Chapter IV
Inequalities and social integration

Inequalities and the lack of opportunities contribute to social disintegration. Many remain excluded from the political process, and the hopes, aspirations and concerns of those who have no chance to express themselves are frequently overlooked and ignored. Entrenched power systems that tend to favour a select minority reinforce these inequalities and discourage social integration.

Ensuring that equal opportunities are guaranteed under the law and in practice is essential for social development, and is especially critical for the empowerment of poor people. Even when the poor and marginalized are invited to express their views, it is unlikely that their needs and interests will be given much policy attention unless mechanisms are in place to ensure the realization of their objectives. Elected institutions should serve as the prime vehicle through which vulnerable groups can secure effective representation.

The most recent wave of globalization has contributed to an increasing homogenization of consumption and production patterns. Globalization has improved the quality of life for many; however, excessive consumption can apply severe pressure on the natural resource base and increase distributional inequalities. The present inequalities and deprivation in both consumption and resource use are likely to be passed on to succeeding generations.

A society characterized by extreme inequalities and the lack of opportunities can become a breeding ground for violence and crime. The widespread and systematic destruction of human life is the ultimate indicator that efforts to improve social integration have failed. This failure manifests itself in a number of different ways, including rampant crime, the high incidence of interpersonal violence and armed conflict. There is seldom one simple reason for the increased tendency towards extreme violence; however, it is clear that inequality, especially horizontal inequality (disparities between groups), increases the likelihood of conflict. Another factor is the inability of a growing number of countries to fully integrate youth into society, especially in terms of employment. Today, almost half of the world population is under 25 years of age, and many developing countries are faced with a younger generation that is much larger than ever before. Most labour markets are unable to absorb all of the young people seeking work; statistically, youth unemployment rates are two to three times higher than those for adults. Faced with such bleak prospects and feeling a sense of injustice, young people often experience anomie and may turn to violent behaviour.

The notion of social integration is not limited by time and space, but represents the understanding that present and future generations are entitled to social justice and equality. The decisions made today affect present and

future social integration patterns and the opportunities created therefrom. The notion of intergenerational equity assumes that each generation will look after its own needs in a manner that does not disadvantage or harm the next; future generations should not be neglected or made to pay the price for economic and social policies adopted long before their time. Every generation is a custodian for the next and is also responsible for ensuring the well-being of members of the previous generation once their productive years are past. Each generation is entitled to environmental, cultural, economic and social resources.

Efforts to strengthen security and curtail violence have intensified around the globe, but little has been done to address the socio-economic causes of conflict. Governments have increased defence spending in many countries, often diverting human and financial resources away from development. Thus, there is a risk that security concerns will further marginalize the social agenda at both the national and international levels, especially in times of heightened public concern over real and perceived threats. This situation has compounded the challenges and difficulties analysed in this *Report*, precluding the implementation of comprehensive strategies essential for social development, including the creation of an enabling environment and the strengthening of institutions.

Intergenerational dimensions of inequality

In every society there are certain moral obligations between generations. The notion of an implicit agreement between generations dates back to the Greek philosophers; this intergenerational social contract is based on the presumption that each generation should take care of the other and has constituted a central pillar of many different societies. It has been argued that such a contract among citizens must contain something for everybody (Rawls, 1971). The manner in which the intergenerational contract is currently honoured varies across societies. In most developing countries, intergenerational support is sustained within a wide kinship network and sometimes through community interaction, while in developed countries the State mediates and/or supports the contract to varying degrees.

In most societies there is a general consensus that the State should take the lead in key areas. For example, in many countries, the Government is the primary provider of education and health care. The public sector may also provide social assistance and protection for children, the family, older persons and other vulnerable groups. With the demographic shifts and economic, social and political developments around the world, the nature of intergenerational contracts and relationships is continually evolving. There has been some debate on the issue of intergenerational equity and the "cost" of supporting older persons through State pensions and health-care provision.

As societies and their demographic composition change, there is a need to refocus on the responsibilities of the different generations to each other, and to adjust to the new realities. In developed countries, the present debate on generational issues focuses mainly on the financial obligations of the younger working-age population vis-à-vis preceding and succeeding generations. There is some concern that current systems, if not adjusted, will fail to meet the demands of the many people entering retirement in the coming decades and will place an unsustainable burden on future generations.

The possibility of intergenerational conflict is not entirely unlikely, as the younger members of society may eventually be unwilling or unable to support the older members. This debate is usually framed in economic terms and revolves around the funding of pensions, dissaving, health costs and the reallocation of resources. However, while acknowledging that demographic shifts might require adjustments not only in pension formulas and funding sources but in a broad range of policies, the larger debate from an intergenerational perspective should really be about the nature of the social contract in each country.

There is no consensus on the "affordability" of social protection for older persons. It is argued, in the case of the European Union (EU), that relatively small changes in the benefit structure would keep expenditures at current levels, and that the debates on affordability are really debates about social cohesion, societal concepts and values rather than economic parameters (Cichon, 1997). Some contend that the growing emphasis on promoting self-responsibility, especially for older persons, will undermine intergenerational solidarity and lead to a general weakening of overall social cohesion (Walker, 1993).

Research shows that in developing countries, financing small pensions for older persons benefits not only the recipients but their families as well, as society's elder members consistently invest money in their offspring and younger dependents and contribute to the social capital of future generations (HelpAge International, 2004). Intergenerational coping mechanisms may be adversely affected by the failure to recognize and address the negative impact of certain policies and programmes on the intergenerational support system. It is only recently that Governments in sub-Saharan Africa have begun to acknowledge the fact that huge numbers of grandparents are caring for orphans whose parents died of HIV/AIDS, and in many areas social protection measures are being instituted to allow them to continue to do so, or to improve their capacity to provide better care. Still, many older persons continue to struggle with meagre resources to provide for orphans within the family structure.

The traditional debate surrounding pensions and health-care funding tends to obscure the fact that intergenerational equity is influenced by a multitude of factors. Researchers are now beginning to investigate other intergenerational transfers at both the family/community and macro levels, studying

the transmission of poverty and of human, environmental, financial, socio-cultural and socio-political capital, and are also examining the ways in which social and economic structures and norms may positively or negatively affect such transfers (HelpAge International, 2004).

Efforts must be made to balance national budgets over an extended period to ensure the overall equitability of the tax burden across generations, the fair and equal distribution of resources among all age groups, and the provision of essential goods and services for the benefit of all in society. Government debts should be reasonable and manageable; future generations should not be made to pay for present spending habits. Economic, social and environmental policies should complement each other to ensure the well-being of future generations.

Many developing countries are burdened with a sizeable national debt. Much of this debt was accumulated during the 1960s and 1970s, and the decisions taken then continue to affect the policies of today. Debt service as a percentage of GNP remains well over 10 per cent in several countries (United Nations Development Programme, 2004b), seriously constraining current fiscal and social policies and ultimately curtailing the opportunities of future generations.

Some policy makers have been looking at ways to reduce expenditures on State-financed and State-supported programmes essential for intergenerational and social cohesion, while at the same time, demographic trends indicate an increase in longevity in most societies and the coexistence of three and four generations. The combination of reduced social and economic support for older persons and even greater reliance on informal intergenerational coping mechanisms will further undermine the intergenerational contract.

There is a need to move beyond the narrow economic efficiency model in assessing the value and meaning of the intergenerational contract to each society. The value the intergenerational contract brings to society in the form of social cohesion and the readiness of societies to honour their social commitments must be celebrated. Governments need to pursue policy changes that support and sustain an inclusive society and not simply look for ways to cut costs while bemoaning the "burden" older persons represent, thereby ignoring their past and present contributions to society.

Consumption, inequality and social integration

An analysis of consumption patterns can provide insights into individual well-being that complement an exclusively income-based approach to inequality. Such patterns constitute an important measure of exclusion, as they identify who does and who does not have access to resources, goods and services. They also highlight the relative deprivation of certain groups in society, a persistent problem worldwide.

Data reveal that observed rates of growth in household consumption vary widely among regions. Over the past 25 years, household consumption has increased at an average annual rate of 2.3 per cent in industrialized countries and 6.1 per cent in the emerging East Asian economies; in Africa, however, the level of household consumption has decreased by 20 per cent over this period (United Nations Development Programme, 1998).

The wealthiest 20 per cent of the population in the highest-income countries account for 86 per cent of total private consumption expenditures, while the poorest 20 per cent worldwide account for just 1.3 per cent. The inequalities in consumption are illustrated by the fact that the wealthiest 20 per cent have 74 per cent of all telephone lines and consume 45 per cent of all meat and fish, 58 per cent of total energy, and 87 per cent of all paper, while the poorest 20 per cent have only 1.5 per cent of all telephone lines and consume just 5 per cent of all meat and fish, 4 per cent of total energy, and less than 1 per cent of all paper (United Nations Development Programme, 1998).

As these consumption levels imply, the material benefits of global development have largely accrued to the wealthy in the industrialized countries. The consumption gap may narrow somewhat over time, but with the finite natural resources available, it would be impossible for the estimated 2.8 billion people currently living on less than US$ 2 a day to ever match the consumption levels of the richest group.

With the burgeoning of a new elite comprised of those benefiting most from globalization, patterns of consumption have emerged in developing countries that mimic those prevalent in developed countries. Conspicuous consumption is becoming more widespread in many regions of the world as the desire for status and for social distinction at the personal and group levels propels individuals from all segments of society towards greater materialism. Achieving status through consumption is as important to the marginalized as it is to the well-to-do, and the pressures of conspicuous consumption are being increasingly felt as countries become more open to global influences (Sanne, 1997). However, if the consumption practices of the several hundred million affluent people in the world today were duplicated by even half of the projected global population of almost 9 billion in 2050, the impact on land, water, energy and other natural resources would be devastating.

The contrast between what is needed to achieve a decent standard of living in developing countries and what is spent on luxury items is striking. For example, US$ 35 billion is spent annually on perfume and cosmetics in industrialized countries, which is equivalent to half of the total amount of official development assistance (ODA) for 2004 (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2003).

Altering consumption patterns is likely to be extremely difficult but is a critical necessity, as the effects of excessive consumption can be socially and environmentally debilitating. It has been stated that "the major cause of the continued degradation of the global environment is the unsustainable pat-

tern of consumption and production, particularly in industrialized countries" (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, 1992). As developing economies continue to advance, this degradation will accelerate. The consequences of increasing consumption and production are most strongly felt by the poor, as present patterns often have an adverse effect on the development of communities and threaten the health and livelihood of those who depend on immediately available resources to sustain themselves.

Because the poor in developing countries tend to live on marginal lands, they are more vulnerable to the effects of environmental degradation. These areas usually have low agricultural potential and are susceptible to floods, landslides, drought, erosion and other forms of deterioration. Soil salinization has been identified as a major cause of land degradation and is responsible for the global loss of at least three hectares of arable land per minute (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2000).

In Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, 75 per cent of the poor live in rural areas and rely on common lands for their livelihood. In some Indian states the poor acquire 66-84 per cent of what they feed their animals from shared lands. The use of resources such as communal grazing areas and forest lands provides low-income families with between 14 and 23 per cent of their total earnings, while for the wealthier segments of society the corresponding proportion is only 1-3 per cent. A study conducted in Zimbabwe indicates that the poor are dependent on environmental resources for up to one third of their income, and confirms that less financially secure families require more natural resources for their subsistence (Commission on Human Security, 2003). It has been estimated that more than 350 million people are directly dependent on forests for their survival; however, the growing demand for land for agricultural use and for wood and paper production has accelerated the process of deforestation, particularly in developing countries. Once the forests have been harvested, much of the land quickly degrades and is not suitable for long-term farming or grazing (Commission on Human Security, 2003; Roper and Roberts, 1999).

Existing inequalities are compounded by increased environmental vulnerability, and the effects are felt most strongly when natural disasters occur. In the 1990s, more than 700,000 people lost their lives as a result of natural disasters. While this casualty figure is lower than in previous decades, the intensity and frequency of such events and the numbers of those affected have increased substantially. More than 90 per cent of the victims of natural disasters reside in developing countries. In 2002, rains in Kenya displaced more than 150,000 people, and over 800,000 people living in China were affected by the most severe drought seen in a century (United Nations Environment Programme, 2002; Worldwatch Institute, 2003).

The earthquake and tsunami disaster that devastated parts of South-East Asia in late December 2004 demonstrated the effects of unequal socio-economic vulnerabilities. Addressing the General Assembly meeting on the tsu-

nami and the longer-term recovery and reconstruction, the Secretary-General of the United Nations said, "We know from experience that the poor always suffer the most enduring damage from such natural disasters" (Annan, 2005a).

Inequalities in access to resources are also important in relation to man-made disasters. With the increasing land degradation in many regions, millions of people are unable to produce enough food to sustain themselves and their families. Such a situation increases social tensions and vulnerabilities and can trigger both conflict and mass migration. In many developing countries, competition and the struggle for control over scarce resources leads to violent clashes as dominant groups attempt to subdue and marginalize indigenous and tribal peoples that reside in verdant areas in order to secure access to their land and resources (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2005b). Famine can provoke civil war, as demonstrated during the drought in the Horn of Africa in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. During prolonged hostilities a vicious cycle is created when conflict further reduces the production of food and access to resources for marginalized groups (Renner, 1999).

The substantial differences in the quality of life between developed and developing countries will persist for many decades, though trends and projections suggest that consumption levels in the latter will slowly rise to match those in the former. It is a realistic presumption that as developing countries move forward, many of the resident poor will aspire to the lifestyles of the more affluent in developed countries. However, to achieve development that is sustainable in the long run, developed countries must demonstrate that resource-efficient, low-pollution lifestyles are both possible and desirable (Schölvinck, 1996).

Some argue that because consumers represent the demand side of the economy, their preferences and choices largely determine the behaviour and output of other economic agents (United Nations, 1996). However, whether consumers have true freedom of choice is open to question. In modern consumer societies, individuals often become locked into consumption patterns and are constrained by the overarching structure of markets and business as well as by intense pressures from commercial marketing on consumption habits (Sanne, 1997). It is becoming increasingly apparent that the demand for goods and services is guided by a multitude of factors and does not always reflect free choice (Jackson and Michaelis, 2003). The dietary changes taking place around the world constitute evidence of the expanding role of the commercial sector in shaping lifestyles. While these changes may not have a direct effect on inequality per se, the indirect impact has socio-economic implications. For example, people are spending more of their disposable income on non-essential foodstuffs, which are often of low nutritional value. In turn, these dietary changes are contributing to an

increase in non-communicable diseases, which places an added strain on the health system.

Obesity, in particular, represents a rapidly growing health threat. There are currently more than 1 billion overweight adults worldwide, and 300 million of them are considered clinically obese (World Health Organization, 2005a). In many countries, the combination of urbanization and rising incomes accompanying development has contributed to major changes in nutritional patterns, leading towards "dietary convergence", or the increasing similarity of diets worldwide (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2005a). Trade in foodstuffs has grown enormously; in 2001 it accounted for 11 per cent of total world trade—a proportion higher than that of fuel (Pinstrup-Andersen and Babinard, 2001).

WHO confirms that the shift from traditional foods such as fish and vegetables to "Westernized" diets that are higher in fat, sugar and salt and lower in fibre has contributed to a decline in overall health, noting that developing countries are beginning to witness a marked increase in ailments commonly found in industrialized countries, including heart disease and diabetes. It is estimated that by 2020 these types of illnesses will account for two thirds of the global burden of disease (World Health Organization, 2002).

The younger generation is particularly vulnerable to these unhealthy dietary changes. Obese children are at increased risk of developing hypertension, hypercholesterolemia, atherosclerosis and diabetes, conditions that are predictive of coronary artery disease (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2002). With the increasing incidence of obesity in children, chronic disease will become more prevalent as the population ages (World Health Organization, 2005a). WHO projections indicate that stroke deaths will double in the developing world over the next 20 years. The number of people with obesity-related diabetes is also expected to double, rising to 300 million by 2025, with the developing world accounting for three fourths of these cases (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2002). If projections are accurate, these developments will have an enormous impact on the demand for health-care and support services, placing an added strain on the economy (Brody, 2002).

Violence and inequality

Countries that promote social integration and respect for human rights are less likely to endure armed conflict and more likely to develop and prosper. Development, security and human rights are intrinsically linked and mutually reinforcing. As stated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, "we will not enjoy development without security, we will not enjoy security without development, and we will not enjoy either without respect for human rights. Unless all these causes are advanced, none will succeed" (United Nations, 2005c).

Although national and international security are necessary conditions for social development, the increased focus on issues such as combating terrorism and organized crime has diverted attention and human and financial resources away from the development process in recent years. There is a risk that the priority given to national security, a highly visible political issue, will further marginalize the development and human rights agendas at both the national and international levels and delay the implementation of comprehensive strategies aimed at building an enabling environment that promotes social development.

One of the most positive aspects of the international climate prevailing in the 1990s was the relative openness of international negotiation (obstructed until the mid-1980s by the strategic security interests dominating the cold war period). The evolution of closer relations and enhanced cooperation within this context allowed the international community to place issues of worldwide concern, such as gender, the environment, HIV/AIDS and social development, at the top of the global agenda. It also engendered a spirit of collective responsibility that culminated in the widespread ratification of the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict and the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Further, the establishment of the International Criminal Court cemented the shared commitment of Governments to ensure that appropriate steps would be taken to address grave violations of human rights. However, recent events, including acts of terrorism and armed conflicts, have created a new atmosphere of insecurity and religious and ethnic intolerance in many parts of the world that may well undermine the spirit of common responsibility for the protection of human dignity. It is essential that these threats be addressed; however, it must be emphasized that long-term human security cannot be ensured by military means alone.

While the precise nature of the relationship between violence and social integration may not be immediately apparent, and while there are some examples of violence being used as a means of social integration, it is a reasonably safe assertion that violence is most often a symptom of social disintegration. Whether this violence takes the form of individual assaults, armed conflict, or expressions of self-determination, it is an indicator that societies have not successfully fostered the full integration of all their members.

Societies in which violence is used to address grievances, force change or maintain public order and the status quo tend to be those in which social integration is lacking. Societies that generally promote human rights, democratic processes and non-discrimination tend to have less need of heavily armed security or military forces. Societies characterized by respect for diversity, equality of opportunity, solidarity, security and the participation of all people are usually less prone to resort to violence to maintain public order.

Violent crime

There is no simple causal relationship linking poverty and inequality with violence. There are growing indications that increased inequality can have a negative impact on economic growth and contribute to higher rates of violent crime (Bourguignon, 1999; Fajnzylber, Lederman and Loayza, 2002). However, broad generalizations fail to convey the wide variations and more nuanced realities on the ground. Violent conflicts do occur in and between well-off countries, while most poor countries live in peace. Poverty, inequality and deprivation do not necessarily lead to an increase in violent crime or an immediate revolt, but they often remain in people's memories and influence events at later stages. A holistic approach to development, in which security and freedom from violence are intrinsically linked to economic, social, cultural and political justice and equality, represents the context in which violence is analysed in relation to inequality and social integration.

Based on data from over 100 countries, the United Nations Survey of Crime Trends reveals that the number of reported criminal incidents increased steadily between 1980 and 2000, rising from 2,300 to more than 3,000 per 100,000 people (Shaw, van Dijk and Rhomberg, 2003). The increases in overall rates of recorded crime have been most notable in Latin America and the Caribbean, while slower increases have been noted in the Arab States, Eastern Europe and the CIS, and South-East Asia and the Pacific. Data for sub-Saharan Africa are insufficient to identify any clear trends. Crime rates in North America have been declining steadily since the early 1990s (United States Department of Justice, 2004), while the EU has experienced a significant increase in recorded crime since the 1980s, surpassing North America. Recorded crime rates for the EU and North America tend to be twice as high as the global average, indicating a significantly lower propensity to report crime in most other regions (Shaw, van Dijk and Rhomberg, 2003).

In determining levels of activity, homicide is a good proxy for the broader category of violent crime as it is more frequently recorded than other crimes, providing a relatively reliable source for comparison. Generally, countries that are ranked high in terms of human development have homicide levels below the global average, while all those with high levels of homicide (over 10 per 100,000 inhabitants) are either middle-income or developing countries. In Latin America and the Caribbean, homicide levels are very high and relatively consistent (25 per 100,000 inhabitants). Sub-Saharan Africa also shows high levels (17-20 per 100,000 inhabitants), though there is no clear overall trend. Levels of homicide in the EU are comparatively low (under 3 per 100,000 inhabitants), and a similar trend prevails in Canada. The United States experienced a rise in the 1980s and a dramatic decline in the 1990s, with the incidence of homicide dropping from just under 10 per 100,000 inhabitants to 5.6 per 100,000 inhabitants between 1991 and 2001 (United States Department of Justice, 2004). Eastern Europe and the CIS registered the sharpest increases in homicide, with the combined level rising from 5 per

100,000 inhabitants in the mid-1980s to 8 per 100,000 inhabitants in the early 1990s, then declining slightly thereafter. The trend for South-East Asia and the Pacific showed relative consistency, with between 3 and 4 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants. Fluctuations in homicide rates were greater in the Arab States than in other regions, though the rates remained consistently below 4 per 100,000 inhabitants (Shaw, van Dijk and Rhomberg, 2003).

Although data on crime and violence are often scarce and ambiguous, especially in developing countries, there is sufficient evidence to confirm the significant relationship between inequality and crime levels across both countries and time periods (Bourguignon, 1999; Fajnzylber, Lederman and Loayza, 2000). The correlation between crime levels and inequality seems to be particularly high during periods of economic volatility and recession (Fajnzylber, Lederman and Loayza, 2002).

A strong positive correlation between inequality and crime, especially violent crime, is observed across different countries and regions, as well as for specific countries over extended periods. Some believe this can be explained by the theory of relative deprivation, which suggests that inequality breeds social tensions, as those who are less well-off feel dispossessed when comparing themselves with others. The basic premise "is that the necessary precondition for violent civil conflict is relative deprivation, defined as actors' perception of discrepancy between their value expectations and their environment's apparent value capabilities. Value expectations are the goods and conditions of life to which people believe they are justifiably entitled. … Value capabilities … are the conditions that determine people's perceived chances of getting or keeping the values they legitimately expect to attain" (Gurr, 1968). Individuals who feel they are disadvantaged and treated unfairly may seek compensation by any means, including crimes against both rich and poor.

Inequality does not always lead to increased violence and is by no means the only explanation for violent crime. However, it does increase the likelihood of violent crime and armed intracountry conflict, especially when it coincides with other factors. For example, the participation of many young people in violent crime and drug trafficking is linked to the intense cultural pressure for monetary success in order to sustain a level of consumption that confers a desired status (Kramer, 2000).

Armed conflict

While it cannot be said that poverty, inequality and the denial of human rights cause or justify assault, terrorism or civil war, it is clear that they greatly increase the risk of instability and violence. Poorer countries are more likely than richer countries to engage in civil war, and countries that experience civil war tend to become and/or remain poor. In a country in which per capita GDP is US$ 250, the predicted probability of war (in a five-year period) is 15 per cent, while the probability is reduced by half for a country with per

capita GDP of US$ 600, and by half again (to 4 per cent) for a country with per capita GDP of US$ 1,250 (Humphreys, 2003).

Violence occurs more frequently in hierarchical societies, where there is typically an unequal distribution of scarce resources and power among identifiable groups distinguished by factors such as territory, race, ethnicity and religion. Violence is more common in countries in which levels of inequality are higher. Countries in which poverty and inequality rates are high also tend to have poorer social support and safety nets, unequal access to education, and fewer opportunities for young people.

Although it is agreed that wealth and growth are generally associated with a lower risk of conflict, there is no consensus on whether certain types of growth make conflict more or less likely. Some may contend that inequality is the primary cause of a particular conflict, but there are insufficient data to support or dispute such a claim; typically there are many possible factors that can contribute to violent conflict. When investigating the potential link between levels of inequality and the incidence or absence of conflicts, it should be kept in mind that the most important aspect of inequality in this context may not be inequality between individuals, but rather inequality between groups (horizontal inequality). Armed conflict and civil war are generally more likely to occur in countries with severe and growing inequalities (or perceived inequalities) between ethnic groups.

Certain levels of inequality may create stresses in society but will often be tolerated, particularly when they remain consistent over time. However, rising inequality can increase tensions, and when this is coupled with a lack of institutional capacity to address the widening disparities, violent conflicts become more likely. Ethnic, religious or cultural differences, in themselves, seldom lead to conflict. However, they often provide the basis on which battle lines are drawn, especially when other factors such as social, political or economic inequalities are present. Ethnic identification has proved to be a vital tool for rebel groups seeking to enhance their legitimacy and recruit new members and support.

A society with a balanced distribution of social and economic resources is generally better able to manage tensions with less risk of institutional and social breakdown than is a society characterized by poverty, economic and social disparities, a systematic lack of opportunity and the absence of universal recourse to credible institutions for the resolution of grievances (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2001). Change can often lead to social and political dislocations, the erosion of social cohesion and the weakening of traditional authority structures and institutions. Economic and political transitions inevitably raise tensions, especially when the power balance or access to valuable resources shifts among groups.

The number of individuals affected by violence is significant. In 2002 an estimated 1.6 million people died worldwide from intentionally inflicted injuries (World Health Organization, 2004). Men are more likely than women

both to cause and to die from such injuries. Globally, suicide accounts for the majority of intentionally caused deaths (873,000), while armed conflicts (559,000) and interpersonal violence (172,000) claim considerably fewer lives (World Health Organization, 2004). This pattern is reflected in all regions except Africa and Latin America, where interpersonal violence and war claim most of those lives lost to intentionally inflicted violence.

In 2004, more than 17 million people were living as refugees or internally displaced persons owing to violence or the threat of violence, down from 21.8 million in 2003. The numbers of people seeking asylum in industrialized countries fell to a 17-year low in 2004 (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2005b). Among a group of 50 industrialized countries the number of asylum requests fell from 508,100 in 2003 to 396,400 in 2004, a decline of 22 per cent. Since 2001, asylum applications have dropped by 40 per cent (High Commissioner for Refugees, 2005a). Although this would normally inspire optimism, it is likely that the decrease reflects changing methods of dealing with asylum-seekers, such as the fast-track handling and rejection of applications, rather than greatly improved living conditions in the countries of origin. With the tighter security measures and border controls, it has become increasingly difficult for asylum-seekers to reach their final destinations and file their applications, creating the impression that the numbers of asylum-seekers have decreased.

The above notwithstanding, 2004 was considered a reasonably good year in terms of refugees. Most of the 3.2 million people who fled Rwanda in 1994 were able to go back to their homeland, and hundreds of thousands of refugees returned to Angola, Eritrea, Liberia and Sierra Leone during the year. However, even as the global community remembered the 800,000 who died during the Rwandan genocide, more than 70,000 people in the Darfur region of Sudan lost their lives to violence, and at least 1.8 million residents were forced to flee their homes as their neighbours were being raped and slaughtered. Despite the traditional calls of "never again" when commemorating past genocides, the international community proved to be as ill-equipped to deal with intracountry violence in 2004 as it had been 10 years earlier.

There were 19 major armed conflicts in 18 locations in 2003, signalling a slight improvement over 2002, when there were 20 major conflicts in 19 locations, bringing the number of major conflicts down to their second-lowest level since the end of the cold war (Dwan and Gustavsson, 2004). In only two cases were the hostilities between States. Between 1990 and 2003, there were 59 major armed conflicts in 48 locations, only four of which involved war between countries. It should be noted that although many conflicts are classified as internal, they have an international element to them in that warring factions are supported by neighbouring countries. In recent years, most of the conflicts of this nature have taken place in Africa. Of the 25 countries ranked lowest in the human development index in 2004, 23 are in Africa, and 20 are currently or have recently been in conflict.

There is increasing awareness that proactive conflict prevention is more effective and significantly less expensive than conflict resolution for securing national and international peace and preventing the massive loss of life and property. It has been estimated that preventive action in Rwanda in 1994 would have cost about US$ 1.3 billion, while overall assistance to that country in the wake of the genocide cost US$ 4.5 billion (United Nations, 2001). Prevention is both cost-effective and possible; studies have estimated that in the second half of the 1990s there would have been 25 per cent more violent conflicts in the world had preventive measures not been undertaken (Commission for Africa, 2005). The most effective conflict prevention strategies, however, are those aimed at achieving reductions in poverty and inequality, full and decent employment for all, and complete social integration.

Youth demographics

High rates of unemployment and underemployment, especially among youth (aged 15-24 years), contribute to the growth of all types of informal economic activity. The incapacity of a country to integrate younger labour market entrants into the formal economy has a profound impact on the country as a whole, with effects ranging from the rapid growth of the informal economy to increased national instability; in the latter case, organized crime and violent rebel groups are often able to recruit heavily from the huge supply of unemployed youth.

In the year 2000 more than 100 countries were experiencing youth bulges, which occur when young people between the ages of 15 and 24 comprise at least 40 per cent of the national population. All of these youthful countries are in the developing world, with most concentrated in the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa (United Nations, 2003). Youth bulges, which are associated with high levels of unemployment, poverty and inequality, increase the likelihood of violent conflict within countries (Urdal, 2004). Even under the best conditions, generations that are considerably larger than those preceding them run into institutional bottlenecks. Unemployment tends to be two to three times higher for young people than for the general population, and the lack of work opportunities may cause intense frustration among youth, especially if expectations have been raised through expansions in education. The situation is aggravated when youth bulges coincide with economic downturns, which further limit a country's capacity to absorb additional labour.

This argument is valid for criminal activity in general. Although a higher level of education is normally associated with a lower likelihood of conflict, this can change when unemployment is high. Deep dissatisfaction is especially prevalent in settings in which recruitment processes for political and economic positions are closed, and in which avenues for social change and social justice are open only to the privileged members of certain groups.

Faced with social exclusion, many young people conclude that there is no way for them to influence or change their own situations or society as a whole. Without any real prospects for decent and productive employment, young people may turn to violence. This decision typically has dire consequences for the young people themselves, but also has far-reaching implications for society that should not be underestimated. In February 2005, during an open debate in the Security Council relating to security issues in West Africa, the Secretary-General of the United Nations commented, "Youth unemployment levels are shockingly high, and the accompanying desperation carries a real risk of political and social unrest in countries emerging from crisis, and even in those that are currently stable" (Annan, 2005b).

Most of those who inflict violence on others are males under the age of 30. Young men have committed most of the war crimes and atrocities in history, and it is young men who carry out most of the violence and killing in conflict zones today. Young men tend to make up the rank and file in military and paramilitary forces, and also comprise the majority of civilians involved in violent activity, either alone or in groups. Young people are also particularly vulnerable in times of conflict. They are more likely to be forcefully recruited as combatants and to become victims of human trafficking and targets for sexual violence; in addition, they are deprived of educational and socialization opportunities.

As already indicated, another important element to be incorporated in the analysis is relative deprivation, as opposed to objective deprivation. Poverty alone may not generate grievances or conflict, but individuals and groups may experience strong resentment and be more inclined to engage in violence when they perceive a gap between what they have and what they believe they deserve or what others have. This tendency is particularly pronounced among easily identifiable groups with a strong collective identity based on ethnicity, religion, language or culture.

The attitudes and behaviour of one generation can have a significant effect on the psychological and behavioural development of another. The characteristics, values and outlook of a particular generation can influence the choices made by the next, as well as the outcome of those decisions. The "inheritance" of opportunities has already been addressed, but the intergenerational legacy can also include beliefs and principles, parenting styles, the tendency towards fidelity or adultery, and even depression, trauma and violence. This phenomenon often exacts a social price. Perceptions are frequently passed down through the generations, which may result in a deepening of discrimination against particular ethnic or religious groups or against persons with disabilities, for example. For those who inherit mental illnesses or negative behavioural tendencies, there are actual costs associated with rehabilitation and social costs associated with leaving them untreated. A particularly high price is paid by those who receive such a legacy; if individuals are exposed to negative or damaging influences at an impressionable age, the

effects and implications can extend throughout their lifetime and that of their descendants.

Rape and child soldiers

Rape has accompanied war and other forms of conflict throughout history. Sometimes it occurs with the breakdown in law and order as armed combatants in a position of relative power take advantage of unarmed civilian women. At times, however, sexual assault is a part of a group's or Government's policies. It has been a consistent feature of religious crusades, revolutions, liberations, wars of imperial conquest and genocides. It is used to punish enemies and reward victors. In war, as in peace, it is the most vulnerable members of society, including women, refugees, minority groups, the young and the poor, who suffer disproportionately from sexual assault.

On the subject of protecting women and girls from rape and sexual violence in conflict situations, the most that can be said is that the international community is now more aware of the need for such protection. "The problem is as serious as it has ever been" (United Nations Children's Fund, 2005). Since the high-profile accounts of systematic rape by soldiers in the Balkans in the 1990s, there has been a growing general awareness of the prevalence of rape as an instrument of war in general and of genocide in particular. Nevertheless, the practice continues and has been an element of virtually every single recent conflict.

Although there are widely diverse social and cultural attitudes towards rape and particularly towards the victims of rape, the effects on the victims' societies are remarkably similar. The physical and psychological damage to those who have been violated is catastrophic and can never truly be measured. During times of conflict the perpetrators of rape and other forms of sexual assault are aware of the harm done not only to the victim but to the enemy community as a whole. Rape is frequently used as a deliberate strategy to destroy family and community bonds and therefore constitutes a tool of "ethnic cleansing" or genocide. It is deliberately used to infect women with HIV/AIDS and other diseases, which often exposes the victims and their families, including their children, to social exclusion and stigmatization, ensuring that they and their communities continue to suffer from the crimes years after they are perpetrated. Children born as a result of rape often endure stigmatization, discrimination and exclusion from their communities. These circumstances reflect an intergenerational dimension of social disintegration whereby the consequences of crimes committed against one generation are also suffered by the victims' descendants.

A number of underlying factors make sexual violence in conflict extremely difficult to eradicate. The subordinate status of women in peacetime often deepens in times of conflict, making them even more vulnerable to sexual abuse. Little progress has been made in bringing the perpetrators to justice,

and because there are inadequate services for the survivors of sexual assault, their reintegration into society often proves enormously difficult (Human Rights Watch, 2004).

Child soldiers represent another direct result of a society's failure to ensure social integration. Just as rape is used as a deliberate weapon or strategy in conflict, the use of child soldiers is based on a deliberate policy of exploitation; essentially, children are seen as cheap, compliant and effective fighters. Human Rights Watch estimates that there are around 300,000 child soldiers in at least 20 countries, and despite increasing awareness and improved understanding of policies that can address the use of children in war, that number has remained fairly constant in recent years (Human Rights Watch, 2004). The recruitment (more accurately described as the abduction) of children for the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo increased dramatically in late 2002 and early 2003, while the end of the wars in Angola and Sierra Leone freed thousands of children from active armed conflict.

Increased awareness of the situation of child soldiers has led to the adoption of three important treaties in recent years.[1] These international treaties have been almost universally embraced but have proved difficult to enforce. Non-State armed groups constitute a particular challenge, as little can be done to induce compliance. These groups are less sensitive to world opinion, and since there is no real threat of military aid being cut off or sanctions being imposed against either these types of groups or formal Governments for their use of child soldiers, there is no reason to expect any significant improvement in the near future.

Halting the use of child soldiers must go hand in hand with the full reintegration of these children into society. Former child soldiers are likely to have been denied a formal education and the opportunity to acquire income-generating skills. Often, their participation in conflicts has provided them not only with a way to earn an income but also a sense of community or camaraderie and status. These young people need a viable alternative to participation in armed conflict—one that meets all their basic needs. Up to now, such reintegration components have received less financial support than disarmament and demobilization efforts, creating an imbalance that may lead to increased frustration and further violence (United Nations Children's Fund, 2005).

Domestic violence and slavery

Another insidious symptom of the lack of social integration is domestic violence. Although men are sometimes subjected to domestic violence, women constitute the overwhelming majority of victims. Domestic violence is a serious problem worldwide; research indicates that as many as 69 per cent of women around the globe have been victims of physical assault by a male partner. Physical violence, frequently accompanied by psychological and sexual

abuse, has a profound impact on individuals and even entire communities (World Health Organization, 2002).

Although domestic violence occurs in all socio-economic groups, women living in poverty appear to be disproportionately affected; further study is needed to determine why this is the case. Research suggests that domestic violence is caused and sustained by the political, social, economic and structural inequalities between men and women in society, and by the rigid gender roles and power relations between the sexes (United Nations Development Fund for Women, 2003).

Violence between partners in a marital or consensual union is often not perceived to be as serious a crime as violence between two strangers. This perception is prevalent among both public officials and the general population (Iadicola and Shupe, 2003). Largely through the efforts of civil society, legal mechanisms and various public and private programmes have been introduced in many countries to combat domestic and other forms of violence against women (Jelin and Díaz-Muñoz, 2003). Legal and policy reforms usually constitute the first step, though little headway will be made unless these measures are enforced and are accompanied by changes in institutional culture and practice. Ultimately, however, violence against women will not be eradicated until structural inequalities between men and women and general attitudes in society are addressed (Chopra, Galbraith and Darnton-Hill, 2002).

Another challenge facing global society is modern-day slavery. Human trafficking and slavery are among the most extreme examples of the damage inflicted by inequality.[2] The times of individuals claiming legal ownership of other human beings are all but gone, yet slavery still exists and is actually growing at an alarming rate. The magnitude of trafficking and slavery is extremely difficult to measure, given the illicit and clandestine nature of these practices. It is estimated that between 12 million and 27 million people are trapped in forced labour or slavery today (Bales, 2000; International Labour Conference, 2005). Most of these individuals live in debt bondage, serving as human collateral against loans that, in practice, are all but impossible for them to repay; often such debts are inherited by the labourers' children.

It is estimated that 600,000 to 800,000 people are trafficked across borders each year. International trade in human beings as a commodity is believed to generate up to US$ 10 billion per year, an amount exceeded only by the proceeds of the illegal trade in drugs and arms (United States Department of State, 2004; United Nations Children's Fund, 2005). These figures do not take into account individuals who are trafficked within national borders, as they are even more difficult to identify. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) estimates that the total number of people trafficked within and across borders may be as high as 4 million (United Nations Population Fund, 2005). Eighty per cent of trafficking victims are women and girls, and a large majority end up being exploited in the commercial sex industry. UNICEF

has estimated that 1.2 million children are trafficked each year, usually for sexual exploitation or domestic labour (United Nations Children's Fund, 2004).

The link between poverty/inequality and slavery is remarkably simple. Individuals from families living in poverty are sold as goods to satisfy the demand for cheap labour. Poverty and the vulnerability it creates are key in this context. Traffickers use force, fraud or coercion to trap and then exploit their victims, who are usually women and children. The victims are confined by means of violence and the threat of violence, fear of the authorities (especially if they have been illegally transported to another country), drug addiction, shame and family obligations. Once a slave ceases to be profitable, he or she is discarded and easily replaced with another human being living in poverty. Trafficking in women and girls ranks among the three top sources of income for organized crime (Heyzer, 2002; United Nations Development Programme, 1999). The fact that trafficking has become such a lucrative business with relatively low risks, combined with the difficulties in identifying victims and traffickers, clearly presents a problem in combating this crime.

Notwithstanding the considerable challenges, various actions can be and have been taken to prevent trafficking, including strengthening cooperation between transit and destination countries, targeting the demand side of sexual slavery, and reforming immigration laws to protect victims of trafficking and allay their fears of deportation. Governments are increasingly identifying trafficking as a crime, and public awareness of the problem is growing. Nonetheless, any progress made in this area is likely to be hard-won. There remains a huge demand for immigrant and trafficked labour, and there is an equally large supply of cheap and disposable human beings that may be easily procured by means of deception, coercion and force to meet this demand. The demand comes from the more prosperous segments of society, and the supply is met by the people living in poverty; the driving force in this equation is the relative inequality between communities, countries and regions.

Fostering democracy and social integration

Promoting respect for democracy, the rule of law, diversity and solidarity can contribute to the elimination of institutionalized inequalities and is therefore critical to successful social integration. Countries that provide opportunities for all people to voice their grievances peacefully and allow them to participate in the political process and influence policy formulation, implementation and monitoring are less likely to experience internal conflict. Some contend that the true meaning of democracy is the ability of a person to stand in the middle of a town square and express his or her opinions without fear of punishment or reprisal. This takes democracy beyond the institutional definition to include tolerance and acceptance at the individual and group level. It also underscores that democracy cannot be imposed by an outside source. Where democratic

institutions are not permitted to flourish, and where there are no outlets for peaceful dissent, specific groups become marginalized, social disintegration is rife, and there is a greater chance for political upheaval.

Democratic, transparent and accountable governance is indispensable in achieving social development. There are now more democratic countries and a greater degree of political participation than ever before. The 1980s and 1990s witnessed what has been called the "third wave" of democratization. In 1980, 54 countries with a total of 46 per cent of the global population had some or all of the elements of representative democracy. By 2000, these figures had risen to 68 per cent of the world's population in 121 countries. However, there is some scepticism about the consolidation of newly planted roots of democracy in some regions; the momentum gained during the 1990s appears to be slowing and in some places may be receding (United Nations Development Programme, 2002).

Democratic political participation consists of more than voting in elections. The ideal of "one person, one vote" is often undermined by unequal access to resources and political power. Thus, there is a danger of decreased motivation to participate, demonstrated by low voter turnouts, unequal capacities to participate in the democratic process and ultimately unequal capacities to influence policy outcomes. Formal political equality does not necessarily create increased capacities to participate in political processes or influence their outcomes, and the transition to democracy does not in itself guarantee the protection or promotion of human rights.

Civil, cultural, social, economic and political rights are essential for maintaining a democratic society. These human rights are mutually reinforcing and must include freedom of association, assembly, expression and participation for all citizens, including women, minorities, indigenous peoples and other disadvantaged groups.[3] Respecting and upholding human rights is crucial not only for the well-being of individuals, but also for the active engagement of citizens and the well-being of society. If democracy is to flourish, it is not enough to enshrine these freedoms in legislation; they must be backed up and protected by policies and political will to ensure that all people have the opportunity to participate actively in the processes that affect their everyday lives.

Democracy is not an achievement but a process that must be continually reinforced at all stages by the internal actions and institutions of the State as well as by the international community. It is necessary to operate under the assumption that democracy is within the reach of any country or region. It is also essential to acknowledge that democratization does not mean the homogenization of cultures; in a true democracy diversity is a source of enrichment and empowerment. One of the fundamental principles of democracy is the right of all individuals to freely express and defend alternative viewpoints both privately and in the context of political participation. In light of the

tremendous benefits at all levels, opportunities to strengthen democratic institutions should not be missed.

Participation is central to the development process and is essential for its success and sustainability. Although often overlooked in the past, marginalization has emerged as a critical element in the re-evaluation of poverty reduction strategies. Nonetheless, many policy prescriptions are still designed without adequate analysis of how they might affect the poor. The most vulnerable groups in society, including the poor, remain outside the sphere of political activity and influence, excluded from the formulation, implementation and monitoring of the very policies developed to address their plight. As a result, poverty reduction programmes may suffer from an urban bias, despite the fact that three quarters of the world's poor live in rural areas (International Fund for Agricultural Development, 2004).

In some countries, stakeholders have successfully advocated for an increase in the share of public resources allocated to social development. However, even in countries in which poverty programmes have been developed through widespread consultations, the priorities identified are not necessarily linked to budget mechanisms, and the final programmes may fail to target the poorest.

Enhancing women's political participation is one means of achieving social empowerment. In 2003, women held only 15 per cent of national parliamentary seats worldwide, an increase of slightly less than 2 percentage points since 1990. The Nordic countries have come closest to achieving gender parity in political representation; in 2003, women comprised 40 per cent of national parliamentarians, more than double the average for developed countries as a group (United Nations, 2004c). Excluding half the population from the political process represents a poor use of human capital and is ultimately a recipe for poorer performance at all levels. Socio-economic obstacles to women's political participation include poverty or inadequate financial resources, limited access to education, illiteracy, limited employment options (in terms of both work opportunities and choices of profession), unemployment, and the dual burden of domestic duties and professional obligations.

The proportion of a country's budget earmarked for the needs of women and girls is often an accurate indicator of the country's priorities. Budgets are never gender-neutral, and in recent years it has been recognized that gender-responsive budget initiatives represent a tool for promoting gender equality and the human rights of women in numerous countries (United Nations Development Fund for Women, 2001).

Indigenous peoples have been discriminated against throughout history and are still frequently denied their basic human rights, in particular their cultural rights and the right to exercise control over their land and natural resources. They are often excluded from the political process. It is critical to ensure their participation so that their concerns can be addressed and another step can be taken towards the achievement of a more equitable society.

Persons with disabilities have also been consistently discriminated against and left without an opportunity to engage actively in the political process. Studies indicate that individuals with disabilities are up to 10 times more likely than others to become victims of crimes, often perpetrated by family members or care providers (Petersilia, 2001). The current consultations for the Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities represent an important step in ensuring the protection of this group's fundamental human rights.

Policy discussions on youth and older persons often reflect an underestimation of their contributions to society and a lack of understanding of their needs. To ensure an inclusive democracy that promotes intergenerational equality, these groups must be integrated into the entire policy-making process.

Conclusion

In many places, social integration remains a distant ideal. Communities worldwide have had to endure enormous pressures as a result of the social changes brought about by globalization. Increases in poverty and inequality and the decline in opportunities have had a serious adverse effect on the well-being of individuals, communities and even countries. It is widely felt that socio-economic needs are not being addressed; few believe that State institutions act in their best interests, and many communities are dissatisfied with their economic situation. Negative perceptions of community well-being and future prospects can leave many discouraged, making it difficult to ensure the participation and investment of all members of a society in the development process.

Since the events of 11 September 2001, global security has risen to the top of the international agenda and has become a focus of increasing concern among the general population. In an international survey conducted by the World Economic Forum, 45 per cent of the respondents felt that the next generation would live in a less safe world, while only 25 per cent believed that the world would be a safer place for future generations (World Economic Forum, 2004). The Middle East and Western Europe were the most pessimistic about future security; Africa, Eastern and Central Europe, and Western Asia were the only three regions that displayed higher levels of optimism than pessimism.

Accompanying this growing perception of increased insecurity is an expansion in the privatization of security. As previously noted, globalization, deregulation and the weakening of the State are contributing to the growth of the informal economy, and these trends are affecting the criminal black market and the growth of the private security sector.[4] Three interlinked trends in the growing privatization of security and violence have been identified; they include the increasing availability of small arms to the public, the expansion

of private security arrangements and the increased involvement of mercenaries in armed conflict (Klare, 1995). While most large-scale weaponry remains under State control, the same cannot be said of the many different types of small arms used in the low-intensity conflicts that have taken place since the end of the cold war. Three in five of the estimated 640 million firearms in the world are held by civilians (Commission on Human Security, 2003).

Surveys conducted in Africa, East Asia, Europe and Latin America indicate that a growing majority of individuals feel they have no control or influence over the economic, political and social factors that affect their lives. Economic and security concerns are causing a great deal of anxiety, and there is little confidence in the ability or commitment of State institutions to manage these growing problems. Countries that have recently undergone profound changes tend to display higher levels of optimism (World Economic Forum, 2004).

Negative perceptions of political processes indicate that increased efforts are required to integrate all segments of society in political life. It is imperative that all individuals have equal access and opportunities to participate in the political process, not only for the sake of justice, but also to ensure that full advantage is taken of a country's human resources and to promote peace and stability. Empowering local groups to take part in the building and improvement of their own communities will make development projects more effective. Involving people in the decision-making processes that affect their daily lives and well-being will significantly reduce the risk of conflict.

The process of social integration is likely to become even more difficult with the demographic and economic changes expected to occur over time. The intergenerational contract, which has provided an effective system of mutual support over the centuries, will be seriously challenged in the coming decades. Many believe that the demographic shifts occurring around the world have ominous implications; the perceived societal threat is often framed in apocalyptic terms that portend power struggles. While changing social, economic and political realities represent an enormous challenge for every society, appropriate planning and sound policy implementation can create opportunities to ensure the well-being of all.

Social integration is a social issue, but it is also an economic, environmental, political, security and human rights issue. The creation of peaceful and productive societies requires the achievement of social integration based on respect for human rights, the principle of non-discrimination, equality of opportunity and the participation of all people, with account taken of the rights and needs of both present and future generations.

Notes

1 The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court defines the conscription, enlistment or use in hostilities of children under the age of 15 as a war crime; the Worst

Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999, prohibits the forced recruitment of children under 18 years of age for use in armed conflict; and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict establishes 18 as the minimum age for participation in armed conflict.

2   For a definition of trafficking, see article 3 of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (also referred to as the Palermo Protocol), supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

3   The issues of these social groups are extensively addressed in the Report on the World Social Situation, 2003.

4   It is questionable whether differentiation between the black market and the informal market is necessary or useful, given that neither is regulated and both are generally outside the reach of the law and are illegal to one degree or another. These essential similarities aside, there is certainly a difference between the market trader selling agricultural products who fails to pay the State sales tax and the small arms trader who provides rebel groups with automatic weapons.