

# Copenhagen '95



## Welcome to Copenhagen

The Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) active in participation in the UN Summit in Copenhagen and in the parallel activities gathered under the NGO Forum '95 is of decisive importance: NGOs have a thorough knowledge of the social realities in the country or countries where the organisations work. NGOs can press the UN member governments to take a genuine position on global problems: Poverty, unemployment and social ostracism. And not least: The World Summit and the NGO Forum are the high points in a long process, which should ensure a more socially just world. NGOs are a guarantee that the promises made by the world's government Leaders in Copenhagen won't be forgotten.

NGOs are the civilian world society's voice, which will be listened to during the summit in Copenhagen. The media - which will be present in large numbers in Copenhagen - will listen, and government representatives will have to listen.

The Summit and the NGO Forum '95 are not just about reversing trends in the world's poorest countries. In the rich countries, the gap between the well-off and the less well-off is still growing. Larger and larger groups of citizens are dropping out of society. The unemployed number in the millions, even in those countries with a high average income per inhabitant.

Racist attacks in European cities are no longer occasional occurrences, and in ex-Yugoslavia, ethnic conflicts have torn apart a whole nation, and many years will pass before the children of former neighbours will be able to look each other in the eye again.

With the earlier UN Summit in Rio (environment and development), and in Vienna (human rights and development), Russia and the other east European countries have played a very minor role.

We hope that the emerging civilian society in the former Eastern Block will be plentifully represented at the NGO Forum '95 in Copenhagen together with NGO representatives from many other countries around the world. A broad NGO-representation is necessary, both to set the world's problems on the summit agenda and to ensure the credibility of NGO Forum.

During the UNs World Conference in Cairo on Population and Development, the NGOs made an energetic contribution to the prominent position of the question of a more just social development in the world received in the Cairo conferences Programme of Action.

But the debates were put off until the coming World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen. And the preparations for the coming Summit need the participation of dynamic NGOs. This became clear during the second preparatory meeting (PrepCom II) in New York, where the draft for a Copenhagen declaration and a Programme of Action was discussed.

During PrepCom II the UNs Summit secretariat in New York wrote a draft for the Programme of Action to be adopted in Copenhagen. The draft is not very definite. Many sections are a direct step backwards in relation to earlier UN resolutions.

Especially the section about how the - conservative - visions of social development shall be realised, and how they shall be financed, were vague and not satisfactorily binding.

After PrepCom II the preliminary conclusion is that representatives from the UNs member governments haven't been able to agree on a draft Programme of Action that is a positive step forward for global social development.

The individual person and governments active contribution is the most important driving force for the development of society. NGOs are an important part of this active contribution. Let the NGO Forum '95 be a manifestation of the civilian society's creativity and strength.

Welcome to Copenhagen.

NGO Forum '95s General Secretary, Jan Birket Smith

This newsletter is published by  
NGO Forum '95

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The Danish Council of Organisations of  
Disabled People  
Danish Refugee Council  
Danish United Nations Association  
National Council of Women in Denmark  
Save the Children Organisation  
Danish Council on Social Welfare

# a place to sleep

Hotel rooms will be booked only if the hotel deposit has been received by DIS CONGRESS SERVICE COPENHAGEN A/S. Only one deposit per room is required. The deposit will be deducted from the guests hotel bill when checking out.

In case of cancellation, please note that hotel deposits will be refunded until January 31st, 1995, minus a processing fee of DKK 250.

After this date, refunds can not be expected.

We would, however, like to give participants the possibility of accommodation free of charge in private homes or cheaper accommodation in sleep-ins or in bed and breakfast, and we have therefore started to advertise for host-families and hope to find enough families to satisfy your needs. If you have difficulties in meeting the cost of hotel accommodation in Copenhagen, please set an X in the type of accommodation required, private, sleep-in or Youth hostel.

The facilities will be of varied standard ranging from dormitory rooms (bring your own sleeping bag) to rooms with separate beds (and breakfast). We will try to take language, interests, gender, etc into consideration when matching participants with families.

## Insurance

The Danish insurance company, Baltica Travel Insurance Ltd, offers insurance to participants in NGO Forum '95 during their stay in Denmark.

The insurance covers:

Medical expenses and repatriation:	DKK	500,000
Personal liability, property damage:	DKK	2,000,000
Personal liability, bodily injury:	DKK	5,000,000
Baggage:	DKK	5,000

## Insurance period

The insurance covers the period from 1 March 1995 to 14 March 1995, but only as long as the person insured is staying in Denmark

## Premium

The insurance premium per person amounts to: DKK 230

## Taking out insurance

Participants who wish to take out the insurance should put an "X" in the registration form, at the section which states: "I wish to take out insurance (insurance premium: DKK 230 per person, which should be forwarded together with your registration fee and your hotel reservation deposit)." This should be done **BEFORE 1 December 1994**

Policy holders who have paid the premium of DKK 230, will receive an Insurance Policy and the Insurance Conditions from Baltica Insurance by post before 1 March 1995.

The insurance Conditions shall only be sent to those participants, who have paid the insurance premium

## How do you fill in the registration forms?

Registration for the NGO Forum '95 involves three forms:

Registration Form (page 15)

Request form for meeting facilities (page 17)

Request form for exhibition space (page 19)

## Registration form

This form is to be filled in by anyone who wishes to be registered as a participant in NGO Forum '95 in Copenhagen. As a registered participant, you will be entitled to use the NGO Forum's facilities, including meeting facilities and exhibition facilities. Registered participants can use DIS Congress Services hotel booking service. Registered participants will also receive further information with, among other things, a complete programme for NGO Forum '95. Please note that the registration fee is 300 Danish Kroner (=60 US Dollars).

Non-registered participants in the NGO Forum '95 can buy a day pass at the entrance to Holmen, but cannot arrange meetings or use any of NGO Forum '95s facilities.

## DIS: Hotel Accommodation

It is time to reserve your hotel rooms in Copenhagen during the NGO Forum '95.

Copenhagen is situated on the East side of the island of Zealand. Given the large number of people expected to be in Copenhagen during the UN World Summit and the number of hotel rooms available - a large number have already been booked for the participants in the official conference - hotel spaces for NGO Forum '95 participants will be limited in Copenhagen. Because of this situation, hotels on the outskirts of Copenhagen (travel distance 30-60 minutes) will probably be used.

Many of these hotels are situated in the beautiful countryside that surrounds Copenhagen.

It is important to mention that the hotel rooms will be booked on a first-come, first-served basis.

To ensure that as many as possible of the NGO Forum '95 participants will have access to hotel accommodation, the NGO Forum '95 has designated DIS CONGRESS SERVICE COPENHAGEN A/S (Herlev Ringvej 2C, 2730 Herlev, Denmark -Tel.: +45 4492 4492/Fax: +45 4492 5050) as their exclusive co-ordinator.

Please make your reservation by filling in the enclosed registration form. When reserving a double or triple room, make sure to state the name(s) of the person(s) you wish to share with.

All prices given on the registration form are per room, and include breakfast, service charges and VAT.



## **Request Form For meeting facilities**

This form should ONLY be filled in if your organisation is planning a workshop, a conference, a cultural event, or other activities that require premises. If you plan two or more meetings or events, please note that you have to fill in one form for each event planned. Please copy the form if you need more than one.

### **The combined meeting facilities are as follows:**

- A conference hall with space for 2,000 people
- Four rooms with space for 3-400 people in each room
- Four rooms with space for 1-200 people in each room
- Four rooms with space for 50-100 people in each room
- Ten rooms with space for 25-50 people in each room

The rooms can be ordered between 9 A.M. to 9 P.M. An hour block is 1 hour and 45 minutes. You can order more than one hour block, but remember that conference rooms are limited, and as many as possible should have the possibility of ordering conference rooms. So don't order more than you need!

The NGO Forum's secretariat will do everything humanly possible to fulfil organisations wishes on conference rooms.

### **Technical equipment in Conference rooms:**

Conference rooms are furnished with a podium and chairs for participants. In conference rooms with space for over 100 participants, microphones and loudspeakers are provided.

The following technical equipment is available, free of charge, when using the conference rooms:

- Video recorder and monitor (VHS PAL and Timebasestandard)
- Slide projector and screen
- Overhead projector and screen
- Flip-over

Other technical equipment (e.g. large screen for the showing of video) can be rented at the NGO Forum's technical centre.

### **Translation**

Simultaneous translation to one or more major languages will only be available to a limited extent, at special events and other important

# **a place to meet**

arrangements. The organisers are encouraged to hold the meetings in either English, Spanish, French, or Danish, and to provide for translation to at least one major language, so that all events are at least bi-lingual. Wireless equipment for translation purposes will also, to a limited extent, be available.

### **Cultural events**

NGO Forum's participants are encouraged to think of alternative means of expressing themselves: Theatre, film, music, performances, stand-up, processions, etc., etc.

The following facilities are available for cultural events:

- The conference hall, with space for up to 2,000 people
- A theatre, with space for 300 spectators
- A night cafe in association with NGO Forum '95s restaurant
- A cinema
- Outdoor areas, which can also be utilised

The conference hall, theatre, and night-cafe are equipped with sound and lighting. Additional specifications on technical equipment for use with cultural events can be obtained from the NGO Forum's Secretariat.

The cinema is equipped with a 35mm projector, video recorder, and large screen, as well as loud speakers. The use of these facilities is free of charge.

### **Special requirements for the disabled:**

A few rooms are not easily accessible for people who are physically handicapped. Please inform us if your arrangement is focused on the participation of handicapped people.

### **Title and issues**

We expect that there will be held over 100 meetings, conferences, events etc. a day at the NGO Forum. The arrangement's title and a short description of its content will be published in the program for the NGO Forum. Title and issues are therefore decisive, when NGO Forum participants choose which activities they will take part in.

# **a place to exhibit**

## **Request form for exhibition space**

This form is only to be filled in if your organisation wishes to reserve exhibition facilities

The exhibition areas are reserved for non-profit organisations. The sale of books, posters, handicrafts, etc., shall be relevant to the organisations work.

NGO Forum has the following exhibition facilities at its disposal:

Exhibition booths will be available for rental at NGO Forum '95. The booths may be rented by NGOs wishing to sell handicraft or other products of their organisation, wishing to display their work and/or programmes, and NGOs who may have literature for sale. Two sizes of exhibition booths will be available: a small booth of approximately 5 m<sup>2</sup> at DKK 500 or a larger booth of approximately 10 m<sup>2</sup> at DKK 1000. Both booths will be equipped with partition walls, electricity, display table(s) and chairs.

Other technical equipment (e.g. video recorders and monitors) can be rented at the NGO Forum's technical centre.

Tables will be available free of charge in the exhibition hall for any NGOs, who wish simply to display literature and pamphlets.

**Reservation of booths and tables are made on a first-come, first-served basis.**

Larger temporary exhibition facilities are available on request. For further information on these, and other questions regarding rental booths, please contact NGO Forum '95s secretariat.

### **Cancellations:**

All cancellations of exhibition space must be sent in writing (fax, letter) to Dis Congress Services Copenhagen A/S, Hvidov Ringvej 2C, DK-2730 Hvidov, Denmark, Fax: +45 4482 5050. Cancellations received before January 1st, 1995 will be refunded in full less a processing fee of DKK 100,00. For Cancellations received after January 1st, 1995 no refunds will be made.



## Poor marks for Summit preparations

Preparations for the UN Summit for Social Development almost came unstuck in August in New York. The situation was saved at the last moment by the chairman for the Preparatory Committee Bureau, Ambassador Juan Somavia. He is the architect behind a new draft summit declaration, the contents of which reversed the frame of mind among PrepCom II participants from one of deep frustration to one of cautious optimism.

From the 22nd of August to the 2nd of September, representatives from the 184 member countries of the UN, as well as 800 NGO representatives, were gathered at the UN's headquarters in New York for the second preparatory meeting (PrepCom II) before the Summit in Copenhagen.

It was PrepCom II's assignment to work on a proposal for a summit declaration and a Programme of Action based on the draft the Summit secretariat in New York had prepared. The majority of the government and NGO representatives were in agreement with each other in their opinion that the Summit secretariats draft was too vague and non-committal.

The draft was therefore re-written during PrepCom II on the basis of recommendations from a range of countries.

But, as they say, haste makes waste.

Instead of being a step forward for Social Development, PrepCom II turned out to be two steps backward.

A range of formulations in relation to human rights and equality are a definite step backwards in relation to earlier UN resolutions. An example of this is that the new draft legitimises female circumcision.

The participating NGOs criticised the draft for the Programme of Action as being too one-sided in its reliance on economic growth as a source of social development.

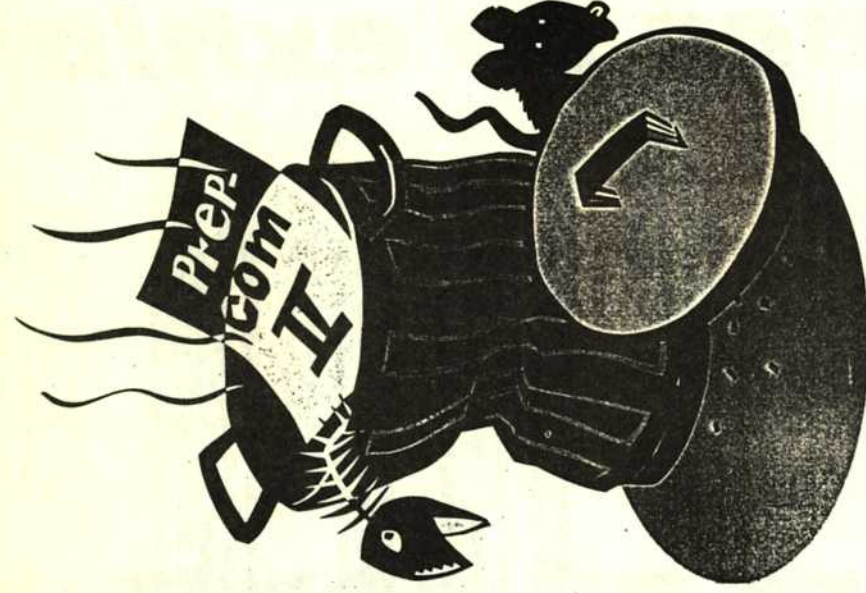
Also forgotten were the recommendations from Rio on sustainable development.

## World Bank criticised

PrepCom II was saved from disaster at the 11th hour by the Preparatory Committee's chairman, Juan Somavia. On the meetings last day he presented a draft for a Summit Declaration, which gave government representatives and NGOs renewed hope for the Summit in Copenhagen.

Somavia outlined in nine points the subjects the World's leaders shall reach agreement on in Copenhagen (see the nine points below). Somavia's paper can, among other things, be a breakthrough for debt relief in the least developed countries: "We shall ensure urgent implementation of existing debt relief agreements, and negotiate further initiatives to eliminate all debts of severely indebted countries at an early date", to quote from Commitment nine.

The World Bank and the IMF also come under fire. The two organisations policies are criticised for being anti-social: "Appropriate changes in the policies of the Bretton Woods Institution (The World Bank and the IMF) will be necessary", writes Somavia in Commitment seven.



as they say: "haste makes waste!"

## Volunteer action

The silken words and golden promises in the declaration are to be specified in the Programme of Action: "The measures to implement the objectives and commitments proclaimed in this declaration... are determined by the individual countries".

The crucial section in the Plan of Action about "Means of implementation and follow up" leaves the practical details after the Summit in Copenhagen to the UN's individual member countries: "...the precise monitoring of the recommendations to be adopted in Copenhagen should be undertaken at national level", to be precise. But yes, there should also be an "exchange of experiences and information through the United Nations system".

But otherwise the Programme of Action indicates an increased use of volunteers in social programmes: "The challenge for international cooperation is to find new ways of mobilizing this volunteer resource so that it plays a more sustained and central role in social programmes". In other words: Social Development will be left to the individual countries. The UN will advise, and the rest is up to volunteers. Seen from an NGO point of view, the recognition of the volunteers is positive, but the Programme of Action's text is permeated with the fact that the individual countries can evade their responsibilities. The UN continues without a much needed specification of increased mandate, and social development will be left up to volunteer action!

This disappointing proposal from the UN was a rallying point for the participating NGOs at PrepCom II. NGO meetings and activities were marked by great interest and enthusiasm. While the NGO activities during PrepCom I mainly had the character of a clarification process marked by uncertainty with relation to the concept of Social Development, and budding attempts at cooperation, common understanding and cooperation was strengthened during PrepCom II.

PrepCom II did not nearly reach the heights expected of it. Neither the Declaration nor the Programme of Action were politically negotiated. In order to make up for lost time "informal discussions" will take place from the 24th-28th of October, 1994, so that PrepCom III can start where PrepCom II should have left off.

After the poor marks to PrepCom II, the NGOs' participation before and during the World Summit for Social Development and the NGO Forum '95 in Copenhagen is more important than ever.

The individual countries NGOs have an important task in keeping their governments minds on their responsibility for Social Development. Nationally and globally. Civilian society should use the time up to March 1995 to pressure national governments to seriously involve themselves in the important issues that will be discussed in Copenhagen.

The coming months continuous preparations will decide whether or not the Summit in Copenhagen will be the turning point for global Social Development, which many hope and work for.

(First revision of the draft programme of action. A/CONF.166/PCL.13)

## Draft declaration

We commit ourselves:

- 1 -To promote social progress
- 2 -To the goal of eradication of poverty in the world
- 3 -To retain full employment as a general goal
- 4 -To promote social integration by fostering inclusive, participatory, just, safe, and stable societies for all people
- 5 -To achieve full equality between men and women
- 6 -To promote the economic, social, and human development of Africa and all Least Developed Countries
- 7 -To make structural adjustment programmes socially-oriented and non-detrimental to the weakest members of society
- 8 -To generate sufficient resources to achieve our objectives
- 9 -To improve the international economic environment and to improve international financial assistance

(Headlines in "Element for the draft declaration: Progress report presented by the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee", New York, August 31st, 1994, A/CONF.166/PCL.13)





**D**enmark doesn't take up much space on a map of the world. The country's total area is 43,000 Km<sup>2</sup>. The peninsula of Jutland borders Germany. The rest of the country consists of 406 large and small islands, of which 90 are inhabited. The Faroe Islands and the world's largest island, Greenland, are part of the Kingdom of Denmark.

**D**enmark has a population of just over five million. Of Denmark's five million people, about 165,000 are foreigners. That is about 3% of the population.

**350,000** people in Denmark are unemployed. The number of women working outside the home is approximately 12% of the total workforce. Denmark has the highest number of women working outside the home in the world.

**D**enmark's highest point, Ydinge Skovhoej, is 173 m above sea level.

**W**hen it rains in Denmark, you can't see the sun. The weather will be like the next morning. The sun will change quickly from beautiful sunshine to rain and sleet. So remember to bring your rain gear.

**D**enmark's highest point, Ydinge Skovhoej, is 173 m above sea level.

**D**anes pay around 50% of their wages in tax. Medical and educational facilities are free. Every year, the State and the trade unions pay 32 billion kroner in unemployment assistance. Denmark's foreign debt is 273 billion kroner.

**N**early everyone in Denmark has a common interest in the environment. A common interest is that when two Danes with a common interest in the environment, they will be seen as a common interest in the environment.

**I**n 1982, Denmark became European Champions in football. The best known Danish footballer is Michael Laudrup.

**D**enmark's foreign aid for developing countries is a little over 1% of the gross national product (GNP). This development assistance framework places Denmark among the leaders of Western donor countries. Poverty orientation is fundamental to Danish development policies.

**D**enmark is the world's largest pig exporter. 16 million pigs are slaughtered every year, and 13 million are exported. Poultry is the second main occupation. That is no joke. The country's agriculture produces enough food to feed 10 million people.

**D**enmark's queen is called Margrethe II. The country's law is very popular among Danes. The Danish Folketing has 179 members. There are eight comedians in Denmark. The comedian is very popular. The comedian is very popular. The comedian is very popular.

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# fact sheet

In this fact sheet, the NGO Forum '95 secretariat answers a range of questions about the preparations for, and participation in, NGO Forum '95 in Copenhagen. The questions are typical of those we are asked daily, via mail and telephone conversations with NGOs from all over the world.

The secretariat will, during the coming months, keep you informed of the preparations for the UN's World Summit for Social Development and the NGO Forum '95.

If you have any further questions, you are always welcome to write or fax the secretariat, at the following address:

NGO Forum '95  
Njalsgade 13C  
DK-2300 Copenhagen S  
Denmark  
Fax: +45 32 96 89 19  
Tel: +45 32 96 19 95

## ? When does the NGO Forum '95 take place?

! From the 3rd to the 12th of March, 1995.

## ? When does the UN's World Summit for Social Development take place?

! From the 6th to the 12th of March, 1995. For the last two days of the Summit, heads of State and Government from the world over are expected to be present.

## ? Where does the NGO Forum '95 take place?

! At the former naval base on Holmen, in Copenhagen.

Holmen, which is situated ten minutes from the centre of Copenhagen, has for over 300 years played a major role in the defence of the city, and has been home to the Danish navy. The navy has now de-activated Holmen, and the Danish Department of Defence has given permission for a part of the former naval base to be leased to NGO Forum '95.

NGO Forum '95 has at its disposal a total of 30,000 m<sup>2</sup> of indoor premises distributed through a range of buildings of different sizes.

## ? Where does the UN's World Summit take place?

! In the Bella Centre, situated 5 km from the NGO Forum '95. Shuttle buses will be organised between Bella Centre and Holmen, so participants in the World Summit and in the NGO Forum '95 can be transported between the two locations. From TV-screens set up on Holmen, participants at the NGO Forum '95 will be able to follow events.

## ? Who can participate in the NGO Forum '95?

! Representatives from Popular Organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations, which are interested in social development, expressed in three themes:

- The enhancement of social integration, particularly of the more disadvantaged, marginalised groups.
- The alleviation and reduction of poverty.
- The expansion of productive employment.

## ? Do you have to be accredited to NGO Forum '95?

! No. There is no requirement for accreditation.

But if you want to be registered to NGO Forum '95, you have to fill in the registration form, which you will find in this newsletter, and send it to the secretariat as soon as possible or 1st December at the latest.

## ? Do you have to be accredited to take part in the World Summit as an NGO?

! Yes. Applications for accreditation to the World Summit for Social Development can be obtained from:

NGO Unit/DPCSD  
United Nations, Room DC2-2340  
New York, N.Y. 10017, USA  
Fax: + 212 963 3063

Additional information on NGO accreditation to the world summit can be obtained from:

NGO Liaison officer  
Secretariat of the World Summit for Social Development  
United Nations, Room DC2-1372  
New York, N.Y. 10017, USA  
Fax: + 212 963 3062

Note: The deadline for registration for the World Summit and PrepCom III is the 15th of December, 1994.

# question & answer

## ? What activities are open to NGOs at the NGO Forum '95?

! Workshops, seminars, meetings, hearings, exhibitions, theatres, films, music, events etc. The possibilities for content and form are endless.

## ? Can we be certain that our wishes of premises for activities will be fulfilled?

! No. The buildings on Holmen include a large hall with space for up to 2,000 people, smaller halls with space for 300-500 people, rooms with space for 50-100 people and a range of smaller venues with space for 20-50 people. Altogether there are meeting facilities for 5,000 people simultaneously in all the premises associated with NGO activities. But there could be problems. If the demand for facilities exceeds the supply, the facilities available must be shared equally between those

The Danish Host Committee will do everything humanly possible to accommodate the wishes of every participating NGO. But we can't guarantee that everybody's wishes will be granted.

A short description of the activities planned, premises required, and the period of time involved should be in the secretariat's hands no later than the 1st of December.

After this date, the premises will be distributed between the registered participants. NGOs that register after this date will only get those premises and times that remain after the first round.

Requirements for premises should be stated on the request for meeting facilities, which you will find in this newsletter.

## ? In which language can we receive information on the NGO Forum '95?

! The International Newsletter with the tentative registration form has been issued to 50,000 NGOs the world over in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Russian.

Future communications from the secretariat will primarily be in English as the secretariat does not have economic resources to issue information in other languages. In your correspondence with us, please use English, or as an alternative Spanish or French.

## ? Can the secretariat of NGO Forum '95 provide economic support for NGOs' travel and accommodation?

! In their letters many NGOs have asked if the secretariat can provide financial support to organisations that wish to participate in the World Summit and/or NGO Forum '95.

The secretariat hasn't the economic resources to pay for participants travel or accommodation expenses. The participating NGOs must themselves pay these expenses, or find alternative sources of finance.

## ? Where can one apply for financial support for travel and accommodation expenses?

! The UN has at its disposal a "Trust Fund" with limited resources. The Fund gives economic support to NGOs from the Least Developed Countries, who wish to take part in the UN's World Summit and the remaining PrepCom in New York (PrepCom III, from the 16th - 27th of January, 1995 - see the enclosed list over the LDC countries). The Fund does not give assistance to NGOs, who wish solely to participate in the NGO Forum '95, but NGOs who receive support from the Trust Fund may participate in both the World Summit and NGO Forum '95.

-continued next page

## Media accreditation

Representatives of the mass media - press, photo, radio, television and film - will be accredited for coverage of the World Summit for Social Development and NGO Forum '95.

Application form for media accreditation can be obtained from:

Media Accreditations and Liaison Unit  
World Summit for Social Development  
Department of Public Information  
United Nations - Room S-250  
New York, N.Y. 10017 - USA  
Fax: + (212) 963-4642



-continued from page 11

Information on the Fund is available from:

The NGO Liaison Officer,  
Secretariat of the World Summit for Social Development,  
United Nations, Room DC2-1372,  
New York, N.Y. 10017,  
USA  
Fax: + 212 963 3062.

But other sources of financial support do exist:

- Local national offices of the UNDP (UNDP = United Nations Development Programme)
- Local national offices of the UN
- Local representations of the EU
- Embassies and consulates
- The offices of NGLS in New York and Geneva:

United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service, NGLS  
Room 6016  
866 UN Plaza  
New York, N.Y. 10017, USA  
Fax: + 212 963 8712

or

NGLS  
Palais de Nations  
1211 Geneva 10  
Switzerland  
Fax: + 22 788 7366

The Danish Host Committee calls on wealthy NGOs to support their NGO co-operation partners in finding financing and thereby secure a broad international participation at NGO Forum '95.

#### ? When can we get more information from the secretariat?

! The secretariat's first international newsletter was issued via The Centre for Our Common Futures magazine, "The Network" (35,021 subscribers), NGLS's magazine "Go Between" (5,000 subscribers) as well as a separate mailing to a range of NGOs in the former Soviet Union and Africa.

This newsletter including among other things the final registration form, has been sent to those organizations, who have sent in a tentative registration form, or who have informed us in writing of their

#### ? Where can we get more information on the World Summit?

! The Summit Secretariat in New York can supply written material on the UN Summit.

Local UN offices can also be helpful with information.

Key United Nations Documents:

- Draft of the Summit Declaration
- Draft of the programme of action
- Human Development Report 1994 (Printed by the UNDP in several languages)
- Report on the World Social Situation, United Nations (Sales No. E.93.IV.2 ISBN 92-1-330140-6)
- World Summit for Social Development: An Overview (A/Conf.166/PC/8+A/Conf.166/PC/9)
- First revision of the draft programme of action (A/CONF.166/PC/L.13)
- Element for the draft declaration: Progress report presented by the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, New York den 31. august 1994 (A/CONF.166/PC/L.18)

#### ? Can we receive information via electronic data base?

! Official United Nations documents on the Summit may be accessed on a number of electronic networks, for example: Association for Progressive Communications (APC) users can access files via the access code: <un.socdev.doc>. conference. Internet users can access files via gopher by connecting to gopher.undp.org. Users without gopher access can search E-mail by sending a message to gopher@undp.org. An automated response will then give instructions on how to access via E-mail, documents on the Summit which can be located under the heading United Nations Conferences. Information from the NGO Forum '95a secretariat can also be found on APC at the conferences:<ngo95dk.info>

## Exemption from Visa

Visitors from the following countries are allowed entry into Denmark without having been granted a visa before entry:

Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bermuda 1), Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Holy See, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India 2), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Kiribati, Korea, Republic of, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Norway, Pakistan 2), Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines 3), Poland, Portugal, San Marino, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Surinam, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania, Thailand, Trinidad-Tobago, Turkey 4), Tuvalu, Uganda, UK 5), United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Zambia, Zimbabwe

1) Only BDTC-passport

2) Only diplomatic and service passport

3) Only diplomatic and service passport marked "official"

4) Only diplomatic special and service passport

5) Holders of British Passports: Exempted from visa includes holders of valid British Passport "Common Format Passport" which describes the holder of the passport as a British Citizen, an individual

# question & answer

#### ? Does it cost anything to take part in NGO Forum '95?

! Yes. Each participant shall pay a registration fee (300 Danish kroner, approximately 50 US dollars.) This amount shall be paid on registration on.

#### ? Do you have to have a visa to enter Denmark?

! Citizens from a range of countries from around the world do not have to have a visa to enter Denmark (see attached list: Exemption

on entering the country. Further information can be obtained from the nearest Danish consulate, Danish embassies and consulate will be informed about the holding of the UN's World Summit and the NGO Forum '95.  
Leave yourself plenty of time with your visa application.

#### ? Where can we reserve hotel accommodation for our stay in Copenhagen?

! All questions on hotel reservations shall be referred to:  
DIS Congress Service Copenhagen A/S  
Herlev Ringvej 2C  
DK-2370 Herlev  
Copenhagen  
Denmark.

Telephone: +45 44 92 44 92  
Fax: +45 44 92 50 50

Reserve accommodation, as soon as you know how many will be in your party. With regard to hotel reservations, the people who book first stand the greatest chance of having their requirements met.

At the moment, the Danish Host Committee is working on finding private accommodation for those participants in NGO Forum '95, who want it.

#### ? How will awareness of the NGO Forum '95 become more widespread in the media?

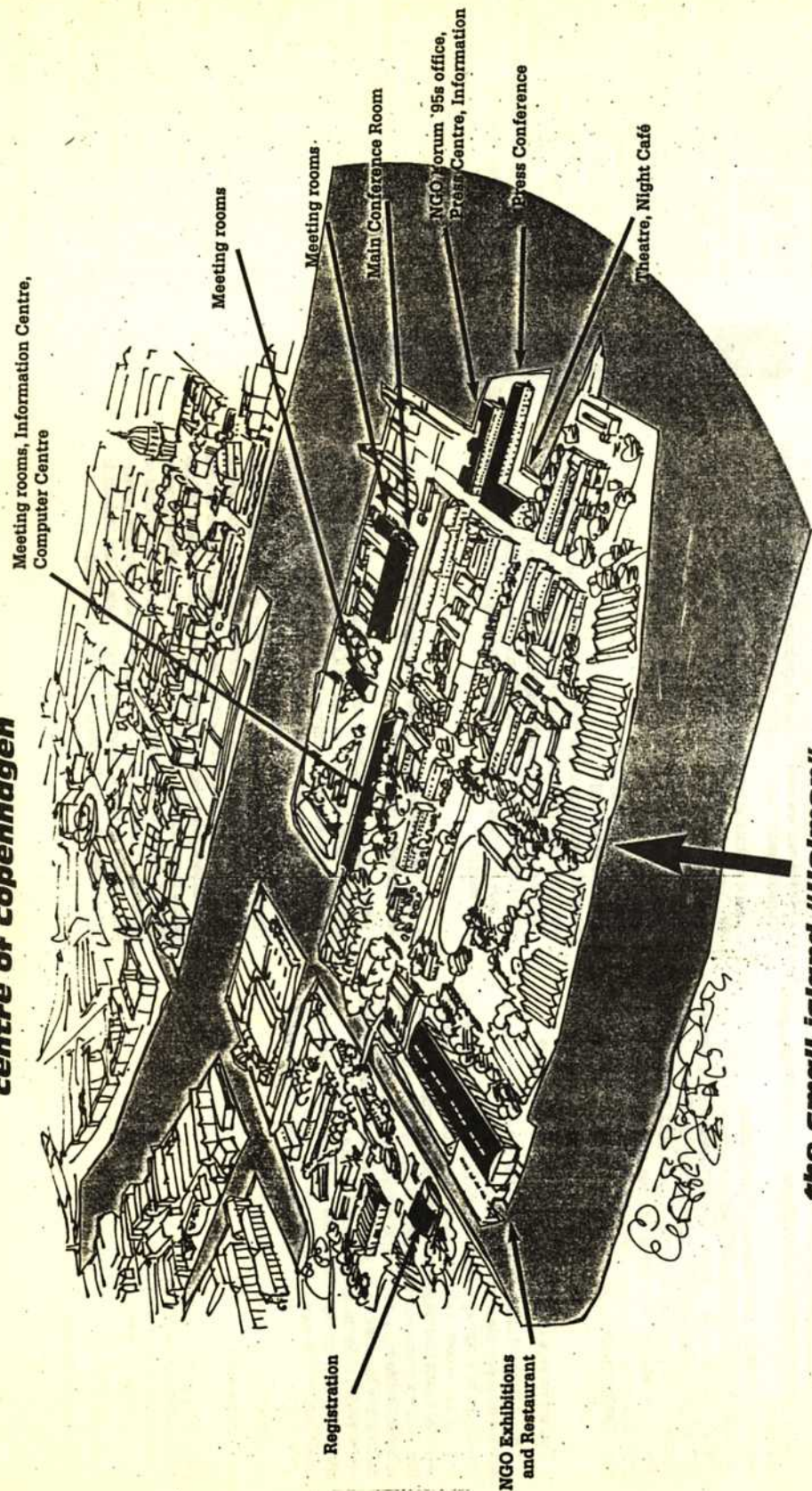
! The international attention currently focused on the UN Summit and NGO Forum '95 is not enough. NGOs around the world can help in raising the debate to a national level (e.g. in both the printed and the electronic media, public meetings, etc.) through the coming months by taking up the themes of both the Summit and the NGO Forum. For many governments, the question of better social conditions for the majority of the nations inhabitants is an embarrassing one. With the Summit, World society has a chance to ensure that the development policy debate is lifted to a level, that makes it difficult for the more reluctant countries to duck out of the political process. The exploitation of this historic chance, depends to a large extent on active and dynamic NGOs, that can pressure their countries government leaders to take a stand, and to participate in the Summit in Copenhagen, when the World's government leaders gather.

## List of the Least developed among the developing countries:

Afghanistan, Benin, Bhutan, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Ethiopia, Guinea, Haiti, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Malawi, Maldives, Mali, Nepal, Niger, Rwanda, Samoa, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Yemen, Bangladesh, Central African Republic, Gambia, Cape Verde, Comoros, Guinea Bissau, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Sierra Leone, Togo, Vanuatu, Tuvalu, Kiribati, Mauritania, Myanmar, Mozambique, Liberia, Cambodia, Madagascar, Solomon Islands, Zaire, Zambia, Eritrea, Angola



centre of Copenhagen



the small island "Holmen"

# registration form

For secretariat use

## NGO Forum '95 - Copenhagen, March 3-12

Fill in with block letters in English and return the form together with your registration fee of **DKK 300** to:  
**NGO Forum '95**, c/o DIS CONGRESS SERVICE COPENHAGEN A/S, Høved Ringvej 2C, DK-2730 Høved, Denmark.  
 Telephone: +45 4492 4492 - Telefax: +45 4492 5050 - Telex: 15476 dis dk

### Participant (Mr. Ms.) (One participant only per registration form)

Family name: \_\_\_\_\_ First name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal code: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Telex: \_\_\_\_\_

### Organisation

I am participating as a member of: \_\_\_\_\_

### HOTEL RESERVATION

Reservations are made on a first come first served basis. Availability of rooms in each category is limited. Accommodation reserved through DIS Congress Service will be confirmed only, if the deposit has been paid. Only one deposit per room is required. The deposits are: Group 1 & 2: **DKK 1.300**, Group 3&4: **DKK 900** per room.

Arrival date: \_\_\_\_\_ March 1995 Departure date: \_\_\_\_\_ March 1995 Total No. of nights: \_\_\_\_\_

Price Group	Single room DKK/room/night	Double room DKK/room/night	Triple room DKK/room/night	Priority
Group 1	900-1.000	1.200-1.300	1.500-1.800	
Group 2	700-800	1.000-1.100	1.250-1.450	
Group 3	500-650	700-900	850-1.100	
Group 4	400-500	500-700	600-850	

Priority: Please state your reservation priorities (1,2,3 etc.) in the box above

### Reservation of double/triple rooms:

Names of persons sharing room must be stated:

All prices are **per room per night** and include service charge, taxes, and breakfast. All rooms, except some in group 4, are with private bath or shower. The deposit will be deducted the final hotel bill when paid by the participant at the hotel.

**Note:** All cancellations must be sent to DIS in writing (fax, letter, telex). Cancellations received before February 1, 1995 will be refunded in full less a processing fee of DKK 300 on participation fee and DKK 250 on hotel deposit. For cancellation received after February 1, 1995 no refunds will be made.

### Other accommodation wishes (limited availability)

Sleep-in  Private accommodation  Youth Hostel

**Insurance:** I wish to take out insurance. Insurance premium: DKK 230 per person, which should be forwarded together with your registration fee and your hotel reservation deposit. yes  no

### Payment:

All payments (Registration fee DKK 300, insurance and hotel deposit) must be made in Danish Kroner (DKK) and payable to **"NGO Forum '95"**, c/o DIS Congress Service Copenhagen A/S

No registration or hotel reservation will be confirmed until DIS Congress Service Copenhagen A/S has received the payment. Payment must be remitted as follows:

- by **banker's draft or check** drawn on a Danish Bank
- by **bank transfer** to bank account No. 4180-892508 (NGO '95) in Den Danske bank, Frederiksberggade 1, DK-1012 Copenhagen K, Denmark  
(Not applicable for payments made in Denmark)
- by **postal giro** transfer to Danish giro account No. 4 02 46 80 (NGO '95)
- by **credit card**. By my signature I authorize DIS to charge my credit card. The total amount must be written on the following line:

DKK \_\_\_\_\_  Access  Amex  Eurocard  Master  Visa

Card No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry date: \_\_\_\_\_

Remember to state participant's **NAME** and **"NGO Forum '95"** on all payments!

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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# registration form

please return this form in a letter or by fax to:

"NGO Forum '95"  
c/o DIS CONGRESS SERVICE COPENHAGEN A/S  
Herlev Ringvej 2 C  
DK-2730 Herlev, denmark  
Fax: +45 44 92 50 50

84

## Request for meeting facilities on NGO Forum '95, Copenhagen, March 3-12, 1995.

Fax to: +45 32 96 89 19 or MAIL to:

NGO Forum '95, Njalsgade 13, DK-2300 Copenhagen S, Denmark.

**Note:** only fill in this form if you are organising a meeting or a cultural event at NGO Forum '95. If you plan two or more meetings or events, you have to fill in 1 form for each event planned. Please copy this form if you need more than one.

Please write in **BLOCK LETTERS**. Write **Clearly** and in **English**.

Organisation (Please do not use abbreviations): \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person, Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Family name: \_\_\_\_\_ First name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Your main area(s) of activity: (fix an order of priority, mark a maximum of 3 activities, using the numbers 1-3 / 1 being first priority)

- |  |   |                                       |   |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Employment         | <input type="checkbox"/> Human Rights | <input type="checkbox"/> United Nations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Men                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Environment        | <input type="checkbox"/> Poverty      | <input type="checkbox"/> Art & Culture  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Women                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Integration | <input type="checkbox"/> Disabled     | <input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Development        | <input type="checkbox"/> Health       | <input type="checkbox"/> Refugees       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seniors                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Education          | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing      | <input type="checkbox"/> Media          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____ |   |                                       |   |

What type of meeting will you hold: (tick one box only)

- Conference  Workshop  
 Other (Describe): \_\_\_\_\_

Cultural event:

- Which type of cultural event will you hold: (tick one box only)  
 Theatre  Dance  Music  Video film  Movie  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

# meeting facilities

In which language will you hold the event?  English  Spanish  French  Danish

How many people do you expect will participate in the event? (tick one box only)

- 10-20  25-50  50-100  100-200  300-400  1000-2000

Specify preferred date(s), if any, you want the meeting facility: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred time: From: \_\_\_\_\_ To: \_\_\_\_\_

There will be time blocks of 1 hour and 45 minutes: (9.00-10.45, 11.00-12.45, 13.00-14.45, 15.00-16.45, 17.00-18.45, 19.00-20.45) You can reserve more than one block.

Do you have special requirements for disabled? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If YES Which: \_\_\_\_\_

What is the title of your event? \_\_\_\_\_

Which issues will you discuss?: Specify: \_\_\_\_\_

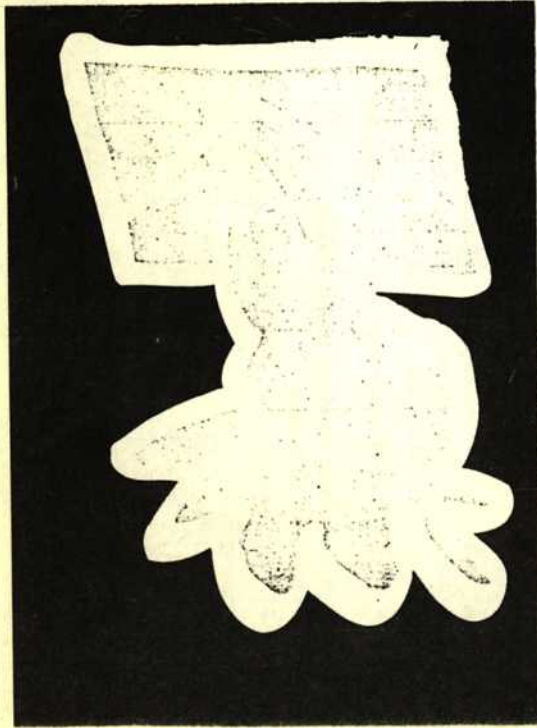
**Deadline: 1st December 1994.**

No assurance can be given that requests for meeting facilities received after the 1st December 1994 can be fulfilled.

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85





# meeting facilities

*please return this form in a letter or by fax to:*

"NGO Forum '95"  
Njalsgade 13 C  
DK-2300 Copenhagen S  
Denmark  
Fax 45 32 96 89 19

### **Request for exhibition space on NGO Forum '95, Copenhagen, March 3-12, 1995.**

Fax to +45 32 96 89 19 or MAIL to:  
NGO Forum '95, Njalsgade 13, DK-2300 Copenhagen S, Denmark.  
**Note: only fill in this form if you wish to reserve exhibition space at NGO Forum '95.**  
Please write in **BLOCK LETTERS**. Write **Clearly** and in **English**.

Organisation (Please do not use abbreviations): \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact Person, Title: \_\_\_\_\_ First name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Family name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Country: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

- Please reserve a table for display of materials only. Free of charge
- Please reserve a small booth 5m<sup>2</sup> at DKK 500 per booth for the 3rd-12th of March 1995
- Please reserve a large booth 10m<sup>2</sup> at DKK 1000 per booth for the 3rd-12th of March 1995

**Payment:**  
All payments must be made in Danish Kroner (DKK) and payable to "NGO Exhibition '95",  
c/o DIS Congress Service Copenhagen A/S, Herlev Ringvej 2C, DK-2730 Herlev, Denmark.  
**Note: All cancellations** must be sent to DIS in writing (fax, letter, telex). Cancellations  
received before January 1st, 1995 will be refunded in full less a processing fee of DKK 100.  
For cancellations received after January 1st, 1995 no refunds will be made.

### **PAYMENT MUST BE MADE IN ADVANCE IN ORDER TO GUARANTEE YOUR SPACE**

Payment must be remitted as follows:  
 by **banker's draft or check** drawn on a Danish Bank.  
 by **bank transfer** to bank account No. 4180-892427 (NGO Exhüb) in Den Danske Bank, Frederiksberggade 1, DK-1012 Copenhagen K, Denmark (**Not applicable for payments made in Denmark**).

by **credit card**. By my signature I authorize DIS to charge my credit card. The total amount must be written on the following line: DKK \_\_\_\_\_

Access  Amex  Eurocard  Mastercard  Visa  
Card No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Remember to state Organisation's Name and "NGO Exhibition" on all payments!  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Deadline 1st December 1994.**

**REMEMBER TO MAKE A COPY OF THIS FORM FOR YOUR OWN FILES**



from:  
NGO-Forum '95  
Njalsgade 13C  
DK-2300 København S  
Denmark  
Tlf: +45 32 96 19 95  
fax: +45 32 96 89 19

**A**  
**Prioritaire**



*please return this form in a letter or by fax to:*

"NGO Forum '95"  
Njalsgade 13 C  
DK-2300 Copenhagen S  
Denmark  
Fax 45 32 96 89 19

사회개발 정상회의  
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**exhibition facilities**



## Poverty and Livelihoods: Whose Reality Counts?

Robert Chambers  
Institute of Development Studies  
University of Sussex

The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors  
and they should not be attributed to UNDP.



## Contents

Summary/Overview	3
Glossary of Meanings	4
Professional and the Poor: Whose Reality Counts?	5
The Context and Record	5
Professional Reality: Rhetoric and Concepts	7
Thinking about Income-Poverty	7
Thinking about Employment	9
Offsetting Normal Professional Biases	10
The Realities of the Poor	11
Dimensions of Deprivation	14
Sustainable Livelihoods	16
The Paradigm of Reversals: the Institutional, Professional and Personal Challenge	20
Wellbeing and Livelihoods: Implications for Policy and Practice	23
A Current Agenda	23
Reversals and Altruism: the new agenda	24
Whose Reality Will Count at the World Summit for Social Development?	28
Table 1: Reported Improvements in Indicators of Human Wellbeing in Low- and Middle-Income Countries	29
Table 2: One Estimate of Population Living in Absolute Poverty	29
Table 3: Contrasting Tendencies in Professional and Poor People's Realities	29
Table 4: Indicator of wellbeing in two Rajasthan village, of households whose per capita real income declined 5 per cent or more over two decades	30
Figure 1: Components and Flows in a Livelihood	30
Notes	31



## Summary/Overview<sup>1</sup>

Anti-poverty rhetoric is widespread, and some indicators of human wellbeing have improved. Current conditions are, though, often appalling, trends in many places negative, and future prospects bad for hundreds of millions of people.

In assessing conditions, and seeing what to do, professionals' realities are universal, reductionist, standardised and stable. Those of economists dominate, expressed in poverty thinking concerned with income-poverty, and employment thinking concerned with jobs. Both project Northern, more industrial and urban, conditions, concerns and categories onto Southern, more agricultural and rural, realities. Both have force but miss much and mislead. Professional biases have been challenged but they remain deep, secure and distorting.

The realities of poor people are local, complex, diverse and dynamic. Income-poverty, though important, is only one aspect of deprivation. Participatory appraisal confirms many dimensions and criteria of disadvantage, illbeing and wellbeing as people experience them. In addition to poverty, these include social inferiority, isolation, physical weakness, vulnerability, seasonal deprivation, powerlessness and humiliation.

Sustainable livelihoods are an objective on which most poor people and professionals can agree. Household livelihood strategies often involve different members in diverse activities and sources of support at different times of the year. Many of these, like home gardening, exploiting common property resources, share-rearing livestock, family splitting, and tending are largely unseen by normal professionals. A sustainable livelihood-intensive strategy stresses natural resources management, redistribution of livelihood resources, prices and payments, health, abolishing restriction and hassle, and safety nets for poor people at bad times.

A paradigm of reversals and altruism demands a new professionalism. The paradigm and the new professionalism put people before things, and poor people and their priorities first of all. The challenges presented are institutional, professional and personal. The policy and practical mean to promote and sustain wellbeing, livelihood and equity include two complementary agendas, one conventional and one new. Underlying the new agenda is the basic human right of poor people to conduct their own analysis. Four elements in this new agenda are:

- \* analysis and action by local people, especially the poor
- \* sustainable livelihoods
- \* decentralisation, democracy and diversity
- \* professional and personal change

Reversals and a radical rethink are required if the realities of the poor are to count at the World Summit for Social Development.

## Glossary of Meanings

Much confusion, and some false consensus, come from vague and different uses of words. The senses in which some key words will be used in this paper are as follows:

- \* deprivation refers to lacking what is needed for wellbeing and a full and good life. Its dimensions are physical, social, economic, political and psychological. It includes forms of disadvantage such as physical weakness, isolation, poverty, vulnerability, and powerlessness.
- \* development means good change
- \* employment means having a job, with an employer who provides remuneration (usually a wage or salary) for work done. It does not include sporadic casual labour.
- \* illbeing is the experience of bad quality of life
- \* income-poor and income-poverty refer to low per capita income
- \* livelihood refers to the means of gaining a living, including livelihood capabilities, tangible assets, and intangible assets (Chambers and Conway 1992). Employment can provide a livelihood, but most livelihoods of the poor are based on multiple activities and sources of food, income and security
- \* normal professionalism is the thinking, values, method and behaviour dominant in a profession or discipline<sup>2</sup>
- \* paradigm means a coherent and mutually supporting pattern of concepts, values, methods and action, amenable to wide application
- \* poor, as the adjective for poverty, means more than income-poor, and applies also to lack of assets, access and basic needs. I have also lapsed into the common broader usage of poor as a synonym for deprived, that is lacking what is needed for wellbeing and a full and good life.
- \* poverty refers to lack of physical necessities, assets, and income. It includes but is more than being income-poor. Poverty can be distinguished from other dimensions of deprivation such as physical weakness, isolation, vulnerability and powerlessness with which it interacts (Chambers 1983: 108-139)
- \* social development means change to "enhanced individual and community wellbeing, and autonomy, within an integrated, equitable and just society" (Eyben 1993)
- \* sustainable livelihood refers to a living which is adequate for the satisfaction of basic needs, and secure against anticipated shocks and stresses<sup>3</sup>
- \* vulnerability mean "defencelessness, insecurity and exposure to risk, shocks and stress" (IDS 1989:1). It is not the same as income-poverty or poverty.
- \* wellbeing is the experience of good quality of life



Thus wellbeing and illbeing refer more to experience, poverty more to physical lack, and deprivation to a much wider range of lacks and disadvantages. "Poverty and deprivation" is short for "Poverty and other forms of deprivation".

"It is not that we should simply seek new and better ways for managing society, the economy and the world. The point is that we should fundamentally change how we behave"  
Vaclav Havel<sup>4</sup>

### Professionals and the Poor: Whose Reality Counts?

This paper is written as a challenge to all development professionals, including myself, and especially to those who prepare, take part in, and follow up on, the World Summit for Social Development. It asks: whose reality counts? The reality of the few in centres of powers? Or the reality of the many poor at the periphery? It argues that these realities differ more than most recognise. Insights into these differences and their implications are generating a new paradigm and a new and hopeful agenda. To recognise, accept, act on and evolve that new agenda is a personal, professional and institutional challenge, demanding deep change in the ways we think and behave. This requires altruism and reversals of much that is now normal. The World Summit for Social Development provides an opportunity for this change, for putting first the reality of the poor and making it count. Will the opportunity be recognised and seized?

### The Context and Record

To start with the context seems right in an overview paper, but for those weary of pedestrian reviews of the human condition, let me recommend skipping to the last paragraph of this section.

Any normal balance sheet of development has to acknowledge achievements. According to the figures presented in table 1, aggregate percentage improvements have been shown in some of the usual indicators of human wellbeing over recent decades<sup>5</sup>.

Smallpox has been eradicated from the earth, and polio and Guinea Worm disease greatly reduced. In little more than a generation the proportion of rural families with access to safe water is reported to have risen from less than 10 per cent to more than 60 per cent, and the proportion of children in primary school from less than a half to more than three quarters. Facts and figures like these can lull one into an impression of laudable achievement.

The record is, though, appalling. Things are less bad than they would have been had nothing been done, and without the efforts of many organisations and individuals. But the glass that looks half full is also half empty; and as population grows the glass gets bigger. The downside is dreadful. Averages conceal adverse income distribution and the condition of underclasses. Some economies are on a downward slide, especially where there is civil war. Malaria and tuberculosis spread again. The time bomb of HIV menaces whole peoples and economies with its insidious spread. Life expectancy in some countries has fallen, with civil disorder, famine and breakdown in government services. Nearly one billion people remain illiterate, and the primary school drop out rate is 30 percent. Perhaps as many as 40 million people are refugees or displaced within their countries. Globally the number of people conventionally defined as in absolute poverty is often quoted as being over one billion, between

one person in five and one in four, as for example in table 2<sup>6</sup>.

Scholastic argument about figures will have no end. The danger is that debate distracts from seeing what to do. Aggregation and generalisation are tempting and difficult. But trends seem evident: that poverty, suffering and other deprivations are increasingly perceived as diverse; that living conditions are moving in different directions in different countries, and for different groups of people; and that for hundreds of millions of people these have a downward momentum and are becoming worse. Poverty, suffering and deprivation seem to be becoming more regional, concentrated more in those countries which are least able to improve conditions, as in many of Sub-Saharan Africa; or in regions within countries, as with the three Indian states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh with their combined population (1994) of over 300 million. As the scourge of HIV spreads, the hitherto localised impacts of AIDS deaths will soon be regional: 8 million AIDS-related deaths are projected to have occurred by the year 2000<sup>7</sup>, the target year of Health for All. In the longer term, the time bomb of HIV mocks development and makes fantasy of much current debate about development. With AIDS, as in other ways, the South is more exposed and vulnerable, will suffer more, and will be far more devastated than the North.

Illbeing and early death take many forms; and those which are in the news — genocide and civil wars in Rwanda, Angola, the former Yugoslavia and elsewhere, and the denials of human rights as in Myanmar, Tibet and many other countries, all demand attention. But much more widely, less conspicuous illbeing and early death prevail. Much of it is hidden or taboo, as with the selective elimination, persecution and plight of females - foetuses, girls and women. The enormity of the abuse, sexual and other, of girl children, is still concealed everywhere by the sacred secrecy of the family. Worldwide, and with a concentration in South Asia, there are 110 million missing females, who would have been alive at the sex ratios of the industrial countries. These missing women are almost the total (female and male) population of Pakistan, or four Canadas, or any two together of France, Iran, Italy, Turkey or the UK, or the combined population of Sudan, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi and Zambia. The scale of the discrimination, deprivation and suffering which underlie these figures beggars the imagination.

The scale and awfulness are the worse because as never before the powerful can see so much of what is happening and have power to act. The nightmare foreseen by C.P. Snow in 1959 has come about. Communications have brought us all dramatically closer, and have made it easier and quicker to do things. Now we, the rich, sit in our warm rooms and comfy seats and watch the poor die on television, turning them on and off at will. Frequent viewing inoculates against compassion. There is more insight than ever before, accessible to those who want it, about how to enable poor people to do better, yet many of the same mistakes and misdemeanours persist at every level of interaction. There is more wealth in the world than ever before, and the peace dividend presents a windfall to give. Yet aid declines, and hundreds of millions of the poorest are on a downward slide, to become poorer and more vulnerable.

To those who read this paper, all this will be familiar, even boring. It has all been said before, and will be said again. And one wonders about the diverse and different realities behind the statistics. But in an overview paper, it has seemed right to bow to convention by starting with statements like these.

The excitement comes when we ask whether anything has changed in our insights, and



what we should and could now do.

The thrust of this paper is that to see better what to do, "we", the sort of people who are assembled here, have more power to change the world for the better than we normally realise, but that to grasp and use that power we have to question our realities and concepts, explore and embrace a new paradigm, adopt a new professionalism, empower the poor to analyse and express their reality, and then put their reality first.

### Professional Reality: Rhetoric and Concepts

We are all part of a world system which perpetuates poverty and deprivation. Those who are poor and deprived do not wish to be poor and deprived. We who are well off and who have power say that poverty and deprivation are bad and should be reduced or eliminated. Yet whatever else does not last, poverty and deprivation prove robustly sustainable. Why?

The usual reflex is to seek answers to this question by analysing poverty and deprivation themselves. Papers on the poor proliferate, like this one. And there are many like me, who are not poor, willing to write about those who are. Papers on poverty are commissioned for conferences and roundtables, for symposia and summits. One may speculate on what topics the poor and powerless would commission papers if they could convene conferences and summits: perhaps on greed, hypocrisy and exploitation. But the poor are powerless and cannot and do not convene summits; and those papers are rarely written. It is not surprising. We do not like to examine ourselves. To salve our consciences we rationalise. Neo-liberalism paints greed as inadvertent altruism. The objects of development are anyway the poor, not us. It is they who are the problem, not us. We are the solution. So we hold the spotlight to them (from a safe distance). The poor have no spotlight to hold to us.

But poverty and deprivation are functions of polarisation, of power and powerlessness. Any practical analysis has to examine the whole system: "us", the powerful, as well as "them" the powerless. Since we have more power to act, it is hard to evade the imperative to turn the spotlight round and look at ourselves.

In doing this, rhetoric and concepts can provide a starting point. Our views of the realities of the poor, and of what should be done, are constructed mainly from a distance, and can be seen to be constructed mainly for our convenience. We embody those views in the words and concepts which we use. Two which receive much prominence, and are much stressed in the outline papers for this Roundtable, are poverty and employment.

### Thinking about Income-Poverty

"Poverty is used in two main senses: in its first, common usage in development, it is a broad blanket word used to refer to the whole spectrum of deprivation and illbeing; in its second usage, poverty has a narrow technical definition for purposes of measurement and comparison. In the words of one authority, "'poverty' has to be given scientifically acceptable universal meaning and measurement" (Townend 1993:3). Poverty is then defined as low income, as it is reported, recorded and analysed, or often as low consumption, which is easier to measure. This is the normal meaning of poverty among economists, and is used for measuring poverty lines, for comparing groups and regions, and often for assessing progress or backsliding in development.

In this paper it is described as income-poverty.

In much professional discourse the narrow technical definition colonises the common usage. Income-poverty starts a proxy or correlate for other deprivations, but then subsumes them. What is recorded as having been measured — usually low consumption — then masquerades in speech and prose as the much larger reality. It is then but a short step to treating what has not been measured as not really real. Patterns of dominance are then reinforced: of the material over the experiential; of the physical over the social; of the measured and measurable over the unmeasured and unmeasurable; of economic over social values; of economists over disciplines concerned with people as people. It then becomes the reductionism of normal economics, not the experience of the poor, that defines poverty.

The pre-eminence of income-poverty seems wrong. But it is understandable. Standing back, four reasons can be seen for its widespread acceptance and use as a measure and concept.

First, economists and their concepts still dominate the development discourse. There can be few multilateral or bilateral aid agencies, and few ministries of planning, where economists are not the most numerous profession (unless accountants). Economists' concepts, measures and methods are accepted as the norm in much development practice and policy-making. This is not to undervalue the utility of economic concepts and methods. But it is to note that one way of seeing things prevails, and what is poverty to economists tends to become the normal meaning and measure for other disciplines and professions.

Second, income-poverty is a concept and measure generated and sustained in the cores of power, reflecting and reinforced by conditions in the rich industrial North. Poor people in the North have been mainly urban, in an industrial milieu, and have tended to rely on cash income, whether wages or social security payments; so much of their economic status can be captured in cash income, or largely cash-based consumption. Projecting and applying this Northern concept of poverty to the South assumes that similar conditions prevail.

Third, poverty defined as income-poverty or consumption-poverty is measurable. Non-monetary flows for subsistence or consumption can in principle be given monetary values and conflated into a single scale. This permits comparisons worldwide between the income, or more usually consumption, levels of different households, regions and nations. It also makes possible the measurement and assessment of poverty lines (meaning income-poverty or consumption-poverty lines). These provide time series measurements to show how income-poverty or consumption-poverty are changing, and so how well a government can be presumed to be doing in the reduction of poverty in these senses. The utility of the measures for centrally placed professionals gives them a primacy and pride of place which tends to go unquestioned. What is measurable and measured then becomes what is real, standardising the diverse, and excluding the divergent and different.

Fourth, it is held that the worse off people are, the more they are preoccupied with income and consumption, with the need to gain subsistence food and basic goods in order to survive. In a recent article, Martin Greeley argued for an income-based concept of welfare, and that "...only when absolute poverty [meaning absolute income-poverty] is no longer the core issue should our measure of development encompass a broader agenda of human need" (Greeley 1994:57).



Given these four factors and beliefs, it is not surprising to find that income-poverty has some primacy as a measure in the World Bank. A widely quoted statement by Lewis Preston, President of the World Bank (in the foreword to the *Poverty Reduction Handbook* (World Bank 1993c) illustrates this:

“Sustainable poverty reduction is the overarching objective of the World Bank. It is the benchmark by which our performance as a development institution will be measured.”

The overarching objective is defined as something which will be measured — sustainable poverty reduction. The *Handbook* elaborates on this thinking, giving primacy to the technical meaning of poverty as income-poverty, which becomes the end or objective of development. Thus the Preface states that “investments in human resources help to increase incomes and reduce poverty” (my emphasis). The World Development Report 1990’s approach to sustainable poverty reduction is, it says, two-pronged, consisting of “broadly based economic growth, to generate efficient income-earning opportunities for the poor, and improved access to education, health care, and other social services, so the poor can take advantage of these opportunities” (my emphasis). In this thinking, income is the end; improved access to education, health care, and other social services are justified as means to that economic end. They are not presented here as justified as ends in themselves, or as means to enhanced capabilities or reduced suffering, or to self-respect, fulfilment or other human values (all hard to measure). Social development is a means not an end; the end is economic development.

That the World Bank states sustainable poverty reduction, and not just being a good bank, to be its overarching objective is a matter for celebration. Nor should the narrowness and circularity of the thinking be cause for surprise in an organisation which is called a bank, with many economists, and conditioned by the normal economic thinking. But Preston’s quite simple statement contrasts with the mission statements of several bilateral agencies. One example is that of the Overseas Development Administration of the British Government, where social development advisers are relatively more numerous and influential:

“The aim of our overseas aid effort is to promote sustainable economic and social development and good government, in order to improve the quality of life and reduce poverty, suffering and deprivation in developing countries” (FCO 1992:28)

By going beyond economic development to include social development and good government, and beyond reducing poverty to improving the quality of life and reducing suffering and deprivation, this embodies a much broader set of values.

Few would want to deny that measures of income-poverty have uses. They point to one dimension of inequality and inequity, between nations and within nations. But income-poverty is only one measure of many, and it is suspect because it serves the needs of professionals in the cores of power, rather than emerging from the realities of the poor at the peripheries.

### Thinking about Employment

As with poverty, so with employment, the normal professional categories have been applied worldwide. Employment, unemployment, job, workplace and workforce are concepts and categories derived from urban industrial experience in the North. As with poverty, attempts

have been made to impose and apply them in the South, including the rural and agricultural South. Perhaps this will become more marked now that the North is so preoccupied with its own unemployment. In his magisterial work on Asian poverty, a quarter of a century ago, Gunnar Myrdal agonised over the misleading preconception of Western economics as applied to Asian conditions:

“When new data are assembled, the conceptual categories used are inappropriate to the conditions existing: as, for example, when the underutilization of the labour force in the South Asian countries is analysed according to Western concepts of unemployment, disguised unemployment, and underemployment. The resulting mountains of figures have either no meaning or a meaning other than that imputed to them... The very fact that the researcher gets figures to play with tends to confirm his original, biased approach...the continuing collection of data under biased notions only postpones the day when reality can effectively challenge inherited preconceptions.” (Myrdal 1968)

And he called (vol 2: 1027) for behavioural studies founded on observations of the raw reality.

Since Myrdal wrote, the informal sector has been discovered and explored, and livelihood has been proposed as a better word than employment to capture the complex and diverse reality of the poor. But employment thinking remains alive, strong, and, by some, universally applied. In the background note identifying topics and concerns on which papers are invited for this Roundtable, the third section is entitled “Expansion of Productive Employment and Sustainable Livelihoods”. But in the whole document the word livelihood appears only twice, compared with employment 28 times, unemployment 11, underemployment 5, jobs 6 and workforce 4, all words and concepts derived from and linked with formal employment. Employment-thinking is deep-rooted. Whatever happens to the poor, full employment seems assured for normal economists and statisticians as they continue to analyse the available data on employment and unemployment, and to project their categories and concerns onto the raw and rather different reality of most of the poor in the South. Myrdal would be sad to learn how little has changed.

### Offsetting Normal Professional Biases

Efforts have been made to offset the biases towards the income measure of poverty and deprivation, and towards an employment measure of livelihood

Those offsetting income-poverty are well known. The World Bank’s *World Development Reports*, since their inception, have ranked countries according to per capita GDP. However, the weak relationship between per capita GDP and human wellbeing is a commonplace. Income distribution is critical. Much of the good life is uncounted in GDP (friendship, love, story-telling, self-sacrifice, laughter, music, health, creativity...) and much of the bad life adds to it (insurance claims, security guards, fossil fuel consumption, cutting down forests...) <sup>8</sup>. Very different perspectives have been given by UNICEF’s annual *State of the World’s Children* which ranks countries according to their under-5 mortality; by the Physical Quality of Life Index (PQLI) which combines in a single scale life expectancy at one year, adult literacy and infant mortality; the human development index (HDI) of UNDP’s annual *Human Development Report* which combines per capita GDP, life expectancy at birth, and literacy; and by the World Bank itself, with its *Social Indicators of Development 1993* which lists poverty indicators such as public



expenditure on social services, immunisation, and fertility rates.

All these show up weaknesses in the correlations between income-poverty and some other deprivations. Strikingly, the latest *Human Development Report* (HDR 1994:15) shows Sri Lanka, Nicaragua, Pakistan and Guinea all with per capita incomes in the US\$400-\$500 range, but life expectancies of, respectively, 71, 65, 58 and 44, and infant mortality rates of, respectively, 24, 53, 99 and 135. Whatever the criticisms of these measures and scales, they have been useful for comparisons and critical in forcing reflection on priorities.

Efforts to offset the bias towards employment measures are less developed. Livelihoods are harder to measure than mortality rates, life expectancy, or literacy. So they are treated as less real. Labour-intensive growth as an objective is designed to increase employment, and may indeed do so. But it is not the same as sustainable livelihood-intensity where livelihoods depend on a multiplicity of activities and resources.

The root problem is that professionals and poor people seek, experience and construct different realities. Some contrasting tendencies are summarised in table 3.

The view from on high seeks and sees sameness and simplifying stereotypes.

The World Bank, highest<sup>9</sup> of us all  
Looks down to see poor people small  
Like atoms all, a shape and size  
For which it's right to standardise

The question is whether concepts and measures that are universal, standardised, measurable, generated by and designed for conditions in the urban industrial North can be universally applied in the more rural and agricultural South, and whether they fit or distort the diverse and complex realities of most of the poor.

### The Realities of the Poor

A person who is not poor who pronounces on what matters to those who are poor is in a trap. Self-critical analysis, sensitive rapport, and participatory methods can contribute some valid insight into the values, priorities and preferences of poor people. We can struggle to reconstruct our realities to reflect what poor people indicate to be theirs. But there will always be distortions. We can never fully escape from our conditioning. And the nature of interactions between the poor and the non-poor affect what is shared and learnt. In what follows, however much I try, I cannot avoid being wrong in substance and emphasis. For I am trying to generalise about what is local (and both rural and urban), complex, diverse, dynamic, personal, and multidimensional, and to do this from scattered evidence and experience, perceived, filtered and fitted together inevitably in a personally idiosyncratic way. Error is inherent in the enterprise. There must always be doubts. But if the reality of poor people is to count more, we have to dare to try to know it better.

Help come from field researchers, especially social anthropologists, from those who have been facilitating new participatory methods of appraisal, and increasingly from poor people

themselves. The new methods enable poor people to analyse and express what they know, experience, need and want. They bring to light many dimensions of deprivation, illbeing and wellbeing, and the values and priorities of poor people. Three sets of findings provide illustrative insights:

#### i. Jodha's paradox: income-poorer but better off

N.S. Jodha (1988) asked farmers and villagers in two villages in Rajasthan for their own categories and criteria of changing economic status. They named 38 criteria. Comparing data from his fieldwork in 1964-66 with 1982-84 he found that the 36 households which were more than 5 per cent worse off in per capita real income were on average better off according to 37 out of their own 38 criteria. (The one exception was consumption of milk, more of which was being sold outside the village). The improvements included quality of housing, wearing shoes regularly, less dependence in the lean season, and not having to migrate for work (see table 4). Several of the criteria reflected more independence.

The reality which these income-poorer villagers presented to Jodha contrast with a normal economist's reality. They were income-poorer, and in an economist's terms worse off; but in their own terms, they were on average much better off.

#### ii. Findings from participatory analysis

Analysis by local people using participatory rural appraisal (PRA) methods have shown similar outcomes.

In a PRA process in a Pakistan village in April 1994 (pers comm Rashida Dohad)

"The local people did a matrix on their existing sources of income to determine the preferred income source. Interestingly, for me, the criterion "more income" was the 9th or 10th one listed (out of a total of about 20 criteria). "More time at home", "ability to get involved in neighbours joys and sorrows" were listed earlier...the generally perceived-to-be-preferred source of income (high-paying skilled/manual labour in the Middle Eastern countries, particularly Dubai) did not emerge as victor..., the reason worked out by the local analysts being that it did badly on their social criteria."

Diverse criteria have also emerged from wellbeing ranking, one of the methods of PRA. In an economic tradition, "wealth" was originally the criterion by which local people were asked to card sort the households in their community (Grandin 1988). Repeatedly, when outsider facilitators have tried to focus discussion and ranking on wealth, local people have insisted on using a wider range of criteria as contributing to their concepts of wellbeing and illbeing, of the good and bad life (Mukherjee 1992; Schaefer 1992; Sarch 1992: A. and J. Rajaratnam pers comm). Health and physical disability feature strongly. A range of criteria from various sources is presented in Box A on the following page.



### Box A:

A short illustrative list of some criteria used by local people in wellbeing grouping and ranking: a selection from sources in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa (expressed here in the negative form)

- \* Disabled (eg blind, crippled, mentally impaired, chronically sick)
- \* Widowed
- \* Lacking land, livestock, farm equipment, grinding mill....
- \* Cannot decently bury their dead
- \* Cannot send children to school
- \* Having more mouths-to-feed, fewer hands-to-help
- \* Lacking able-bodied members who can fend for their families in the event of crisis
- \* With bad housing
- \* Having vices (e.g. alcoholism)
- \* Being "poor in people", lacking social supports
- \* Having to put children in employment
- \* Single parents
- \* Having to accept demeaning or low status work
- \* Having food security for only a few months each year
- \* Being dependent on common property resources

Sources include Sarch 1992, Redd Barna 1993, A. Rajaratnam and J. Rajaratnam pers comm. 1993.

### iii. Participatory Poverty Assessments

The World Bank has been breaking new ground in its Poverty Assessments. In the words of Sven Sandstrom (1994:13) these are designed

"to help us to address three fundamental issues: Who is poor? Why are they poor? What needs to be done to reduce the number of the poor?"

The Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPA) conducted under the auspices of the World Bank in Ghana, Zambia and Kenya, and some other countries now have the potential for going beyond these questions, to ask: Who defines poverty? Who are the poor as defined within a society by local people themselves? What criteria of poverty or deprivation do they have? What are their priorities?

The PPA sponsored by the World Bank in Zambia (Norton, Owen and Milimo 1994), using PRA techniques, gave insight about conditions, trends and poor people's priorities with practical implications. To illustrate some of the range:

- \* health was repeatedly and consistently given a higher priority than education. Indeed, education was not raised as a priority need in most communities
- \* payment of school fees was found to be required at the most difficult time of the year, coinciding with food shortages, heavy work in agriculture, indebtedness, expenditure for Christmas, and high incidence of disease

- \* the rudeness of health staff was a deterrent to poor people going for treatment
- \* food-for-work at bad times was highly valued
- \* all weather roads were desired not only for marketing but also to give access to clinics and hospital during the rains
- \* mangoes are good because they provide food at the worst times of the year.

Insight such as these indicate action — postponing school fee payments, training health staff to be more caring, food for work for all-weather roads, improving and spreading mangoes and similar tree food crops — with high benefit in poor people's own terms for relatively low financial cost.

### Dimensions of Deprivation

These and other examples illustrate the multi-dimensionality of deprivation and disadvantage as poor people experience them. Deprived people are often thought of as being uniform. The "rural masses" commonly expresses a stereotype. But if anything there is more diversity among the poor than among the non-poor. Under extreme deprivation, as Viktor Frankl found in his study of inmates of concentration camps, people react in sharply different ways. Disadvantage itself takes many forms. Any list of dimensions will be provisional and personal. The eight which follow are an attempt to capture some of poor people's reality, but can surely be improved upon. Of the eight, the first three are better recognised.

The three better recognised dimensions of deprivation are:

1. *Poverty* refers to lack of physical necessities, assets, and income. It includes but is more than being income-poor. Poverty can be distinguished from other dimensions of deprivation such as physical weakness, isolation, vulnerability and powerlessness.
  2. *Social inferiority* can be ascribed, acquired, or linked with age and lifecycle. It can be socially defined as genetically inferior or disadvantaged, including gender, caste, race and ethnic group, or being a "lower" in terms of class, social group or occupation, or linked with age, as with children and sometimes daughters-in-law.
  3. *Isolation* refers to being peripheral and cut off. Poor people can be isolated geographically - living in a "remote" area; isolated in communication, lacking contacts and information, including not being able to read; isolated in lack of access to social services and markets; and isolated in lack of social and economic supports.
- Five other dimensions prominent in the realities of the poor and weak have been relatively neglected by the development professions.
4. *Physical weakness*. Professionals, dependent as they are on their brains more than their bodies, tend to undervalue the importance to many of the poor of the asset of a fit, strong body, and the liability of a body which is sick, weak or disabled. Repeatedly, in defining illbeing and wellbeing, poor people mention physical weakness, sickness or disability, both as bad in



themselves and bad in their effects on others. Having a household member who is physically weak, sick or handicapped, unable to contribute to household livelihood, but needing to be fed and cared for, is a common cause of income-poverty and deprivation, as graphically shown for river-blindness (Evans 1989) and now spreading widely in new forms with AIDS. The prominence of disability in the consciousness of poor people in the South is shown by the frequency with which, in participatory social mapping, village analysts spontaneously represent the disabled as a category. Those who are sick are a concern of health services. Those who are otherwise disabled are numerous, yet neglected. There are perhaps 200 million disabled persons in the South (Helander 1993)<sup>10</sup>, and probably more than another 200 million impoverished and adversely affected through having to support the disabled. Yet the UNDP *Human Development Report 1993* does not include disability in any of its tables. The disabled are among the most unseen, and politically powerless, and not only in the South.

5. *Vulnerability*. Much prose uses "vulnerable" and "poor" as alternating synonyms. But vulnerability is not the same as income-poverty or poverty more broadly defined. It means not lack or want, but defencelessness, insecurity and exposure to contingencies. It has two sides: the external side of exposure to risk, shocks and stress, and the internal side of defencelessness, meaning a lack of means to cope without damaging loss. Loss can take many forms — becoming or being physically weaker, economically impoverished, socially dependent, humiliated or psychologically harmed.

For hundreds of millions, vulnerability has increased, and so their livelihoods have become less securely sustainable, even when their incomes have risen. In most cultures and contexts, patron-client safety nets have weakened, the extended family gives less support, contingencies such as weddings, funerals, brideprice and dowry have become more costly, and effective health services have become less accessible or more expensive or both. More people have moved into insecure environments. More people live exposed to risk of famine, flood, storm, and some human, crop and animal diseases, than before. War and civil disorder remain widespread. And where there have been past disasters, many are more vulnerable through the earlier loss of livelihood assets and means to cope. It then takes less to make a famine, as in the current 1994 famine in Ethiopia.

For poor people there are often trade-offs between income and security. Income-poverty thinking can neglect vulnerability in seeking to raise income. On a huge scale, the Integrated Rural Development Programme in India provides subsidised loans to poor people to acquire assets aimed at raising their incomes. But as many have experienced, this increases vulnerability: loss of the asset can lead to debt and being worse off than before. At the margin, poor people often prefer a lower income with less risk of debt and dependence.

6. *Seasonality*. The seasonal dimensions of deprivation are underperceived by professionals who are urban-based and season-proofed. Yet in tropical seasonality many adverse factors for the poor often coincide during the rains — hard agricultural work, shortage of food, scarcity of money, indebtedness, sickness, the late stages of pregnancy, and diminished access to services; and indicators like birthweights, body weights, infant mortality, and morbidity all bear this out. In the words of a mother in a novel about Sri Lanka:

"I say to the father of my child, "Father of Podi Sinho," I say, "There is no kurrakan in the house, there is no millet and no pumpkin, not even a pinch of salt. Three days now

and I have eaten nothing but jungle leaves. There is no milk in my breasts for the child". Then I get foul words and blows. "Does the rain come in August?" he says. "Can I make the kurrakan flower in July? Hold your tongue, you fool. August is the month in which the children die. What can I do?"<sup>11</sup>

Gerard Gill's book (1991), from which this quotation is taken, is entitled *Seasonality and Agriculture in the Developing World: a problem of the poor and powerless*.

7. *Powerlessness*. The poor are powerless. Dispersed and anxious as they are about access to resources, work and income, it is difficult for them to organise or bargain. Often physically weak and economically vulnerable, they lack influence. Subject to the power of others, they are easy to ignore or exploit. Powerlessness is also, for the powerful, the least acceptable point of intervention to improve the lot of the poor.

8. *Humiliation*. Self-respect, with freedom from dependence, is perhaps the dimension most overlooked and undervalued by professionals. Indira Hirway in Gujarat found that poor people disliked taking debts because what followed from them included "abuses and insults", "helplessness, insults and pain", and "touching the feet of the lender and swallowing insults and abuses" (Hirway 1986: 147, 142, 144). N.S. Jodha (1988) (see table 4) grouped several of the criteria of economic wellbeing he was given by villagers as not being subject to "indispensability of patron's (rich people's) support/mercy/patronage". These criteria included not residing on the patron's land, not taking seed loans from patrons, not taking loans only from patrons, and not marketing produce only through patrons. Of 22 poor informants with whom Tony Beck (1989: 27-8) held long discussions in a village in West Bengal nineteen "did not hesitate in saying that for them respect was more important than food, and that "without respect food won't go into the stomach". And Beck added "If this feeling is widespread among the poor in India, then planners' and academics' exclusive interest in income and nutrition is inadequate for understanding poverty". But humiliation and self-respect do not lend themselves to measurement, are in practice not measured, and so, for normal professionals, barely exist and rarely count.

Deprivation and wellbeing have, then, many dimensions. Poor people have many priorities. What matters most to them often differs from what outsiders assume, is not always easy to measure, and may not be measurable at all. If poor people's realities are to come first, development professionals have to be sensitive, to decentralise, and to empower, enabling poor people to conduct their own analysis and express their own multiple priorities.

### Sustainable Livelihoods

There remain deep dilemmas over "our" knowledge and values<sup>12</sup>, and "theirs". Our knowledge has an advantage with the physical universe and with whatever is microscopic, macroscopic, large-scale or distant from where poor people live. With these our linked communications, instruments and science empower us. But their knowledge has an advantage with the local, the social, whatever is continuously observed and experienced, and whatever close to them touches their lives and livelihoods; and they are the only experts on their life experiences and priorities. But our power in the past has overwhelmed their knowledge, hidden their analytical abilities, and allowed us to assume that we know what they experience and want. The problem is one of balance between two realities — ours which is powerful, and theirs which



is weak. Standing back and standing down, we need to search for overlaps where their realities and aspirations can give rise to practical concepts which we can then use to help empower them.

One such overlap is suggested by sustainable livelihoods<sup>13</sup>. For many of the poor, livelihood seems to fit better than employment as a concept to capture how poor people live, their realistic priorities, and what can help them. "Sustainable" then refers to the longer-term, and "livelihood" to the many activities which make up a living.

On sustainability, it is a common prejudice among those who are not poor that poor people inherently "live hand-to-mouth" and take the short view. But in practice, again and again, they show tenacity and self-sacrifice in trying to take the long view, and safeguarding the basis for their livelihoods. Small farmers with secure rights invest their labour in land shaping, terracing, and creating fertile microenvironments; in harvesting water, silt and nutrients; and in planting and protecting trees. A desperately poor family in Bangladesh only cut down their two trees as a near last resort (Hartmann and Boyce 1983). Alex de Waal (pers. comm.) found a woman in Darfur in Sudan, on leaving her village in a famine, preserving millet seed for planting on her hoped-for return by mixing it with sand to prevent her hungry children eating it. On the basis of extended fieldwork during famine, he concluded that "avoiding hunger is not a policy priority for rural people faced with famine", and "people are quite prepared to put up with considerable degrees of hunger, in order to preserve seed for planting, cultivate their own fields or avoid having to sell an animal" (de Waal 1989 and 1991:68). It is now a widespread finding that as soon as food shortage threatens, poor people eat less and worse in order to protect their livelihood assets in the bad times to come (see e.g. Corbett 1988). It is less the poor and more outsiders who take the short view — contractors who cut the forest, officials fixated on the financial year, and politicians who cannot see beyond the next election.

On livelihoods, the strategies of the poor are usually diverse and often complex. They can be compared to those of hedgehogs and foxes, after the saying of Archilochus that "The fox has many ideas but the hedgehog has one big idea". Full-time employees in the industrial world and industrial sector are hedgehogs, with one big idea, a single source of support. Those poor people, often powerless, desperate or exploited, who have but one survival strategy are the same — slaves, bonded labourers, outworkers tied to supplier-buyers, beggars, some vendors, prostitutes, and some occupational specialists. But most poor people in the South, and more now in the North, are foxes with a portfolio of activities, with different members of the family seeking and finding different sources of food, fuel, animal fodder, cash and support in different ways in different places at different times of the year. Their living is improvised and sustained through their livelihood capabilities, through tangible assets in the form of stores and resources, and through intangible assets in the form of claims and access (figure 1).

Fox strategies are rarely fully revealed by conventional questionnaire surveys. Schedules construct a standardised, short and simple reality, and investigators' incentives are to record less, not more. Also:

"Many aspects of rural livelihoods are not captured in either income or consumption-based survey data. This is because they are neither commoditised, nor evident enough to the researchers to be allocated "imputed values"...Energy (fuelwood) and herbal medicines are two examples. A significant element of the "safety net" for many rural

people in times of stress consists of "famine foods" which can be gathered from bush and fallow lands...".

Norton, Owen and Milimo 1994: 93

The ingenuity and opportunism of poor people, and the diversity and complexity of their strategies, can be illustrated by case studies and the accounts of social anthropologists and others (e.g. Beck 1989, Breman 1985, Davies, Griffith 1994, Gulati 1981, Hirway 1986, Rahmato 1987 ...). Even within the same village, different social groups of the landless can have completely different strategies (e.g. Heyer 1989). Strategies and sources of food, income, support and survival include:

- \* **home gardening** (both rural and urban) and the exploitation of microenvironments. Seven studies in Indonesia reported the proportions of household income deriving from homegardens as variously 10-30, 20-30, over 20, 22-33, 41-51, and 42-51 per cent, while another Indonesia study found the proportion higher among the poor, providing 24 per cent of their income compared with 9 per cent for the well off (cited in Hoogerbrugge and Fresco 1993:12)
- \* **common property resources** – fishing, hunting, grazing, and gathering in lakes, ponds, rivers, the sea, forests, woodlands, swamps, savannahs, hills, wastelands, roadsides.... for any of a vast range of fish, animals, fodders, wild foods, fibres, building materials, fuel, fertiliser, medicines and much else. CPRs are often a major source of livelihood for the rural poor (see e.g. Beck 1994, Jodha forthcoming), and a safety-net fallback source of food and income in bad times
- \* **scavenging** (mainly urban) and **gleaning** (mainly rural), including traditional rights and access to private residues (buttermilk, crop residues as fuel etc.)
- \* **processing, hawking, vending and marketing**, including produce from home gardens and common property resources
- \* **share-rearing of livestock**, where livestock are lent for herding in exchange for rights to some products and/or offspring
- \* **transporting goods** with a horse, donkey, mule, cart, bicycle, or head or backloading
- \* **mutual help**, including small borrowings from relatives and neighbours
- \* **contract outwork** – weaving, rolling cigarettes, making incense sticks...
- \* **casual labour** and piecework especially in agriculture
- \* **specialised occupations** – barbers, blacksmiths, carpenters, prostitutes, tailors
- \* **domestic service** – especially by girls and women
- \* **child labour**, both domestically (collecting fuel-leaves, twigs, branches, dung, collecting fodder, weeding, herding animals, removing stones from fields and ticks from livestock...) and working in factories (making matches, candles, fireworks...), restaurants, people's houses...



- \* **craft work** of many sorts
- \* **mortgaging and selling assets**, future labour and children
- \* **family splitting**, including putting out children to others
- \* **migration** for seasonal work in agriculture, brick-making, urban construction...
- \* **remittances**
- \* **seasonal food-for-work, public works and relief**
- \* **stinting**, in many ways, with food and other consumption
- \* **begging**
- \* **theft**
- \* **trriage** especially with girl children and weaklings and so on.

The point of this incomplete list is to illustrate. Often an individual or a household engages in many livelihood activities such as these over a year. This does not fit any concept of "employment" in "a job". Individuals and families diversify and complicate their livelihood strategies in order to increase income, reduce vulnerability and improve the quality of their lives.

A similar pattern is shown by "the third agriculture" (Chamber, Pacey and Thrupp 1989; Scoones and Thompon in press). The first or industrial agriculture is standardised and simple, and the second or green revolution agriculture has high-yielding packages in controlled conditions. The third agriculture on which perhaps 1.5 billion people depend for their livelihoods, is complex, diverse and risk-prone (CDR). CDR farmers seek to reduce risk and increase food and income by complicating, diversifying and, where labour is available, intensifying their farming systems, adding to their enterprises. They multiply the internal links and flows within their farming systems, for example through aquaculture, composting, cut-and-carry for stallfed livestock, multiple cropping, agroforestry, home gardening, and the concentration of nutrients, soil and water in other microenvironments such as silt deposition fields and other protected pockets of fertility.

For these realities, of strategies of most of the rural poor and many of the urban, sustainable livelihood fits better than employment as a concept. Employment, in the sense of having an employer, a job, a workplace and a wage is more widespread as aspiration than as reality. Where economic crisis and structural adjustment cut urban jobs, the proportion of foxes can be expected to increase. Moreover, however much poor people may seek employment, and educate their children in the hope that they will find a secure and remunerative job, for most such a job is not a realistic prospect. Even in the North, the classic concept of a single employment is being challenged (e.g. by Handy 1989) and portfolio, fox livelihoods becoming more common. More so in much of the South, most livelihoods of the poor will continue to be adaptive performances, improvised and versatile in the face of adverse conditions, sudden shocks and unpredictable change.

In identifying actions, then, it make sense to shift thinking from labour-intensive growth toward sustainable livelihood-intensive change. This is not to argue against growth, or against a strategy of labour-intensive growth, but to qualify and complement it. For labour-intensity and sustainable livelihood-intensity (SL-intensity) though overlapping are not identical. As a concept, labour-intensity links with employment. A SL-intensive strategy goes beyond employment to include:

- \* **natural resources**: sustainable management of natural resources, especially common property resources, and equitable access to them for the poorer
- \* **redistribution**: redistribution of private and public livelihood resources to the poor
- \* **prices**: marketing, prices and prompt payment for what poor people sell, and terms of trade between what poor people sell and what they buy
- \* **health**: accessible health services for prevention of disease and for prompt and effective treatment of disabling accidents and disease
- \* **abolishing restrictions and hassle**: removal of restrictions on livelihood activities otherwise used to hassle and exploit the poor
- \* **safety nets** for poor people at bad times, and mitigating seasonal stress, enabling them to conserve their livelihood assets

To conclude, deprivation and wellbeing as perceived by poor people, and sustainable livelihoods as a shared goal of outsiders and the poor, question the degree of primacy often attributed to income-poverty. The realities of the poor are many and particular. They can experience and agonise over acute trade-offs between different dimensions of deprivation and wellbeing. What they value and choose often differs from what outsider professionals expect. Income matters, but so too do other aspects of wellbeing and the quality of life — health, security, self-respect, justice, access to goods and services, family and social life, ceremonies and celebrations, creativity, the pleasure of place, season and time of day, fun, spiritual experience, and love. If development means good change, it is so much more than economic growth and income; it is also these and many other aspects of wellbeing and quality of life as poor people experience and wish them.

### The Paradigm of Reversals: the Institutional, Professional and Personal Challenge

Anti-poverty action has often been justified to the rich and powerful by appealing to enlightened selfishness: this has stressed mutual interests and the bad impacts of poverty, suffering and deprivation on those who are better off and on the North as a whole. The strongest argument was perhaps that of the Brandt Commission, that the North had an economic interest in economic growth in the South. To the extent that reciprocal non-zero sums exist or can be found, they must be welcomed. But such arguments do not always hold up. Well-meaning casuistry about mutual interest, argued during the development decades to justify helping the poor, can prove a shifting sand. To rely on arguments about mutual material interests is to risk loss of support if they do not exist. Ethical arguments are stronger, surer and better. The prescriptions which follow are founded not on self-interest on the part of the rich and powerful, which may or



may not be served, but on the values of common decency, compassion and altruism.

The differences between top-down reductionist definitions and objectives, and poor people's realities present development professionals with challenges which are institutional, professional and personal. The challenges are paradigmatic: to reverse the normal view, to upend perspectives, to see things the other way round, to soften and flatten hierarchy, to adopt downward accountability, to change behaviour, attitudes, and beliefs, and to identify and implement a new agenda; in sum, to define and embrace a new professionalism.

This new professionalism and its paradigm stress reversals, decentralisation, local diversity and complexity, and empowerment.

#### a. *The institutional challenge*

Professionals, whether in NGOs, Government Departments, Training Institutes and Universities, or donor agencies, have been slow to see that the fine words "participation", "ownership" and "empowerment" by and for the poor demand institutional change "by us". Participation "by them" will not be sustainable or strong unless we too are participatory. "Ownership" by them means non-ownership by us. Empowerment for them means disempowerment for us. In consequence, management cultures, styles of personal interaction, and procedures all have to change.

One indicator of the orientation of an agency is the composition of its staff. Middle-aged economists, often Northern and male, still dominate international development organisations and the development discourse. In contrast, social anthropologists, social development advisers<sup>14</sup>, and psychologists remain few. Modest increases in their numbers are patchily achieved: numbers of social anthropologists and sociologists working in their professional capacities for the World Bank are hard to estimate, but they are outnumbered by their economist colleagues by perhaps between 20 and 50 to 119<sup>15</sup>. In contrast, the ratio of Economists to Social Development Advisers in ODA is of the order of 3 to 1, still high, but dramatically lower than in the Bank. Gains in the numbers and influence of non-economist social scientists are also vulnerable. The International Potato Centre earlier demonstrated the big contributions social anthropologists could make in agricultural research but has now reduced them. Astonishingly, the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) is reported to have no anthropologists at all (Fujisaka 1994:10).

The institutional challenge for all development agencies is to flatten and soften hierarchy, to develop a culture of participatory management, to recruit a gender and disciplinary mix of staff committed to people, and to adopt and promote procedures, norms and rewards which permit and encourage more open-ended participation at all levels. Project procedures, textbooks and training all require revision. Top-down targets, drives to disburse funds fast, rewards to big spenders, and rushed visits, meetings and decisions, have all to be restrained and reversed.

#### b. *The professional challenge*

The professional challenge is paradigmatic and profound.

Normal professional orientations, concepts, values, methods and behaviour reinforce the

dominance of the North, and of whatever is industrial, capital-intensive and "sophisticated". Its magnetic force repeatedly reasserts itself. Small successes in reversing it are vulnerable to flipping back again to the normal. In the CGIAR, for instance, farmer participatory research, painstakingly established by a small number of social and natural scientists, is threatened by the current "infatuation with biotechnology as a top-down cure-all" (Fujisaka 1994:10).

The challenge is to learn to see things the other way round, to appreciate and grasp that other reality, of local people. In the words of the recent vision paper for the CGIAR (Conway et al 1994:11) it is "to reverse the chain of logic, starting with the socio-economic demands of poor households" in order to identify appropriate research priorities. But such reversals are impeded by normal professionalism, by disciplinary specialisation, and by nature of worldwide upper-lower interactions between those who are dominant and those who are subordinate (Chambers 1994a). The stronger the dogmatism and drive of the upper (the World Bank task manager, the senior official, the knowledgeable professional...) so the more he (most are men) is likely to be misled. As with the remarkable story of the misperceived ecological history of the Guinea forest-savannah mosaic, professional and bureaucratic misbelief is perpetuated by the politeness and prudence of those who know another reality:

"Villagers, faced by questions about deforestation and environmental change, have learned to confirm what they know the questioners expect to hear" (Leach and Fairhead 1994:86)

So the prudent poor and weak perpetuate the fantasies and fallacies of the powerful and strong. All power deceives.

The professional challenge is to review and reorient normal professional concepts, values, methods and behaviour which serve "our" purposes, and instead to enable the poor to express their reality. The new professionalism entails recognising the extent to which "our" reality is generated by our training, interactions, power, and central needs, and then revising and reversing many normal concepts, values, methods and behaviours.

#### c. *The personal challenge*

The personal dimension is as paramount as it is perversely overlooked<sup>16</sup> Again and again, in the experience of PRA, the behaviour and attitudes of outsiders have been the key to facilitating participation, to enabling people who are poor and weak to come together and express and analyse their reality. Yet the personal is scarcely on the development agenda at all. Psychologists and psychotherapists are rare among development professionals, and where they are found, tend to be in other than their specialised roles. It is, though, obvious to the point of embarrassment, that individual personality, perceptions, values, commitment, and behaviour are crucial for institutional and professional change.

The personal challenge applies in all social spheres. It is not limited to professional work. For example, men can feel personally threatened by feminism and the focus on women in development. For these imply changes in roles and relationships both at work and at home. And they can raise ethical questions about limits to intercultural tolerance, as with dowry, female circumcision, and selective abortion.

The personal challenge can be expressed as the paragon new professional. She is



committed to the poor and weak, and to enabling them to gain more of what they want and need. She is democratic and participatory in management style; is a good listener; embraces error and believes in failing forwards; finds pleasure in enabling others to take initiatives; monitors and controls only a core minimum of standards and activities; is not threatened by the unforeseeable; does not demand targets for disbursements and achievements; abjures punitive management; devolves authority, expecting her staff to use their own best judgement at all times; gives priority to the front-line; and rewards honesty. For her, watchwords are truth, trust and diversity. And throughout this paragraph she can also be a he.

Much of the challenge is to give up power. It is to enjoy handing over the initiative to others, enabling them to do more and to do it more in their way, for their objectives. This has its own satisfactions, in seeing how well and how differently people do things, and what they achieve. The need is for those with power to learn to value and enjoy those satisfactions.

### Wellbeing and Livelihoods: Implication for Policy and Practice

This analysis reframes and shifts the balance of objectives of development: from reducing income-poverty to diminishing deprivation and enhancing wellbeing; and from increasing employment to sustaining livelihood. Development then demands and generates diversity, as deprivation is so much more than lack of income, livelihood is so multifarious and dynamic, and wellbeing as people experience and desire it has so many dimensions. Equity also applies, but now more to what poor people themselves define as priorities and strategies, and less to what we suppose they ought to want.

To support and achieve these objective, there are two agendas: one with elements that are current and familiar, even if it is often convenient to overlook parts of it; and one new, based on the paradigm of reversals. For completeness, both are presented, but the first in brief.

#### A Current Agenda

An updated and amended current agenda overlap with, qualifies, and adds to, the two-legged orthodoxy of the World Bank (WDR 1990) of labour-intensive growth and basic services, with its add-on of safety nets. This agenda include:

1. **peace and equitable law and order.** These have primacy as preconditions for sustainable wellbeing. The horrors of Rwanda are an extreme example, and civil disorder has spread since the end of the Cold War. Much more widespread is the lack of the equitable rule of law to provide justice for the poor and powerless.

2. **international terms of trade.** Given the dominance of greed and selfishness in the Western democracies, it is unlikely that anything much will be done about this until powerful people change and exercise extraordinary leadership. This requires altruism, meaning that the powerful value non-material rewards and act against their own narrowly defined material interests for the sake of others.

3. **debt relief and good aid to debtor countries** (but not including the United States or other rich debtors). The need for these is so widely recognised that no more will be said.

4. **domestic macroeconomic policy.** This includes livelihood-intensive growth. Domestic macro-policy in all countries should be informed more by the realities of the poor as they experience and express them, and less by the realities supposed for the poor by the powerful. Few would now deny that had structural adjustment programmes been oriented in this manner from the start, much suffering would have been averted.

5. **redistribution.** Redistributive policies from the rich to the poor, whether through assets such as land or through taxation, deserve revival and restoration from the limbo to which neo-classical orthodoxy has consigned them. Redistribution, for example of land, has been found again and again to be efficient as well as equitable.

6. **rights and information.** The poorer people are, the more they need and can gain from secure rights, and information about those rights. This includes the credible abolition of rules and restrictions which empower officials to extort bribes, and organisation and legal support to ensure effective justice.

7. **infrastructure and access to basic services.** This includes health, education, water, transport, credit and marketing. These are well recognised, but access by the poor remains crucial, and is often neglected and weak or non-existent in practice.

8. **access to affordable basic goods.** The ILO basic needs list did not include access to affordable basic goods, yet they matter much to poor people, and are quite often out of reach to the poor, especially those who are rural and remoter from urban centres.

9. **safety nets.** Safety nets, the third, sometimes lame, policy leg of the *World Development Report 1990*, are vital for many of the poor. Food for work and famine relief often come too late, after people have lost or been forced to dispose of livelihood assets. Some professionals and organisation still see food aid only as famine relief and not as a livelihood-sustaining safety net to help poor people avoid becoming poorer. For sustainable livelihoods, the vulnerable poor need safety nets.

#### Reversals and Altruism: the new agenda

The new paradigm is people-centred, participatory, empowering and sustainable. These nice words are more deeply embedded in the reflexes of paper- and speech-writers than in the mental frames and personal behaviour of those who write the papers and read out the speeches. For the paradigm demands reorientation, upending of much of the normal upper-lower, North-South dominance. It combines reversals and altruism: reversals to stand the normal on its head, to see things the other way round, to enable the poor and weak to express their reality, and to put that reality first; and then altruism, to act in the interests of the poor and powerless. The paradigm of reversals and altruism stands as a challenge for the World Summit for Social Development.

The reversal of logic is fundamental. Instead of starting with the analysis of central professionals, the logic starts with the realities of the peripheral poor. Policy is not deduced and driven centre-outwards, with distant assumptions about effects on the poor, but induced and drawn up from the experience and analysis of those who live local realities and know what happens close to them. Nor is the argument that this should be the only logic: it is



complementary. But the scales are so weighted against it, that unless it is put first and kept first, nothing like a good balance and mix of logics will ever be achieved.

A key point for healthy sceptics is the cost-effectiveness of this agenda. Good things which poor people want and which have not been done because they have not been recognised can have high payoffs. **Many measures which make a big difference to poor people have low financial costs.** Rights, security, the rule of law, information, access, changes in procedures, removals of restrictions, polite behaviour by officials, timing actions for the right season, timely delivery, providing diverse "baskets of choices" (of crop varieties, trees, uses of credit and so on) — these are examples of actions which can have low financial costs and high benefits in wellbeing. The key is identifying such measures, and then implementing them.

The paradigm of the new agenda has four pillars. Each will be illustrated with a few of its potential practical implications.

### *1. Analysis and action by local people, and putting first the priorities of the poor.*

Central to the paradigm is the basic human right of poor people to conduct their own analysis. People-centred development (Freire 1970; Korten and Klaus 1984; Cernea 1992; Burkey 1993) starts not with analysis by the powerful and dominant outsiders — the "North", uppers, and professionals, but with enabling local people, especially the poor, to conduct theirs. In the past five years innovations in approach and methods, some of them known as participatory rural appraisal (PRA) (RRA Notes 1988 —; Mascarenhas et al 1991; Mascarenhas 1991; Chambers 1992)<sup>17</sup>, have contributed a new repertoire which has proved powerful and popular, when well used, in enabling poor people and communities to undertake their own appraisal, analysis and action.

Putting first the priorities of the poor can refer to whole communities which are poor, but equally to those who are disadvantaged — the poor, weak and marginalised, whether women, or a social or economic group — within communities. To find, convene and facilitate groups of the disadvantaged demands analysis of difference (Welbourn 1991) and commitment. The outcomes can include awareness and action by those groups, joint action with outside agencies, and feedback into policy.

PRA approaches and methods are now being used in over 40 countries with a wide range of applications including natural resource management, agriculture, health and nutrition, and poverty programmes. PRA methods have been used in participatory poverty assessment (PPAs) sponsored by the World Bank and bilateral donors in Ghana, Zambia (Norton, Owen and Milimo 1994) and Kenya (pers. comms Charity Kabutha and Deepa Narayan), enabling poor rural and urban people to analyse their conditions, and express their own values, definitions of wellbeing, and priorities, in short, to present their realities.

Some practical implications are:

\* **experiential training.** Those with experience in participatory approaches and training are mainly in NGOs. The spread of PRA and similar approaches requires special field-based training, which is still in short supply for both NGOs and Government. The multiplication, personal development and deployment of good trainers is a key to

realising the potential of participatory approaches.

\* **local priorities and practice.** Putting people first, and poor people first of all, generates local priorities requiring local differentiation. PRA-type approaches and methods can thus reinforce and support decentralisation and local diversity.

\* **participatory poverty assessments and policy.** PPAs open up a potential for poor people's problems and priorities, and their definitions of wellbeing, to have direct impact on national policy.

### *2. Sustainable livelihoods*

Economic growth usually generates niches for new or enhanced and diversified livelihoods and the resources for services. But economic growth can also destroy livelihoods. **Policies can also be livelihood-intensive without economic growth.** To search for and implement livelihood-generating and supporting policies is a priority. It is especially so in countries where economic growth is difficult.

Some practical implications are:<sup>18</sup>

\* **secure rights.** Secure rights to land, water and trees encourage and support long-term investment by families. Secure rights to common property resources provide a basis for sustainable management by communities. Secure rights of ownership, access and use are fundamental to the sustainability of livelihoods which rely on natural resources.

\* **removal of restrictions which hamper and harm.** For example, effective removal of restrictions on urban informal sector activities can reduce the insecurity, anxiety and humiliation of poor artisans, vendors and entrepreneurs, and the petty rents they otherwise have to pay to officials. Or abolishing restrictions on the cutting and transport of trees from private land increases farmgate values for trees, encourages tree planting and protection, and so enhances livelihood security by allowing trees to become savings banks for small and poor farmers (Chambers, Saxena and Shah 1989)

\* **access to effective health services.** The livelihoods of most poor people depend on their bodies. Health and quick effective treatment, especially for disabling accidents and sickness, matter more to them than to the less poor. A livelihood cannot be sustained if its main asset, the body, is sick, damaged or disabled. Health services for prevention and prompt and effective treatment of accidents and sickness, and for rapid recovery, are basic for sustainable livelihoods for the poor.

### *3. The Three Ds: Decentralisation, Democracy and Diversity*

Reversals require decentralisation with transfers of power, and democratic modes of operation. Together these make space for diversity and local fit of action to need. The basic principle is that of subsidiarity, that every activity should be carried out as low down as feasible. Complementing this, ownership and accountability are reframed.

Ownership shifts downwards. At a high level, this is presaged in the World Bank's



Wapenhans Report *Effective Implementation: Key to Development Impact* (World Bank 1992) which recommends a shift of ownership from Washington to national capitals; in the Bank's response (World Bank 1993c) which endorses partnership and participation; and in the Report of the Participation Learning Group of the Bank (1994) which outlines and recommends practical actions for the participation of the poor. The implication for all development organisations is that at every level ownership is pushed down, handed over and fostered. Beyond this, participation at the community or group level is then not "their" participation in "our" programme, but our participation in theirs; and participation by the poor is not just in design and implementation of projects, but also in identification, monitoring and evaluation, and policy formulation.

Accountability is reversed. Downward accountability is to the poor and weak. It is those whom the World Bank has defined as "primary stakeholders: those expected to benefit from or be adversely affected by Bank-supported operations, particularly the poor and marginalized" (World Bank 1994: 2). So professionals are responsible to their clients: health workers to the sick, agricultural researchers and extensionists to farmers, NGO workers and officials (whether national or foreign, local or central) to poor villagers, slum dwellers and others among the primary stakeholders who are or might be touched by their decisions and actions.

Some practical implications are:

- \* **procedures:** Many procedures for central control impede decentralisation and diversity. In the World Bank, for example, changes made or contemplated in the legal framework and procedures for procurement and disbursement will support decentralisation, subsidiarity and participation.
- \* **appraisal, action, monitoring and evaluation:** These all shift downwards and become more participatory and more diverse. In particular, poor people and communities conduct their own, participatory, monitoring and evaluation, using their own baseline and indicators to reflect their own concepts of illbeing and wellbeing and their insights into causality, enhancing their understanding and ownership, and holding agencies to account. Poor people then monitor and evaluate the programmes and actions of development professionals and organisations.

#### 4. Professional and personal change

The key to the new agenda is as obvious as it is neglected. To an extraordinary degree, we, development professionals, abstain from looking at ourselves, as people. The subject is almost taboo. Yet who we are, where we go, how we behave, what we are shown and see, how we learn, are deceived, and deceive ourselves, the concepts we use, the language we speak, what we believe, and above all what we do and do not do — these so obviously affect all other aspects of development and development policy. It is bizarre that psychology, psychotherapy and management learning scarcely exist in development studies or practice. As a matter not of evangelism, but of analytical rigour, it would seem that it is we the professionals, the powerful and the influential, and those who attend Roundtables and Summits, who have to reconstruct our realities, to change a people, and to enable and empower others to change, if the new paradigm of development is to prevail.

Some practical implications are:

- \* **more participatory management** in development organisations, including multilateral and bilateral agencies, NGOs both Northern and Southern, research institutes, training colleges and institutes, Government departments in headquarters and the field, and universities, entailing the adoption of participatory personal styles and interactions.

- \* **interactive learning** (Pretty and Chambers 1993) to replace unidirectional lecturing and teaching as approach and method, both in teaching and training institutes, and universities and colleges. This entails a shift from top-down teaching to learning which is shared, lateral and experiential.

- \* **experiential learning from poor people**, meaning that those who are powerful step down, sit, listen and learn. One initiative is the German Dialogue and Exposure Programme (Kochendorfer-Lucius and Osner 1991; Osner et al 1992) in which senior politicians, officials and academics engage in unhurried learning in the field from individual poor families. PRA also has been a means to enable outsiders to facilitate and gain insight from the analysing of poor local people, both rural and urban. The practical implication is that agencies authoritatively set aside time for field experiential learning for their staff, so that they, directly, as people, can see, hear and understand that other reality, of poor people, and then work to make it count.

#### Whose Reality Will Count at the World Summit for Social Development?

In its concern with poverty and employment, the World Summit for Social Development may be in danger of plodding in worthy but well worn ruts which lead nowhere new. The challenge is to go beyond the normal agenda: beyond poverty to wellbeing, and beyond employment to sustainable livelihoods. It is to explore the new paradigm, to embrace the new professionalism, and to concern itself with whose reality counts. To justify the cost, time and effort of the Summit, to make things better for the poor, it will have to question conventional concepts of development; to challenge "us" to change, personally, professionally and institutionally; and to change the paradigm of the development enterprise. If the poor and weak are not to see the Summit as a celebration of hypocrisy, signifying not sustainable wellbeing for them, but sustainable privilege for us, the key is to enable them to express their reality, to put that reality first, and to make it count.

To do that demands altruism, insight, vision and guts. Will these qualities show at the Summit? Is there hope that the reality that counts at the Summit will be not ours, but that of the poor?



Table 1. Reported Improvements in Indicators of Human Wellbeing in Low- and Middle-Income Countries

	1960	1990
Life expectancy	46	63
Infant Mortality per 1,000 live births	149	71
Adult literacy rate	46	65
Real GDP per capita \$	950	2,170

Source: HDR 1993:143

Table 2. One Estimate of Population Living in Absolute Poverty

	Number of people (millions)	Percentage of total population
Asia	675	25
Sub-Saharan Africa	325	62
Middle East and North America	75	28
Latin America	150	35
Total	1,225	23

Table 3. Contrasting Tendencies in Professional and Poor People's Realities

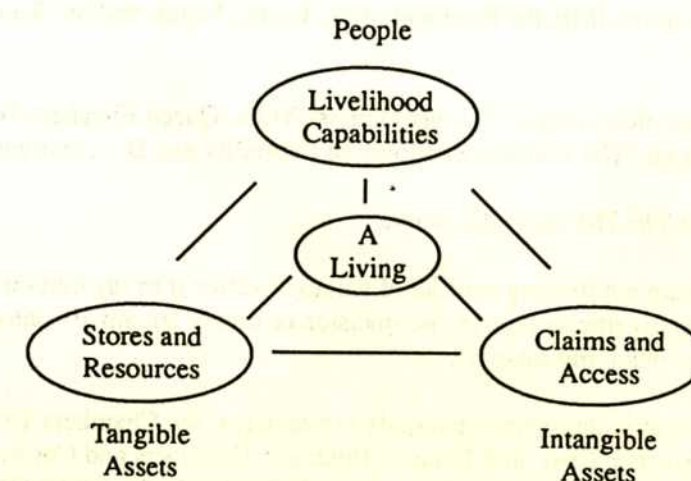
<i>Professionals'</i>	<i>Poor People's</i>
universal	local, specific
simplified	complex
reductionist	holistic
standardised	diverse
physical	experiential
quantified	unquantified
income-poverty	multi-dimensional deprivation
employment	livelihood

Table 4. Indicators of wellbeing in two Rajasthan villages, of households whose per capita real income declined 5 per cent or more over two decades

	Percentage of the 36 households	
	1963-6	1982-4
With one or more members working as attached or semi-attached	37	7
Residing on patron's land or yard	31	0
Taking seed loans from patron	34	9
Taking loans from others beside patrons	13	47
Marketing farm produce only through patrons	86	23
With members seasonally out-migrating for job	34	11
Selling over 80 per cent of their marketed produce during the post-harvest period	100	46
Making cash purchases during slack-season, festivals etc.	6	51
With adults skipping third meal in the day during the summer (scarcity period)	86	20
Where women and children wear shoes regularly	0	86
With houses with only impermanent traditional structure	91	34
With separate provision of stay for humans and animals	6	52

Source: Jodha, 1988

Figure 1. Components and Flows in a Livelihood





## Notes

- 1 For insight into North-South, upper-lower relationships I am grateful to Jenny Chamber, and for comments on drafts of this paper to Rosalind Eyben and Gunilla Olsson. The usual disclaimers about responsibility apply.
- 2 Normal professionalism and the new paradigm are elaborated on in *Challenging the Professions: frontier for rural development* (1993) chapter 1, 5, 6 and 8. I apologise to any reader who finds the references to these rather cryptic in this paper
- 3 For a fuller definition, and exploration of the implication for the rich as well as the poor, for the North as well as the South, see Chamber and Conway 1992
- 4 Condensation of a speech to the Davos Development Conference, reported in the New York Times, 1 March 1992.
- 5 For a fuller balance sheet, see *UNDP Human Development Report 1993* pp 12-13, and Peter Adamson *The Progress of Nations, the nations of the world ranked according to their achievements in health, nutrition, education, family planning and progress for women*, UNICEF 1993, and subsequent publication in these serials
- 6 Cited in Kates and Haarman 1992:6. The source is "the Worldwatch Institute's country estimates of absolute poverty and other social and economic indicators. Estimates should be viewed as midpoint in a range of plus or minus 10 per cent". The figures probably refer to the late 1980s, since when there will have been changes. The point of presenting them here is to indicate relative orders of magnitude by regional location.
- 7 *HIV/AIDS Pandemic 1993 Overview*, Global Programme on AIDS, WHO, Geneva. There is much uncertainty about projections, and locally, especially in parts of Africa, the impact is already devastating.
- 8 This is the footnote with the letter from Bob Lack.
- 9 With apologies to the IMF, the President of the United States, and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.
- 10 Personal communication with Barbara Harriss-White, Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford, who is preparing a paper on "The Political Economy of Disability and Development"
- 11 Leonard Woolf *The Village in the Jungle*
- 12 In this paper I am not treating conflict of values. Suffice it to say that the playing field is not level. I feel free to criticise female circumcision or dowry but am affronted when a poor person asks me how much my salary is.
- 13 For elaboration of sustainable livelihoods as a concept, see Chambers 1987; Conroy and Litvinoff 1988; Bernstein, Crow and Johnson 1992; and Chambers and Conway 1992. Together with basic rights, sustainable livelihoods are being debated and adopted by OXFAM as part of

the theoretical and practical basis of their work.

- 14 The Overseas Development Administration of the British Government has, however, increased the numbers of Social Development Advisers from 2 in 1988 to 21 by mid-1994. Even so, they are still outnumbered by their economist colleagues by about 3 to 1.
- 15 This guess is a form of calculated irresponsibility, calculated in the sense of being designed to provoke someone to come up with a better figure. Any better information will be appreciated, especially if accompanied by details of definition of categories, including whether supported by core or Trust funds.
- 16 For a fuller statement, see "NGOs and Development: the Primacy of the Personal", available on request from the author. The paper applies at least as much force to government and donor agencies as to NGOs.
- 17 For further sources, see *Participatory Rural Appraisal: abstracts of selected sources*, forthcoming from the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton BN1 9RE, UK
- 18 For other practical implications, see Chambers and Conway 1992



**The Employment Challenge:  
An agenda for global action**

United Nations Development Programme  
International Labour Office, Geneva



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## Preface

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Which policies will do most to create decent jobs in sufficient numbers? The question has been investigated jointly by the UNDP and the ILO, and this booklet is the result.

In recent years a consensus has emerged that developing countries must achieve macroeconomic stability as a precondition for growth. But stability may not ensure the expansion of employment, and may not ensure sustained and equitable growth of incomes. Not only is there a need for creative government policies and interventions, but also for a better external environment, including faster growth in OECD countries and a redirection of aid flows.

This booklet is based on discussions at an ILO/UNDP technical meeting in Geneva in May 1994, on economic policies and employment. The meeting considered one general and several regional papers (listed in Appendix 1) on the nature of the employment problem and its macroeconomic solution; the UNDP provided financial support for their preparation, as well as for the meeting. The discussions reported in this booklet do not necessarily reflect the policy of either organization.

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## Contents

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Preface	2
Work, growth and the world economy	3
World problems, world solutions	5
“Jobless growth” — or benign transition	10
Freer trade, better aid	14
Fitting jobs to people	16
An outline for global action	19
Appendix I: List of background papers	20
Appendix II: List of participants	21



## Work, growth and the world economy

Economic policy exists to deliver social progress. Social progress is denied where there is high and persistent unemployment. In the middle 1990s, high unemployment characterizes the economies of the world's richest and poorest countries alike. Something is badly wrong.

Unemployment has risen, and stubbornly persisted, as the world's economies grow increasingly interdependent. National economies are being ever more closely tied to each other by global pacts (such as that which concluded the Uruguay Round of the GATT), and by regional arrangements (such as the European Union and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)).

Even without such arrangements, new technologies by their own momentum promote economic integration. The revolution in communications moves goods, services and capital around the world at a rate never seen in history. New manufacturing techniques make possible unprecedented increases in productivity. Humankind can at last hope for a future in which poverty has been abolished.

But the immediate problem is of too little production and too few jobs. Economic integration makes it impossible for any one country to make a dash for growth and jobs on its own. The problem is global. The solution must be global too.

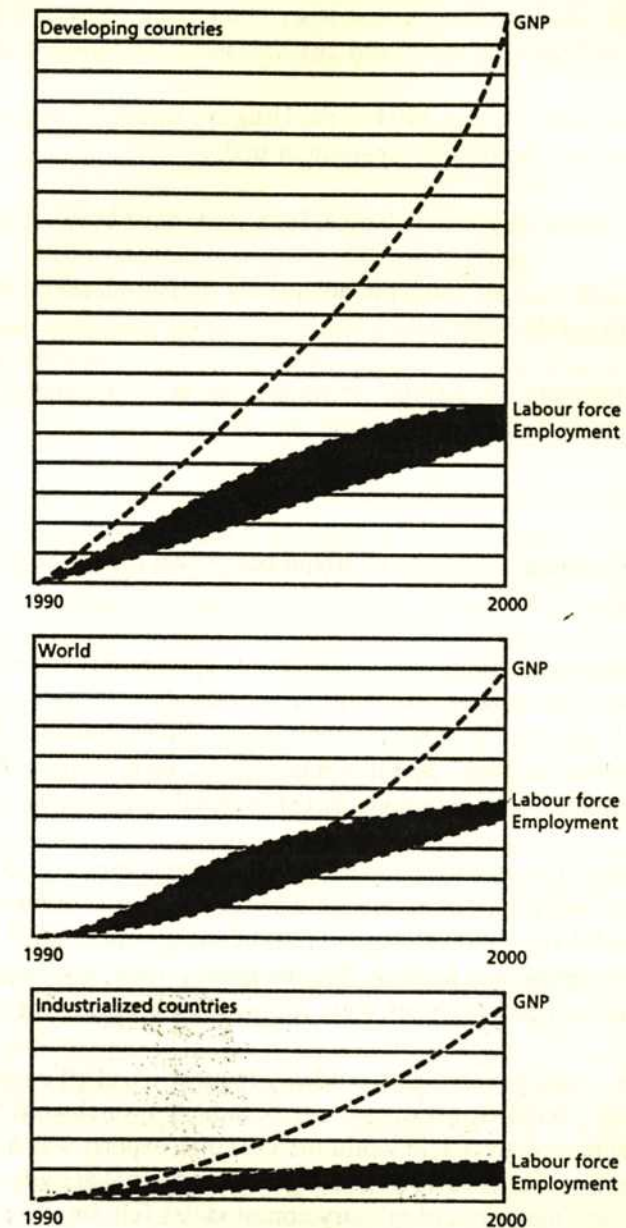
Of course, things look different in different places. In East and South-East Asia (including China) output and employment have been growing dramatically; but parts of that successful region lag sadly behind. In South Asia absolute poverty is being reduced; but the growth of employment is precarious, and much valuable work is paid at levels barely sufficient to keep families alive. The relative success of those regions, containing almost half of the world's people, proves that there is no reason to despair. But the achievement is fragile. Even there, far more remains to be done before the unemployment crisis can be considered solved.

In the rest of the world, entire generations of people are growing up who believe that it is unrealistic to hope for productive, remunerative and reasonably secure jobs. Societies that fail to offer that prospect are bound to be socially unstable and economically insecure. Figure 1 shows likely rates of output and labour force growth until the year 2000. The rates of growth of employment it shows are possible and indeed probable, pointing to the danger of unemployment increasing if policies do not change.

The pace of change is overwhelming whole sectors of economic activity. Those displaced from their jobs are often not equipped to work in the new activities that emerge. When new jobs are created they are often less well paid, less secure, and of lower quality than those that disappear.

Without concerted international action, across national frontiers and occupational differences, unemployment and its attendant miseries seem bound to persist, even to get worse. The prospect is intolerable. The techniques exist for improving it. This paper offers an overview of the world employment scene, and of ways in which it can be made brighter by international cooperation, through a global compact for growth.

Figure 1: Output, employment and labour force growth, 1990-2000



Source: Output growth from projections made by the International Monetary Fund, *World Economic Outlook*, May 1994, Washington, DC; labour force projections from the International Labour Office, *Economically active population*, fourth edition, Geneva, forthcoming; employment projections from ILO staff estimates.



## World problems, world solutions

The trend towards world economic integration gathered pace in the early 1990s, promoted by international agreements and circumstances. The following are some examples:

- The completion in early 1994 of the Uruguay Round of negotiations in the GATT has set the scene for a worldwide opening of trade.
- Regional blocs (in North America, for a start) have been set up to foster free trade.
- Trade in services, although not adequately measured, seems to have grown much faster than trade in goods.
- The former centrally planned economies are being integrated (although at a low level of activity) with the rest of the world economy.
- Barriers to the international movement of capital have been much reduced.
- The international migration of labour has grown fast, although subjected to new restrictions.

These developments impose new constraints upon purely national economic policies. They limit taxation, interest rates, exchange rates and public-sector deficits. They make protected industries unviable, and unable to sustain their labour forces, however lavishly governments may support them. In particular they make it almost impossible to increase the relative price of labour in one country. Solutions must be sought across national frontiers, by concerted action.

Recent history shows what happens when countries try, and fail, to escape on their own from the unemployment trap. The economic woes of the 1980s followed the economic shocks of the 1970s. The sudden rise (and subsequent fall) of energy prices after 1973 encouraged massive and unsustainable international lending. Soaring interest rates, and huge government deficits in countries at all stages of development, were followed by a worldwide epidemic of inflation.

In reaction, many governments suddenly retrenched, often under pressure from international lenders. Stability, not dynamism, became the watchword. World trade slowed down, the annual average rate of growth in world merchandise exports was 6.6 per cent in the 1965-80 period, and 4.1 per cent between 1980 and 1991. As industrial activity declined in the industrialized nations, the prices of primary commodities fell, impoverishing the producing countries.

Seeking to redress the harm done by inflation, the industrialized countries tolerated what they hoped would be temporarily high levels of unemployment. Many of them raised new protective barriers against imports: the World Bank (1991) estimated that in the previous decade 20 of the 24 member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) became more protectionist, especially against competing products from developing countries.

None of these restrictive policies worked as they were meant to. True, inflation was curbed almost everywhere, and governments prophesied that monetary stability would, of its own accord stimulate growth. But unemployment went on rising; and where (as in the United States) it eventually started to roll back, rates of pay for the new unskilled jobs were far lower than those prevailing before the recession. Inequality increased, and so did the sense of deprivation.

### Box 1: Unemployment in the 1990s

Similar employment problems are faced by seven groups of countries, each of which has attempted broadly similar solutions. These geographical groups are of course economically diverse; and the figures relating to them may look different, depending (for example) on whether their incomes are calculated on the basis of exchange rates or of purchasing-power parities.

With those reservations, Tables 1 and 2 summarize the basic facts about them, and particularly about their labour forces. Note in particular the rapid proportional increases in the labour force expected in the Middle East and throughout Africa, from north to south; and the vast absolute increase in the labour force that will occur in South Asia.

In the relatively rich industrialized nations that belong to the **Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)**, economic growth has begun again. But jobs are growing more slowly than output; and even where (as in the United States) unemployment has fallen, the new jobs pay less for less skilled workers and are less secure than those that were eliminated during the latest recession.

**Eastern Europe** is leaping from central planning towards a market system for which its peoples and institutions are wholly unprepared. The transition has wiped away many jobs, without putting others in their place. Subsidies, intended to cushion this effect, demand massive government spending without providing government revenue. This contributes to inflation, which makes the new poor even poorer.

**Latin America and the Caribbean** face rapid growth in the population of working age, rising participation by women in the labour force, and a continuing shift from rural to urban employment. At the same time governments are reducing the size of, and employment in, the public sector. The new jobs that are being created are almost all in the informal sector, unregulated and uncounted.

**The Middle East and North Africa** confront the consequences both of recent population growth and of a sharp decline in the oil revenues upon which the region's potential prosperity depends. Governments can no longer act as the employer of last resort, especially for graduates from the vastly expanded university systems. The



Meanwhile, in the poorest countries, things got absolutely worse. Box 1 (below) summarizes, region by region, the world employment situation in the mid-1990s. The picture is gloomy.

resulting social instability prevents governments from tackling reforms that they know to be desirable.

In **sub-Saharan Africa** the crisis is at its fiercest. With almost three-quarters of the region's people living in rural areas and their numbers increasing at an unprecedented rate, figures for employment and job creation are at best sketchy. More than half of all non-farm employees work for governments, which clearly cannot afford to hire more or to raise the real wages of those whom they do employ. The process of structural adjustment devised for the heavily indebted African countries has not so far been translated into increases in employment, or reductions in absolute poverty.

**East and South-East Asia** shows rapid growth both in general economic activity and in employment. Typically, the state sector is small, labour markets are lightly regulated and policies are devised to favour private employers. Exports have been carefully promoted by manipulated exchange rates. Social stability and equality of incomes have been shielded by protection against imports, especially of farm staples such as rice. A low priority has been given to human rights, especially to freedom for workers' associations and the promotion of opportunities for women. There are signs, in countries such as the Republic of Korea, that economic progress is being followed by social progress.

**China**, as befits its size, is a case on its own. A headlong rush for economic liberalization has contributed to astonishing (and probably unsustainable) rates of economic growth and a rapid decline in poverty. This has been achieved under tight political control, with no concessions to human rights or the rights of workers.

**South Asia** consists entirely of low-income countries that export no oil. On the whole, they survived the shocks of the oil and debt crises rather well. But they need to create huge numbers of jobs, because women are joining the labour force fast, just as large numbers of young people of both sexes enter the labour market. There has also been a rapid flow of labour from farming into the cities; but productive employment in agriculture may grow. Governments are reducing the labour market restrictions that make many large enterprises (especially in the state sector) uncompetitive.

Table 1: Population and labour force, 1991 (millions) and projected

	Latin America and the Caribbean	Sub-Saharan Africa	East and South-East Asia	South Asia	Middle East and North	Former Soviet Union Africa Europe	OECD and East	Other	World
Population	445	526	1653	1195	297	414	803	42	5374
Labour force	172	191	902	435	98	215	390	18	2420
Male	116	123	519	330	82	110	226	11	1517
Female	56	68	384	104	16	105	164	7	903
Labour force as percentage of population	39	39	55	36	33	52	49	43	45
Female labour force as percentage of total labour force	32	36	43	24	16	49	42	39	37
Male participation rate	53	47	61	53	54	56	58	52	56
Female participation rate	25	26	47	18	11	49	40	33	34
Annual growth rate of labour force 1991-2000	2.1	2.8	1.2	2.3	2.9	0.7	0.3	0.4	1.5

Source United Nations: *World population prospects*, the 1992 revision, New York, 1993; International Labour Office: *Economically active population*, Geneva, forthcoming.



Table 2: Growth rates and income levels

	Annual growth rates (per cent)			1992 per capita GNP: (WB Atlas Method) US\$
	1973-80	1980-90	1990-93	
<b>Latin America and the Caribbean</b>				
Population	2.4	2.1	1.9	-
GNP per capita	2.3	0.5	1.1	2765
<b>Sub-Saharan Africa</b>				
Population	2.8	3.1	3.0	-
GNP per capita	0.6	-1.1	-1.3	467
<b>East and South-East Asia</b>				
Population	1.7	1.6	1.5	-
GNP per capita	4.8	6.3	6.9	922
<b>South Asia</b>				
Population	2.4	2.2	2.0	-
GNP per capita	1.8	2.9	1.5	316
<b>Middle East and North Africa</b>				
Population	2.9	2.9	2.8	-
GNP per capita	1.9	-0.6	0.3	1956
<b>Former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe</b>				
Population	0.8	0.7	0.7	-
GNP per capita	3.6	1.7	-10.5	2015
<b>OECD</b>				
Population	0.7	0.6	0.5	-
GNP per capita	2.1	2.5	0.6	22896

Source: World Bank: *World tables*, Washington, DC, various dates.

### "Jobless growth" — or benign transition

The contrast in performance between the world's most and least successful regions is sharp, and bitter. East and South-East Asia are enjoying unprecedented growth of both real incomes and employment. Africa and the Middle East confront a potential catastrophe of demographic growth and economic failure. Meanwhile the industrial countries of the OECD are baffled by the persistence of unemployment amid prosperity.

The facts do not support the view that the world is inexorably set on a path of "jobless growth", by which technological progress will benefit a few and disadvantage the many. New technologies have created, and made possible many millions of jobs in most regions. Employment has grown fastest in economies that have grown fastest.

Where the unemployment crisis exists, it has been created not by chance but by error; by incentives that distort and institutions that are inadequate. For example, national policies have often been mistakenly devised to promote capital investment, when labour-intensive production was what the country needed. Before the debt shock of the late 1970s, the economies of Latin America were growing fast; but they created far fewer jobs than have recently been created in Asia's economic boom.

National governments borrowed imprudently, for unproductive purposes, and thus made necessary the structural adjustment programmes of which their successor governments now understandably complain. Excessive borrowing fostered domestic inflation.

The attempt to curb that inflation brought about recession. And the fight against inflation continues, even now that the battle is largely won, and the jobs crisis is more menacing than the monetary one.

External influences imposed the debt crisis. External considerations have helped to impose its successor, the employment crisis. Monetary restraint in the industrial countries brought growth there to a halt. They therefore reduced their imports from primary-producing developing countries. Those developing countries — especially the weakest of them, heavily dependent on commodity exports — in turn suffered recession.

In particular, the OECD countries limited domestic borrowing by increasing their interest rates. So interest rates rose everywhere, above all in the developing countries that had borrowed heavily, especially those in Latin America. Capital stopped flowing from the OECD countries to the developing world; this limited the developing countries' ability to buy goods and services from the OECD countries, and made their recovery harder. It was a vicious circle. Future policy must break out of it.

#### Domestic policies

The importance of domestic policies is self-evident. The East Asian economies that in the 1980s avoided stagnation and unemployment did so because they got their domestic policies right. Prudent borrowing, creative use of exchange rates, promotion of exports, protection of food producers, restraint of nominal wages — all these factors combined to keep the growth of employment in step with overall economic growth. Other nations and regions should look



carefully at the implications.

Without sound domestic policies, no country will progress towards the goal of prosperity and full employment. A stable and noninflationary currency, a high rate of savings and investment, as well as prudent management of exchange rates, are necessary preconditions for sustainable growth. All that goes without saying.

Yet many countries still lack civil peace, the rule of law, and the efficient delivery of public administration. In so far as the international community can help to install good governance, it should endeavour to do so.

The most important contribution that national governments can make to economic growth and the efficiency of the labour market is through education and training. There is overwhelming evidence that the best investment countries can make is in basic education, especially of women. Women's education reduces birth rates and improves children's health. The *World development report* (1992) of the World Bank noted that improving girls' education contributes to environmental conservation and sustainable development.

Governments can ease the transfer of employment from declining to growing sectors by new forms of social security and temporary income supplements; and by ensuring the transferability of pensions and benefits such as health insurance.

As some economic sectors decline and others rise, the opportunities to increase employment in declining sectors should not be forgotten. For example, investment in irrigation may create new jobs in labour-intensive agriculture, while the general farm labour force continues to decline. Equally, service industries can often develop new and profitable markets, with a high potential for employment by adapting to match new forms of demand.

### International policies

Interdependence between nations has increased, and will continue to increase. No solution can work unless it takes that into consideration. In the 1980s, the growth of world trade slowed markedly for most groups of countries (see table 3), and where trade faltered unemployment rose.

Table 3. Exports of country groups as a percentage of world exports

	1980	1991
OECD countries	62.9	71.5
Former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe	7.8	5.0
Developing countries	29.3	23.5
Latin America and the Caribbean	5.4	3.9
Asia	8.7	14.9
Africa	4.7	1.9
West Asia	10.5	2.8

Source: United Nations: *World economic survey*, New York, 1993

Between 1980 and 1991:

- The OECD's share of world exports increased sharply, from 63 per cent to 72 per cent. Meanwhile the OECD's trade with the developing countries fell sharply, from 30 per cent to 20 per cent as a share of the OECD's imports. (Falling oil prices speeded this decline.)
- Asia's share of world exports rose, while that of the other developing countries declined. In particular, OECD imports of Asian manufactures rose sharply.
- As the developing countries' trade with the OECD countries declined, their trade among themselves increased significantly (from a low base). This increase was wholly accounted for by Asian countries.
- The largest proportional increase in international trade took place between China and the rest of East and South-East Asia. (But the figures may be deceptive: much trade with China was not recorded, for political reasons.)
- The OECD's terms of trade improved, while the terms of trade of Africa and the Middle East grew dramatically worse.
- The OECD countries reduced their imports because they were in recession, then reduced them still further by protectionist import restrictions. Non-Asian developing countries failed to increase their exports.
- Capital flowed from the developing to the developed nations; in 1985, largely because of heavy debt repayments, the reverse flow of capital towards the rich nations was as high as \$30.2 billion.

Yet the worst may be over. Recently there has been a general, if fragile, recovery in most commodity prices (but not in oil). Real interest rates fell dramatically in the early 1990s (but may be heading up again). Capital is flowing again towards the developing countries by US\$26.8 billion in 1992 (but much of that was short-term lending and the poorest countries of Africa felt little benefit). Several heavily indebted countries have escaped from the trap; strengthened by capital inflows, they are borrowing again on international markets.

A few developing countries achieved high growth of their economies, and of employment, while the OECD's recession was at its height. Now the OECD's recession may be ending. The World Bank has recently projected an overall annual growth rate of 2.6 per cent for the OECD economies in the 1994-2003 period. Yet if growth is to gather pace throughout the developing world, faster OECD growth is essential.

In particular, economic expansion in the OECD countries would revive Africa's export performance and improve Africa's terms of trade. Among the main beneficiaries would be the OECD countries themselves, whose African markets would expand quickly.

Like the generals in the old story, the governments of the industrial world have got ready to fight the last battle: the battle against inflation. But the real enemy in the mid-1990s is not inflation but unemployment.



Careful monetary expansion by the OECD countries would, to be sure, entail some risk of renewing inflation. But high unemployment throughout the OECD should help to ensure that wage increases do not contribute to inflation. And the risk of inflation would be much reduced if the expanding countries kept pace with each other, and did not seek to gain a competitive advantage in the process. By increasing, in concert, domestic demand they would put to work large numbers of their own unemployed. Soon that increased demand would translate itself into higher commodity prices enabling the poorest developing countries to increase their imports. This, in turn, would promote the non-inflationary growth of exports from the OECD countries. Everybody would gain — especially the unemployed in rich and poor countries alike.

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### Freer trade, better aid

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With the conclusion (and it is to be hoped, speedy ratification) of the Uruguay Round of bargaining in the GATT, the conditions have been established for worldwide freer trade in goods and services. That was a necessary precondition for speeding the growth of economic activity. International cooperation is more than ever necessary if full advantage is to be taken of this opportunity to put more people to work.

We have seen that, in the bad years of the 1980s, many industrialized countries sought to mitigate the effects of recession by restricting Imports, and thus made recovery harder for themselves.

Opening borders to the flow of trade would reverse that damage. In 1993 the World Bank made the following estimate: "Total exports from China, Jamaica, Pakistan, Thailand and the Philippines would increase by at least 40 per cent if OECD tariff barriers were removed. Other countries would gain even more..." In particular, several countries specializing in exports of textiles and clothing would benefit dramatically, with corresponding gains in their ability to import from the OECD itself.

Poor countries, where real wages are low, obviously have a competitive advantage in labour-intensive manufacturing. If rich countries import more low-price manufactures, they will equally obviously employ fewer of their own people in low-wage jobs. If economic growth is fast enough, the lost jobs will be replaced by new jobs demanding higher skills and paying higher wages. But this process cannot be left to chance; governments and social partners must work together to ease the transition, especially in retraining displaced workers and ensuring that labour markets operate humanely and efficiently.

In the industrialized countries, ill-considered protectionist measures are often called for as a response to cheap imports, or against the failure of exporting countries to safeguard workers' rights. But trade restrictions defeat their own objective. They reduce the rate of economic growth, and thus in turn increase unemployment. When unemployment is high, workers' conditions rarely improve, and their rights are rarely acknowledged. In this respect, too, progress can best be made by cooperation, not confrontation. Exporting and importing countries must work together to raise standards without resorting to protectionism. Only exceptional circumstances can justify restraints on the growth of trade.

Trade should grow rapidly in the coming decade, especially because of the conclusion of the Uruguay Round and the creation or strengthening of regional free trade pacts. According to the GATT secretariat, the agreement should by the year 2000 boost world merchandise trade by an extra 12 per cent. The benefits could be larger still.

The GATT agreement permits some discriminatory trade barriers against developing country exports of textiles, garments and footwear — labour-intensive products, in which low pay gives the poorest countries a competitive advantage. Even where, as is certainly the case, workers are at present exploited in such countries, the fastest way to end the exploitation is to increase the demand for labour and thus raise its price. Those trade barriers should be lowered.



Special attention must furthermore be paid to the effect of the Uruguay Round on the food-importing countries of sub-Saharan Africa. By raising world food prices, the agreement may in the short term harm the trade balances of these countries, for which compensatory arrangements should be made.

### Aid and its conditions

Official development assistance (ODA) is defined as net disbursement of grants and loans made on concessional financial terms. In 1991 the world total of ODA was US\$58.2 billion, the vast majority of it from member countries of the OECD. Overall, this was equal to 0.33 per cent of those countries' total GNP.

Private flows of capital to the developing world were much larger, at \$113 billion in 1992-93. After the low period of the 1980s, this was a return to the level seen before the debt crisis. The flow may once more prove unsustainable; in any case, most of it went to a few countries whose national incomes are already classed in the middle-income category and above. Private capital hardly benefited the poor.

A high proportion of ODA, too, flows towards relatively prosperous countries. During the days of the Cold War, aid was sent mainly to political allies, or with the aim of maintaining regional stability. With that confrontation over, it is a good time to focus aid deliberately upon those who most need help — say, the 48 countries (containing 72 per cent of the people in the developing world) that in 1991 had a per capita income below US\$1,000.

The relatively successful developing countries would, in this case, rely mainly on flows of private capital, which we have seen to be larger in total than ODA.

If ODA were clearly seen as an instrument of economic development, rather than of military or political manipulation, its allocation would be much simpler. Aid would go to the countries that most need it, and use it best.

A main test of performance could be the expansion of productive employment; other relevant social achievements are those analysed in the UNDP's annual *Human Development Report*. Simply put, countries that create jobs and improve the lot of their peoples would be rewarded for doing so. Furthermore, ODA to genuinely poor recipients should be conceded entirely as grants, rather than as loans that have often served mainly to plunge indebted countries even deeper into debt.

### Debt reduction

Most of the world's most severely indebted countries are in sub-Saharan Africa; desperately poor countries, gravely affected by recession in the OECD. The Uruguay Round will not much benefit them, and may (by raising world food prices) make their lives yet harder. Few of them were ever able to borrow much from private creditors. Their debts to individual donor countries have mostly been forgiven or deferred. Their main outstanding debts are, therefore, owed largely to the multilateral aid agencies, which at present are not allowed formally to write off debt. It would be reasonable and prudent, and a great saving of administrative time and ingenuity, if a way could be found of eliminating those debts altogether.

## Fitting jobs to people

People come first. Governments must create the conditions in which all their citizens have the opportunity to find reasonably secure, remunerative and productive employment. Yet it is not States but families that decide how many citizens there shall be.

Several countries in different parts of the world have dramatically reduced the rate of growth of their population. Success is most likely in economies that are growing and where educational opportunities are improving. Yet even where birth rates have fallen, the number of children born each year will go on rising, as the many women born in past years reach the age of parenthood.

And for many nations — especially in Africa, from north to south — the demographic time-bomb has already exploded. There are too few jobs for too many young people, who see almost no chance of finding secure employment. Many governments have made things worse by attempting to become the employers of last resort. For those who could not find productive work, they have created jobs with no identifiable purpose, producing no goods that people want and no useful services.

A swollen and underemployed public service imposes an inflationary burden on national exchequers; rates of pay are therefore kept very low, adding to the frustration of those intended to be the beneficiaries. The social consequences are worst when, as is often the case, government jobs are offered automatically to all those completing a specified level of education. Past policies of this kind are regarded as significant contributors to social unrest.

Without underlying economic growth, the attempt to increase state employment is unsustainable and self-defeating. The way forward must be by increasing productive activity, and offering an appropriate education to those who will work in it. The best way to strengthen labour markets — and to satisfy individuals — is by providing basic education for all.

### Women, and other disadvantaged groups

It is of course a human and moral imperative to encourage full participation of women in all aspects of society. The practical points we make here are that female advancement has a quick and lasting effect on birth rates; and that well-educated mothers improve the educational chances of the children they bear. Improving women's educational and other opportunities, including those for entry on equal terms into the labour force, is the key both to limiting the growth of population and to improving the welfare of coming generations. It is the most significant single way to bring about general social advancement.

Yet in most regions women suffer disadvantages. In the Middle East and in most of Africa they are in practice largely excluded from paid employment. Almost everywhere, and notably in East Asia, women's wages are discriminately low. Even in many otherwise enlightened societies, their educational opportunities are limited. Very rarely are they offered the child-care facilities they need if they are to compete on equal terms with men.

Many societies treat members of certain ethnic (and sometimes religious) groups with



equal unfairness; examples are indigenous people in Latin American countries, and gypsies in Eastern Europe. Members of traditionally disadvantaged groups tend to suffer longterm unemployment, giving rise to further social disadvantage.

Legislation against discrimination is only the start of a comprehensive policy for the protection of disadvantaged groups, including women. They need better access to education, and to productive resources, if they are to make their full contribution to society.

### Labour Markets

Like all markets, the market for jobs works best when demand roughly matches supply. At times of high unemployment that is not the case, and the fault lies with governments. It means that their macroeconomic policies are failing to ensure the efficient use of resources, especially of labour.

Inappropriate government policies may also distort labour markets so badly as to contribute to mass unemployment. Especially in Western Europe, labour market policies have often been enactments of agreements between organizations of workers and of employers. Laws and regulations formalize massive social gains made over many years.

It is often argued that, as technology and the economic environment change, such policies may come to limit job creation as well as labour mobility. If so, the policies need changing. But it is extremely difficult to tell whether labour market distortions are caused by inappropriate regulation, or by general market failures.

It must be frankly recognized that labour market flexibility means different things to different people. The creation of new job opportunities is essential: but so is the protection of existing workers' rights. It is important to recognize, and reject, the version of flexibility that implies only reductions in pay and in workers' rights. It is not progress to replace secure employment by other jobs of lower quality at lower pay.

East Asia has shown in recent years that labour mobility can be compatible with increased employment and rising pay — but only in the context of rapid economic expansion. In most other developing countries, where growth is sluggish, labour mobility is also slow. Most new jobs are generated through self-employment and the informal sector. Sometimes, but too rarely, the informal sector achieves high productivity and dynamic growth; mostly, though, informal-sector work is relatively unproductive, and low paid.

Appropriate responses should be devised in the light of several considerations:

- the method by which wages and conditions of work are set in any country should respect democratic traditions; growth in developing countries may be hampered by rules copied from those prevailing in economies with more highly developed labour markets;

- restricting labour mobility by employment quotas, or by guaranteeing employment in unviable enterprises, may reduce overall economic activity and deny job opportunities to new entrants in the labour market;

- if public-sector pay is disproportionately high, it can distort labour markets and contribute to unproductive public expenditure; and if public-sector employment is too high a proportion of total employment, it may lead to inefficiency in public services and further labour market distortions;

- the most effective government action to improve the working of the labour market is by promoting basic education and encouraging the retraining of workers bypassed by technical or economic change;

- legislation, and persuasion, can help to ensure that members of disadvantaged groups have a fair chance to find work;

- exceptional problems may call for special labour-market policies. Examples include:

- (a) natural disasters, where well-established public works programmes can be efficiently expanded to both relieve distress and build capital assets such as roads or dams;

- (b) economic disasters such as that affecting much of Eastern Europe, where jobs have been eliminated by harsh but necessary reforms, and savings by hyperinflation. There, as the World Bank has argued, it may be impossible to find even short-term work for those affected, and cash income supplements may be the only way to avoid distress. The overriding rule is that emergency relief be finite, offering the beneficiaries a strong incentive to return actively to the labour market as soon as possible.



## An outline for global action

Nations that act together can greatly increase their chances of providing remunerative and sustainable work for all their citizens. Full employment is possible only if economic growth is rapid. The world has become a global market in which trade transfers the benefits of growth and its risks — from one economy to another.

Certainly individual countries can exclude themselves from the growth process by, for example, bad macroeconomic management, bureaucratic rigidity or institutional corruption. Good governance and the rule of law are the domestic basis for growth. But no one country can keep growing for long on its own. The approach to full employment in an interdependent world must start with an international compact.

The World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in March 1995 will provide the opportunity for agreement on an agenda for worldwide growth. This paper has outlined some of the problems and prospects. Here we briefly offer some proposals:

- The industrial countries of the OECD must coordinate their policies for faster growth.
- The momentum towards freer trade must be sustained, with reductions in tariffs and other barriers by countries at all levels of development.
- The system of official development assistance should be entirely reformed, to concentrate the resources available on the countries most in need.
- The outstanding debts of the poorest developing countries should be reduced or, better, eliminated.
- Basic education for all (especially for women), and retraining for adults, are essential preconditions for increasing and upgrading employment everywhere. They should be supported by more and better technical assistance, including the transfer of educational technology.

*An integrated world demands concerted action. All nations have a common interest in the growth of trade and of economic activity: so do all enterprises, national and multinational, and all workers' organizations. Faster growth will put the jobless to work.*

*To promote global growth, a global compact is needed. No country, or sector, can on its own fulfil its full potential and provide the jobs that people need. All can succeed if they pull together. Now is the time to start.*

*The aims of a global compact would be to speed the growth of employment, reduce poverty and improve the quality of the jobs provided. The subjects it would need to consider are wide-ranging but closely interwoven. They include trade, aid, the operation of labour markets, migration, the movement of capital and the safeguarding of the environment.*

*In all these areas there are shared risks to be avoided, and mutual advantages to be obtained. Global action must be defined by a global forum. It is for the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995 to draw up the agenda and start the process.*

## Appendix 1 List of background papers

1. *Growth, macroeconomic stability and employment expansion: A global strategy*, Azizur Rahman Khan.  
(to be published by the ILO as *Overcoming Unemployment*)
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