

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
Division for Social policy and Development
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INTERNATIONAL FORUM FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Second Meeting

Cooperation for Social Development: The International Dimension

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SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

1. The International Forum for Social Development is an initiative of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat. Financed by voluntary contributions and placed under the umbrella of technical cooperation, it brings together participants from governments, international and national organizations and the civil society for an informal dialogue on global issues of development and social progress. Its aim is to promote the social development of developing countries and their participation in the building of a harmonious world community.

2. The overall theme of the Forum is *Open Societies, Open Economies: Challenges and Opportunities*. A first meeting was convened on 7-8 February 2002 in New York to debate *Financing Global Social Development*. The Commission for Social Development, at its fortieth session, was apprised of the results of this meeting. A report was issued in June 2002 and will be available shortly as a sales publication of the United Nations. It contains comments on traditional and new, or innovative instruments for the global financing of social development, and outlines the different views that were expressed on whether or not the current model of development and globalisation is favourable to the social development of developing countries.

3. The second meeting of the Forum, devoted to *Cooperation for Social Development: The International Dimension*, took place on 16-17 October 2002, also in New York. Twenty-five invitees discussed this subject in a seminar followed by an informal gathering with the Second and Third Committee of the General Assembly. Three themes and related questions were proposed to the participants:

Theme 1: What contribution does international cooperation make to the social development of developing countries?

- Is international cooperation making a difference in reducing poverty? Is it providing income, work opportunities, incentives and assistance for domestic economic initiatives?
- Is international cooperation helping the development of public social services? What is its impact on education, health, housing policies?
- Has international cooperation an impact on inequalities, on class structures, on political institutions and processes? Is it helping the promotion of human rights?
- Do the policy prescriptions and recommendations that developing countries receive from the various international organizations constitute a coherent whole, from the perspective of domestic social development?
- The expression “International cooperation for social development” is rarely used. How significant is this fact?

Theme 2: Does international cooperation help developing countries to participate in and to shape the process of globalisation while promoting universal moral principles and a plural path to social progress?

- One of the main objectives of the operational activities of the United Nations is “capacity building”; what can be said of this approach in relation with social development in a context of an increasingly globalised world economy?
- It is routinely said that “developing countries have the primary responsibility for their own development”; and it is generally recognized that the current process of globalisation de-facto reduces the margin of manoeuvre of most governments; does international cooperation help addressing this apparent contradiction?
- International cooperation through international organizations - and bilateral arrangements - has a very significant normative content, hopefully derived from the moral principles and values embodied in the Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and ranging from the manner to define and reduce poverty, to the definition of good governance and the role of market mechanisms in society; how could the participation of developing countries in the elaboration and implementation of this normative corpus be enhanced?

Theme 3: From the perspective of the social development of developing countries and the overall betterment of the human condition, in which directions could international cooperation be most usefully strengthened or expanded?

- Should the emphasis be on greater and more secure financial transfers from the North to the South? From public and private, traditional and innovative sources? Should a system of solidarity and redistributive justice at the world level be set as a goal?
- Would it be desirable, and possible, to give a renewed vigour to the traditional idea that the primary objective of international cooperation for development is to close the economic gap between developed and developing countries, in terms of living conditions, economic opportunities, capacity for sustainable patterns of production and consumption, and power to set the rules of the game in the functioning of the world economy?
- Should there be more legally binding agreements and treaties linking all countries of the world in an expanded array of obligations and responsibilities? And strengthened or new international institutions to administer this body of international law? And an international body with the power to adjudicate on conflicting rules and obligations?
- Alternatively, or in a complementary manner, is the social progress of developing countries and of the world to be sought in multiple and voluntary endeavours, or in partnerships between different forces and entities with different functions and motives but some shared interests and values? Through which processes and institutions should these shared interests and values be identified?
- Are there new, or neglected avenues for international cooperation for social development that ought to be discussed and promoted? Does growing de-facto interdependence demand closer linkages between the various aspects of international cooperation?

4. The views expressed on these three themes are summarised below. A more detailed report will be prepared for publication in the coming months.

I. THE CONTRIBUTION OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION TO THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

5. International cooperation, for the related purposes of maintaining peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations, solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character, and promoting respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms, is the *raison d'être* and privileged mode of operation of the United Nations and the United Nations system. It is an objective and a means consistent with the principle of the Charter that all the Members of the Organization are sovereign and equal, and consistent also with the modern view that states are the main actors on the world scene.

6. International cooperation for development, born with the decolonisation process and based on the ideas that the finality of human progress is clear and shared, and that wealthy nations have the responsibility to help poor nations - notably through multilateral channels -, has for decades been a major activity of the United Nations system and the visible face of the Organization for many people across the world. It underlies the North-South divide. It is multiform, involving the elaboration of legal agreements and normative guidelines by the General Assembly and other governing bodies on a large number of subjects, the provision of financial assistance in loans and grants primarily through ODA, and the delivery of technical assistance through various operational activities of a number of agencies, funds and programmes.

7. There are aspects of this international cooperation for development that are predominantly “social”, as they pertain to social sectors, or as they focus on social relations, structures and institutions, and other aspects that are predominantly “economic”, or “financial”. But all have, to varying degrees, social intents, dimensions and consequences, as all have economic and financial, and political facets. It would therefore be artificial to separate different types of cooperation according to their objective and the Forum did not recommend a larger use of the expression “international cooperation for social development.” The badly needed social development of developing countries, understood as a comprehensive process enhancing the well-being of all and all its aspects, demands quite different means.

8. While intended as a contribution to an overall assessment of the present impact of international cooperation on the social development of developing countries, the debate of this Forum had by necessity to refer to some historical perspective and normative framework. Have matters improved or deteriorated, in relation to what purposes and objectives, since when, and under what circumstances and influences, are unavoidable questions. Not surprisingly, the late 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, marked by the various political and ideological consequences of the disappearance of the Soviet Union, were considered as defining a “before” and an “after” for international cooperation and the position of developing countries on the world scene. As to the normative framework, the text adopted by the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995 was seen as the most complete and most ambitious official document adopted by the United Nations in this domain. It expressed the commitment of a very large number of

heads of State and Government to pursue, within an external environment favourable to social development, the goals of eradication of poverty, full employment, and the promotion of social integration by the fostering of stable, safe and just societies based on the protection of human rights. Whether the present political climate is favourable to the active pursuit of these goals, accompanied as they were in the Copenhagen text by extensive policy recommendations, was a subject of debate during the Forum.

9. A number of elements in the current context of the United Nations operations were mentioned as conducive to international cooperation for the social development of developing countries. They include the following:

- The reduction, even elimination of poverty has never before figured so prominently in the agenda of world organizations and in the pronouncements of affluent countries on their policies vis-à-vis the developing countries. Launched by the World Summit for Social Development, adopted by the OECD with a target for 2015, and endorsed by the United Nations Millennium Declaration, this objective is at the core of multilateral and bilateral agreements and projects on development. And the reduction of poverty is clearly one of the main conditions for social development.
- This agreement on the centrality of the elimination of poverty has resulted in an equally unprecedented level of cooperation and coordination among the United Nations, the various agencies of the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions. The World Bank and, within the limits of their mandate, the IMF and the WTO, have expressed their willingness to join the “war against poverty.” The perennial problem of lack of coordination and sometimes outright competition - notably in the developing countries themselves - among international organizations, appears to have evolved in a shared determination to, in the words of the Millennium Declaration, “freeing the entire human race from want”.
- Organizations of the civil society have grown in number, means and influence, at the international, regional, national and local levels, and most of these organizations are interested in major social problems. Through their role of critics, advocates and increasingly associates of public authorities in the design and implementation of specific projects, they increase the visibility of social issues and environmental concerns, and often give a voice to those who are left behind by the process of economic, social and cultural change.
- A spectacular change also occurred in the last few decades in the relative power of the private sector, particularly the corporate sector with a global reach, its relations with national and international public institutions, and its position in the society at large. Within this context, notions of partnership rather than confrontation with unions, self-regulation rather legal obligation imposed by the state, and corporate social responsibility as well as corporate citizenship, gained prominence. This is seen as a manifestation of social progress.
- This notion of partnership is currently applied not only to the relations between the public and the private sectors, and to the relations between organizations of

the civil society and public and private powers and entities, but also to the relations between developed and developing countries. Building on the concepts and experiences of interdependence, mutuality of interests, and more equal sharing of the benefits of the globalisation process, partnership, together with ownership of programmes and projects by the recipients of ODA and technical assistance, and the concomitant capacity building, constitutes the central element of a new global contract, or new compact between North and South, between rich and poor nations. Thus, the reduction of poverty and social development are now benefiting from a consensus on the rationale for international cooperation. Signs of this favourable environment are the commitments made at the International Conference on Financing for Development held in Monterrey, Mexico, in 2002, for an increase in ODA by the European Union and the United States of America. Also, some countries, notably the United Kingdom, have increased their financial aid to developing countries and have “untied” such aid.

- Part of the new contract between developed and developing countries is that the latter are committing themselves to the promotion of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights, as evidenced for instance by NEPAD. These are now globalised concerns and global objectives. They are characteristics of society that are fundamental components of social development. A society that would have no material poverty, but no freedom and no political participation of its citizens would not be a socially developed society. In addition, the same new contract between developed and developing countries, includes the facilitation of economic freedom, the creation of conditions for the flourishing of entrepreneurship and the spirit of initiative, all virtues indispensable to economic and social development. And lastly, the progressive integration into the world economy, with intensified trade, better access to capital and to technologies, and also more intense communications with world centres of culture, is providing developing countries with the possibility to close the gap that separates them from their rich partners.

10. Mentioned also, however, and recognized by all, including the proponents of this optimistic vision of the consequences for developing countries of the dramatic changes that occurred in the world since the 1980s, were facts that show the persistence or aggravation of traditional problems of underdevelopment and the apparition of new scourges that place developing countries, their governments and their citizens, in an increasingly precarious situation. Four groups of such worrisome facts were mentioned:

- Firstly, in the last two decades or so, most developing countries have not succeeded in building the economic base without which there can be no hope of better levels of living for the majority of their population. Economic growth, and the resulting growth domestic product for capita, has been insufficient. The level of economic activities has stagnated or even declined in many countries of Africa and Latin America. Even in Asia, with notable exceptions in terms of economic aggregates, the financial crisis of the mid-1990s has revealed elements of fragility and uncertainty in economies long considered dynamic and

solid. Also, by all measures, the economic gap between developed and developing countries has increased and there is no evidence of the reversal of this trend. And, developing countries have no more say in the management of the world economy, be it trade or finance, than they had twenty years ago. In fact, they had more weight at the time of attempts at elaborating a new world economic order.

- Secondly, within most developing countries, inequalities among social groups have increased, whether they are measured in terms of income and assets, or access to employment, or access to basic services such as education and health. Issues that have more or less disappeared from the international agenda, such as the distribution of land, remain nevertheless acute in many settings. There is plenty of evidence that reforms and policies inspired by financial rigour for public agencies and disengagement of the state from an active role in the economy, however rationale they may be from the standpoint of attempting to free private energies and construct dynamic market economies, have hurt the poor, the vulnerable and often the majority of the population of developing countries. Only a minority of individuals, in developing as well as developed countries, seems to have benefited from the great ideological and political turn that occurred in the last part of the 20th century. So far, no significant progress appears to have been made in the reduction of poverty, even in its extreme forms, and the HIV/AIDS pandemics is extending its shadow over great parts of the world.
- Thirdly, the building of societies benefiting from the active participation of a maximum number of their citizens, of inclusive societies in economic, political and cultural terms, where freedom and opportunities create hope, where learning and having a meaningful work is not only the privilege of a few, this fundamental aspect of social development also appears to be receding. Across the world, political institutions and processes seems to be increasingly mistrusted by the people they are supposed to serve. Various forms of corruption, of incivility, violence and criminality, plague societies. Young people are often alienated from public institutions that are distant and unresponsive to their needs and dreams. The dissemination of elements of democratic regimes, the propagation of the notion that human beings have fundamental and inalienable rights, the increasing visibility of social movements and organizations, all these unquestionable facts are paralleled and sometimes negated by renewed forms of elitism, discrimination and exclusion.
- Fourthly, concrete forms of solidarity and cooperation between developed and developing countries, through multilateral and bilateral channels, have declined in recent years. The facts are well known. The agreed target of 0.7% of their GNP that the developed countries were to devote to ODA was never achieved, and a progress during the 1970s and 1980s was followed by a steady decline in the 1990s. It was noted that even if the promises made at Monterrey in 2002 were kept, there would still be a gap of some \$30 billion to reach the estimated level of additional external aid needed for the realization of the goal included in the Millennium Declaration of halving by the year 2015 “ the proportion of the world’s people whose income is less than one dollar a day”. Further, the amount

of private capital that is invested in developing countries reached a peak in the mid-1990s and declined thereafter, while being in any case heavily concentrated in a few countries. Overall, on an annual basis, there is still more capital leaving developing countries than there is capital coming to these countries, and there has been a continuous worsening of this “reverse flow” in the first years of the 21st century. And it is commonly argued that the spectacular increase in world trade in the 1980s and 1990s has not benefited developing countries as much as it should have and has hurt many of their small producers in the industrial and agricultural sectors.

11. There is a glaring discrepancy between these features of the developing countries and their situation on the world scene, and the promises of a stronger and more effective international cooperation that would at least reduce poverty through various partnerships and a renewed contract between developed and developing countries. Participants at the Forum offered different interpretation of such discrepancy.

12. For some, the recent transformation in the conception of development strategies and supportive forms of international cooperation was unavoidable, necessary and useful, and will take time to bear fruits. The various forms of liberalization that have occurred at the national and international levels are indeed disruptive in the short term, particularly in fragile economies, but new structures and instruments will emerge that will provide a solid economic and political foundation for social development. Also disruptive in the short term and aggravating various forms of inequality and exclusion, but enormously positive for all in the medium term are the far reaching scientific developments and technological innovations that surged during recent decades. How would one expect what is probably the historical equivalent of the industrial revolution to unfold without creating serious problems of social adjustment?

13. Moreover, during this period under scrutiny, the world economy was sluggish, and developing countries were affected by numerous violent conflicts, an increasing number of severe natural disasters, and the dramatic spreading of old and new pandemics. Under such circumstances, these countries had little room for policies beyond survival and international cooperation had to focus on humanitarian assistance and post-conflict reconstruction. It would be wrong to quickly condemn or deplore the ideas and policies that became dominant in the 1980s with the argument that they have failed at this point to change some long-standing aspects of the human condition. Some historical perspective is useful to avoid hasty judgements. And the unavoidable excesses and errors that this liberal political philosophy indulged into after its victory over authoritarian systems, for instance an unwarranted trust in market mechanisms to solve social problems and create viable and sustainable societies, are quite normally exposed and are being progressively corrected. Assuming that it would be at all possible, a radical change of course would be a mistake.

14. Other participants in the Forum, while not disagreeing with the sentiment that human problems and human suffering ought not to be addressed in terms of alternative comprehensive intellectual schemes, put more emphasis on aspects of the spirit of the

time and features of the prevalent political culture that they considered hostile to effective international cooperation for development and conducive to social regression in the developing world and in the world community as a whole. These include the following:

- International cooperation for development, focused as it should be on creating conditions for every human being to live in freedom and dignity, and rooted in the conviction that it is possible to build a peaceful world community, is eroded, in intellectual, political and emotional terms, by the growing preoccupation with security that pervades a world where violence, conflicts and signs of division, resentment and hate abound. Military expenditures are increasing. So are in many countries' budgets for the prevention and repression of various forms of criminality and insecurity. On the agendas of international organizations, the concerns with terrorism and other global threats and crimes are becoming prominent. However understandable and justified they might be, these concerns distract energies and resources from the pursuit of development goals.
- Related perhaps, are signs of renewed forms of nationalism, of perceptions and expressions of national interest that are more affirmed and more blunt than in a recent past, and less happily blended with a genuine concern for the others, notably those weak in wealth and power, and with efforts at identifying the general interest of humankind. An international cooperation for development responsive to social perspectives and social goals, and aware of the requirements of sustainability, cannot be based solely on the addition of national interests, or even on a narrow perception of the mutual interest of developed and developing countries. It requires a vision of a desirable world community, that does not necessarily have to be formulated in grandiose terms, but that has enough strength to permeate the mentalities and actions of those in a position of power. It requires a generosity of the spirit that can put in perspective legitimate economic and political calculations.
- The ideas that currently shape the normative and operational aspects of international cooperation for development, focused as they are on the eradication of poverty, suffer from several fundamental flaws. The focus is on the poor, as a group, rather than on poverty, as a social phenomenon with diverse manifestations, causes and remedies. Hence a targeted approach, which is rather simplistic and lead to recommendations to developing countries to adopt specific "pro-poor" strategies. It was noted that "pro-poor" services and "pro-poor" policies tend to become poor services and poor policies. "Normal" services are then privatised and de-facto reserved for those who can afford them. The ensuing rejection of the principle of universal reach and coverage, be it for social protection or for access to basic public services such as education, ultimately perpetuates discrimination and rejection of the "poor". The insistence on "user-fees" has the same results. Consistent with this approach, are reforms imposed by some international organizations to governments of developing countries with the intended or unintended result to deprive these governments from the financial and regulatory means that they would need to implement comprehensive social and economic development policies that would address the causes of poverty. Measures for redistribution of income and assets have disappeared from the

international agenda. And the struggle for the reduction of poverty takes place in a context of reduction of tangible expressions of international solidarity and of rejection of any form of international taxation that could finance more transfers to developing countries and more action to promote or protect global public goods. Overall, the dominant political discourse appears to suggest that one should rely only on economic growth to reduce poverty.

- On the issue of poverty as on other major issues on the international agenda, international cooperation for development is almost “naturally” inclined to propose and promote standardized and universally applicable approaches. It does so while giving some recognition to the view that diversity, in its cultural and political aspects, is desirable, and while proclaiming that developing countries have the main responsibility for their development, notably for their social development. The view was expressed during this Forum that standardized methods, rules and recipe were often ineffective - even when applied to the implementation of universally shared values and principles - and are systematically favouring the interests of the most powerful actors on the international scene, be it with regard to trade or to social protection. Also, in line with the emphasis on “capacity building” and “ownership”, the ability of developing countries to conceive and implement their own policies should indeed be a major objective of international cooperation. But, as discussed in the next part of this report, the current process of globalisation and integration of developing countries in this process tends to reduce their margin of manoeuvre.
- Lastly, the message that is conveyed to developing countries by the diffuse but powerful spirit of the time, expressed as it is by international organizations, consultants and experts from developed countries and the media, is that social policy is a residual activity and social development itself a more or less obsolete concept associated with political philosophies and ideologies that are no longer relevant. Such reading of the intellectual and political atmosphere that shape international cooperation for development is a vast and controversial subject that would deserve ample reflection and debate. Among the facts and trends that were mentioned during the Forum are the rise of humanitarian and human rights concerns and actions as balancing the core economic and security agendas, and therefore reducing social development and social policy to a marginal role; the related reduction of social development in documents of international organizations to the situation of specific groups seen as vulnerable and to issues of crime and drug abuse; the emphasis on the “local level”, consistent with the target approach to poverty and incompatible with national distributive and redistributive social policies; the vogue of social funds, financed by voluntary contributions; the emphasis on the role of the private sector, including its “social responsibility” and the correlative emphasis on the “transparency” and “accountability” of the public sector rather than on its capacity to promote social development; the reliance on the charity and benevolence of organizations of the civil society and on volunteers to alleviate social problems; and the insistence on treating people as “consumers”, whereas social policies deal with citizens.

15. According to this school of thought, the World Summit for Social Development would have marked the end rather than the beginning of an era. But beyond international gatherings and the fate of their pronouncements, there is ample evidence that the needs and aspirations of people across the world, not only those classified as poor but the ordinary citizens of large and small countries, remain the same and are far from being met. There is also ominous signs that these ordinary citizens feel a growing distance, a growing alienation from ruling elites and institutions that, at all levels, take the decisions that affect their lives and their hopes for their children. Could international cooperation, in its various forms and modes of operation, be rethought and re-examined in this light?

II. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION, PARTICIPATION OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES TO THE PROCESS OF GLOBALISATION, AND PLURAL PATHS TO SOCIAL PROGRESS

16. The following reasoning underlined this second theme of discussion in the Forum: in a context of easier, cheaper and much more rapid communications between people and nations, an attempt is being made at creating global markets and a global civilization; while inscribed in the historical trend of growing interdependence this effort has identifiable actors and forces; at this point, developing countries do not share a leading role in this globalisation process; they are invited to join it, through their integration in a liberalised world economy, and international organizations have the mandate to facilitate this integration and to ensure a better distribution of the benefits and costs of globalisation; at the same time developing countries have a recognized right, and even duty to choose their own path to development in general and to social development in particular; this right stems from the traditional principle of respect for national sovereignty and from the more recent emphasis on cultural diversity and the virtues of pluralism; and a greater participation of developing countries in the “management” of the globalisation process could perhaps modify the orientations and characteristics of this process and make it more amenable to a plurality of choices on the organization of one’s society.

17. A number of general comments were made on this theme:

- The concept of globalisation has different meanings attached to it. It is used for descriptive purposes, referring notably to the growing interdependence that link nations and societies and the ensuing weakening of borders. It is used as an explanatory variable for most diverse phenomena, including the rise of various types of fundamentalism. It is used also, notably in the public international discourse on development and cooperation, in a normative fashion, indicating the way humanity is going, and, sometimes, should be going. Such semantic and conceptual ambiguity and confusion opens avenues for political options and choices. But developing countries are not in a position to exert such choices, for two main reasons: the intrinsic weaknesses of institutions and mechanisms for global economic and social governance, and the force of the dominant ideas on what should be done to achieve development.

- Globalisation is positive for the North and negative for the South. It has been initiated by the Western powers, perhaps, according to some historians, as early as the 16th century, it is based on Western values and objectives, and it is run by Western dominated public and private institutions.
- International cooperation for development does not at this point compensate for the effects of a process that is inherently favouring the most economically and financially powerful. In many cases, international cooperation, including in its bilateral forms, amplifies the effects of globalisation.
- The relationships between international cooperation for development, the progress or regress of developing countries, and globalisation, ought to be treated in a holistic manner because one of the major problems for developing countries is the use of double standards and inconsistent policies by donors and multilateral agencies. A prominent example is the frequent contradiction between trade policies and aid policies. If international development cooperation focuses for instance too heavily on good governance in developing countries, it risks neglecting the external causes of the difficulties of the same countries.
- Globalisation brings insecurity, to individuals, groups, countries and the world as a whole. It does so because it is expressing competitive values and objectives, it creates concentration of power and losers - and winners with an uncertain future, it neglects the external damages that result from its focus on the pursuit of wealth and power, and it responds more readily to abstract principles, such as the “law of the market”, than to human needs and aspirations. International cooperation for development probably provides some level of comfort, both to governments of poor countries and to the people who benefit directly from its concrete operations. Such cooperation is however much too weak, much too powerless in relation to the forces that are driving the current process of globalisation, to be a significant element of security and stability in the world.
- Developing countries have currently no or too limited space to pursue their own policies. The globalisation process and the recommendations or injunctions they receive from international institutions and developed governments to facilitate their integration into the world economy, contribute to this shrinking of their political space. While justified and useful, pronouncements on cultural identity, exhortations on good governance, and efforts at “capacity-building” through technical cooperation are of little weight compared to the abolition of levies on imports or the suppression of controls on movements of capital. Beyond the problem of consistency evoked earlier, it seems that the actors of international cooperation need to engage an open reflection and debate on whether their main objective is to limit or to sustain the autonomy of public authorities of developing countries.

18. Underlying the discussion on these various points were different convictions and sentiments that can be regrouped along two schools of thought. It is useful to attempt to characterise these positions, simply because assumptions that remain hidden do not help the search for solutions to the problems at hand. For a first school of thought, the right question to address is not “how developing countries could better participate in the process of globalisation”, but, rather, how could they distance themselves sufficiently

from this process to avoid further damage to their economies and societies. This position, expressed at the Forum, corresponds to a widespread sentiment throughout the world. It was also pointed out that public opinions in developing countries identify globalisation with structural adjustment programmes, which are perceived as summarizing the arrogance, insensitivity and domineering streak of international financial institutions and Western powers. And data on the overall economic and social performance of developing countries in the last decade or so do not help brushing away such view of globalisation as an avatar of traditional imperialism. Also, there are many studies and stories on the behaviour of transnational corporations, on the destruction of small local industries and farms by trade arrangements that favour systematically the powerful countries, and on social institutions and social mores that crumbled under the pressure of a Western model of individual happiness and success that is ubiquitous, attractive and at the same time reachable only by a small minority. These facts and images feed resentment and the difficult and so far elusive search for alternative paths to modernity and social progress.

19. While sharing broadly such diagnosis on the effects of global capitalism on the weaker members of the international community and agreeing that developing countries have currently no say in the process of economic, financial and cultural globalisation, the second school of thought, largely represented in this Forum, takes a more reformist stance. The sentiment that globalisation is too strong a movement to be usefully opposed, that it is a phase - if not the end - in the history of humanity, is stronger than the uneasiness generated by this same movement. Economic “de-linking” is, in particular, seen as totally impossible, even foolish. Globalisation is associated with modernity, which is itself the opposite of under-development and the remedy to many causes of the suffering of people throughout the developing world, from poor economy to bad government. Globalisation is the dissemination of new technologies that are the products of human ingenuity and creativity and which render life more interesting and more agreeable. Globalisation is also the possibility to attend prestigious universities and to join the new cosmopolitan world elite. Globalisation, in short, is an opportunity to be seized and turned to the advantage of all those who are currently classified as “underdeveloped”. This will be a struggle, requiring political determination and imagination, and new alliances involving governments and a large variety of social movements. In this process, “globalisation” itself, which is neither a well-rounded political project nor a total historical determinism, will be transformed and “reformed” in ways that cannot be entirely foreseen but that will hopefully meet some of the concerns of those that are seeking alternative paths.

20. Then, in the interest of developing countries and in the general interest of the people of the world, and of future generations, the current process of globalisation has to be democratised. This means several complementary intellectual and political undertakings:

- A shift of perspective is required in the mindsets of the main actors of the globalisation process. Global capitalism is not an end in itself. Nor is free trade, or the creation of global markets, or the integration of developing countries into a world economy and society organised according to liberal

principles. These are means at the service of the creation of humane market economies, and a humane global economy, offering opportunities to a maximum number of persons for the fulfilment of their needs and aspirations. And this goal cannot be simply a sort of by-product of actions responding to traditional motives of profit and power. It has to be a normal dimension of these actions, and the main criteria for assessing their level of political and moral responsibility. What is demanded from governments of developing countries, in terms of transparency, accountability and attention to the need of their citizens, should a-fortiori be demanded from those who rule the world.

- A related necessary change in the mindsets of the actors of the globalisation process is a more realistic perception of the respective roles of the public authorities and the private sector in the management of the economy at the national as well as international level. At present, the dominant political culture is too readily inclined to identify private corporate interests with the general interest. The historical lessons of the social blindness of a laissez-faire attitude are not made irrelevant by new technologies and the enormous power of transnational corporations and international banks.
- The most obvious requirement of a more democratic process of globalisation is the greater involvement of the governments of developing countries in the various international institutions and informal structures having an influence on global decisions and trends. Most readily mentioned were the World Trade Organisation, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the Bank for International Settlements. At issue is not only the level of representation of developing countries in the committees or boards that manage such organisations, but their capacity to participate effectively in their daily operations and in the decisions, including reforms, that shape their internal culture. Also mentioned were of course the meetings of the most industrialised countries, the G.8, that are symbolic of the unwillingness of the most powerful to consider weaker members of the international community as equal partners.
- Equally if not more important from the viewpoint of the social development of developing countries, is the involvement of the people of these countries in the decisions and policies that give its orientations to the process of globalisation. The distinction between governments and the people is justified by the still limited number of well functioning representative democracies in the world, by the intergovernmental and technocratic character of international organisations, but also and more fundamentally by the very fact that globalisation is changing the meaning and requirements of people's participation in decisions that determine their lives. Democracy at the global level is more than the addition of national democracies and more than the democratisation of international institutions. The social movements that manifest their views on globalisation through protests and through events such as the World Social Forum will have eventually to become part of an organised and institutionalised political process. It was noted that the current emphasis on partnership might be interpreted, or used as a step in this direction. The alternative is an increasingly unequal and divided world.

- There is a continuum and a political complementarity between these various dimensions of the democratisation of world structures and institutions. And it was recalled that most events, decisions and global trends find their concrete expression where people live and work. A local or provincial abusive power can prevent national and global democracy to yield its benefits to the people concerned. But it was also pointed out that the demand put on developing countries for better governance, transparency of public decisions, accountability of governments and public servants, end of corruption, in short for better democratic regimes, should not be treated as a pre-condition for the democratisation of international and global institutions and processes. The golden principle that the most powerful have the most demanding moral and political responsibility and should set the right example is taking all its relevance with interdependence and globalisation.
- Education remains the key requirement for effective democracy, at all levels. Knowledge brings not only capacity to have a role in increasingly complex societies, but is also a source of openness and understanding and respect for the other. Comments were made on the education of leaders who influence the process of globalisation and shape international cooperation for development. To address the question of poverty, for instance, requires more than an abstract and statistical perception of the situation of the poor. Experience at what is called the grass-root level should be made compulsory in the curriculum of universities attended by future leaders. Comments were also made on the importance for world democracy and peace of the manner history is taught in schools. The cultivation of prejudices remains a temptation in all cultures. Also, more money should be made available to the universities of developing countries to support academic research. Democracy has to be nurtured through a number of initiatives that are neither spectacular nor immediately profitable. The democratisation of the globalisation process should involve deliberate actions by agencies such as UNESCO as well as by organisations such as WTO.
- Lastly, it was recalled that democratisation and taxation remain inseparable. The litmus test of the quality of a national democracy is the scope, fairness and transparency of its tax system, and of the use of its proceeds, in developing as in developed countries. Similarly, efforts at ensuring an effective participation of developing countries in the globalisation process and at democratising world institutions of governance will remain fallacious or illusory if not accompanied by adequate global systems of financing and taxation. The Forum noted that the discussion of this central issue had receded from the agenda of the main international organisations.

21. The partly formulated assumption taken by participants during the discussion of this theme was that an opening and a diversification of the globalisation process, and a related democratisation of international and global institutions, would ipso facto involve an examination, a questioning and an enrichment of the values that characterise the dominant political culture and that also influence the various forms of international cooperation for development. For example, the merits of the idea that in international

agreements preferential treatment should be granted to those who are the weakest, would certainly be debated again in comparison with the merits of similar rules, duties and obligations being applied to all “partners”. It is through such debates on specific issues, in this example particularly trade issues, that the concrete meaning for developing countries of values and principles such as equality and solidarity could be ascertained. As another example, the notion of cultural diversity, or pluralism, would have a better chance of taking a positive and dynamic content through the richness of exchanges and debates that the pursuit of global democracy would entail.

III. DIRECTIONS FOR A STRENGTHENING OR EXPANSION OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

22. First is the question of the *coherence* of the various facets of international cooperation for development. It was pointed out that, from the viewpoint of the social development of developing countries, this coherence, or consistency, should be sought in three directions:

- Coherence among the components of international cooperation, which are normative, financial and operational, with, as noted before, a growing emphasis on humanitarian assistance and post-conflict reconstruction. These components should not be considered independent, or parallel, and should primarily be reconciled at the operational level and through national strategies and policies.
- Coherence among cooperating agencies, which requires a leading political role to be played by the United Nations, both at the normative and at the operational levels.
- Coherence between the short term and the long term to ensure that efforts and investments are sustained.

23. It was emphasised that attempts at such coherence should not be dissociated from the willingness to increase the effective participation of developing countries in the management of the world economy and the shaping of the globalisation process. For coherence is not an objective in itself. When the interests of a few prevail in the elaboration and implementation of international policies, lack of coherence gives a chance to the less powerful.

24. Coherence is also to be sought between proclaimed goals and objectives and means and policies to implement them. There is no simple recipe to stop what was perceived by several participants as a growing gap between the generous intentions and promises of the international discourse and the reality of the policies of the most powerful countries and international institutions vis-à-vis the developing world. It would be useful to take one of the overall goals that were adopted by United Nations world conferences, for example “a people-centred development”, or the building of a “society for all” and to make a major intellectual effort, preferably launched and capped by an international event, to identify in precise and concrete terms where and how the different facets of international cooperation, be it on trade, on health, on education, on the reduction of poverty or on ageing, contribute or not to progress towards such goal. Such effort should

involve governments as well as social movements and only the United Nations has the mandate and membership to launch it.

25. Secondly, international cooperation for development would be strengthened by a **greater intellectual and political willingness to address difficult issues**. This remark was made on the basis of the conviction that neither the developing countries nor the world community as a whole has anything to gain by avoiding problems that divide or that seems intractable. Examples include international migrations and the situation of migrants, the overall rising of inequalities, the redistributive requirements of the reduction of poverty, the sustainability of the prevalent model of development, and of course the above mentioned consistency of accepted overall social goals with actual policies in a variety of domains. The state of the world is in many respects so preoccupying, the dangers are so great, the divisions so pronounced, that it would be extremely imprudent to rely on the old adage that “time will take care of it”. Neither inaction and the reliance on the passing of time, nor the appetite for quick results, easy solutions, painless compromises, attractive but short term and artificial consensus, are responsible strategies. To address difficult issues implies the recognition of the importance of processes, of the value of steps in the right direction. It implies also the democratic belief that on issues of development and social progress the involvement of all concerned, actors and victims, is always better than technocratic or elitist approaches. To extend the scope of the debates on international cooperation is therefore an idea that is not separable from the democratisation of the globalisation process and of international institutions. It is not separable either from the necessity for international organisations, notably the United Nations, to have sufficient resources to expand and disseminate objective - or scientific in the sense of intellectual rigour - knowledge on traditional and new domains of international concerns. The point was made that too many national or international debates were suffering from the use of fabricated or insufficient data and information.

26. Thirdly, it would seem that international cooperation for development has to continue **to be pursued in a large variety of domains**. This refers to sectors of activity. Progress in the well being of the people of developing countries and progress in the situation of these countries on the international scene obviously require international cooperation, notably financial aid and technical assistance, in all the sectors of public activity, be it industry, agriculture, rural development, research, computer science, communications, health, education, or criminal justice. Needs vary from country to country, experiences suggest differences in emphasis, modalities evolve, but in principle there is no sector of international cooperation that is a-priori irrelevant to any developing country. Consequently, universally applicable priorities are not helpful. From the perspective of the social development of a specific country, it could be financial aid and technical assistance for the creation of small industries, or the same help for negotiating a trade agreement, or for improving the tax system, or for establishing universal and free primary education that would be the most needed at a given time. For this reason, the Forum did not make a general recommendation for greater priority to be attached to social sectors. What it does recommend, is that the objectives and requirements of the

social development of developing countries be given the prominent role in all aspects of the international cooperation for development.

27. The pursuance of international cooperation for development on a large variety of fronts has another equally important meaning. It refers to the objectives of such cooperation, which are more or less the following, with variations in language over time and according to the international institution concerned: to foster development and peace in the world; to create a safe, fair and prosperous world; to improve levels of living in developing countries; to eradicate poverty in these countries; to close the gap between developing and developed countries; to create a favourable external environment for the development, or social development of developing countries; to facilitate the integration of developing countries into the world economy; to build the internal human, institutional and technical capacity of developing countries; to assist developing countries in their pursuit of good governance, democracy and the promotion and protection of human rights; and, less frequently, to achieve development in a pluralistic world. Apart from short lived political fashions, there seems to be a strong tendency in the current dominant political culture to focus almost exclusively on one or a few of these objectives and to consider that others are obsolete. Hence the prominence of the goal of eradication of poverty, and the insistence on capacity building. Hence also, the present neglect of the creation of a favourable external economic environment to developing countries. Clearly, international institutions have to understand and reflect in their work the big ideological and political changes that affect the world. They are not impervious guardians of eternal values. But development and cooperation are neither in the scientific realm, where one theory can replace another, nor totally in the ephemeral realm of politics, where immediate adjustment to changing circumstances is imperative. The Forum was of the view that more continuity in the pursuit of a few basic objectives would increase the relevance of international cooperation for the social development of developing countries. In the same vein, changes in the labelling of the operational activities of international and bilateral institutions in developing countries could usefully be less frequent.

28. Also related to this point of the diversified and yet holistic character of international cooperation for development, is the balance between the elaboration and implementation of legal instruments, that is of treaties, conventions, covenants and codes that are legally binding and enforceable, and the use of voluntary agreements that rest on the good will and the good faith of the concerned parties. The former evoke protracted negotiations, bureaucracies and control, obstacles to the freedom and creativity of individuals and the sovereign rights of nations. The latter are to day very much in favour in international circles, notably in the new cosmopolitan corporate elite. And the most powerful government is not anxious to see further developments in international law and international obligations that would limit its freedom of manoeuvre. It must be noted, however, that the major instances of social progress in recent centuries have always been obtained through the pressure of social movements and inspired individuals, then sanctioned by law. The rule of law is not only legitimate for the administration of justice and the fight against corruption.

29. Fourthly, the view was expressed that the **strengthening of regional mechanisms** for international cooperation was as necessary as the building of the internal capacity of developing countries and the strengthening and democratisation of international and global institutions. The success stories of regional cooperation are many and should receive more recognition at the international level. There are numerous formal and informal networks, involving public and private actors, which are promoting knowledge creation and dissemination and the resolution of common technical, economic, social or institutional problems. These networks use economies of scale, promote the construction of identities, create solidarity, and create also a better bargaining power of the regions in the global arena. Overall, these regional networks and institutions enhance better governance at the national and international levels.

30. Fifth, the Forum, without dwelling on a question that was debated at its first meeting of February 2002, reiterated the judgement that much more **financial resources** were needed for international cooperation for social development. There is the already mentioned gap of some \$30 billion between the additional resources of an ODA type that are expected in the coming years and the estimated needed additional amount of \$50 billion required for the achievement of the anti-poverty and related goals of the Millennium Declaration. There is also the still elusive additional sources of financing, including for global public goods, mentioned by the Social Summit, the 24th special session of the General Assembly, and discussed in 2001 in the Report of the High-Level Panel on Financing for Development, or “Zedillo Report”. The excessive and unfounded reliance on private sources for the financing of the development of developing countries is another example of the large ideological swing to which the circles deciding on the orientations of international cooperation appear to have been too sensitive.

31. Lastly, some ideas were expressed for **new institutions or new institutional arrangements** that could facilitate international cooperation for development:

- Support was reiterated for ideas already mentioned in the first report of the Forum, notably a “Modern Marshall Plan”, the creation of an “International Tax Organisation”, the intensification of the debates for the establishment of some form of international tax, which would either institutionalised ODA or be a complement to it, and the creation of a “Council on Economic and Social Cooperation”, which would paralleled the Security Council, an idea first mentioned in the report published in 1995 and entitled “Our Global Neighbourhood: The Report of the Commission on Global Governance”.
- The idea evoked during the first meeting of the Forum of an “international organization on political reform” was further developed. Such international institution, that may be part of the United Nations system, would be devoted to the search for democratic systems of government and governance that would apply the basic principles contained in the Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and at the same time reflect the pluralism and diversity that ought to be compatible with the dominant conception of modernity and

the process of globalisation. It would make recommendations and negotiate international agreements on matters of taxation, on relations between parliaments and organisations of the civil societies, on the financing of political parties, as well on questions related to the role of the media. It was noted in this regard that, already existing, were notably the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, the International Parliamentary Union, and that the United Nations Secretariat had an Electoral Assistance Division within the Department for Political Affairs.

- Given the crucial importance of trade agreements for the development of developing countries and their participation in the globalisation process, and given the strong and unintended social consequences of many of these agreements, the view was expressed that UNCTAD, an organisation that is within the United Nations, should be on a par with the WTO. Negotiations that affect the future of essential public services, notably education and health, should for instance be placed under the political guidance of the United Nations. An added reason for a better division of labour between UNCTAD and the WTO is that very often delegations of developing countries are ill prepared for WTO crucial negotiations and decisions. This suggestion illustrates one of the main thrust of this second meeting of the Forum, which is that social development objectives and concerns have to be at the core of the various forms of international cooperation and of the decisions shaping the process of globalisation.
- In a different realm, it was suggested that an “inter-religious forum”, attached to the United Nations or to a specialized agency, would be useful to debate, on the basis of concrete strategies and policies for international cooperation for development, of the values and moral principles that are shared and that differ from culture to culture. A pluralist dialogue, among representatives of different religions, philosophies, and spiritual traditions, was seen as essential to alleviate the dangers that fanaticism of all types represent for the fundamental tenets of a civilised world community.
- It was noted that the central normative function on matters of international cooperation for development in general and for social development in particular, is primarily the responsibility of the United Nations. The fulfilment of this function requires not only high-level intergovernmental negotiations but also extensive research activities, and diversified contacts with various organisations of the civil society and the private sector. The financial resources and political space needed for this task are currently not available to the United Nations.

32. The Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development states the following: “By this Summit we launch a new commitment to social development in each of our countries and a new era of international cooperation between Governments and peoples based on a

spirit of partnership that put the needs, rights and aspirations of people at the centre of our decisions and joint actions.” The United Nations Millennium Declaration contains similar pledges, including: “ We have a collective responsibility to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level”, and, “only through broad and sustained efforts to create a shared future, based upon our common humanity in all its diversity, can globalisation be made fully inclusive and equitable.” Critical are the notions of collective commitment, of effort, and of common humanity. Such notions have to be kept alive, especially at times of adversity. More and better international cooperation, for development and for peace, is not a choice. The alternative is despair and chaos.

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