

Workshop on  
The New International Human Order:  
The Moral Aspects of Development

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At the outset I wish to assure you of my interest in the initiative taken by the University of Life and the University for Peace in convening this workshop to generate ideas and inputs for consideration by the Member States and the UN General Assembly of the proposed UN Declaration on a New Human Order based on the Moral Aspects of Development.

The concern for the establishment of such a New Human Order is deeply shared by many men and women of goodwill, perception and compassion around the world. The United Nations Charter and the many declarations, treaties and covenants along with varying forms of public expression all help to define the moral and ethical principles that should inform a New Human Order. These principles should therefore contain the substance of the international code of ethics that is envisioned as a guide to national and world development.

It is hence our common concern in this matter that encourages me to raise a question in all candour: How can we deal with the general scepticism around the world regarding the effectiveness

of collective international action in the face of the mounting global violence and crises and the seeming ineffectiveness of many early declarations and initiatives for world action launched by the United Nations and other fora? The adoption of yet another declaration, however justifiable it may seem, would have to face this scepticism.

The rising level of violence and the easy resort to violence, throughout the globe, is perhaps the most acute and dangerous challenge to the survival of mankind today. In the third world alone, more than 100 wars have been fought since the end of the Second World War. It is against this background that the world has lost political control over the nuclear arms race and the arms trade. A labour force of more than one hundred million people is paid directly or indirectly by defence establishments and more than \$50 billion is spent annually on military research and development. Nearly half a million scientists and engineers are engaged in the arms industry or weapons related research. The cost of the arms trade must be measured not only in financial terms, a staggering expenditure of \$600 billion -- a rough and conservative approximation according to experts -- but also in the lost opportunities and possibilities for improving economic and social conditions throughout the world.

Both in the North and South, governments keep acquiring ever more sophisticated arms for security, only to increase their own insecurity and vulnerability as well as that of the

whole globe. The militarization of whole societies is occurring daily and humankind has allowed science and technology to serve its fears rather than its better creative impulses. It is thus evident that the lessening of violence and the potential for violence becomes the conditio sine qua non of a New Human Order.

This is of even greater urgency, I believe, because of a fundamental mutation in the human condition. Wars and conflicts have been part of the pattern of history, but mankind now has a destructive power capable of eliminating human life itself and the basis for civilization with nuclear weapons as well as the much higher destructive capacity of present day conventional arms. The whole world is involved in this question and that is the reason why stereotyped arguments such as "mankind has always been like this" have become totally unacceptable.

The futility of many earlier declarations and actions initiated by the United Nations and others is attested by the tremendous human suffering evident all around us. Wars and conflicts have let loose tides of human migrations -- and tragedies -- beyond description. Tremendous human suffering also results from extreme inequality in the distribution of wealth and insecurity thereby triggering massive movements of people as migrant workers or refugees. The degree of exploitation of these people is part of our contemporary tragedy, intolerable in a New Human Order.

These trends, including the vast migrations taking place within nations and across national and continental boundaries, are part of the international dimensions of the threat to national unities and cohesions. In Asia alone, accepting only the more conservative estimates of internal and international migrants in recent years, some 50 million people are involved. We have among us a veritable "nation of migrants" with a population larger than all but six Asian countries. Around the world, upwards of 16 million refugees of war, oppression and natural disaster are adrift. An additional 20 million workers, by some estimates, are in jobs outside their home countries. Confronted with these and other social, political and historical convulsions that frequently disregard any national boundaries, development planners and practitioners often feel powerless in the realization that the development effort to which they are committed is only one of the many interacting forces of power in their societies.

Is there a need for another declaration? This raises the issue of the present legal systems and safeguards, nationally and internationally, and of problems that are over and beyond such systems. In this setting a new humane order can only be founded on a people fully conscious and knowledgeable of their own potential and their own responsibilities. Legal systems and basic laws are without doubt important as means for implementing a human order but in the last analysis the

the moral aspects of development, the political consciousness and self-consciousness of society and its sense of justice, its capacity to resolve conflicts and overcome differences are but facets of the same moral aspirations. It implies the willingness to adjust to others and to limit one's own rights for the sake of others and the larger community. Respect for human rights depends on political consciousness, the liberty and opportunity to act as a result of that consciousness, and the political space available for such action.

It also implicitly requires the capacity for empathy and the willingness to struggle not only for one's own rights but also those of one's neighbours. These are the moral aspects on which a Human Order should be based. These aspects are inseparable from people and society, their self-confidence and perception as human beings and the very concept of their humanity. It is the message of social and human solidarity needed to overcome prejudice and racial and ethnic hatred. But these ancient ills can only be overcome if people are given the opportunity for their own apprenticeship in the process of peaceful conflict resolution once there is the commitment to work out grievances without resort to violence.

The quest for a New Human Order based on the Moral Aspects of Development is, I believe, thus synonymous with the formulation of democratic concepts of development. Such a formulation implies the analytical and explanatory capacity whereby we can

understand the relationship between three conditions of progress:

- 1) change and growth
- 2) order, stability and security, and
- 3) social justice

Such a concept should help guide us towards a development that respects human freedom, human dignity and human rights as it seeks to achieve economic growth, political stability, and national security. To maintain the balance between these three elements of the development triangle is evidently a question of constant and difficult re-adjustments.

At the very centre of this approach is the crucial question: How to keep the disparities that are inevitable in the process of development within the differing ideological and ethical limits set by the differing component parts of our pluralistic global society? This has turned out to be the most difficult problem of development. Whatever strategy is followed, disparities are bound to arise and as they become too great, political systems are badly strained and violence breaks out. How to stay within those limits is therefore not only a political problem but also concerns the limits of justice embedded in the ideology and culture of nations.

Such difficult questions must be coped with at a moment when the democratic form of governments often appears to be afflicted with a degree of paralysis which shows itself in a number of ways. We seem to be experiencing a breakdown in

the body politic. This has left many of those who cherish democracy with a pervading sense of malaise.

We see undecided elections in which voters can't make up their minds, leading to weak governments with no clear mandate. There are increasing tendencies towards both split constituencies and single issue politics, each in its own way weakening democracy's ability to act decisively. There seems to be a general erosion of the power of the conventional democratic political and social organizations -- the trade unions, political parties and other older institutions. This is true both east and west of the ideological divide.

At the same time, we are witnessing intensified political awareness and assertiveness from outside the mainstream. Let us make no mistake about it, there are expressions of profound value changes of great magnitude. These new values have the potential to give societies whole new directions and thrusts -- a major challenge for democracy is to find ways to integrate these value changes into society either through adaptations of existing institutions or the creation of new institutions. The recognition of the importance of these new values, and the human creativities they can unlock, need to be part and parcel of any New Human Order.

Another of the prime conditions for the realization of a New Human Order is the elimination of poverty. It has now

been demonstrated all too well that development seen only as economic growth has not been the answer. Theories of social change and economic development which, after 20 years, leave us with an increasing number of people below the poverty line and with the prospect of only a slightly smaller number at the end of the century hardly can be considered adequate. Likewise, development theories which omit the necessary linkage between economic growth and social justice take no account of the development triangle I mentioned earlier and could lead to the very destruction of the development effort.

It seems clear therefore that development is a process of societal growth. Governments are not the sole agents of development -- the development process has turned out to be much more dynamic, with many more component parts than the nation state alone. It touches so many issues and involves the mobilization or the stimulation of so many human capabilities as to require a mechanism and a political space for a process of continuous national self-reflection that links up technocratic and governmental activity with a sense of moral purpose and with the moral core of a nation and its people. Because there will be no clear precepts of how to make the very difficult choices in the development process, this continuous national self-reflection, enhancing the capacity and the opportunity for moral reasoning on a national scale as well as on a community scale, is absolutely essential to the maintenance and the

development and growth of a social order perceived to be moral.

Most schools of public and business administration have emphasized efficiency and effectiveness as a goal without taking into consideration whether the application of bureaucratic decisions enhances or reduces the autonomy and freedom of others. The capacity to make a valid judgement is something that has to be fostered in a society that refuses to let the bureaucracy become an end in itself. Bureaucracies should not feel threatened by a growing capacity for self-organization and self-management, for the security risks are far outweighed by the development dynamics released by this process.

If stability could be maintained in the development effort, however, it would be very much conditioned by the nature of change. In this respect, technology also creates another series of problems. Technological choice must not be made on the basis of economic and efficiency criteria alone. The crux of the matter is how technological choice will affect the distribution of power, wealth and authority within society. Who is going to do what and who will lose what through a specific choice of technology? To leave the choice to technocrats is unwise and unacceptable because of the very profound social and ethical issues involved. The same reasoning could be applied with the alternative uses of resources: land use, land ownership, and tenancy. What is the appropriate choice between the preservation of forests and the need to build highways

destructive of the environment through these forests? How can we develop production patterns that do not bring on enormous and irreversible ecological havoc? How can we develop management strategies that will give appropriate heed to the intimate interlinkages between environment problems and the problems of the poor? These are all development dilemmas that arise from the nature and necessity of change.

How also does one choose between the long term and the short term? This is a particular challenge to leadership in a democracy where the long-term vision that is so needed for true global interdependence must cut across and look beyond the very real, very understandable and very urgent short-term demands of national or parochial interests. The question of the long-term effects of growth have not been raised frequently enough -- as we now belatedly are beginning to perceive. We also recognize that the general tendency to be guided by short-term considerations at decisive moments can create a new set of problems for coming generations. All this, too, is very closely linked to the problems of the moral order.

The neglect of these elements of choice and its justification in the development process has raised a number of ethical issues about freedom, about paternalism, and inclination towards authoritarianism. It has led to the lessening of freedom, autonomy, and space for the individual and for the kind of decision-making without which society cannot grow. Freedom

also means the management of social change from below. How do national bureaucracies adjust to the need for self-management from below? Here again I believe that very difficult choices will have to be made and they cannot be made on the basis of efficiency and economic costs alone. There is, in this respect, a learning element which is an essential precondition to societal growth.

Too often, in past decades, we have let a purely economic outlook bypass the notion that the human being is, in fact, the ultimate goal of development, its very basis and sole means. It has often been called human-centred development, but few efforts have been made towards that realization. One of the consequences of this neglect has been the continuing structural dualism in the developing countries where town and country, rich and poor, and modern and traditional sectors of societies face sharply opposed differences. A similar set of problems besets human society on the global scale. In such a swiftly changing world, how do we handle absolutely essential elements that will determine whether an international order is perceived to be moral or not? It is singularly clear that the present international order is not a moral one. It is therefore our capacity to form a moral judgement collectively on the choices we must make in the face of crisis that is at the heart of the issue of the New Human Order.

I have tried to set forth here what clearly the human order

must not continue to be, as well as to give my views on what a New Human Order should contain. I have attempted also to suggest some of the ways by which we might try to bring such a new and more humane order of human existence into being. This should include giving due attention to the relationship between changes, order and justice, an essential triangle of the development process. Also important will be finding ways to keep inevitable disparities within certain limits and opening new doors to the marginalized and the powerless within our societies who have stood outside the mainstream for so long and are now clamouring for their just entitlement. This will be to recognize that the human being -- his needs, his values and his expectations -- must always be central to the development process if that process is to take us toward a New Human Order.

The United Nations General Assembly, in its discussions since 1981 to promote efforts towards a New International Humanitarian Order, adopted another resolution on this subject at its last session on 13 December 1982. In this resolution, the General Assembly has taken note of the proposal for the establishment of an Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues composed of leading personalities and has indicated that the deliberations of such a Commission could be useful for further study of the proposal relating to the new order. I have been invited to be a member of this Commission,

and I have accepted. The deliberations of this workshop and any follow-up should be seen in the context of the work of the Commission to avoid possible duplication and with a view to achieving complementary results.