

Needs, Rights and Social Development

Rodolfo Stavenhagen

Overarching Concerns
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Acronyms

GDP	gross domestic product
GNP	gross national product
NGO	non-governmental organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

Summary/Résumé/Resumen

Summary

This paper is based on a speech given by Rodolfo Stavenhagen at the conference, Taking Responsibility for Social Development, organized by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) on 29 June 2000 in Geneva. The conference was held during the five-year review of the World Summit for Social Development.

The paper looks at the development of rights and the link with social development. According to Stavenhagen, free-market economics and globalization, instead of providing solutions to some of the world's most serious problems such as poverty, tend to exacerbate them. He says that the idea of social and human development has become the "step-child" of international priorities and that, rhetoric aside, development does not always take into account human values and social goals; rather, development is often confused with economic growth.

All human beings have to satisfy material, cultural, social and spiritual needs, and it is the purpose of development strategies and policies to contribute to their fulfilment. Development must serve the needs of the people, especially the poor, which means that needs must be factored into development strategies. These must be designed to address the issue squarely: not as a hoped-for secondary fall-out or an afterthought, but as the centrepiece of development thinking.

Stavenhagen also says that development—however defined—must be considered not only as a process of accumulation or change, but rather as a collective good, to the extent that it addresses the common needs of specific social and cultural groups. Sometimes it is "development" itself that is the problem, when it is imposed without taking into account the particularities of specific contexts.

Most human needs have been framed in modern times as legitimate rights to which citizens can aspire, and which society at large has an obligation to respect and provide for. Struggles for the fulfilment of needs have resulted in needs becoming rights, which in turn became the legitimate and legal framework for political and social action in modern nation-states.

However, according to Stavenhagen, national development strategies were not always modified based on these principles. Instead, development strategies were subordinated to overall growth objectives in the emerging global marketplace. One of the great illusions of recent decades has been that market forces by themselves can pull the poorest countries and the poorest populations in all countries out of the morass they are in. Obviously, development cannot be left to markets alone. This view is reflected in what Stavenhagen calls the "currently fashionable" Third Way in politics, which maintains that both the community and the market have a role to play in development and that the excesses of the market can be held in check by regulations.

Stavenhagen maintains that development policies designed to alleviate poverty, overcome social exclusion and reduce persistent categorical inequalities must focus on the needs and rights of specific categories or groups in society. But they must do so in areas that make a difference: that is, productive activities, and the ownership and control of the means of production and the fruits of labour, the organization of the workplace, decision-making processes, legal framework enabling autonomous participation, respect for cultural differences and social identities and, of course, democratic governance.

He concludes by stating that futures that include socially valued ends must be based on the understanding that human needs and human rights can best be served through the articulation of people-oriented participatory institutions at all levels of society. The state must be seen not only as a regulatory mechanism for diverse and sometimes conflictive interests, but also as an instrument for the achievement of socially desired collective goods and the well-being of all of society's members. Such a state can only be built up from the grassroots level, and can thrive only in a democratic environment. It is accountable at all levels and linked to the various other institutions of civil society. These institutions, in turn, must become the countervailing power to state authority. Democratization, decentralization, deregulation and devolution are all concepts linked to a socially responsible state.

The state in all its ramifications must be brought back in as a socially responsible and accountable institution of governance, with a clear vision of what the public sphere is to provide in terms of addressing the needs and rights of human beings. The market serves only as a necessary mechanism for the allocation of certain kinds of consumer goods and services, and a stimulant to changes in productivity—not as the judge and provider of socially valued collective goods. These collective goods can only be obtained through politics: the politics of consensus building, collective participation, transparent decision making and democratic commitments, inspired by the values of freedom, justice and morality.

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Résumé

Ce document s'inspire d'un discours prononcé par Rodolfo Stavenhagen à la conférence "Assumer la responsabilité du développement social", organisée par l'Institut de recherche des Nations Unies pour le développement social (UNRISD) le 29 juin 2000 à Genève, lors de l'examen, cinq ans après, du Sommet mondial pour le développement social.

Il porte sur l'évolution des droits et son rapport avec le développement social. Au lieu d'apporter des solutions aux problèmes mondiaux les plus graves tels que la pauvreté, l'économie de marché et la mondialisation ont tendance, selon R. Stavenhagen, à les exacerber. L'idée même de développement social et humain est devenu, dit-il, le "parent pauvre" des

priorités internationales et, si l'on fait abstraction de la rhétorique, le développement, que l'on confond souvent avec la croissance économique, ne tient pas toujours compte des valeurs humaines et des objectifs sociaux.

Tous les êtres humains ont des besoins matériels, culturels, sociaux et spirituels à satisfaire et les stratégies et politiques de développement ont pour but de contribuer à cette satisfaction. Le développement doit servir à répondre aux besoins du peuple, en particulier des pauvres, ce qui signifie que les besoins doivent être pris en compte dans les stratégies de développement, qui doivent être élaborées directement dans ce but: dans la réflexion sur le développement, la satisfaction des besoins doit être non pas une retombée souhaitée, un ornement surajouté, mais bien la clé de voûte du développement.

Rodolfo Stavenhagen dit aussi que le développement—quelle que soit la définition qu'on lui donne—doit être considéré non seulement comme un processus d'accumulation ou de changement, mais plutôt comme un bien collectif, dans la mesure où il répond aux besoins communs de groupes sociaux et culturels spécifiques. Parfois, c'est le "développement" lui-même qui pose problème, lorsqu'on l'impose sans tenir compte des particularités de contextes spécifiques.

La plupart des besoins humains sont présentés à l'époque moderne comme des droits légitimes auxquels les citoyens peuvent aspirer et que la société dans son ensemble a le devoir de respecter et de réaliser. Les luttes pour la satisfaction des besoins ont transformé les besoins en droits et c'est ce qui a donné à l'action politique et sociale son cadre légitime et légal dans les Etats-nations modernes.

Pourtant, selon R. Stavenhagen, les stratégies nationales de développement n'ont pas toujours été modifiées en fonction de ces principes. Au contraire, certaines ont été subordonnées à des objectifs généraux de croissance sur le marché mondial en formation. L'une des grandes illusions des dernières décennies a été de croire que les lois du marché réussiraient à tirer de leur marasme les pays les plus pauvres et les populations les plus démunies du globe. De toute évidence, on ne peut pas abandonner le développement aux seuls marchés. Pour illustrer ce point de vue, il y a ce que R. Stavenhagen appelle la troisième voie "actuellement en vogue" en politique, qui consiste à dire que la collectivité et le marché ont tous deux un rôle à jouer dans le développement et que les réglementations peuvent venir à bout des excès du marché.

Selon lui, les politiques de développement conçues pour atténuer la pauvreté, surmonter l'exclusion sociale et réduire des inégalités catégorielles tenaces doivent être axées sur les besoins et les droits de catégories ou de groupes sociaux spécifiques. Mais les mesures doivent porter sur des domaines stratégiques: les activités de production, la propriété et la maîtrise des moyens de production et des fruits du travail, l'organisation au lieu de travail, les processus décisionnels, les cadres juridiques propres à favoriser une participation autonome, le respect des différences culturelles et des identités sociales et, bien entendu, une gouvernance démocratique.

Il conclut en disant que la construction d'un avenir socialement porteur doit reposer sur l'idée que c'est en mettant en place à tous les niveaux de la société des institutions participatives axées sur les personnes que l'on parviendra le mieux à servir la cause des droits de l'homme et à satisfaire les besoins des êtres humains. L'Etat doit apparaître non seulement comme l'arbitre d'intérêts divers et parfois conflictuels, mais aussi comme un moyen, pour la société, d'obtenir les biens collectifs qu'elle désire et, pour tous ses membres, d'accéder au bien-être. Un tel Etat ne peut s'édifier qu'à partir de la base et ne prospérer que dans un environnement propice à la démocratie. Il est comptable à tous les niveaux et lié à diverses autres institutions de la société civile qui, de leur côté, doivent faire contrepoids aux pouvoirs publics. La démocratisation, la décentralisation, la dérégulation et les transferts de compétences sont toutes des notions liées à celle d'Etat socialement responsable.

Dans toutes ses ramifications, l'Etat doit redevenir une institution de gouvernance responsable et comptable devant la société, ayant une vision claire de ce que la sphère publique doit faire pour que les êtres humains voient leurs besoins satisfaits et leurs droits respectés. Le marché n'est qu'un mécanisme nécessaire à la répartition de certains types de biens de consommation et de services et un stimulant pour la productivité, mais pas le juge et dispensateur de biens collectifs prisés par la société. Seule la politique peut permettre de les obtenir: la politique du consensus, de la participation populaire, de la transparence dans la prise de décision et des engagements démocratiques, inspirés par les valeurs de liberté, de justice et d'éthique.

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Resumen

Este documento se basa en un discurso pronunciado por Rodolfo Stavenhagen durante la conferencia "Asumir la Responsabilidad para el Desarrollo Social", organizada en Ginebra el 29 de junio de 2000, por el Instituto de Investigación de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo Social (UNRISD). La conferencia se llevó a cabo durante la revisión quinquenal de la Cumbre Mundial para el Desarrollo Social.

En el documento se examina la evolución de los derechos y su vínculo con el desarrollo social. Según Stavenhagen, las economías de libre mercado y la mundialización, lejos de facilitar soluciones a los problemas más graves del mundo, como la pobreza, tienden a exacerbarlos. Señala que la idea del desarrollo humano y social se ha convertido en el "hijastro" de las prioridades internacionales y que, retórica aparte, el desarrollo no siempre tiene en cuenta los valores humanos y los objetivos sociales, sino que, por el contrario, a menudo se confunde con el desarrollo económico.

Todos los seres humanos deben satisfacer sus necesidades materiales, culturales, sociales y espirituales, y el propósito de las estrategias y políticas de desarrollo es contribuir a que se

cumpla tal objetivo. El desarrollo debe atender las necesidades de las personas, especialmente los pobres, lo que significa que dichas necesidades deben estar contempladas en las estrategias de desarrollo y formularse para abordar directamente la cuestión; es decir, no como una idea secundaria deseable de último momento, sino como eje de la filosofía del desarrollo.

Stavenhagen también afirma que el desarrollo—al margen de su definición—no sólo debe ser considerado como un proceso de acumulación o de cambio, sino más bien como un bien colectivo, hasta el punto de hacer frente a las necesidades comunes de grupos sociales y culturales específicos. Algunas veces el problema es el “desarrollo” en sí, cuando se impone sin tener en cuenta las peculiaridades de contextos específicos.

La mayoría de las necesidades humanas se han considerado, en el contexto actual, como derechos legítimos a los que los ciudadanos pueden aspirar, y que la sociedad en general está obligada a respetar y asegurar. Las luchas para satisfacer las necesidades han resultado en que éstas últimas se hayan convertido en derechos, los cuales a su vez, han llegado a ser el marco jurídico y legítimo de acciones políticas y sociales emprendidas en los Estados modernos.

Sin embargo, según Stavenhagen, las estrategias de desarrollo nacional no siempre se modificaron con base en estos principios. En su lugar, las estrategias de desarrollo se subordinaron a objetivos generales de crecimiento en el mercado mundial emergente. Una de las grandes ilusiones de las últimas décadas ha sido que las fuerzas del mercado por sí solas, puedan sacar de la miseria a los países más pobres y a las poblaciones más pobres de todos los países. Evidentemente, el desarrollo no sólo puede dejarse en manos de los mercados. Esta opinión se refleja en lo que Stavenhagen denomina la, “actualmente de moda”, Tercera Vía en la esfera política según la cual, tanto la comunidad como el mercado tienen un papel que desempeñar en el desarrollo, y los excesos del mercado pueden ser controlados a través de regulaciones.

Stavenhagen sostiene que las políticas de desarrollo formuladas para aliviar la pobreza, superar la exclusión social y reducir las desigualdades categóricas persistentes; deben centrarse en las necesidades y los derechos de categorías o grupos específicos de la sociedad. Pero deben hacerse en ámbitos que hagan una diferencia, tales como: las actividades productivas, la posesión y el control de los medios de producción y los resultados del trabajo, la organización del lugar de trabajo, los procesos para la toma de decisiones, en marcos jurídicos que propicien la participación autónoma, el respeto por las diferencias culturales e identidades sociales y, por supuesto, el gobierno democrático.

Concluye señalando que la visión de un futuro que incluya objetivos socialmente valorados debe basarse sobre el entendido de que el mejor modo de atender las necesidades y derechos humanos, es a través de la articulación de instituciones participativas orientadas hacia las personas en todos los planos de la sociedad. El Estado no debe ser considerado sólo un mecanismo regulador para intereses diversos y muchas veces encontrados, sino también un instrumento para el logro de bienes colectivos socialmente deseados y para el bienestar de todos

los miembros de la sociedad. Semejante Estado sólo puede construirse desde un nivel local, y únicamente puede prosperar en un entorno democrático, debe rendir cuentas en todos los niveles y estar vinculado con otras instituciones de la sociedad civil quienes, a su vez, deben llegar a ser el poder compensatorio con respecto a la autoridad estatal. La democratización, la descentralización, la liberalización y la delegación son conceptos vinculados con un Estado socialmente responsable.

Debe lograrse que el Estado, en todos sus ámbitos de competencia, vuelva a ser una institución de gestión de gobierno socialmente responsable y capaz de rendir cuentas, con una visión clara de lo que debe ofrecer la esfera pública con respecto a la satisfacción de las necesidades y los derechos de todas las personas. El mercado sólo sirve como mecanismo necesario para asignar ciertos tipos de servicios y bienes de consumo y para alentar los cambios en la productividad—no como juez y proveedor de bienes colectivos socialmente valorados. Estos bienes colectivos sólo pueden obtenerse a través de la política: la política de formación de consenso, de participación popular, de toma de decisiones transparentes y de compromisos democráticos; inspirada en los valores de la libertad, la justicia y la moralidad.

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Introduction¹

If this meeting had been held a hundred years ago, we would no doubt have been presented with a most extraordinary account of the situation of the world. Some speakers might have celebrated a long, unbroken period of peace and prosperity in Europe. Others would have underlined spectacular advances in science and technology that opened up new vistas of unparalleled progress and well-being for mankind. Observers would have noted that the world had shrunk and that railroads, shipping-lanes and the telegraph were uniting people far and wide. Commerce and industry had greatly increased among nations bringing the peoples of the world closer together. Responsible statesmen had been able to craft treaties and agreements that would make a repetition of the predatory or dynastic wars of yesteryear very unlikely. The world had been divided up into “spheres of influence”, and an equilibrium had been reached that would guarantee stability and peace for the coming generations. Europe (and now the United States as well) had assumed its *mission civilisatrice* (civilizing mission) and its “manifest destiny” to bring the light and benefits of civilization and progress to the “lesser breeds” of humanity. It was the age of smug, self-glorifying imperialism. Queen Victoria, Bismarck and Teddy Roosevelt (the Thatcher, Kohl and Reagan of that gilded era, *toutes proportions gardées*) sat, literally, on top of the world.

But even then there were doubters and challengers. Industrial capitalism had created a dissatisfied and restless working class, which was demanding certain basic rights: decent working conditions, minimum wages and the freedom to associate and organize. Peasants were abandoning poor and backward rural villages to flock to the cities, whereas others fled from famines, and religious and political persecution across international borders and oceans. While a burgeoning urban middle-class flaunted its lifestyle and levels of consumption, masses of illiterate, unemployed and undernourished populations subsisted at the margins of bourgeois society. Women were demanding equal rights, and citizens were claiming a place of their own in emerging democratic polities. More dramatically, the peoples of the colonial empires had begun to question the inevitability of having to carry the white man’s burden and were preparing for the long march toward freedom. During the previous half-century, remarkable men of vision had theorized about the internal contradictions of the world capitalist system and had prophesied its revolutionary downfall. Indeed, revolutionary groups and movements were already at work trying to bring this about.

Does all this sound familiar a century later? Has the world really changed as much as we are led to believe? Has the end of history been finally achieved (that is, has humanity been stopped in its tracks) or are we witnessing the lull before the next storm? Is it merely a coincidence that the Short Twentieth Century, as historians like to call it, begins and ends in Sarajevo? This short twentieth century has been full of contradictions and extremes. We can understand Yehudi Menuhin when he states: “If I had to sum up the twentieth century, I would say that it raised the greatest hopes ever conceived by humanity, and destroyed all illusions and ideals” (quoted

¹ This paper is based on a speech given by Rodolfo Stavenhagen at the conference, Taking Responsibility for Social Development, organized by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) on 29 June 2000 in Geneva. The conference was held during the five-year review of the World Summit for Social Development.

in Hobsbawm 1994); although if we agreed completely with the last part of the statement we might not be sitting here today.

The Impact of Globalization on Social Development

In 1995, UNRISD prepared a report for the World Summit for Social Development. The title of this document, *States of Disarray: The Social Effects of Globalization*, is revealing, because even then it was already clear that the dynamics of the international system after the end of the Cold War had brought in its wake, among other things, a number of very acute structural and systemic problems that had not received sufficient attention by governments and international bodies during the preceding years. The Social Summit itself had been convened to address issues that were not being dealt with adequately by existing institutions, and the debates at the Summit and concurrent meetings focused on global tendencies that required the urgent attention of the international community. UNRISD's publication pointed out the major challenges at the end of the century. The report indicates, for example:

At the international level, social organizations have been overtaken by transnational corporations and international financial institutions. At a national level, many state institutions have been eroded or eliminated. And at a local level, the imperatives of market forces and globalization have been undermining communities and families. ... [P]ower has been transferred to institutions that have consistently ignored the social implications of their actions – while passing responsibility for absorbing the damage either to non-governmental agencies or to communities and families that have themselves been so weakened that they are in no position to respond (UNRISD 1995:8).

On the occasion of the Summit, UNRISD also invited a number of scholars to debate their visions of social futures. It is instructive, some years down the road, to recall some of the major findings of these academics:

- i) The impact of the globalized economy on social, cultural and political life is, of course, a principal topic of this *fin de siècle*. Globalization has both positive and negative implications. It liberates entrepreneurial energies and contributes to the accumulation of wealth. But it also generates inequalities (among regions, nations and social classes), poverty and unemployment. Globalization stimulates migrations and competition, but it also arouses xenophobia, discrimination and often, violence.
- ii) The effects of the new technologies (computers, telecommunications) on the restructuring of social relations are paramount, and the global economy cannot be understood without them. Particularly affected by these changes are labour markets, which are no longer what they used to be: the nature of work is changing rapidly. At least in the Western industrial countries, manual labour is disappearing and the so-called "services sector" is generating increasing employment. "Work" is no longer a long-term relationship with a fixed employer to be negotiated through a union contract. It has become "flexible", in today's jargon, which means that workers have to give up security, benefits and fixed wage rates to return to the old "happy-go-lucky" ways of early industrial times. "Work at decent rates of pay is increasingly hard to come by", says Ralph Dahrendorf, while "uprooting people becomes a condition of efficiency and competitiveness" (Dahrendorf 1996:29).

- iii) A concomitant phenomenon that commands the attention of analysts and provides grist for the polemical mills of academe, is the withering away of the state. Not of course as Karl Marx prophesied, but rather as an accompaniment of the neoliberal global free market. The “dismantling of the welfare state is on the agenda everywhere”, Dahrendorf reminds us. (1996). Still, the nation-state is not about to disappear, argues Eric Hobsbawm, because it carries out some necessary, though nowadays diminished, functions such as security, the political organization of the citizenry, and the redistribution of wealth. Hobsbawm sees little promise in some proposed alternatives to the territorial state, such as free-market ultraliberalism and the ideology of “small is beautiful”, that is, the substitution of larger political units by smaller ones. The territorial state, augurs Hobsbawm, will continue to play a major role in relation to social development (Hobsbawm 1996:55–66).
- iv) In response to the decreasing political legitimacy of states, some scholars propound a return to community; not the old, traditional and conservative communities – relics of a pre-modern era – that backward-looking romantics tend to idealize, but rather, according to Amitai Etzioni, a composite concept of “responsive community”, a group of people who share affective bonds and a culture, based on open participation, dialogue and truly shared values (Etzioni 1996: 93–94). Communitarians see community as a constructive alternative to the overbearing state and the free-ranging markets, or rather, as a compromise between these two apparently mutually exclusive options.
- v) This globalized “runaway world”, which in the West at least may lead to a “post-scarcity” society, requires a new kind of “life politics” based on “reflexive modernity”, according to Anthony Giddens (1996: 151–163), who more recently has become a staunch proponent of the polemical Third Way in politics (Giddens 2000).

It has become fairly evident by now that free-market economics and globalization, if left to themselves, are not able to provide solutions to some of the contemporary world’s most serious problems; and that, on the contrary, they contribute to aggravate tendencies that may in the long run (and in the not-so-long run as well) spell catastrophe for millions of human beings. (This has been pointedly underlined by NGO-organized demonstrations on the occasion of official international conferences, as in Seattle in December 1999 and in Geneva in June 2000.) Can these issues be addressed by making occasional minor adjustments to the excesses of the workings of the market, such as splitting up the Microsoft empire into two smaller ones, phasing out the use of fluorocarbons in refrigerators and hair-spray cans, or taxing the flow of overnight speculative capital from one stock-exchange to another? Sometimes indeed, major transformations are achieved by an accumulation of smaller changes, but often, in history, the reverse is also true: *plus ça change, plus ça reste le même* (the more things change, the more they remain the same).

While the major global tendencies are clear, there is no widespread consensus on the world’s priorities at the turn of the millennium. Should the economy just keep growing and create more wealth? Are environmental concerns paramount? Do we have to stop the “population explosion”? Must employment top the list? Is the eradication of poverty the major concern? But what about human rights and fundamental freedoms? Is not democratic governance the basic pre-condition for all other concerns? And how important is the need for conviviality and tolerance in a world prone to conflicts and violence? In an ideal world, we might reach agreement on a ranking of world priorities. But as our planet is a highly diversified congeries of

societies and cultures, and each has its own perceptions of right and wrong, of the tasks ahead and how these issues must be addressed.

Even when priorities have been identified and agreed upon, there is still no agreement as to how these ought to be met, and the best of intentions may flounder with a lack of political will, or when there is simple incompetence and neglect. That the idea of social and human development (which are closely linked terms from any perspective) should remain the step-child of international priorities is unfortunate, but that the concept of development can still be wielded without reference to human values and social goals is inexcusable. What I refer to is of course the widespread habit of confusing development with economic growth, and measuring economic achievement principally in terms of gross national product (GNP) and other macroeconomic indicators.

The Concept of Human Needs

Several decades ago, reflecting broad disillusionment with growth-centred measures of development, there was much talk of a “basic-needs”-oriented approach to development, and there has been some interesting theoretical work on this topic. The concept of “basic needs”, however, was criticized by scholars from the poorer countries, who suggested that it was being used to lock developing countries into persistent poverty, while allowing richer countries to continue on a “growth-oriented” track. Basic needs were soon replaced by “human needs” or simply by the concept of “needs”, and scholars tended to agree that basic or not, all human beings have to satisfy material, cultural, social and spiritual needs somehow, and it is the purpose of development strategies and policies to contribute to the satisfaction of these integrated packages of needs. While the “needs” approach to development seems to have fallen out of favour in the councils of the mighty, there is still a strong debate on the wider objectives of growth strategies and policies, beyond maintaining a certain growth rate or raising a country’s gross domestic product (GDP).

There seems to be agreement that whatever the final uses to which the outcomes of the economic growth process might be put, the process itself is necessary to create wealth, which in turn is considered by many an end in itself. This is a dubious assertion that not everybody would agree with because the massive accumulation of riches by a few is not necessarily compatible with the improvement of living standards of the many. Nor is it imperative to cut down the world’s remaining tropical forests so that a middle-class urban family can comfortably furnish its apartment. It boils down to a question of values, and the larger and more commonly debated issue is: “So, it is okay for economies to grow, but to what uses shall the fruits of growth be put and who shall benefit?” Leaving aside for the moment the questionable thesis that, thanks to an invisible guiding hand, the sum of individual benefits amounts to collective well-being, this is of course a question of values as well.

Let us return briefly to the notion of basic needs.

Classical political economists have shown that human beings, who live in society and share in certain cultural values, work in order to satisfy their human needs. Work is neither a malediction thrust upon humanity by a wrathful god, nor is it the inescapable lot of the suffering poor to enrich the rich. Work is part of human nature, and it is—or should be—essentially creative and satisfying, except when, due to social and economic conditions, it is alienating. According to Marx, it is not work itself but alienating work that must be overcome. Work that is alienating or exploitative is a common phenomenon of modern times, although it has existed throughout human history, because of the conditions imposed by world capitalism.

But in the era of globalization, we have reached a period when work *need* no longer be alienating; yet it still is, for millions of people. And the lack of work is alienating for those millions who are unemployed or underemployed. Will economic growth do away with alienating work? This is not likely, even though globalization has, by all accounts, changed the nature of work (Aronowitz and DiFazio 1994; Wilson 1996). Even the World Bank is now concerned that high growth rates have not been able to do away with poverty and unemployment.

In an era of global transactions, megamergers and macrostrategies, perhaps it is necessary once again to turn the world upside down, or rather downside up. It cannot be stressed often enough that development is not to be confused with economic growth. There can be growth without development, and although many may not agree with this, there can also be development without growth. What I mean is that the well-being of people who live on the lowest levels of the social pyramid can change for the better even in the absence of macroeconomic growth rates.

But how can this be achieved? We must turn to some old ideas and values that curiously seem to have gone out of fashion in recent decades. These are simple and well known, and it is surprising that at the beginning of the third millennium we are again debating them as if nothing had been learned from the history of the last two centuries.

The first idea is that development must serve the needs of the people, especially those who have less. This means that needs must again be factored into development strategies, and these must be so designed to address the issue squarely: not as a hoped-for secondary fall-out or an afterthought, but as the centrepiece of development thinking.

Secondly, development—however defined, and definitions abound while consensus is lacking—must be considered not only as a process of accumulation or change, but rather as a collective good, to the extent that it addresses the common needs of specific social and cultural groups. I refer not only to the old problematique of the commons, but also to the more thorny issue of the relationship between individual or corporate enterprise and the well-being of the group, whether this group is a small peasant village, an indigenous tribe, an urban neighbourhood, a geographical region or a nation. Examples and illustrations abound. Hydroelectric power projects from the Amazon to Aswan used to be promoted as the passport to modernization and development. They are

now considered to be white elephants and costly failures: costly in environmental and social as well as financial terms. Take the continuing debate on the Three Gorges Dam on the Yangtze River. Development cannot be reduced to kilowatt-hours of energy, or for that matter, output of steel or automobiles, without taking into consideration the impact on the daily lives of peoples, their environment, their survival, their identities and those of future generations.

In Uganda, for example, a local environmental organization said that World Bank funding should not go toward building a large hydroelectric dam when smaller scale renewable energy, like wind and solar energy, would more likely benefit the nation's rural poor. The NGO said the Bank relied on a false premise that economic growth spurred by the project will trickle down to the poor, and argued that the institution was not taking into account how corruption and social inequalities would inhibit the poor from benefiting from the dam (Internet, news item, June 24, 2000). Another example: the state of Chiapas produces one third of Mexico's total energy, yet the people of Chiapas are among the country's most deprived, and among the lowest on the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) human development index (UNDP 1993).

I can quote a personal anecdote. Almost half a century ago, I worked as a budding government employee in southeastern Mexico on making the construction of a giant multipurpose dam (then the largest in Latin America) acceptable to the local indigenous population. We considered ourselves to be harbingers of progress, and it was an exciting experience for a young committed "applied anthropologist". It involved, among other things, moving hundreds of peasant families to new locations. Years later I returned to the area and saw that the project had been a disaster: social disorganization, economic inequality, environmental destruction, waste, corruption, bureaucratic bungling, the whole list of what *not* to do with a development project. Could it have been done differently? Perhaps, but given the social and political constraints, it was not. Therefore this was a cultural, social, institutional problem, not a financial or a technical one. At that time, it was common to hear arguments about the so-called social and cultural obstacles to development. Nowadays we know better, of course. Very often, "development" is itself the social and cultural obstacle. We should not forget that.

3) Thirdly, let us assume that society – and not the economy – is a self-regulating mechanism, and therefore it requires the knowledgeable and committed participation of its members in devising and managing institutions for the collective good. One such institution is, of course, the state, but it is not the only one. The trouble with the state in the twentieth century was that, to put it bluntly, we couldn't live without it but we couldn't live with it either. Can we do better during the twenty-first century?

I think it should be clear by now that people-centred development requires not only people who participate, but also people-oriented institutions, including a people-oriented state.

Allow me to say a few more words about these three simple – and not very original – ideas.

Except for the most basic of all physiological functions (say, eating and sleeping) all human needs are socially constructed, as are the ways in which all needs (including eating and sleeping) are satisfied, because humans are social and cultural animals. The way needs are formulated, defined, expressed, gratified or deferred, becomes in all human societies a culturally determined process. And all past and present human societies have instituted mechanisms whereby such needs may or may not be satisfied through a host of mores, customs, norms and relationships. When needs are felt, expressed and recognized but not satisfied, or not sufficiently or adequately satisfied, then human beings possess the faculty of doing something about it. When they are hungry, they should work harder, according to some advisers, but they can also try to emigrate to greener lands, or plunder a warehouse or storm the Bastille. When they feel the need to participate (a very human need indeed), they can sit in a community assembly, sing at a prayer meeting, dance in a disco, form a political party, stage a protest or start a revolution. How they react in each case becomes a social and cultural issue, and not infrequently, a political drama. We could draw up a long list of how needs and needs-satisfaction are embedded in the sociocultural matrix of space and time.

Human Needs as Human Rights

What might be emphasized is that most human needs have been framed in modern times as legitimate rights to which citizens can aspire, and which society at large has an obligation to respect and provide for. Johan Galtung has suggested that most of the human rights that appear in international legal documents (the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights, and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) respond in fact to some basic human need (Galtung 1994). Throughout history, people have struggled—sometimes violently and against formidable odds—to obtain need-satisfaction, from the slave revolts of antiquity to trade union organization drives in industrial capitalism, to national liberation struggles and the tearing down of the Berlin wall in our days. These struggles resulted in needs becoming rights, which in turn became the legitimate and legal framework for political and social action in modern nation-states. We live in an age of rights in which, as Norberto Bobbio reminds us, “the current increasingly widespread and intense debate on human rights can be interpreted as a ‘prophetic sign’ (*signum pronosticum*) of humanity’s moral progress, given that it is so widespread as to involve all the peoples of the world and so intense as to be on the agenda of the most authoritative international judicial bodies” (Bobbio 1996:35).

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, adopted by the General Assembly in 1966, recognizes “the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions”. It also recognizes the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger, and obligates the States Parties to the Covenant to take adequate measures for the fulfillment of this right. As everybody recognizes, this is a large order, and it has led to important debates regarding the concept “adequate” and the measures and steps, including specific programmes, that states are required to take in order to acquit themselves of this obligation. It is quite clear that we are dealing here implicitly with development strategies

based on the international formulation of human rights, which derive from the recognition of specific human needs. What we have here is a concept of development anchored in the dyad of human rights—human needs. To what extent does market-driven growth address this challenge? It is well known that the laws of demand and supply can fix the market price of bread, but they do nothing to alleviate hunger and famine. Should not development strategies be expected to provide a response? And if they are expected to do so, as I believe they must, how should these be formulated and by whom (Alston in Eide et al. 1984; Moore 1998)?

Let us also remember that the United Nations General Assembly adopted in 1986 a Declaration on the Right to Development, which stipulates that:

Article 2

1. The human person is the central subject of development and should be the active participant and beneficiary of the right to development.
2. All human beings have a responsibility for development, individually and collectively, taking into account the need for full respect for their human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as their duties to the community, which alone can ensure the free and complete fulfilment of the human being, and they should therefore promote and protect an appropriate political, social and economic order for development.
3. States have the right and the duty to formulate appropriate national development policies that aim at the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population and of all individuals, on the basis of their active, free and meaningful participation in development and in the fair distribution of the benefits resulting therefrom.

It is significant that during the 1980s the members of the UN saw fit to address development as a human right. As so many international declarations before it, however, this one did not generate any a great deal of activity seeking its immediate implementation. Moreover, human rights specialists did not quite know how to translate the principles set out in the Declaration into practical measures, and as far as I can tell, national development strategies were not generally adjusted to follow these principles. To the contrary, it appears that development strategies were subordinated to overall growth objectives in the emerging global marketplace. Is it not time now to return to the principles of the UN Declaration and attempt to adjust development strategies to the integrated and indivisible package of human rights?

The Free Market Economy and Social Development

Granted that sustainable development strategies must be based on investment in future growth, and not on quick fixes to immediate demands, yet we have learned from brutal experience during the twentieth century that betting on a bright but distant future by deferring immediate needs is a recipe for political and human disaster. But betting on the invisible hand of the market and ignoring the needs and rights of the socially excluded is just as dangerous and morally unacceptable. In UNRISD's volume, *Social Futures, Global Visions*, Emma Rothschild shows that in eighteenth-century Britain, the father of *laissez faire*, Adam Smith, was not

opposed to government regulation and intervention in favour of socially valued ends, to which he devoted some of his writings, which are ignored by today's economic libertarians. Rothschild laments the lessons of a "road not taken" (Rothschild 1996). Are we not repeating the unlearned lesson?

Allow me to refer again to the situation in my country. As a result of a violent social revolution early in the century, Mexico adopted radical land reform legislation to satisfy the demands of the exploited and oppressed peasantry. Land and liberty was the rallying cry of the revolutionary peasants who were led by the legendary Emiliano Zapata (there are other Zapatistas active in southeastern Mexico at the present time, claiming similar rights which they have been denied; the revolutionary cycle has come full circle during the century). While it took several decades to implement the agrarian legislation, results have been mixed. Renewed land concentration took place during the latter part of the century. Small peasants and landless labourers were unable to make ends meet, thus fuelling increasing migration flows into urban areas and the United States; and recent government policies have been biased against peasant-based development. As part of Mexico's triumphal entry into the era of globalization during the 1980s and 1990s, the government decided to scrap the remnants of land reform altogether, expecting that land reprivatization, foreign investments in agriculture and agribusiness, and the miracles of the global market would raise productivity and international competitiveness to new heights. This was achieved to a certain degree, but the designers of this "structural modernization" as it was euphemistically named, forgot an essential element in their strategy: namely, the fate of millions of poor farming families and communities.

Here we have a case in which the state deliberately opts out of a constitutional obligation. During the early part of the century, rural development strategies were based on an understanding of the relationship between peasant needs and social rights, which was mediated by a corporatist and paternalistic state. Later, this link was broken and, in the absence of a strong civil society as a countervailing power and the inability of the state to fully assume its responsibility, agrarian issues (as opposed to agricultural productivist criteria) were neglected and sidetracked. All presidential candidates in the July 2000 electoral process paid lip service to the need for taking up again the "just" demands of the peasantry, but the free market strategy to which the Mexican government is committed has left millions of poor peasants—who, contrary to what the theory predicted, did not become competitive entrepreneurs overnight—with many unsatisfied needs, many unrecognized rights and few expectations that either the market or the state will do anything about it. This goes a long way to explaining why Emiliano Zapata rides again in the mountains of southeastern Mexico (Collier 1994; Harvey 1998).

The Role of Communities

The second simple idea I mentioned before is that human rights belong not only to individuals as isolated atoms (monads) but to human beings who live their lives in specific social and cultural contexts and are part of all kinds of networks. For most people in the world, the immediate context of their daily lives is family and community. Human needs are fulfilled in

these collective human environments: food, shelter, security, education, work, leisure, participation, creativity, spirituality are all conditioned by culture. Peoples' behaviour is as much, if not more, determined by the need for belonging and identity as by the desire to accumulate or consume. Nobody has understood this better than the advertising and merchandising industries, who now cater increasingly to so-called consumer "niche markets" (music, entertainment, clothing, foods, etc.), thereby changing the nature of culture and of cultures. Moreover, the idea of development itself is a cultural artefact, which is why it can no longer be simply wielded as a purely technical or instrumental construct, but must be regarded as one more element in the processes of cultural change, a problem cogently addressed in UNESCO's report on culture and development, *Our Creative Diversity* (Pérez de Cuéllar 1996).

What I wish to underline is that despite the rampant individualism that the carefully crafted Western consumer culture tries to foist upon the rest of the world, millions of people around the globe are tied by tradition and volition to communities and collectivities that provide meaning to the lives of individuals and have, indeed, a life of their own. While identity politics is much decried nowadays because of extremist phenomena (religious fundamentalisms, ethnic cleansings, genocide, racism and xenophobia), it is no less true that communities can provide solutions to many of today's problems. This is what the communitarians put forward, such as Amitai Etzioni (1996) who argues in favour of a community-centred approach to social development.

Are communities better equipped to deal with human needs and human rights than market mechanisms? While the question is still open (communities are often accused of being culturally oppressive regarding their individual members, and exclusivistic regarding outsiders), some practitioners argue that both community and market have a role to play. The currently fashionable Third Way politics holds that "the good society is one that strikes a balance between government, markets and the civil society" (Giddens 2000:165). This is not exactly new nor particularly earth-shaking, but it does stress the fact that development cannot be left to markets alone.

The "good society" of course is one in which human needs and human rights are equitably taken care of. While in the countries of the North this requires rethinking the welfare state, rebuilding human capital, providing opportunities for employment and regulating transfer payments to the underprivileged (let alone rethinking immigration policies, the importance of which has again been underscored by the tragic incident in Dover, in which over 50 undocumented migrants were found dead in a closed trailer, and by "illegal immigrant" hunting in the desert of Arizona), in the South the challenge is considerably greater. In fact, it is immense. One of the great illusions of the last couple of decades has been that market forces by themselves can pull the poorest countries and the poorest populations in all countries out of the morass they are in. The World Bank reports that worldwide the number of poor and extreme poor has remained stable, amounting to almost half the total population of the world (Wolfensohn 2000). But the issue is not only poverty of individuals in statistical terms (how

many persons subsist below an arbitrarily defined “poverty line”), but rather the problematique of structural inequality and collective social exclusion.

Amartya Sen has developed the idea of “capability sets”, which represents a person’s freedom to achieve “functionings” relevant for one’s own well-being (Sen 1992:49, 56). While he recognizes the problem of entrenched deprivation related to issues of class, community, caste and gender (p.55), he does not pursue this line of inquiry, which has been followed by other scholars. Charles Tilly (1998) shows that durable inequality is “categorical”, that is, certain categories of people (gender, ethnicity, status groups, etc.) are persistently involved in the transmission of inequality from generation to generation. It is the social and economic structures of inequality which lead to its reproduction. No amount of “human capital building” or “attitude changes” will do away with categorical socioeconomic inequalities; this requires more authoritative interventions at the structural levels.

We may conclude from the foregoing that development policies designed to alleviate poverty, overcome social exclusion and reduce persistent categorical inequalities, must focus on the needs and rights of specific categories or groups in society. But they must do so in areas which make a difference: that is, productive activities, and the ownership and control of the means of production and the fruits of labour; the organization of the workplace, decision-making processes, the legal framework enabling autonomous participation, respect for cultural differences and social identities and, of course, democratic governance.

May I be allowed once again to provide an example from my part of the world. Indigenous peoples, for example, the 50 million in Latin America, are the perennially poor, the persistently deprived, the systematically excluded, the eternally marginalized and discriminated against. In Geneva the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations has been working since 1983 on a Declaration of Indigenous Rights which is still, at this time, bogged down in the Human Rights Commission. What do indigenous peoples want? Not only equal rights with everybody else, because formally they have enjoyed these rights in most countries since the beginning of the nineteenth century. What they claim, nowadays, is legal recognition as differentiated collectivities (and a number of Latin American constitutions now recognize this fact), territorial rights, cultural rights, and local and regional autonomy within the framework of the right of peoples to self-determination. Not all of this is accepted by existing states, and political conflicts over these issues have erupted all over the region, in Chile, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Mexico. The peace accord of 1996, which put an end to a brutal 30-year long civil war in Guatemala, includes provisions for the rights and culture of the Maya people—the country’s demographic majority. One of the reasons why a peace accord has not been achieved in Mexico is that the national government backed away from the idea of indigenous autonomy, which it had previously negotiated with the Zapatista Liberation Army (Stavenhagen 1998, 2000).

The economic and social development of Latin America must include the indigenous populations—not only as a faceless and nameless statistical category of persons in poverty or extreme poverty, but as peoples requiring specific solutions to their historically rooted

collective needs, solutions that can only be based on the recognition of group rights without which individual rights cannot be fully guaranteed. The holders of such rights may vary from the vast rather amorphous concept of an indigenous people (which is what indigenous organizations claim but states refuse to recognize), to the residents of specific territories (as is the case in Colombia since the 1991 constitution), to local communities (as in Bolivia and Peru).

Convention 169 adopted by the International Labour Organization in 1989 goes far in setting out the current rights of indigenous peoples. It states that:

Special measures shall be adopted as appropriate for safeguarding the persons, institutions, property, labour, cultures and environment of the peoples concerned.

In applying the provisions of this Convention:

the social, cultural, religious and spiritual values and practices of these peoples shall be recognised and protected, and due account shall be taken of the nature of the problems which face them both as groups and as individuals;

and governments shall:

establish means for the full development of these peoples' own institutions and initiatives, and in appropriate cases provide the resources necessary for this purpose.

Furthermore,

The peoples concerned shall have the right to decide their own priorities for the process of development as it affects their lives, beliefs, institutions and spiritual well-being and the lands they occupy or otherwise use, and to exercise control, to the extent possible, over their own economic, social and cultural development.

The improvement of the conditions of life and work and levels of health and education of the peoples concerned, with their participation and co-operation, shall be a matter of priority in plans for the overall economic development of areas they inhabit. Special projects for development of the areas in question shall also be so designed as to promote such improvement.

Governments shall take measures, in co-operation with the peoples concerned, to protect and preserve the environment of the territories they inhabit.

The rights of ownership and possession of the peoples concerned over the lands which they traditionally occupy shall be recognised.

The rights of the peoples concerned to the natural resources pertaining to their lands shall be specially safeguarded. These rights include the right of these peoples to participate in the use, management and conservation of these resources.

Fourteen states had ratified this Convention by July 2000, and it should be clear that its provisions can be implemented only if the group rights of indigenous peoples are recognized in all activities related to social and economic development (on indigenous rights in international law, see Lâm 2000).

These considerations lead to some ideas regarding the role of people-oriented institutions, including the state. Adam Smith notwithstanding, in today's globalized world there is no invisible hand that guides free markets to socially desired decisions. If these occur at all, they are the by-products, not the major outcomes of *laissez faire*. There are, on the contrary, many visible fingers punching computer keyboards to obtain the best results of global transactions for the world's power elites.

Conclusion

Since the end of the Cold War, the believers in the miracles of globalization feel that nothing should be done to stop the dynamics of the free market, whereas those who still think—contrary to evidence—that a strong and active all-inclusive state is required to solve all major problems are decidedly in the minority. The proponents of the Third Way in politics suggest that by a little bit of regulation, the excesses of the market will be held in check and things will go well. While none of the three approaches is convincing, particularly regarding the immense problems of the countries of the South, the approach of the Third Way is the least objectionable.

But the problematique of the countries of the periphery (formerly lumped together as the Third World) is much broader and of a different essence than the issues faced by the industrialized societies of the North. Many countries in the South have been unable to build viable economies, structure their civil societies or create legitimate states. There is still much ongoing debate about the “why and wherefore” of this state of affairs, but it obviously affects the way different societies become incorporated into the process of globalization. What may sound as a “user-friendly” political alternative in the North is in many respects irrelevant to the South. The president of the World Bank recently stated: “Our watchword must be ‘globalization with a human face’. Globalization that is inclusive. Globalization that promotes social equity and works for the poor”, (Wolfensohn 2000) but UNRISD's report to the Copenhagen+5 summit warns us that “what we are more likely to see is globalization with a human mask. Human values are not being placed at the centre of policy making, but scattered to the periphery and painted onto the surface” (UNRISD 2000:17). The South must come up with its own visions, and I use the plural advisedly because given the differences between situations, there cannot be a single road to the future. We must not be afraid to return and build upon the utopias of the past no matter how they have been pummelled in recent decades, for humanity without utopias is like a ship in a storm without a compass.

Futures that include socially valued ends must be based on the understanding that human needs and human rights can best be served through the articulation of people-oriented participatory institutions at all levels of society. The state must be seen not only as a regulatory mechanism for diverse and sometimes conflictive interests (which is how free-market libertarians would like to see it), but also as an instrument for the achievement of socially desired collective goods and the well-being of all of society's members. Such a state can only be built up from the grassroots level and thrive in a democratic environment. It is accountable at all levels and linked to the various other institutions of the civil society. These institutions, in

turn, must become the countervailing power to state authority. Democratization, decentralization, deregulation and devolution are all concepts linked to a socially responsible state. In this sense, the current emphasis on democratic elections may strengthen certain kinds of political regimes and the competition between political parties, but it does not guarantee state responses to collective needs, the participation of civil society in decision-making processes, or the social and political accountability of the ruling classes in developing and transitional societies. The case of Latin America is revealing in this respect. Some years ago the end of military-authoritarian regimes was widely heralded by political scientists as the beginning of a “transition to democracy”, which was soon changed to an optimistic analysis of the “consolidation of democracy”. Today observers are more inclined to speak of “insufficient”, “inefficient”, “uncertain” and “fragile” democracies, not only because there is the permanent threat of a return to authoritarianism in some countries, but also because the formal electoral process by itself has not led—and is not likely to lead in the short term—to the structuring of socially responsible states. By “states” I do not mean only central governments, but rather public institutions of governance at all levels, sometimes well integrated, at other times loosely linked to national-level institutions. As we know, the time of a strong statist centralized locus of power is no longer feasible nor desirable, and in Latin America, at least, with its long history of centralized and hierarchical authority structures, there is a widely felt need for thorough state reforms.

With regard to development, the retreat of the state (Strange 1996) cannot serve the cause of socially valued ends; the state in all its ramifications must be brought back in as a socially responsible and accountable institution of governance with a clear vision of what the public sphere is to provide in terms of addressing the needs and rights of human beings. And this can only be achieved, as mentioned before, in close association with the many-faceted organizations and institutions of civil society. And where does the market stand in all of this? As a necessary mechanism for the allocation of certain kinds of consumer goods and services and a stimulant to changes in productivity. But certainly not as the judge and provider of socially valued collective goods.

For this we must return to politics: the politics of consensus building, collective participation, transparent decision-making and democratic commitments, inspired by the values of freedom, justice and morality.

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