an important one, but it is not the sum total of their lives. Development must therefore be more than the expansion of income and wealth. Its focus must be on people.

This approach was expanded on by the sustainable human development concept as presented by the Administrator James Gustave Speth. The 1994 Human Development Report accordingly defined sustainable human development as the development:

- that not only generates economic growth, but distributes its benefits equitably,
- that regenerates the environment rather than destroys it,
- that empowers people, rather than marginalises them

It is development that gives priority to the poor, enlarging their choices and providing for them opportunities to participate in decisions that affect their lives. Development that is:

- pro-people
- pro-nature
- pro-jobs
- pro-women

According to the definition of the UNDP 1990 Human Development Report, the human development paradigm is aimed at the expression of freedom of choice of the individual. It provides material and social conditions necessary for such freedom. In other words, the freedom of choice presupposes universal access to health-care and education, employment, elimination of poverty and discrimination, conservation and preservation of nature and the security of the individual. But, in the view of some critics, freedom of choice and participation in taking decisions relevant for everyone

are impossible without an open society, guaranteed pluralism and consolidated democratic systems. Such a definition of human development, therefore, at first sight seems to be rather mundane, not complete, and oversimplified.

Without question what is certain is that human development becomes impossible within societies where there is not sufficient political stability and respect for fundamental human rights. In brief, and on a more practical level, the United Nations Development Programme has successfully introduced a valid new concept and solid new dimension of development by putting people first both at the national and global levels.

Through UNDP's concerted efforts, we have learned that development should no longer be evaluated by how much growth, but what type of growth. People should not be considered only as a residual factor for growth, but as the true objective of development. True development can be achieved only through a process that places people at the centre of all concerns. This process must develop human capacities and capabilities to help people to release their human energies for the benefit of their own development and that of their societies.

HUMAN SECURITY

The third basic human concern is human security. Taking into account the reasons for the failure of the League of Nations at San Francisco in 1945, it was clear to the signatories of the United Nations Charter that a durable international peace and security system could only be achieved if effective measures were taken to ensure human security. Therefore, one of the major goals of the United Nations Charter has been to foster peace by promoting social progress and better standards of living in an environment of freedom. Its preamble declared that:

“the Peoples of the United Nations [were] determined to promote social progress and better standards of life... to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples”. Articles 55 and 56 pointed out that:

“the United Nations shall promote... higher standards of living, full employment and conditions of economic and social progress and development” and “take joint and separate actions for the achievement of these purposes”.

In brief, according to the Charter the world cannot be secure unless people are secure in their homes, their jobs, and their communities. As a matter of fact, when one reads the following appraisal from the report of the former US Secretary of State Hull to President Truman on the results of the San Francisco Conference, one deems to praise warmly the farsightedness of the founders of the United Nations, especially with respect to the concept of security and human rights:

“... The battle of peace has to be fought on two fronts. The first is the security from where victory spells freedom from fear. The second is the economic and social front where victory means freedom from want. Only victory on both fronts can assure the world an enduring peace... No provision that can be written into the Charter will enable the Security Council to make the world secure from war if men and women have no security in their homes and their jobs...”

From the above quote, it is clear that the architects of the United Nations have given equal weight to

human security and political security. However, during the Cold War, security meant mainly military and political security, the defence of states, their territory, their system, and their institutions. Similarly, the meaning of “human rights”, especially for some Western countries, meant essentially political and civil rights of the individual and free speech. The third freedom - freedom from want - was nearly forgotten. Now that the Cold War is over, there is a pressing need to return to the basic and original aims and interpretation of the United Nations Charter concerning the human security and rights, and to insert them with new energy and commitment at both the national and international levels.

The United Nations Charter recognises that international security has many components. It involves not only political, but also human security and the two are indivisible. In maintaining peace and security, the well being of people is as important as national political security. The preamble of the Charter begins with the words, “We the people”. Therefore, each member of the United Nations must put ‘people’ at the centre of all concerns. People’s capacities and capabilities must be better utilised. The release of human energies must be encouraged in accordance with their aspirations.

Definition

Several definitions have been formulated to describe human security. As the 1994 Human Development Report indicates, like other fundamental concepts, such as human freedom, human security is more easily identified through its absence than its presence.

It could be said that human security has two distinct aspects. First, it means safety from deadly threats such as hunger, disease and repression. Secondly, protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life - in homes, in jobs or in communities.

Also, human security has four distinct characteristics:

- It is a universal concern.
- Its components are interdependent. When the security of people is endangered in one part of the world, sooner or later other nations are likely to feel its consequences, especially areas such as terrorism, disease, pollution, and ethnic disputes.
- It is easier to ensure it through earlier prevention than later intervention.
- It is people-centred. Its main subject is how people live.

There are, of course, close linkages between human security and sustainable human development. However, it is important that the two should not be considered the same. Human development is a process through which people’s capacities, capabilities and choices expand. Human security is the necessary environment in which this expansion can take place and in which choices can be exercised safely and freely³.

A NEW TRILOGY

Despite the many advances in the second half of the 20th century, there is still a large unfinished national and global agenda to be completed in the quest for the empowerment of people and implementation of the trilogy of basic human concerns which has been examined above. Therefore,

perhaps the most urgent need, both at national and international levels, is the realisation of this new paradigm - a political consensus on a renaissance in development thinking. True development requires a balance between economic growth rates, sustainable human development goals and human rights norms. Without this balance, long-term development cannot occur and progress in meeting people's goals will never be achieved and sustained. Therefore, all development efforts need to be people-centred. This means:

- A renewal of the social contract between the State and the people, putting people, especially poor people, first; higher standards of living for all; full employment; social progress; reduction and control of inflation; and political and personal freedom.
- A new system for monitoring progress in achieving and maintaining human rights and responsibilities for development must be established at the national level.
- National strategies should be developed to empower people and increase opportunities for productive employment.
- Role, rights and responsibilities of the private sector, foundations, civil society and media in empowering people must be recognised and defined.
- Social spending should be the last thing to be cut in structural adjustment programmes. Subsidies for the rich should be cut before subsidies for the poor.
- Safety nets that address areas of health, education, unemployment, falling incomes should be an integral part of social policy, and access of the poor to health, education, clean water and other social services must be improved.
- Women's access to basic education, skills training, political participation and decision-making, health-care, family planning, productive resources and markets should be expanded.
- Expansion of productive and remunerative employment should become the central goal of all political, economic and social policies. Employment has multiple dimensions in people's lives. It is not merely an economic means to generate financial resources. Far more important, it gives people a sense of dignity and integrates them into their society.
- Investments must be backed by a higher rate of domestic savings.
- Government policies must be designed to unleash people's creativity and energy and enable them to become self-employed or entrepreneurial.
- Respect for human rights, freedom of expression and association, freedom to worship and true economic and social justice are the cornerstones of stable societies. Therefore, each government and each society must become more tolerant and respectful, show more solidarity with one another, and halt violence. The management of expectations and pluralism are crucial in this process.
- The civil society, educational institutions, media and individuals all have responsibilities to expand moral horizons to include values of solidarity, tolerance and partnership. The Government should use public policies to promote solidarity, unity, partnership, and tolerance of multiculturalism with devolution of power, electoral reforms, and respect for different cultures, languages, and faiths in

society.

New Actors and Agents

At present, Governments and intergovernmental organisations are no longer the sole actors and agents in promoting the establishment, evaluation, management and improvement of the trilogy of basic human concerns, at the national and global stages. Assisted by remarkable advances in information technology and a world-wide process of democratisation, today non-governmental and civic organisations, media networks, private sector and multinational corporations, local authorities, grass-root and community-based organisations, associations, foundations, academic institutions, etc., are playing a very dynamic role in promoting and protecting human concerns, as well as shaping important strategies according to their own rules, priorities and values.

The emergence of these new actors and agents in local, national and global relations creates the need for redefinition of the role, functions, rights and obligations of each actor and the establishment of appropriate partnerships between them in order to respond effectively to pressing human concerns and challenges.

Especially in the domain of human rights, increasingly a closer relationship is being established at a global level between intergovernmental organisations and the relevant non-governmental as well as community-based organisations. Intergovernmental organisations are now recognising the important contribution which can be made by civil society institutions in the provision of information concerning the enjoyment or abuses of the rights contained in the International Bill of Human Rights. In many instances, these institutions have generated substantial media attention in their countries and around the world.

CONCLUSIONS

The previous discussion demonstrates that despite a long history of humanity it is an amazingly short period of the last fifty years that the major human concerns have rapidly developed from aspirations to perceptions and finally to well-defined legal rights and duties. What conclusions can be drawn from this remarkable process?

First, lasting peace and security on earth depends on a new paradigm - a trilogy of major human concerns to be identified as: a) human right to development; b) sustainable human development; and c) human security. Though these three concepts are very much inter-linked, they should not be considered to be one and the same. They are indispensable and inseparable parts of a whole, and they are complementary and reinforcing elements of one another. They are and should be the concern of local, national, regional and universal efforts. Similarly, they are interdependent and indivisible. Equal attention and urgent consideration should be given by people, nations, states, international communities and organisations, as well as by new actors such as civil society, local authorities, private sector, academia and media, to their full implementation, promotion and protection.

Some governments make a mistake by adopting the hypocritical and biased policy of making a distinction between the right to development and other civil and political rights. By not ratifying the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, they consider these as second-class rights, which are unenforceable, non-justifiable, and only possible to be fulfilled over time.

As recognised again and again by different international documents, human rights are indivisible,

inalienable and universal. The emphasis on one aspect can and should not be used to detract from the promotions of any other aspect of human rights.

Poverty is a brutal denial of human rights. Due to such an approach, despite significant progress made in the last half of this century in addressing problems of human deprivation, well over one billion people on the earth live in circumstances of extreme poverty, homelessness, hunger and malnutrition, unemployment, illiteracy and chronic ill-health. More than 1.5 billion people lack access to clean drinking water and sanitation. Some 500 million children don't have access even to primary education. This massive scale of marginalisation raises serious questions, not only of development, but also basic human rights and political security.

By now we have learned that peace, economy, environment, social justice and democracy are all integral parts of the whole. Without peace, human energies cannot be productively employed. Without economic growth, there can be no sustained, broad-based improvement in material well being or ecological balance. Without environmental protection, the basics of human survival are jeopardised. Without social justice, mounting inequalities threaten social cohesion, and without the channels to participate in local politics developmental freedom remains fragile and perpetually at risk.

In brief, we know that a balance is needed between democratic freedoms, economic growth, social progress and human and environmental development. We also know that the political, economic and social spheres are one. They are complementary and mutually supporting. Too much social equity without adequate economic growth may lead to bankruptcy; too much economic growth without social equity can lead to social disorders. Therefore, for each government a package of integrated political, economic and social policies is essential for the maintenance of political peace and social justice.

It is high time for each Government, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the turn of the century to lead its own country and people to a new millennium. This can be done by preparing them for a more interdependent world, for the information age and the global economy, by expanding their opportunities, prosperity and human rights and by maintaining fiscal discipline, opening more markets and investing more in people.

For these to happen, they need new global perceptions and vision, long-term perspectives and bold leadership.

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1 See: Human Rights, Fact Sheet No.16, UN Publications.

2 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, UN Publications, Part I, paragraph 5.

3 Human Development Report 1994, UNDP, Oxford University Press, New York 1994, pp. 22-23.

*On the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights