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**The Role of the UN: Directing Global
Resources to the Rural Poor**

Peter Townsend

London School of Economics
University of London

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I. Introduction

Children are victims of every insurgency and every war. The youngest victim of the demolition of the World Trade Centre was a six-year old girl, taken that morning by her mother for a short visit to be shown off to fellow staff. Many children lost parents in that bolt from the blue.

Millions of children caught up in conflict, dying before they are five years old, desperately under-nourished or exploited for their labour across the world were to be the focus of attention at a special UN conference on September 17, later postponed, in New York.¹ As UNICEF reported in a statement intended for the conference, suffering among children has remained on a scale that ought to haunt rich and poor governments alike. "Most governments have not lived up to the promises made at the 1990 World Summit for Children." Hundreds of millions of children suffered from malnutrition, were not in school, had no access to health services or even clean water, or were routinely abused.²

There is a dragging of feet about affordable remedies, and worse, a refusal to be drawn into a more scientific investigation of instability, poverty and growing inequality so that constructive new international policies can be found, and the underlying connected causes of extremism and terrorism traced.

II. Poverty Among Rural Populations

On the evidence available more people in rural than in urban areas are poor. This applies to the great majority of countries. For example the latest report by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) shows for 118 country-specific surveys that in 112 of these more people were found to be poor in rural than in urban areas and in only six instances were there fewer.³ These six are Indonesia (twice, 1987 and 1990), Mongolia (1995), Honduras (1993), Trinidad and Tobago (1992), and Georgia (1997). In many cases the ratio of percentage of population in poverty was more than 2:1 – as in China, North Africa, several countries of both Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa, and some countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. However, the evidence through time is patchy and there are continuing difficulties in making reliably exact comparisons. Style of living and deprivation take different forms. Income in kind has to be valued and added to cash income to reach a wider measure of "income" so that valid comparisons can be made.

As a consequence of difficulties in measuring income primary attention tends to be given to indicators of material and public service deprivation – such as access to drinking water, infant and under-five mortality, school enrolment. However, these indicators are rather few in number and restricted in coverage. While very helpful such data are not fully representative of the phenomena under examination. Country-specific surveys have been carried out in recent years by the World Bank, UNICEF and other agencies to provide a complementary source of information of a kind that will sharpen comparative and scientific work. Only now are those data beginning to be assembled for groups of countries and regions.⁴

New research being conducted in the Universities of Bristol and London (LSE) offers an example. Measures of deprivation are being developed on the basis of the Demographic and Health Surveys that have been carried out in a large number of countries. Table 1 gives a preliminary illustration of the value of the results when comparing rural with urban populations. Far more children in rural than in urban areas are deprived according to these three measures of access to minimally adequate water, toilet provisions and shelter. In Kenya substantial percentages of children are deprived in all three respects, but the overwhelming majority are in rural areas.

Data about material deprivation can be collected by area to pinpoint remedial action. Such data also allow policies to be constructed which can absorb plans that necessarily must take account of both scale of resources and time required to eliminate particular forms of deprivation.

Work already carried out for UNICEF in Niger offers another good example, and includes income.⁵ A 1993 survey found that 36 per cent of the population of rural areas were extremely poor and altogether 66 per cent poor, compared with 52 per cent and 34 per cent respectively in urban areas. Other data confirm the divide. Children under 5 in rural areas have a mortality rate nearly double that in urban areas – 293 compared with 168 per 1000 in the year 2000. Stunting is an index that shows chronic malnutrition and does not vary seasonally. It was found to have increased between surveys carried out in 1992, 1998 and 2000. As Table 1 shows in Appendix 1 children in rural areas are much more likely to be stunted than in urban areas – 41.8 per cent, compared with 26.4 per cent.

III. Financial Strategy

The divide that has been illustrated is familiar to the international agencies. A major question is to how to develop more effective financial strategies, but also more effective benefit or service strategies, that discriminate in favour of the rural as well as urban poor? What models can be devised? The Zedillo report provides an excellent up-to-date example for discussion, complementary research and decision. It helps to illustrate what might and might not be done.

The Zedillo Report

During the last decade there have been increasingly frequent references to the possibility of raising huge sums for the poorest countries by means of a tiny percentage tax on financial transactions across the world - given the difficulties of raising sufficient resources from overseas development assistance. James Tobin put forward the idea of a tax varying from 0.1 to 0.5 per cent of international financial transactions. A tax of only 0.1 per cent has been estimated to raise \$400 billions a year.

Only six months after Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary-General to the President of the General Assembly, set up a panel under the chairmanship of Ernest Zedillo to review the financing of development its report was published - on 25 June 2001. The object was to "recommend strategies for the mobilisation of resources required to accelerate equitable and sustainable growth in developing countries as well as economies in transition, and to fulfil the poverty and development commitments enshrined in the UN Millennium Declaration."

The recommendations will attract wide attention. However, the analysis and recommendations are economic and technical rather than economic and social.

“If global taxation is considered desirable...new sources of international finance, especially a currency transactions tax and a carbon tax” should be seriously discussed.

The Tobin tax is a tax on all spot conversions of one currency into another. Proponents argue that it would dampen speculative operations in international markets and raise large revenues. Sceptics say it would be too complex, the economic effects would be ambiguous, and avoidance would be practised, for example traders would bypass foreign exchange markets and use derivative instruments – notably the futures and options markets. These problems have to be answered specifically. Most tax proposals go through a process of technical, legal and practical scrutiny. What seem to be major objections can often be resolved technically – even with some loss of potential revenue. Certainly the options in constructing the tax deserve close examination and illustration. That does not seem to have been explored in the Zedillo Report.

The alternative carbon tax seemed to the panel to be politically more realistic – since its objective of “making polluters pay” was widely accepted.

This reasoning might be said to expose one glaring weakness of the movement in favour of the Tobin tax – which is also an object lesson for the future conduct of international social policy. The exact purpose, and intended benefit, of the tax remains unstated. The fundamental problem is to identify the principal benefit – in the same way as identified in the case of the proposed carbon tax..

Possible priorities for the use of the Tobin tax are neither raised nor discussed by the Zedillo Report. Such a discussion has a direct bearing on the way the tax could work, and how it might be treated in public opinion. One priority would be for the tax to finance a universal child benefit, in cash or in kind. This would have a more direct (and immediate) effect on human development than the carbon tax and would simultaneously serve the fulfilment of child rights and the reduction of poverty, especially rural poverty.

This example of the treatment of the Tobin tax in the Zedillo report has lessons for the development of international social policy. The implicit social assumptions of stated economic policies and recommendations are not drawn out. If they were the policy options would be much clearer, and the practical steps to achieve the desired result a lot easier.

IV. The General Case for an International Child Benefit

The proposal is that the identification of the principal beneficiaries would greatly strengthen the arguments for a financial transactions tax. This would help not just with the problem of working out how the tax would work technically and to whom it would be applied. If resources were used for young children that would also improve dramatically the chances of, for example, reducing world poverty by half by the year 2015, and simultaneously ensure a reduction of the exposure of millions of young children to malnutrition and premature death. It

would also contribute strongly to the fulfilment of specific articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This element in the general argument for an international child benefit deserves to be spelt out carefully. The fusion of efforts to fulfil human rights and human development is extremely pertinent to the current world situation and is going to continue. This is found not only in the current preoccupation with armed conflict and the involvement of millions of refugee families. For example, there are extensive references to international standards and the collective rights of workers in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights in up-to-date reviews of necessary policies and legislation.⁶ In the UK, as in laws passed in many other countries in the last decade, the introduction of the Human Rights Act in 2000 has allowed advocates to demonstrate the need for conformity in general with international standards as well as for collaborative social policies.⁷

Specific Forms of a Possible International Child Benefit

Because of the different circumstances of different countries a child benefit would necessarily take a variety of forms. The UN could give attention to the value to be recommended per child and according to age, and which governments might be allocated partial or full subsidies per child.

There are possibilities of weekly cash allowances for children under a given age – say 15, or 5. There is the possibility of free school meals, or collection of free foodstuffs and milk. An advantage in establishing schemes even for small numbers is that forms of administration can be put in place and subsequently developed.

A start could be made in some countries with an allowance or benefit in cash for infants under two years. A low birthweight baby allowance is an example of a measure that could be applied in rich and poor countries alike. For example, a proposal for such an allowance is now being considered in the United Kingdom. Low birthweight babies are ten times more likely than normal birthweight babies to have cerebral palsy, and are also far more likely to experience other disabilities including deafness, severe vision loss, brain damage and special educational needs.

V. The Greater Relevance of Human Rights to Anti-Poverty Strategies

The ideas of human development and human rights have pursued a parallel but related course during the last half-century. The history of human development has taken many twists and turns and a thousand documents bear witness to critical examination of achievements, shortcomings, measurement and research..

Critical examination of human rights has been less in evidence. Partly this is because people have remained in awe of lofty, quasi-legalistic documents. Much of the content of the documents is taken for granted, or is patently desirable, or represents a morality to which most aspire, but can rarely accomplish. For such reasons critical examination has been suspended or unfocussed. Meanings have attracted examination - but not so much origins, proportion or implementation through policy.

Perhaps the next generation of students, campaigning groups and research analysts can help to put some of this right and re-direct attention and action to more effective ends. For the various statements of human rights have potentialities for action and therefore social consensus and inclusion that need to be recognised and followed more strongly.

Consider the list of charters and declarations since 1945. There had been statements by the League of Nations and other bodies beforehand, such as the 1924 Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child. In 1948 there was the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in 1950 the European Convention on Human Rights, in 1979 the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and in 1989 the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The network of developments, rather than exclusive consideration of a single charter, demands attention - so that any particular example can be understood better.

Any provisional acquaintance with the history of the expression of rights since 1945 (as illustrated in the attached UNDP table from its Human Development Report 2000 - p. 28) provokes sharp questions. Why are some kinds of rights prominent in some charters but not others? For example, why does the European Convention consist largely of political and civil rights but minimally of economic and social rights - certainly when compared with the Universal Declaration and the CRC? And why is there still comparatively small effort to translate lofty statements of objectives into tangible and practical detailed action that allows progress to be precisely monitored? Most awkwardly of all why have the various human rights not been fully generalised in order to distinguish the rank or rating of different countries? The UN is in the best place to explore these questions intensively in the interests of establishing a range of effective policies wider than those that can be put forward within the powers of most international agencies

There is a human development index (whatever the conclusions to be drawn about its limitations) but there is not a human rights index, whereby the performance of different countries across the world might be compared. An initiative by UNICEF seeks to put this right.⁸ The construction of a human rights index, so that progress by different countries might be measured seems to be feasible. What has been found is that current statistical indicators can be put to this purpose, although the substitution of new indicators would be feasible as well as preferable.

Human Rights and Human Development

In the opening chapter of the Human Development Report for 2000, attributed to Amartya Sen, the ideas of human rights and human development are distinguished but argued to enrich each other. "To have a particular right is to have a claim on other people or institutions that they should help or collaborate in ensuring access to some freedom. This insistence on a claim on others takes us beyond the idea of human development."⁹ It is acknowledged that the discussion on rights has tended to emphasise civil and political rights while that on human development has tended to portray economic and social conditions - for example in the application of the human development index.¹⁰ But the separate existence of sets of "practitioners" for each of the two concepts is accepted a little too readily when the two need to be interrelated or fused. Again it is argued that the human rights approach "may offer an additional and very useful perspective for the analysis of human development."¹¹

The possibility that development includes fulfilment of rights is not fully considered. There are many ways in which a scientifically "integrated" approach might be conceived and made practical. One point I would make is that in human development measures of economic growth and poverty do not take account of the ravages of war and the costs of deforestation, global warming and pollution. The causes of poverty are not sought in the collection of cumulative evidence of the initiation and sustainability of violence.

Article 25 and the Re-statement of International Social Policy

How can the expression of human rights be incorporated in social policy? More use might be made by the UN of Articles 22 and 25 in the Declaration of Human Rights- dealing with the rights to social security and an "adequate" standard of living. These rights have not been invoked during the last two decades when poverty has persisted and even deepened in many parts of the world, and when inequalities in living standards between the first and third worlds and even within most countries, have grown. For example, they were not believed to be a necessary element in the discussions about structural adjustment policies and then the social fund - especially in the particularly fraught regions of Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, South Asia and Eastern Europe. As a consequence the discussion in the 1980s and 1990s focussed on targeting and short-term means-tested benefits rather than on long-term minimal living standards for all. To do them justice the international agencies have in recent years begun to acknowledge the strengths of comprehensive or universal public services and benefits. But that has not yet got very far. It has not led to the reformulation of development policies to reduce poverty – and certainly not by direct, and still affordable, methods.

There are illustrations of efforts in some countries to bring human economic rights and government measures together. In the UK there have been some attempts to relate the right to an adequate standard of living to social policy. Thus the Children's Rights Development Unit published a valuable report¹² that took a lingering look at Article 27 (comparable to Article 25 in the Universal Declaration) in the Convention on the Rights of the Child - that is, "the right to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development." They concluded that in the UK there was a need for a "fundamental examination of the principles which underpin the social security system...there is a need to address the adequacy of benefit levels and for independent research to establish a level of weekly benefit that would enable children and their parents to participate fully in their society"¹³

This is a telling example of the current shortcomings of the policies of the international agencies and governments, as well as of the ways that anti-poverty policies can be made to be effective. How can policies that are more effective be constructed?

The Re-making of International Social Policy

Priority for human rights envisages more comprehensive or international social policy. Social policy analysis draws on a range of sociological, political and economic theories to explain how policies have come to be framed and developed, and why they operate in the way that they do. There are laws and bodies of regulations to be studied and understood, histories of experience and of professional, administrative and political organisation and practice to be

mastered, and causes of social problems and influences upon policy to be carefully and comprehensively analysed.

Certainly the thrust of developments came originally from national interests in clarifying and explaining problems to do with the immense early problems of industrialization, urbanization and social management. Historically we point to unemployment, dangerous working conditions, exploitation, poverty, sickness and disability, and the vulnerability of young children and the elderly. There was a demand for expert study. Social institutions were developed to respond to the problems. In many respects the welfare state was built as a system like a casualty service, to repair and mend victims of industrialisation, urbanisation and social change.

Although some of the themes, ironically, are much like those addressed in the nineteenth century the explanations of causes, and therefore the remedies which are being and have to be given attention, are changing fast. The scientific and intellectual base of social policy is being broadened.

The problem-orientated nature of the subject of social policy propelled scientific and academic interest in

- (i) the history of development of the welfare state;
- (ii) the enormous scale, as measured by expenditure, personnel and clients, patients, pupils, students, tenants or beneficiaries of the subject-matter in national life;
- (iii) the production and evaluation of evidence about the handling and outcome of trends in social problems;
- (iv) the tracking of a huge range of relevant, and rapidly growing, legislation and regulation;
- (v) the theoretical underpinning of understanding on the one hand and policy on the other (struggling all the time to take account of the implications of the latest developments - as in the 1980s of, for example, feminism, monetarism, post-modernism and structural adjustment theory).

There are two principal reasons for the current strengthening of social policy – deriving from concerns with global markets but also human rights. One is theoretical. The subject used to be conceived as an applied subject. It also tended to be restricted to services dealing with specific social problems. Both of these assumptions are now outmoded or at least seriously questioned. On the one hand policies have complex histories and tend to acquire a life of their own, much like the policy institutions producing and managing them. Questions about dependent and independent variables in the equations are more complex. And, especially in recent years, social policies can be demonstrated to have had effects which have deepened. Even less than formerly can the evolution of the welfare state be interpreted as being one of linear progression. Policies propel major social changes which have had not only good effects and therefore lie at the heart of theoretical analysis and discussion.

Comparative and international research is also exposing the traditional study of social services as a very restricted vision of social development. It is not simply social services, but fiscal systems, labour markets, administrative bureaucracies, professions, banking systems and financial organisation that are relevant, and need to draw on cross-national human and social values for reform and even transformation. Nowadays all of these are primarily international or

cross-national. Paradoxically this wider view of development is one of the indirect outcomes of monetarist and privatization policies.

Another way of expressing the theoretical change is to acknowledge the shift from casualty to preventive thinking. This is also a product of concerns about cross-national equity and social as well as human rights. For most of the 20th century social policy was more concerned with damage than with prevention, with ill-health rather than with health. But the intellectual challenge to construct cities or services for hardworking and committed individuals as well as communities in order to prevent serious problems from arising, and thereby provide alternative models of explanation for present disorders provides a larger and more complex agenda. It is an agenda which patently has so far eluded many governments. In such an agenda precedence would be given to "structural" theories in explaining social conditions and trends - and therefore to "structural" plans in developing government policies.

VI. The Role of the UN: Other International Organisations

In channelling the benefits of globalisation to the rural poor much can be gained by the UN by comparing its work with that of other agencies in dealing with the same problems. The issue of playing complementary rather duplicative roles can be examined. For purposes of illustration I will compare the World Bank with UNDP. Significant differences seem to be emerging between these bodies at the present time.

In the 1980s and 1990s international bodies seemed to sing from the same hymn sheet on issues to do with social development. On the basis of their macro-economic policies the priorities for social policy set by the World Bank and the IMF have not only been remarkably consistent since the 1960s but, with small variations, have been broadly re-iterated, until recently, by the other international agencies.

The prime example is anti-poverty policies. At the end of the 1960s Robert McNamara made these the No.1 priority of the World Bank. In 1990, after some ups and downs in the world's agenda,¹⁴ they were restored as the No.1 priority. And in August 2000 fresh assertion of their pride of place was powerfully expressed. James Wolfensohn, the President of the World Bank, stated that it was the Bank's "mission to fight poverty with passion and professionalism, putting it at the centre of all the work we do."¹⁵ "We have learned," he went on, "that traditional elements of strategies to foster growth – macro-economic stability and market-friendly reforms – are essential for reducing poverty. But we now also recognise the need for much more emphasis on laying the institutional and social foundations for the development process and on managing vulnerability and encouraging participation to ensure inclusive growth."¹⁶ There had been some progress, he argued, for example in improving life expectancy in poor countries. Nonetheless, "poverty remains a global problem of huge proportions. Of the world's 6 billion people 2.8 billion live on less than \$2 a day and 1.2 billion on less than \$1 a day."¹⁷

World Bank Policies

What are the policies the Bank advocates? The latest report states, "At the core of the World Bank poverty reduction strategy remains the approach proposed in the *World*

Development Report 1990, the 1991 policy paper on *Assistance Strategies to Reduce Poverty* and [the 1991] *Operational Directive 4.15*: support policies that promote broad-based labour-intensive growth, investments in human capital, and the provision of safety nets for those unable to share in the benefits of growth.”¹⁸

Before clarifying these three sets of policies two important qualifications need to be made. The Bank does of course adapt its arguments to events. It calls attention to elements in its approach that have become more prominent or that must now be included in the early years of the 21st century. In 1996 there was its acknowledgement, prompted even before the East Asian financial crisis, of the “vulnerability of poor households and communities to shocks” and some acknowledgement in the late 1990s of heightened concerns about inequality, vulnerability and governance.

The Bank has also extended its own multi-dimensional interpretation of the concept of poverty and therefore of the strategies designed to alleviate poverty. It “accepts the now traditional view of poverty (reflected, for example, in *World Development Report 1990*) as encompassing not only material deprivation (measured by an appropriate concept of income or consumption) but also low achievements in education and health. Low levels of education and health are of concern in their own right, but they merit special attention when they accompany material deprivation. This report broadens the notion of poverty to include vulnerability and exposure to risk – and voicelessness and powerlessness.”¹⁹

This extension of the concept has also paved the way for a re-statement of strategy. This could be interpreted as a tactic designed to divert attention from the manifest failure to eradicate what has come to be called income poverty. A threefold strategy for attacking poverty is recommended: “promoting opportunity, facilitating empowerment, and enhancing security.”²⁰ Upon close scrutiny the central factors in *promoting opportunity* turn out to be “overall economic growth” and “market reforms” although action by the state is also required to establish “greater equity ... to support the build-up of human, land, and infrastructure assets that poor people own or to which they have access.”²¹ *Facilitating empowerment* involves active collaboration to “make public administration, legal institutions and public service delivery more efficient and accountable to all citizens – and by strengthening the participation of poor people in political processes and *local* decisionmaking. This also helps the growth process. *Enhancing security* involves *national* action to build the assets of poor people and provide a “range of insurance mechanisms to cope with adverse shocks – from public work to stay-at-school programmes and health insurance.”²²

Ravi Kanbur – the Director of the World Bank’s *Development Report on Poverty* – resigned in May 2000 in protest at suggestions that his proposals in the text not to pin development and reduction of poverty forever only on economic growth were likely to be rejected.

He has since written at length about the nature of disagreements.²³ “There are deep divisions on economic policy, distribution and poverty.” Part of his argument is to explain that packages of policies different from those advocated by the international funding institutions or represented by the “Washington consensus policies” can be hugely successful in accelerating

economic growth and ameliorating poverty – like those developed over many years by East Asian countries and by European countries.

UNDP Policies

In a series of recent reports, especially those concerned with "Overcoming Human Poverty" and with "Poverty in the Transitional Economies,"²⁴ UNDP is emphasising different anti-poverty policies. Thus, under a side-heading "Weak Links with Redistribution Policies" There is the following in the latest report on overcoming human poverty: "With renewed emphasis on inequality as an impediment to reducing poverty, growth is no longer considered the single driving force for poverty reduction. In many countries inequality is the roadblock to rapid and sustained growth. Moreover, a country with high inequality requires much higher growth to secure significant progress against poverty....Income does not trickle down; it only circulates among elite groups."²⁵ The distribution of land was too unequal. Through more generous action in debt relief, especially for the 41 heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC)s, countries would have more resources for health and education. The policies of multi-lateral institutions would be re-cast. Lending policies should be related to poverty reduction. Conditionalities should be reviewed. Favourable treaties for the poorest countries should be negotiated for trade through the WTO. UNDP proposed new measures for "poverty-reducing trade" including legal aid, appointment of an ombudsman and more policy research.²⁶ Official development assistance had sunk to low levels.

The same approach has been applied in studies of Eastern Europe and the republics making up the territory of the former Soviet Union. Before 1989 the transitional economies, now hit by extensive and severe poverty, had features of universal coverage in their welfare legacy. A minimum standard of living was ensured. At the core of social security systems were work-related contributory insurance programmes. Social insurance schemes were comprehensive. Pensions "were virtually guaranteed."²⁷ Not only has UNDP given remarkable testimony to the strengths of the previous regimes, but goes on to approve transitional maintenance of social protection systems, as well as clear guidance for the future. "At the core of welfare policy ...there must be a comprehensive social insurance scheme that compensates all people in time of need...Categorical benefits should be offered to all in need, or at least to all those near or below the poverty line. It is very important to avoid providing support only to the 'poorest of the poor' while neglecting the relatively poor."²⁸ Moving pensions "towards means-tested social assistance programmes would push practically all pensioners into poverty."²⁹ A progressive tax system was vital, and the primary responsibility for a welfare system had to lie with the public sector.

Comparative analysis of the roles of different international organizations can be revealing, as these illustrations show, and also helpful in showing what more distinctive as well as larger role can be played by the UN. There is unique opportunity to take acknowledged global initiatives, investigate and apply human rights and, through advocacy of specific universal policies – like the one I have suggested of a financial transactions tax related to a child benefit – show how international social policies can suitably complement national policies.

VII. Conclusion

The argument of this paper is for the simultaneous pursuit of specific and general anti-poverty policy objectives, and not only a better fusion of economic and social objectives. The necessary ingredients of the argument involve realistic financial resources for development, specification of benefits and beneficiaries, prioritisation and measurement of human rights, and simultaneous concern with long-term structures and short-term remedies.

Public opinion has to be harnessed in favour of specific, and direct, identifiable remedies. Although arguments on the basis of new reviews of evidence often lead to multiple recommendations, and this argument is no exception, there happens to be a single priority. This is for a universal international child benefit, incorporating a range of practicable and affordable measures according to the resources and poverty assessment of different countries, as illustrated above, financed by a “children in need” tax on international financial transactions. Because of the greater needs among rural populations they would benefit disproportionately.

Other measures must also be introduced. The Zedillo Report and the Secretary General’s end-decade report on progress since the World Summit for Children in 1990 give important examples. But if future UN reports are to have lasting influence they need to be integrated or at least interrelated. While the former is more economic and technical the latter is more social and country-specific. And while the former is certainly more strategic the latter is more descriptive. Both reports might have gained had they given serious attention to the benefits or systems implied by Articles 22 and 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Zedillo Panel concluded that a global council should be set up to handle some of the problems of international economic guidance. This would be “more broadly based than the G7 or the Bretton Woods institutions.” But there would be the “enormous political difficulty of launching it.” Proposals were made for domestic resource mobilisation, private capital flows, trade and international development cooperation. This included the necessary achievement of the 0.7 per cent of GNP aid target. A persuasive argument was put forward for an international tax organisation to monitor developments in taxation in different countries and review “excessive” measures taken by multinationals.

Above all, the role of the UN in reducing poverty, including that in rural areas, can be strengthened by building more firmly on the 1995 Copenhagen agreement. This represented a breakthrough in securing agreement to draw up national anti-poverty plans, but also bridge the gap between rich and poor countries by devising a two-tier measure of “absolute” and “overall” poverty. European social scientists have welcomed this initiative and sought to extend and implement the proposals. One major possibility is to relate country-specific reports on the extent of absolute and overall poverty to direct measures to reduce it, and so contribute to a key aim of the Millennium Declaration.

Appendix 1. Tables

Table 1 Rural/urban difference in selected forms of deprivation

Country	Percentage of children water deprived	Distribution of children deprived of minimal access to water (%)		Percentage of rural children water deprived	Percentage of urban children water deprived
		Rural	Urban		
Kenya	27.6	97.8	2.2	31.5	4.2
Nigeria	17.2	94.8	5.2	22.7	3.2
Zambia	7.2	96.7	3.3	11.5	0.6
Nepal	16.9	99.4	0.6	18.2	1.3
Philippines	2.6	91.5	8.5	4.4	0.5
Bolivia	3.2	97.5	2.5	7.9	0.1
Peru	3.2	94.1	5.9	7.8	0.3
Dominican Republic	3.8	95	5	8.6	0.3
Country	Percentage of children toilet deprived	Distribution of children deprived of access to toilet (%)		Percentage of rural children toilet Deprived	Percentage of urban children toilet deprived
		Rural	Urban		
Kenya	17	97.1	2.9	19.3	3.4
Nigeria	26	87.2	12.8	31.6	11.8
Zambia	26.9	94.7	5.3	41.9	3.6
Nepal	84.9	93.7	6.3	85.9	71.9
Philippines	15.2	80.9	19.1	22.6	6.3
Bolivia	37	66.4	33.6	62.1	20.6
Peru	30.1	78.3	21.7	61.4	10.6
Dominican Republic	10.7	79	21	20.1	3.9
Country	Percentage of children shelter deprived	Distribution of children deprived of minimum standard of shelter (%)		Percentage of rural children shelter deprived	Percentage of urban children shelter deprived
		Rural	Urban		
Kenya	15.3	95.8	4.2	17.2	4.4
Nigeria	3.8	80.5	19.5	4.3	2.7
Zambia	5.5	93.5	6.5	8.4	0.9
Nepal	19.6	96.7	3.3	20.5	8.8
Philippines	2.4	78.1	21.9	3.5	1.2
Bolivia	21.1	74.3	25.7	39.7	9
Peru	15.8	67.5	32.5	27.8	8.3
Dominican Republic	3.1	83.8	16.2	6.2	0.9

* Water deprived defined as ">20 minutes walk to water and use of surface water".

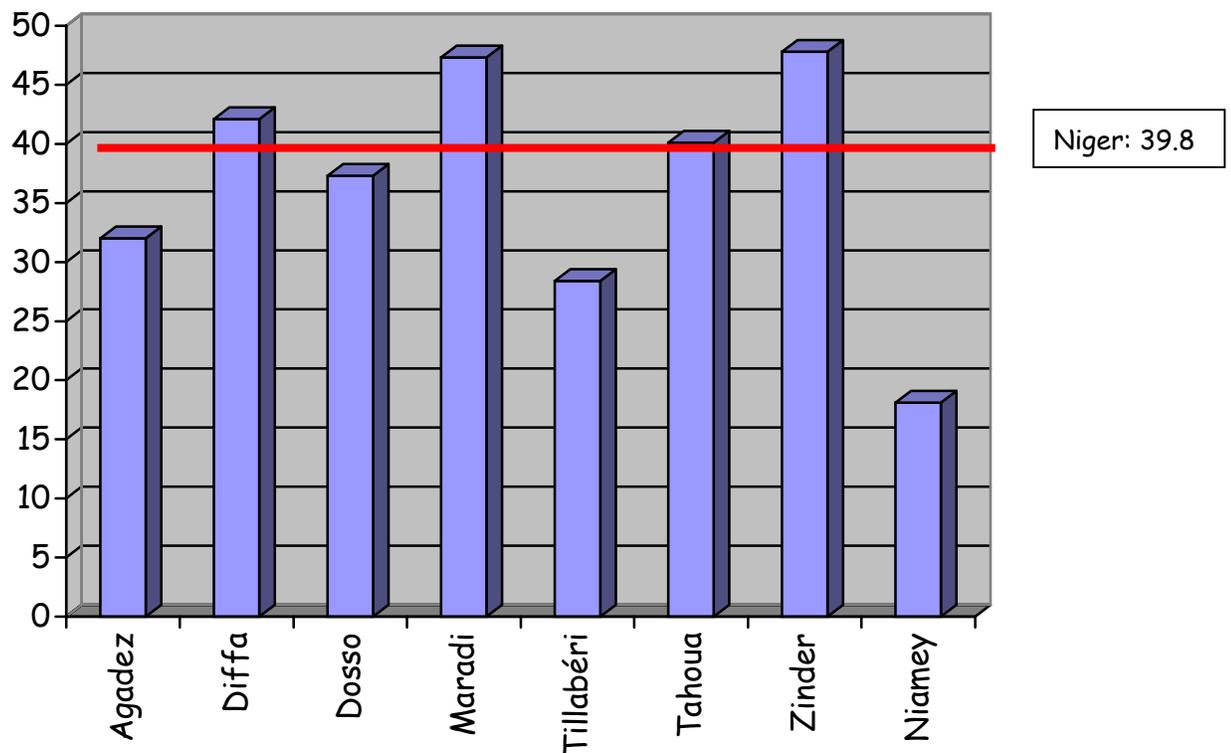
** Toilet deprived defined as "no private or communal facilities".

*** Shelter deprived defined as ">5 people sleeping per room and Mud flooring".

Year of DHS Data : Kenya, 1998; Nigeria, 1999; Zambia, 1996; Nepal, 1996; Philippines, 1998; Bolivia, 1998; Peru, 1996; Dominican Republic, 1996.

Table 2
Stunting: Spatial analysis

Ind.	Niger	Region									
		Urban	Rural	Agadez	Diffa	Dosso	Maradi	Tillabéri	Tahoua	Zinder	Niamey
Stun	39.8	26.4	41.8	32.0	42.1	37.3	47.3	28.4	40.1	47.8	18.1



Within Niger, regional disparities are very important. Children living in Niamey are stunted two times more than children living in the region of Zinder (respectively 18.1 in Niamey and 47.8 in Zinder). Stunting is higher than the national average (39.8) in the region of Diffa (42.1), Maradi (47.3), Tahoua (40.1) and Zinder (47.8).

Children living in urban areas are much less stunted than children living in rural areas (respectively 26.4 in urban areas against 41.8 in rural areas), with a rural/urban ratio of 1.583.

Source: MICS 2000

Appendix 2

2.1 Methodology - Table 1

Steps Taken to Construct Indices of Deprivation - Water, Toilet and Shelter

1. The DHS data for the countries were adapted to show the households with children in them, and the number of children in each household.

Deprivation Indices

2. The DHS data were re-computed to produce 3 initial indices of deprivation: water deprivation, toilet deprivation and shelter deprivation. In subsequent analysis this treatment will be extended to other indicators (such as education and access to health services).

3. To produce a "WATER DEPRIVATION" index we recomputed the "time to water source" variable into "> 20 minutes to water" and "<20 minutes to water", and combined it with those who used "surface water" (water from springs, rivers, creeks, rainwater etc.) as opposed to wells, pumps, and piped into dwelling.

4. To produce a "TOILET DEPRIVATION" index we recomputed the "Type of Toilet Facility" variable to show those respondents who had "No facilities" (either private or communal). This figure was then used for the TOILET DEPRIVATION index.

5. To produce the "SHELTER DEPRIVATION" index we computed a new variable to show "number of people sleeping per room"(<1, 1 -3, 3-5 and >5 people per room). We then combined ">5 people sleeping per room" with those who had "Mud/natural flooring" in the home. This provided some indication of overcrowding and shelter of poor quality.

6. These deprivation indices were then used to produce results for those households with children, and cross tabulated with the place of residence to show where deprivation occurred (i.e. rural or urban).

7. Thus we have:

- The proportion of children water/toilet and shelter deprived
- The distribution of water/toilet and shelter deprived children between Rural and Urban areas
- The proportion of rural children and urban children who are water/toilet and shelter deprived.

The results are summarised above in Table 1.

2.2 Methodology – Extracts from the Niger report (Marco Segone) *Please note: Not yet for quotation – pending circulation of final report*

Definition of the Poor/rich ratio.

This is the ratio between the rate prevailing in the poorest population quintile and that found in the richest quintile. Thus, a Poor/rich ratio of 2.0 for, say, Under 5 mortality, would mean that the Under 5 mortality rate in the poorest quintile is twice the rate in the richest. This is a rather crude index since, among other things, it provides no information about the middle three quintiles. It does, however, provide a general order or magnitude of differences between the poorest and the richest 20 percent of the population.

Definition of the Concentration Index.

The Concentration index, whose value can vary between -1 and $+1$, is similar to the Gini Coefficient frequently used in the study of income inequalities. It measures the extent to which a particular health status variable is distributed unequally across all five wealth quintiles – that is, the concentration of inequality. The closer is the index to zero for any indicator, the less concentrated is the wealth inequality for that indicator; conversely, the further away is the index from zero, the greater is the inequality. The sign on the index (negative or positive), and the meaning of the sign with respect to inequality, reflect the expected direction of the relationship of an indicator with poverty and inequality. For example, there is typically an inverse relationship between Under 5 mortality and wealth, so that a negative concentration index implies a regressive situation as concerns wealth inequality. Conversely, the relationship between immunization and wealth is typically direct, so that in this case a positive Concentration index implies a regressive relationship.

Use of Assets rather than Income or Consumption.

Reliance on a Wealth index to measure socio-economic status is somewhat unconventional in research about economic disparities, which tends to define economic status in terms of consumption or income. The main reason for the choice of the Wealth index is that DHS and MICS surveys do not provide consumption or income data but do have detailed information on household ownership and access to a variety of consumer goods and services. Thus an asset approach presents the only way to examine, from an economic perspective, the distributional aspects of the uniquely detailed DHS and MICS information. Though there is some argument about the relative merits of using asset, consumption or income data to measure socio-economic status, recent research suggests that the asset-consumption relationship is quite close (Filmer and Pritchett, 1998; Montgomery et al., 1997; Wagstaff et al., 1991; Rutstein, 1999). To the extent this is correct, asset ownership can be taken as a reasonably satisfactory proxy for consumption, in addition to an indicator of economic status in its own right.

Choice of assets

Use of an asset approach requires a decision of which assets to select from those available in the data set being used. Second, a choice has to be made about whether to use the

same set of assets for all countries, or to design country-specific asset indices. The Wealth index includes the items in the DHS and MICS Household Questionnaire that relate to household ownership of consumer goods, and that deal with household access to services and resources such as electricity, water and sanitation facilities. The same set of assets, by and large, is used for all countries. The decision to include all asset variables, and to use the same types of asset variable across all countries, has advantages and disadvantages:

- ◆ Use of a relatively larger number of assets increases the variation across household asset scores and facilitates a more regular distribution of households across quintiles.
- ◆ An index that comprises the same list of assets for each country facilitates comparisons across countries. Such an index is also easy to compute since the DHS and MICS has a standard list of assets that are included in questionnaires for all surveyed countries.
- ◆ Including all the available assets, and using the same types of assets across all countries, to calculate the Wealth index lessens the subjectivity likely to be involved in selecting only some variables for inclusion, or in choosing different variables for different countries.
- ◆ On the other hand, including all variables entails a lack of discrimination with respect to the variables' differing natures. For instance, it is not clear whether access to water, sanitation, electricity or other publicly-provided resources should be included in an index that purports to measure private household wealth. Moreover, variables such as water and sanitation (for instance, whether a household uses a private tap) are not solely indicators of household wealth. Rather, they are also likely to be direct determinants of the health status of household members.
- ◆ Creating one index that includes all asset variables limits the types of analysis that can be performed. In particular, the use of a unified index does not permit a disaggregated analysis to examine which particular asset variables in the index are more or less important in their association with social indicators, a question that can have important policy implications. Also, certain types of variables included in the index may themselves be seen as socio-related services for which inequalities are of great potential interest, but which cannot be separately included in these tables. For example, including water and sanitation in the Wealth index precludes inclusion of information about access to water and sanitation by wealth quintile, because access to water and sanitation is an element in the definition of wealth.
- ◆ Certain household asset variables may reflect household wealth better in some countries than in others, or may reflect differing degrees of wealth in different countries. Taking such information into account and creating country-specific Wealth indices with a country-specific choice of asset variables might produce a more effective and accurate index for a particular country. In Niger, a country with an economy based on agriculture and breeding, taking in consideration ownership of animals (camels, sheep, cows, etc) and farmland would be very relevant for the calculation of a Niger-specific Wealth index. Nevertheless, for the reasons explained above, the Wealth index used in DHS and MICS surveys do not have this flexibility.

Notes

¹ UN (2001), *We the Children: End-Decade Review of the Follow-Up to the World Summit for Children*, Report of the Secretary General, New York, General Assembly.

² Also see UNICEF (2001), *The State of the World's Children 2001*, New York, UNICEF.

³ IFAD (2001), *Rural Poverty Report 2001: The Challenge of Ending Rural Poverty*, Oxford and New York, OUP, pp. 42-45.

⁴ An example is Chen S. and Ravallion M. (2000), *Trends in Poverty*, Development Research Group of the World Bank.

⁵ I am grateful to Marco Segone for an opportunity to see an early draft of his report on *Child Poverty in Niger*, Niamey October 2001.

⁶ For example, Ewing K. D. ed. (2001), *Employment Rights at Work*, London, the Institute of Employment Rights, especially Chapters 4 and 7.

⁷ For example, Klug F. (2000), *Values for a Godless Age: The Story of the United Kingdom's New Bill of Rights*, London, Penguin Books.

⁸ A summary report of an ongoing project is available: Gordon D., Pantaziz C. and Townsend P., with Nandy S. and Namazie C. 2001, *Child Rights and Child Poverty in Developing Countries*, Draft Report to UNICEF, Centre for International Poverty Research, University of Bristol.

⁹ UNDP (2000), *Human Development Report 2000*, New York, OUP, p. 21..

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 20.

¹¹ My emphasis. *Ibid*, p. 21.

¹² Children's Rights Development Unit (CRDU) 1994, *UK Agenda for Children: a systematic analysis of the extent of which law, policy and practice in the UK complies with the principles and with the standards contained in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*, London, CRDU.

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 72.

¹⁴ For example, in the mid-1980s "poverty" became something of a token concept in World Bank annual reports on development which, together with the unsuccessful social adjustment programmes, caused bodies like UNICEF to call for action programmes "with a human face." However, the critics did not demur from macro-economic policies giving priority to economic growth (Cornia, Jolly and Stewart, 1987).

¹⁵ World Bank (2000b), p. v.

¹⁶ *Ibid* p. vi.

¹⁷ *Ibid* p. vi.

¹⁸ World Bank (2000a), p. 35.

¹⁹ World Bank (2000b), p.15.

²⁰ *Ibid*, p.6.

²¹ *Ibid*, pp. 6-7.

²² My emphasis. *Ibid*, p. 7 and see pp. 8-12.

²³ Kanbur R. (2001), *Economic Policy, Distribution and Poverty: The Nature of Disagreements*, Rome, 19 January 2001.

²⁴ In the first case UNDP (1998a and 2000) and in the second UNDP (1998b and 1999).

²⁵ UNDP (2000), p. 42.

²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 50.

²⁷ UNDP (1998b), pp. 90-92.

²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 105.

²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 109.

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