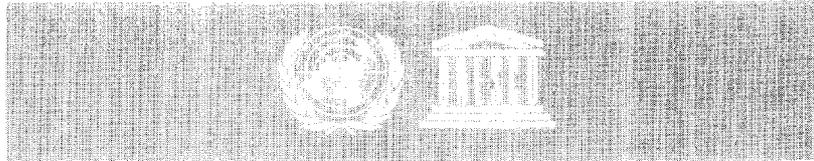


# OUR CREATIVE DIVERSITY



*Report of the  
World Commission  
on Culture  
and Development*

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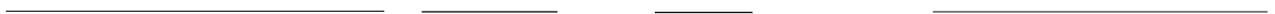
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## Our Creative Diversity

### Report of the World Commission for Culture and Development



## **World Commission on Culture and Development**

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\* Member of the Commission until appointed Assistant Director-General for Culture at UNESCO in July 1994; continued to take part in the deliberations of the Commission as the Representative of the Director-General and to supervise the work of its secretariat.

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## President's Foreword

In January 1988, as Secretary-General of the United Nations, I joined Federico Mayor, Director-General of UNESCO, in launching the *World Decade for Cultural Development (1988-1997)*. On that occasion I observed that development efforts had often failed "because the importance of the human factor - that complex web of relationships and beliefs, values and motivations, which lie at the very heart of a culture - had been underestimated in many development projects".

Redressing that unfortunate situation would mean rethinking the development process itself - no small task! Little did I imagine that just five years later I would be given such a task. Little did I know that the World Decade itself would generate the idea of an international commission to take up this challenge and that I would be asked to preside over it.

By 1988, it was already clear to us that development was a far more complex undertaking than had been originally thought. It could no longer be seen as a single, uniform, linear path, for this would inevitably eliminate cultural diversity and experimentation, and dangerously limit humankind's creative capacities in the face of a treasured past and an unpredictable future. To counter this hazard, a vigorous cultural diversification had already taken place across the world, fed by the awareness that human civilization was a mosaic of different cultures. This evolution in thinking was largely the result of political emancipation, as nationhood had led to a keen awareness of each people's own way of life as a value, as a right, as a responsibility and as an opportunity. It had led each people to challenge the frame of reference in which the West's system of values alone generated rules assumed to be universal and to demand the right to forge different versions of modernization. It had led peoples to assert the value of their own cultural wealth, of their manifold assets that could not be reduced to measurement in dollars and cents, while simultaneously asserting the universal values of a global ethics.

The demand for human betterment was pressing. People began to sense, not always clearly, that the failures and frustrated expectations of development had given rise to cultural tensions in many societies. Sometimes these failures took the form of development disasters, ranging from civil wars to murderous authoritarian regimes, and disrupted the development process itself. Elsewhere people saw successful development, that not only closed the gap between rich and poor countries but also showed that traditions specific to each culture could be combined with the most modern economic, scientific and technological resources. They saw the example

of prosperous East Asian countries, whose peoples remained faithful to their values, yet had earned for themselves higher living standards than many nations in the industrial world. And in the industrial world itself, disillusionment with material progress, high levels of consumption for the privileged amid widespread deprivation and persistently high rates of permanent unemployment were also pushing culture and cultural identity to the forefront of the public agenda.

Clearly, there was a need to transcend economics, without abandoning it. The notion of development itself had broadened, as people realized that economic criteria alone could not provide a programme for human dignity and well-being. The search for other criteria had led UNDP to elaborate the notion of *human development* – “a process of enlarging people’s choices” - that measures development in a broad array of capabilities, ranging from political, economic and social freedom to individual opportunities for being healthy, educated, productive, creative and enjoying self-respect and human rights. Culture was implied in this notion, but it was not explicitly introduced. It was, however, increasingly evoked by several distinguished groups: the Brandt Commission, the South Commission, the World Commission on Environment and Development and the Commission on Global Governance. Building cultural insights into the broader development strategies, as well as a more effective practical agenda, had to be the next step in rethinking development. This is the formidable challenge that our Commission had to face.

New questions needed to be asked and old ones posed anew. What are the cultural and socio-cultural factors that affect development? What is the cultural impact of social and economic development? How are cultures and models of development related to one another? How can valuable elements of a traditional culture be combined with modernization? What are the cultural dimensions of individual and collective well-being?

It was to raise, discuss and, if possible, answer questions such as these that the idea of a World Commission on Culture and Development was put forward in UNESCO by several enlightened representatives of the Nordic countries. Clearly they were inspired by the process which had led from the Brundtland Report to the Rio Summit and beyond. They felt that the time had come to do for “culture and development” what had been achieved for “environment and development”. This conviction was widely shared. Just as the Brundtland Commission had so successfully served notice to the international community that a marriage of economy and ecology was overdue and had set in motion a new world agenda for that purpose, so, it was felt, the relationship between culture and development should be clarified and deepened, in practical and constructive ways.

At its twenty-sixth session in 1991 the General Conference of UNESCO adopted a resolution requesting the Director-General, in co-

operation with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, to “establish an independent World Commission on Culture and Development comprising women and men drawn from all regions and eminent in diverse disciplines, to prepare a World Report on Culture and Development and proposals for both urgent and long-term action to meet cultural needs in the context of development”. This request was endorsed by a resolution adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations a few weeks later. In November 1992, Boutros Boutros-Ghali and Federico Mayor did me the honour of appointing me President of the Commission. This was a responsibility not to be declined. Together we then approached the twelve men and women identified to join me as members of the Commission. They needed little persuasion: the service we invited them to share with us was of a kind they wished to render. The texts of the pertinent resolutions, the names of the Commission’s members, and a detailed account of its work will be found in an Appendix to this Report.

The Commission began its work in the spring of 1993, in a world full of the promise and opportunity of newly unlocked doors but also charged with uncertainty and frustrated hopes. It was a context in which the questions posed above had become even more pertinent, if not more pressing and acute.

Across the world, as peoples mixed as never before, all began to be drawn into broader and more empowering and participatory frameworks. But for most of them the world system itself appeared increasingly unbalanced, indeterminate and incoherent, leading many to turn to culture as a means of resistance to the entropy of the global system, as a bulwark and as a refuge.

A bipolar order had collapsed, but the implosion of one side was hardly an unalloyed victory for the other. In the affluent world the notion of progress without limits had become an illusion. Value systems and ties of solidarity appeared to be breaking down. The gulf between the “haves” and the ‘Chave-nets” appeared to be widening, the scourge of social and economic exclusion disturbing the smooth surface of contentment.

The confrontations of the Cold War blocs had long masked a multitude of local claims and tensions over scarce resources or over the sharing of newly acquired ones that now pushed people into the narrow walls of group identity, feeding a new tide of smaller confrontations between ethnic, religious and national communities. The logic of rejection and “the narcissism of small differences” began to threaten peace and security, to undermine both economic growth and social harmony, to violate the inherent dignity of the person, to diminish each society’s faith in its own resources and to threaten the diversity of cultures that is vital to the well-being of the human race.

To accept this would have been to tolerate the intolerable, and the

Commission began its work therefore with some clear premises. Each Member was convinced that, like peace and democracy, the enlargement of people's capabilities could be rooted only in a people's ethics and values, that shape its patterns of daily behaviour. Each was committed to respect for pluralism, respect both for cultures - for their equal dignity, for their diversity, for their variegated vigour - and for different paths of development. Each Commissioner upheld the principle of equity, both here and now and for future generations. Each recognized the universality of aspirations for betterment and progress, as well as the variety of paths that could be chosen to achieve these goals. Each was convinced that culture is a central variable in explaining different patterns of change and an essential determinant, if not the essence itself, of sustainable development, since attitudes and life-styles govern the ways we manage all our non-renewable resources.

Each Commissioner has served in a personal capacity, bringing to the task the insights of a particular intellectual discipline and experience of life. Each would have chosen different words and different emphases if he or she had written this report alone. Everyone may not have fully embraced every proposal; but we all agreed on the substance and thrust of the Report. I am profoundly grateful to them all for their spirit of co-operation that made this possible.

The comparison between our work and that of the World Commission on Environment and Development has already been made. A word of caution is required, however. Unlike the environment, a clearly defined reality, the notion of culture is so broad and polysemic, and the interactions between "culture" and "development" so difficult even to describe, let alone measure, that the preparation of a World Report on the subject could only be a task of daunting complexity. Fortunately, the General Conference of UNESCO did not merely assign us the mandate of "identifying, describing and analysing basic questions, concerns and new challenges" in an extremely broad range of areas. It also specified that the results of our work should be "policy-oriented", giving the Commission the latitude to focus and interpret that mandate. As our work proceeded, such an abundance of information, viewpoints and analysis accumulated, much of it at the frontier of research and reflection, that the need to concentrate and focus became imperative. Our Report could not be a treatise, nor a work of original research, nor a handbook on cultural affairs in the world. Rather, it would have to be a call to action in a selected number of priority areas, based on our reasoned assessment of what needs to be done now towards improving the way human communities are coping with them.

Hence the Commission decided to focus its International Agenda on achieving a clearly defined set of goals. Foremost among them is to provide a permanent vehicle through which some of the key issues of culture and

development can be explored and clarified. From this process a set of international principles and procedures can gradually be identified. These will, in turn, provide a forum where an international consensus on good practice concerning culture and development can be achieved and the task of rethinking current approaches carried a significant step further.

This would be only the start in staking out new terrain that raises awareness of the range of cultural issues that must underpin human development. We are providing the groundwork. Our hope is that others will move forward and build on it. The International Agenda is no more than a core around which a much more comprehensive world programme should emerge.

We have designed this Report to address a diversified audience across the world that ranges from community activists, field workers, artists and scholars to government officials and politicians. We want it to inform the world's opinion leaders and to guide its policy-makers. We want it to capture the attention of the world's intellectual and artistic communities, as well as the general public.

We aim to have shown them how culture shapes all our thinking, imagining and behaviour. It is the transmission of behaviour as well as a dynamic source for change, creativity, freedom and the awakening of innovative opportunities. For groups and societies, culture is energy, inspiration and empowerment, as well as the knowledge and acknowledgment of diversity: if cultural diversity is 'behind us, around us and before us', as Claude Lévi-Strauss put it, we must learn how to let it lead not to the clash of cultures, but to their fruitful coexistence and to intercultural harmony.

Just as in the tasks of building peace and consolidating democratic values, an indivisible set of goals, so too economic and political rights cannot be realized separately from social and cultural rights.

The challenge to humanity is to adopt new ways of thinking, new ways of acting, new ways of organizing itself in society, in short, new ways of living. The challenge is also to promote different paths of development, informed by a recognition of how cultural factors shape the way in which societies conceive their own futures and choose the means to attain these futures.

I have for some time been concerned with the "culture of peace". There is now considerable evidence that neglect of human development has been one of the principal causes of wars and internal armed conflicts, and that these, in turn, retard human development. With government complicity and with the intention of raising export receipts, private businesses continue to sell advanced military technology, nuclear materials and equipment for the production of bacteriological and chemical warfare. The concept of state sovereignty which still prevails today has increasingly come under scrutiny. In the area of peace-keeping, the distinction between

external aggression and internal oppression is often unrealistic. The predominant threat to stability are violent conflicts within countries and not between them. There is an urgent need to strengthen international human rights law. Many of the most serious troubles come from within states – either because of ethnic strife or repressive measures by governments. Conditions that lead to tyranny and large-scale violations of human rights at home sooner or later are likely to spill over into a search for enemies abroad. The temptation of repressive states to export internal difficulties is great. Consider the Soviet Union's invasion of Hungary and Czechoslovakia after it had used domestic oppression and the persistent refusal - for many years - of the previous South African governments to grant independence to Namibia. An ounce of prevention is better than a ton of punishment. And prevention of aggression is an important task for the United Nations. The principle had in the past been applied only to South Africa. The time has come to generalize it.

We have a long way to go. We have not yet learned how to respect each other fully, how to share and work together. This truly exceptional time in history calls for exceptional solutions. The world as we know it, all the relationships we took as given, are undergoing profound rethinking and reconstruction. Imagination, innovation, vision and creativity are required. International partnerships and interaction are an essential ingredient for creativity in problem-solving, a quality that requires a willingness to frame bold questions instead of depending on conventional answers. It means an open mind, an open heart, and a readiness to seek fresh definitions, reconcile old opposites, and help draw new mental maps. Ultimately it will be the honesty of introspection that will lead to compassion for the Other's experience, and it will be compassion that will lead us to a future in which the pursuit of individual freedom will be balanced with a need for common well-being, and in which our agenda includes empathy and respect for the entire spectrum of human differences.

The Commission is deeply grateful to the governments, agencies of the United Nations system, other governmental and non-governmental organizations, national development agencies, cultural and scientific institutions and foundations that have provided financial and other support for its work. It is deeply grateful also to the leading public figures, scholars and artists, educators, cultural activists, and development specialists who have contributed valuable information and insights, as well as to the other individuals who have helped it in many ways. All are listed in the Appendix.

The Commission is particularly indebted to UNESCO, to its Director-General Federico Mayor, and to its Assistant Director-General for Culture, Lourdes Arizpe, who was a member of the Commission through the summer of 1994 until she was appointed to her present position. It is

deeply grateful to the United Nations and its Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who have attached the greatest importance to its work and have contributed to it in many practical ways.

As the Commission's President, I wish to express my special gratitude to my colleagues for their help and support. I must thank them for their forbearance, particularly at the time when the political challenge I myself had shouldered in Peru greatly reduced the time and attention I could devote to the work of the Commission.

I wish also to express my gratitude to the Executive Secretary of the Commission, Yudhishthir Raj Isar, and the members of the Commission Secretariat at UNESCO, who steered us through the decisive final phase of our work, as well as to Jérôme Bindé, who served as Executive Secretary during the initial stages of the process.

Our thanks are due to the writer and journalist Michael Gibson for his expert help in shaping an early draft of the Report and, last but not least, to the distinguished economist Paul Streeten, who kindly agreed to act as our Editorial Consultant in the last stage of our work. He moulded, enriched and clarified our ideas, expressing them far more elegantly than we would ever have been able to do ourselves. Ultimately, however, the responsibility for this Report is ours alone.



Javier Pérez de Cuéllar

## Executive Summary

Development divorced from its human or cultural context is growth without a soul. Economic development in its full flowering is part of a people's culture. This is not a view commonly held. A more conventional view regards culture as either a help or a hindrance to economic development, leading to the call to take "cultural factors into account in development". But the argument advanced in this Report is that development embraces not only access to goods and services, but also the opportunity to choose a full, satisfying, valuable and valued way of living together, the flourishing of human existence in all its forms and as a whole. Even the goods and services stressed by the narrower, conventional view are valued because of what they contribute to our freedom to live the way we value. Culture, therefore, however important it maybe as an instrument of development (or an obstacle to development), cannot ultimately be reduced to a subsidiary position as a mere promoter of (or an impediment to) economic growth. Culture's role is not exhausted as a servant of ends - though in a narrower sense of the concept this is one of its roles - but is the social basis of the ends themselves. Development and the economy are part of a people's culture.

Unlike the physical environment, where we dare not improve on the best that nature provides, culture is the fountain of our progress and creativity. Once we shift our view from the purely instrumental role of culture to awarding it a constructive, constitutive and creative role, we have to see development in

terms that encompass cultural growth.

Governments cannot determine a people's culture: indeed, they are partly determined by it. But they can influence it for better or worse, and thereby affect the path of development. Respect for all cultures whose values are tolerant of others and that subscribe to a global ethics should be the basic principle. Respect goes beyond tolerance. It implies a positive attitude to other people and rejoicing at their different ways of life, at their creative diversity. Policy-makers cannot legislate respect, nor can they coerce people to behave respectfully. But they can enshrine cultural freedom as one of the pillars on which the state is founded.

Cultural freedom, unlike individual freedom, is a collective freedom. It refers to the right of a group of people to follow a way of life of its choice. Cultural freedom guarantees freedom as a whole. It protects not only the group but also the rights of every individual within it. Cultural freedom, by protecting alternative ways of living, encourages experimentation, diversity, imagination and creativity. Cultural freedom leaves us free to meet one of the most basic needs, the need to define our own basic needs. This need is now threatened by both global pressures and global neglect.

Development is a phenomenon with strong intellectual and moral implications for individuals and communities. Any understanding of the questions raised by development and modernization must have at its core a dual focus on cultural values and the social sci-

ences. Culture in a narrower sense than the one used above – the values, symbols, rituals and institutions of a society – affects economic decisions and results; economic activities can undermine or reinforce various aspects of a culture. Economic development that is combined with a decaying, stunted, oppressive, cruel culture is bound to fail. The ultimate aim of development is the universal physical, mental and social well-being of every human being.

The Commission has defined several areas of policy and action for governments, international organizations, private voluntary associations, profit-seeking firms, trade unions, families and individuals, culminating in an International Agenda.

There is an underlying unity in the diversity of cultures, which is defined in a global ethics. It furnishes the minimal standards any community should observe. The ethical impulse to alleviate and eradicate suffering whenever this is possible is an example of such a universal imperative. One of the most encouraging recent trends has been the development of international standards of human rights. Democracy and the protection of minorities are important principles of global ethics, as well as a condition for institutional efficiency, social stability, and peace. Democracy can be defined in terms of two institutions – regular and real elections, and a body of real civil rights and liberties. The first institution ensures that governments can be thrown out of office, while the other makes sure that there are some things they must not do even when they hold office.

In a world in which 10,000 distinct societies live in roughly 200 states, the protection and accommodation of minority rights is a principal concern. But

minorities have also asserted the right to rule over majorities, such as the British in India in the past, the Afrikaners in South Africa and the Central and East European Communist parties. Minority rights should not be at the expense of the rights of majorities. Nor should vocal bullies, pretending to speak for minorities, be accepted as the voice of their people. Democratic “voice” should also be heard much more at the international level than has been the case so far. The commitment to the peaceful resolution of conflicts and to fair negotiation, and equity both within and between generations, are other important principles of this global ethics.

Universalist is the fundamental principle of a global ethics. The ethos of universal human rights proclaims that all human beings are born equal and that they enjoy these rights irrespective of class, gender, race, community or generation. This implies that the basic necessities for a decent life must be the foremost concern of humanity. Universalism requires that in our anxiety to protect future generations we must not overlook the pressing life claims of the poor today. The objective of sustainability over generations would make little sense if the opportunities to be sustained in the future were miserable and indigent. Sustaining deprivation cannot be our goal.

Rights have to be combined with duties, options with bonds, choices with allegiances, liberties with ligatures. Modernization has widened the range of choices, but destroyed some connections. The aim should be a society in which liberty is not libertine, authority not authoritarian, bonds more than painful restrictions.

The principle of pluralism is regarded as basic. The message of the dis-

discussion of pluralism is that cultural pluralism is an all-pervasive, enduring characteristic of societies, and that ethnic identification is a normal and healthy response to the pressures of globalization. Ethnicity acts as a trigger for violent conflict only when it is mobilized and manipulated to do so. There are many policy approaches to ethnic diversity, such as constitutional formulas, different types of electoral systems, bills of rights, and economic and cultural policies. Attempts at 'nation building' through making all groups homogeneous are neither desirable nor feasible. Nor can the domination of one ethnic group provide long-term stability in a society. The most durable way to accommodate ethnic diversity is to create a sense of the nation as a civic community, rooted in values that can be shared by all ethnic components of the national society. Such a sense of community is best achieved if the concept of "nation" is freed from any connotations of ethnic exclusivity.

Cultures are neither isolated nor static, but interact and evolve. Pluralism is only an empty word if those concerned cannot take democratic initiatives and manifest their creative imagination in tangible ways. They must also be in a position to communicate with people in other societies. New media technologies should not become an instrument of the rich and powerful alone, but should be used as a means of democratic interaction and poverty reduction. This requires a competitive market and a balance between efficiency and equity and between global and local concerns. The Commission proposes that the possibility of establishing new international public media services be studied and that an international debate be engaged among media professionals, viewers and

listeners with regard to the problems of violence and pornography in the media.

The rights and needs of women and the interdependence of men and women are important in redesigning their identities and roles in society. The challenge is to avoid the dual pitfalls of ethnocentrism and Western bias on the one hand, and ethical relativism that denies women their human rights in the name of local "culture" on the other. This discussion leads on to the need to pay attention to the rights and duties of children and young people. No generation has ever been so large or so young. The vast and rapidly growing number of children and young people, combined with their lack of power, presents a special need to protect them against exploitation and neglect and to advance their education and health. This is above all their basic human right. But it is also the most important investment in our future.

Rapid change presents new challenges for the conservation and revitalization of the cultural heritage. Historic buildings and sites, museum objects, as well as intangible manifestations such as folklore or language, are being destroyed or allowed to decay. The Commission calls for the creation of a corps of Human Heritage Volunteers to help with the preservation effort. Enlightened policies for the preservation of languages – unique ways of viewing experience that are in danger of being lost – should be adopted.

Cultures cannot survive if the environment on which they depend is laid waste or impoverished. Humanity's relation to the natural environment has so far been seen predominantly in biophysical terms; but there is now a growing recognition that societies themselves have created elaborate procedures to

protect and manage their resources. These procedures are rooted in cultural values that have to be taken into account if sustainable and equitable human development is to become a reality. For the first time in history, a few years hence the majority of the world's population will not live by agriculture in the countryside, but rather in towns and cities. This has important implications for the relations between ecology, technology and culture. It is the beginning of a truly new era. Urban culture provides an antidote to selfhood and its burdens, a release into a less personalized existence.

In spite of four decades of development efforts, poverty remains high and is increasing in some areas of the world. In addition to the urgent call to eradicate poverty, the Commission has turned to two important needs: the need to reformulate cultural policies in general and the need to generate and monitor new knowledge on the links between culture and development. The Commission expands the concept of cultural policy from a narrow focus on the arts, and suggests a different way of thinking about it. Cultural policy should be directed at encouraging multi-cultural activities. Diversity can be a source of creativity. Supporting new, emerging, experimental art forms and expressions is not a subsidy to consumption but an investment in human development.

On research, the Commission advocates interdisciplinary work at a deep level, at which variables from different disciplines are integrated. A research agenda is proposed which pays attention to the hitherto largely neglected integration of culture, development, and forms of political organization. The question at the heart of the development process

is this: what policies promote sustainable, human development that encourages the flowering of different cultures?

The major problem facing individuals and communities in a rapidly changing world is that of promoting and adjusting to equitable change without denying the valuable elements in their traditions. This Report is about providing present and future generations of humanity with the tools to meet this challenge, to broaden their knowledge, to discover the world in its imposing diversity, and to allow all individuals to lead a life that is decent, dignified and wise, without losing their identity and sense of community, and without betraying their heritage.

In this spirit, the Commission has formulated an "International Agenda". Its purpose is to mobilize the energies of people everywhere in recognition of the new cultural challenges of today. It is selective and illustrative, not comprehensive. At a time when many international initiatives are being launched on many different important issues, a set of limited options is more realistic. It may appear a somewhat modest stance in the light of the wide range of urgent needs and the number of priorities that have been brought to the Commission's attention. The Commission has preferred to recommend a short list of actions that can help energize and motivate people throughout the world. These actions seek to:

- (i) enhance and deepen the discussion and analysis of culture and development;
- (ii) foster the emergence of an international consensus on culture and development, particularly through the universal recognition of cultural rights, and of the need to balance these rights with responsibilities;

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(iii) ensure that through the advance of human development, wars and internal armed conflicts can be reduced;</li><li>(iv) apply the balance of rights and duties to the media of communication;</li><li>(v) initiate a process of consultation that will lead to a Global Summit on Culture and Development;</li><li>(vi) promote the widest democratic participation by all, especially women and young people;</li><li>(vii) promote this participation at all levels, from the local, the provincial, and the central government levels to the international and global level, where it has so far been neglected; and for all organizations, including private voluntary organizations and private firms</li></ul> | <p>(for which democratic participation has been much less discussed than for governments); and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(viii) mobilize energies around several practical initiatives.</li></ul> <p>This Report is an urgent call for the widest possible democratic mobilization. Poverty, unemployment, hunger, ignorance, disease, squalor and exclusion are unmitigated evils. They are reinforced by cultural habits that lead to narrow selfishness, prejudice and ill-advised hatred. These are the obstacles and inhibitions in the path forward. On the far side, however, and to the extent that we balance information and knowledge with wisdom, rights with duties, and ends with means, what awaits us is nothing less than a new Renaissance - a new, creative vision of a better world.</p> |
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# INTRODUCTION

*A great deal of confusion arises in both academic and political discourse when culture in the humanistic sense is not distinguished from 'culture' in its anthropological senses, notably culture as the total and distinctive way of life of a people or society. From the latter point of view it is meaningless to talk of 'the relation between culture and the economy'; since the economy is part of a people's culture... Indeed the ambiguities in this phrase pose the great ideological issue confronted by the Commission: is 'culture' an aspect or a means of "development", the latter understood as material progress; or is 'culture' the end and aim of "development": the latter understood as the flourishing of human existence in its several forms and as a whole?*

Marshall Sahlins<sup>1</sup>

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## Two views of development

Both culture and development have become protean concepts, with an elusive and sometimes bewildering variety of meanings. For our present purpose, however, we can confine ourselves to viewing development in two different ways. According to one view, development is a process of economic growth, a rapid and sustained expansion of production, productivity and income per head (sometimes qualified by insistence on a wide spread of the benefits of this growth). According to the other, espoused by UNDP's annual *Human Development Report* and by many distinguished economists, development is seen as a process that enhances the effective freedom of the people involved to pursue whatever they have reason to value.<sup>2</sup> This view of *human* development (in contrast to narrowly economic development) is a culturally conditioned view of economic and social progress. Poverty of a life, in this view, implies not only lack of essential goods and services, but also a lack of opportunities to choose a fuller, more satisfying, more valuable and valued existence. The choice can also be for a different style of development, a different path, based on different values from those of the highest income countries now. The recent spread of democratic institutions, of market choices, of participatory management of firms, has enabled individuals and groups and different cultures to choose for themselves.

Various indicators of the quality of life have been suggested such as longevity, good health, adequate nutrition, education and access to the world's stock of knowledge, absence of gender-based inequality, political and social freedoms, autonomy, access to power, the right to participate in the cultural life of the community and in important decisions affecting the life and work of the citizens, and so forth. Clearly, any set of quantitative indicators is bound to be less rich than the concept of human development. But these are the things that matter according to the second view of development - which focuses on increasing the capabilities of people and enlarging their choices - not just the enlargement of material products.

The role of culture is different in the two interpretations of development. In the view that emphasizes economic growth, culture does not play a fundamental role but is purely instrumental: it can help to promote or hinder rapid economic growth. Thus Protestantism and Confucianism have been thought to encourage saving, capital accumulation, hard work, hygiene and healthy living habits, and entrepreneurial attitudes. More recently, evangelical fundamentalism that has spread in East Asia, Latin America and Africa has been regarded as the religion of micro-entrepreneurs who constitute the germ of capitalist economic growth. When cultural attitudes and institutions hamper economic growth, they are to be eradicated. Culture enters into this analysis not as something valuable in

itself, but as a means to the ends of promoting and sustaining economic progress.

Without doubt, this instrumental view of culture is of great interest and importance, since the process of economic growth is generally highly valued. Admittedly, there are groups in rich societies that reject indefinite or infinite growth and consumerism in favour of a modest standard of sufficiency and adequacy: they consist of some academics, some ministers of religion, members of certain action groups, of some communities. But

**As development becomes imperative, as we approach the turn of this century, we are faced with the necessity of giving new meaning to the word. Reflecting on development is thus the most important intellectual challenge in the coming years.**

**Boutros Boutros-Ghali<sup>3</sup>**

even for those who value economic growth, the question does arise as to whether economic growth should be valued for its own sake, while the instruments, including culture, are valued as means only, or whether growth itself is only an instrument with less claim to a foundational role than cultural aspects of human life. On reflection, most people would value goods and services because of what they contribute to our freedom to live the way we value. It is also difficult to accept the view that culture can be fully captured in a purely instrumental role. Surely, what we have reason to value – the court of last appeal – must itself be a matter of culture. Education, for example, promotes economic growth and is therefore of instrumental value, and at the same time is an essential part of cultural development, with intrinsic value. Hence we cannot reduce culture only to a subsidiary position as a mere promoter of economic growth.

It is therefore important both to acknowledge the far-reaching instrumental function of culture in development, and at the same time to recognize that this cannot be all there is to culture in judgments of development. There is, in addition, the role of culture as a desirable end in itself, as giving meaning to our existence. This dual role of culture applies not only in the context of the promotion of economic growth, but also in relation to other objectives, such as sustaining the physical environment, preserving family values, protecting civil institutions in a society, and so on. In the promotion of all these objectives some cultural factors will help, others will hinder, and in so far as we have reason to value these specified objectives, we have grounds – derived and instrumental grounds – to value those cultural attitudes and features that foster the fulfilment of those objectives. But when we turn to the more basic question: why concentrate on these specified objectives (including economic growth, reduced inequality, environmental conservation, and so on), culture has to enter in a more

fundamental way - not as a servant of ends, but as the social basis of the ends themselves. We cannot begin to understand the so-called "cultural dimension of development" without taking note of each of these two roles of culture.

## Culture and development

Human development as defined above refers to the individual human being, who is both the ultimate objective of development and one of the most important instruments or means to it. For an alert, skilled, educated, well-nourished, healthy, well-motivated labour force is the most productive asset of a society. People, however, are not self-contained atoms; they work together, co-operate, compete and interact in many ways. It is culture that connects them with one another and makes the development of the individual possible. Similarly, it is culture that defines how people relate to nature and their physical environment, to the earth and to the cosmos, and through which we express our attitudes to and beliefs in other forms of life, both animal and plant. It is in this sense that all forms of development, including human development, ultimately are determined by cultural factors. Indeed, from this point of view it is meaningless to talk of the "relation between culture and development" as if they were two separate concepts, since development and the economy are part of, or an aspect of, a people's culture. Culture then is not a means to material Progress: it is the end and aim of "development" seen as the flourishing of human existence in all its forms and as a whole.

If, on the other hand, one rejects this all-embracing definition of culture and instead confines its meaning to "ways of living together", and if by "development" one means "the widening of human opportunities and choices," then an analysis of culture and development refers to a study of how different ways of living together affect the enlargement of human choices. A country's culture is not static or changeless. On the contrary, it is in a constant state of flux, influencing and being influenced by other cultures, either through voluntary exchange and extension or through conflict, force and oppression. A country's culture therefore reflects its history, mores, institutions and attitudes, its social movements, conflicts and struggles, and the configurations of political power, internally and in the world at large. At the same time it is dynamic and continually evolving.

It is for this reason that attempts to make culture a qualifier of development, as in the notion of "culturally sustainable" development, must be undertaken with great care. It should not be interpreted in such a way as to confine culture to the role of an instrument that "sustains" some other objective; nor should it be defined so as to exclude the possibility

that the culture can grow and develop. It should not be given an excessively conservationist meaning. Unlike the physical environment, where we dare not improve on the best that nature provides, culture is the fountain of our progress and creativity. Once we shift our attention from the purely instrumental view of culture to awarding it a constructive, constitutive and creative role, we have to see development in terms that include cultural growth.

A country need not contain only one culture. Many countries, perhaps most, are multi-cultural, multi-national, multi-ethnic and contain a multiplicity of languages, religions and ways of living. A multi-cultural country can reap great benefits from its pluralism, but also runs the risk of cultural conflicts. It is here that government policy is important. Governments cannot determine a people's culture; indeed, they are partly determined by it. But they can influence it for better or worse and in so doing affect the path of development.

The basic principle should be the fostering of respect for all cultures whose values are tolerant of others. Respect goes beyond tolerance and implies a positive attitude to other people and a rejoicing in their culture. Social peace is necessary for human development: in turn it requires that differences between cultures be regarded not as something alien and unacceptable or hateful, but as experiments in ways of living together that contain valuable lessons and information for all.

More is at stake here than attitudes. It is also a question of power. Cultural domination or hegemony is often based on the exclusion of subordinate groups. The distinction between "us" and "them" and the significance attached to such distinctions is socially determined and the distinctions are frequently drawn on pseudo-scientific lines so that one group can exercise power over another and justify to itself the exercise of that power. Distinctions based on "race", "ethnicity" or "nationality" are artificial, without any basis in biological differences. A policy based on mutual respect rests therefore on a large body of scientific evidence.

In a world that has become familiar with "ethnic cleansing", religious fanaticism and social and racial prejudice, the obvious question is how hatred can be replaced by respect. Policy-makers cannot legislate respect, nor can they coerce people to behave in a respectful manner. But they can enshrine cultural freedom as one of the pillars on which the state is founded. The legislature, the judiciary and the executive can implement the principles of equality, civil rights and cultural freedom.

Cultural freedom is rather special; it is not quite like other forms of freedom. First, most freedoms refer to the individual - freedom to speak one's mind, to go where one wishes, to worship one's gods, to write what one likes. Cultural freedom, in contrast, is a collective freedom. It refers to the right of a group of people to follow or adopt a way of life of their choice. It is true that some forms of group pressure can be stifling and

oppressive, and can deny individual freedom. Accepting group rights may also involve connivance in the denial of rights to stigmatized members of that group, as occurs in many caste societies. But these are corruptions of collective rights. Cultural freedom properly interpreted is the condition for individual freedom to flourish. It embraces the obligations that are embedded in the exercise of rights, the bonds that have to accompany options. Core individual rights are situated in a social context. Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his or her personality is possible.

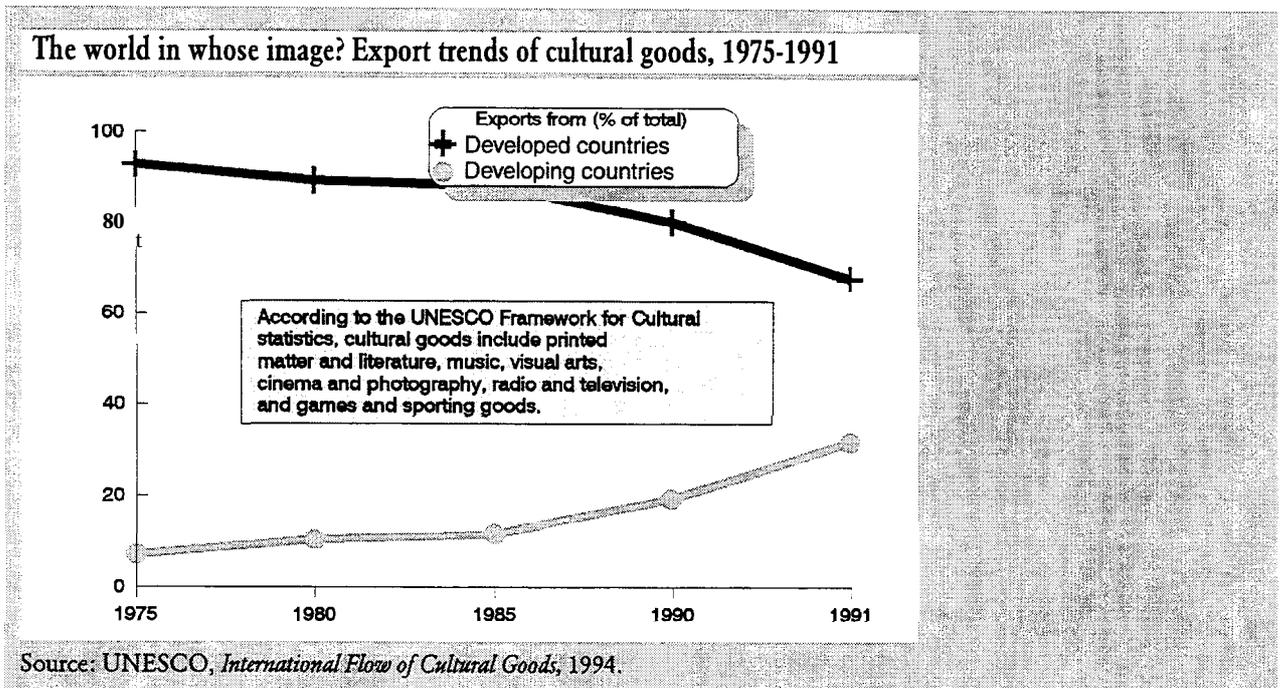
Second, cultural freedom, properly interpreted, is a guarantee of freedom as a whole. It protects not only the collectivity but also the rights of every individual within it. Individual rights can exist independently of collective rights, but the existence of collective rights, of cultural freedom, provides additional protection for individual freedom.

Thirdly, cultural freedom, by protecting alternative ways of living, encourages creativity, experimentation and diversity, the very essentials of human development. Indeed, it is the diversity of multi-cultural societies, and the creativity to which diversity gives rise, that makes such societies innovative, dynamic and enduring.

Finally, freedom is central to culture, and in particular the freedom to decide what we have reason to value, and what lives we have reason to seek. One of the most basic needs is to be left free to define our own basic needs. This need is being threatened by a combination of global pressures and global neglect.

## The fragmented global culture

It has become a cliché to say that international interdependence is great, has increased, and will continue to grow. Normally interdependence is intended to refer to trade, foreign investment, the flow of money and capital, and the migration of people. Rapid progress in transport and communications, in particular technological advances such as optic cables, computer microchips, fax machines and satellite transmissions, have shrunk the world. The international spread of cultural processes, however, is at least as important as that of economic processes. As members of the Commission meet in different cities and as they travel round the world, they have an opportunity to observe the young in the cities in which they meet: from Ladakh to Lisbon, from China to Peru, in the East, West, North and South, styles in dress, jeans, hairdos, T-shirts, jogging, eating habits, musical tunes, attitudes to sexuality, divorce and abortion have become global. Even crimes such as those relating to drugs, the abuse and rape of



women, embezzlement and corruption transcend frontiers and have become similar everywhere in the world.

Globalizing cultural processes are not entirely dominated by one country, the USA, or even by the “West” or the “North”. Contributions to world literature, world music and world art are emerging from Bombay, Rio de Janeiro, Ouagadougou or Seoul, as they are from New York, London, Liverpool or Paris.

The world-wide pressures of popular culture - in music, films, television, dresses, habits and attitudes - to penetrate other cultures are powerful, and often accepted and even welcomed by people from different cultures with alacrity and enthusiasm. It is not just American television that has a worldwide following, but also English pop groups, Japanese cartoons, Venezuelan and Brazilian soap operas, Hong Kong kung fu films, and Indian films in the Arab world.

A possible danger of this spread of popular mass culture is that the size and scale of the media of communication dominate what is promulgated, and that tastes and interests of minorities get lost. These are not primarily elite tastes and interests; they maybe those of certain groups of ordinary men and women. It is not so much that the mass media must cater to the lowest common denominator. If people share some interests, while other interests differentiate them, the minority interests will tend to be ignored or neglected in favour of those of the majority. Television and broadcasting have to rely on the economies of large scale. On the other hand, the large, global scale can permit catering for specialized interests.

Since there is value in differentiation and diversity, we should attempt to provide the maximum opportunities for a wide range of voices to be heard in the global commons.

The impression of global uniformity is, however, deceptive. Just as trade, foreign investment and the flow of money have affected only a few regions of the world and left the rest untouched, so this globalization of culture is fragmented and only now beginning. It is evident in the towns and suburbs, and the more advanced countryside. The poor in the rural hinterlands, in spite of the increasing availability of transistors and television, have been largely bypassed. Globalization itself is an unequal and asymmetrical process. Nor does it diminish the uncertainty, insecurity and entropy of the world system. It is awareness of this that has led to reactions. There are the resurgent assertions of peoples and their leaders in the post-Cold War world, mainly in Central and Eastern Europe, but elsewhere also. There is the often uneasy acceptance of standardized information and consumption patterns. People turn to culture as a means of self-definition and mobilization and assert their local cultural values. For the poorest among them, their own values are often the only thing that they can assert. Traditional values, it is claimed, bring identity, continuity and meaning to their lives.

In many lands there has been a convulsive ingathering, a return to past traditions and a reaction towards tribalism. We are witnessing religious revivalism everywhere: Islamic in the Muslim world, evangelical Christian fundamentalism not only in the United States, but also in East Asia, Africa and Latin America. Hindu revivalism is evident in India and a Judaic one in Israel. It is partly a reaction against the alienating effects of large-scale, modern technology and the unequal distribution of the benefits from industrialization. The concern is that development has meant the loss of identity, sense of community and personal meaning.

Although many groups wish to return to or maintain their ancient traditions, sometimes in the form of a return to tribalism, most people wish to participate in "modernity" in terms of their own traditions. The very existence of a World Commission on Culture and Development is itself a reflection of this demand of peoples from every part of the planet. Some features of traditional societies are worth preserving in their own right; these and others may also be instrumental in advancing economic development; others will have to change, be adapted to the requirements of a changing and progressing world; yet others will have to be implanted from outside.

Japan and other East Asian countries seem to have succeeded in this better than others. Traditional consumption habits, community loyalties, patterns of co-operation and hierarchies have contributed to the extraordinary economic growth of the country. Neither tradition nor modernity are

When we speak of world civilization, we have in mind no single period, no single group of men: we are employing an abstract conception, to which we attribute a moral or logical significance – moral, if we are thinking of an aim to be pursued by existing societies: logical, if we are using the one term to cover the common features which analysis may reveal in the different cultures. In both cases, we must not shut our eyes to the fact that the concept of world civilization is very sketchy and imperfect, and that its intellectual and emotional content is tenuous. To attempt to assess cultural contributions with all the weight of countless centuries behind them, rich with the thoughts and sorrows, hopes and toil of the men and women who brought them into being, by reference to the sole yard-stick of a world civilization which is still a hollow shell, would be greatly to impoverish them, draining away their life-blood and leaving nothing but the bare bones.

The true contribution of a culture consists, not in the list of inventions which it has personally produced, but in its difference from others. The sense of gratitude and respect which each single member of a given culture can and should feel towards all others can only be based on the conviction that the other cultures differ from his own in countless ways, even if the ultimate essence of these differences eludes him or if, in spite of his best efforts, he can reach no more than an imperfect understanding of them.

The notion of world civilization can only be accepted therefore, as a sort of limiting concept or as an epitome of a highly complex process. There is not, and can never be, a world civilization in the absolute sense in which that term is often used, since civilization implies, and indeed consists in, the coexistence of cultures exhibiting the maximum possible diversities. A world civilization could, in fact, represent no more than a world-wide coalition of cultures, each of which would preserve its own originality.

Claude Lévi-Strauss

static: both are continually changing. Neither all tradition nor all modernity is to be welcomed. The repressive nature of some traditional values and practices and of some modern ones is evident. Tradition can spell stagnation, oppression, inertia, privilege and cruel practices; modernization

can amount to alienation, anomy, exclusion and a loss of identity and of a sense of community.

In spite of four decades of development efforts, poverty remains high. Although the proportion of poor people has diminished significantly on all continents except Africa, absolute numbers have increased.

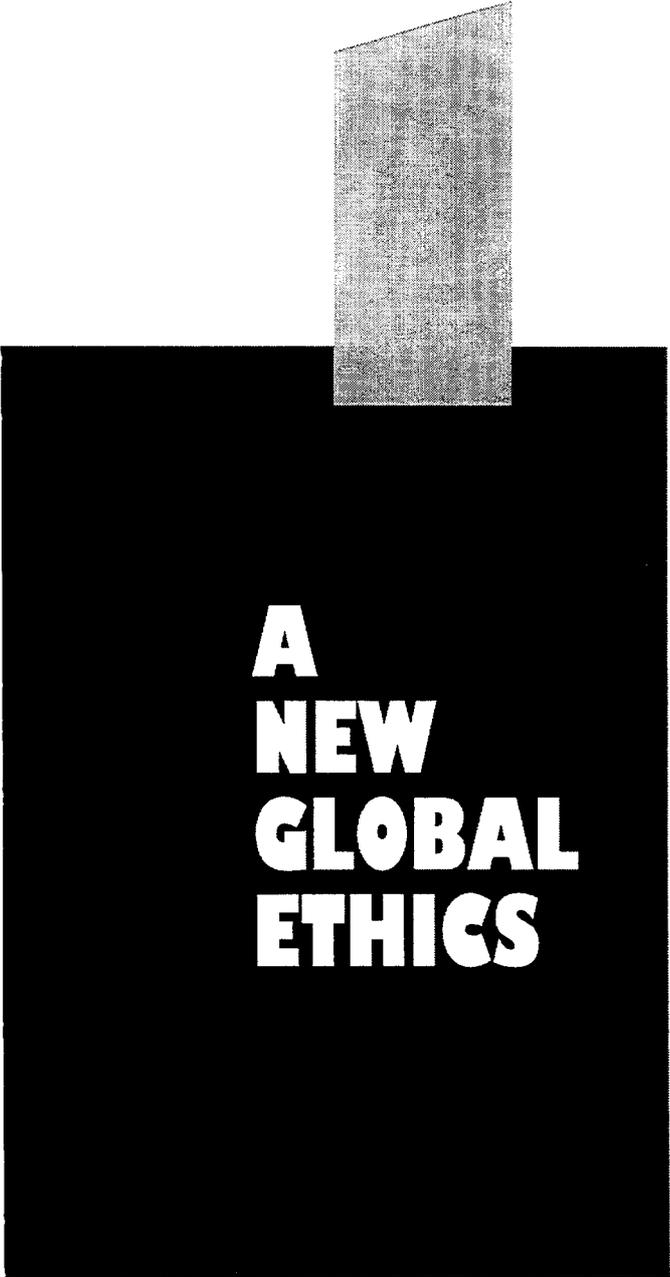
Over a billion poor people have been largely bypassed by the globalization of cultural processes. Involuntary poverty and exclusion are unmitigated evils. All development efforts aim at eradicating them and enabling all people to develop their full potential. Yet, all too often in the process of development, it is the poor who shoulder the heaviest burden. It is economic growth itself that interferes with human and cultural development. In the transition from subsistence-oriented agriculture to commercial agriculture, poor women and children are sometimes hit hardest. In the transition from a traditional society, in which the extended family takes care of its members who suffer misfortunes, to a market society, in which the community has not yet taken on responsibility for the victims of the competitive struggle, the fate of these victims can be cruel. In the transition from rural patron-client relationships to relations based on the cash nexus, the poor suffer by losing one type of support without gaining another. In the transition from an agricultural to an industrial society, the majority of rural people are neglected by the public authorities in favour of the urban population. In the transitions that we are now witnessing from centrally planned to market-oriented economies, and from autocracies to democracies, inflation, mass unemployment, growing poverty, alienation and new crimes have to be confronted.

This does not mean that modernization is bad and should be rejected: on the contrary. Some traditional societies practise their own cruelties and oppressions, from female genital mutilation to sexual subjugation, attacks on women with too small dowries, widow burning, child marriage, female infanticide, domestic battering, cannibalism, slavery and the exploitation of child labour. With rapidly growing populations as a result of the introduction of modern mortality rates into societies with traditional birth rates, development is not an option: it is a necessity.

As a result of accelerated change, of the impact of Western culture, mass communications, rapid population growth, urbanization, the break-up of the traditional village and of the extended family, traditional cultures (often orally transmitted) have been disrupted. Cultures are not monolithic and the élite culture, often geared to the global culture, tends to exclude the poor and powerless.

## Notes

1. Marshall Sahlins, "A Brief Cultural History of 'Culture'", paper prepared for the World Commission on Culture and Development, August 1994.
2. Amartya Sen, "Culture, Economics and Development", a paper contributed to the World Commission on Culture and Development, May 1995. See also Mahbub ul Haq, *Reflections on Human Development*, New York Oxford; Oxford University Press, 1995.
3. Message from the Secretary-General in *Uncommon Opportunities: An Agenda for Peace and Equitable Development* (Report of the International Commission on Peace and Food), London, Zed Books, 1994.



# A NEW GLOBAL ETHICS

*The world is our village: if one house catches fire, the roofs over all our heads are immediately at risk. If any one of us tries to start rebuilding, his efforts will be purely symbolic. Solidarity has to be the order of the day: each of us must bear his own share of the general responsibility.*

Jacques Delors<sup>1</sup>

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## Why we need a global ethics

Development is a complex and ambitious endeavour. To secure for all human beings in all parts of the world the conditions allowing a decent and meaningful life requires enormous human energies and far-reaching changes in policies. The task is all the more demanding as the world faces numerous other problems, each related to or even part of the development challenge, each similarly pressing, and each calling for the same urgent attention. But, as Arnold Toynbee has said, "Our age is the first generation since the dawn of history in which mankind dares to believe it practical to make the benefits of civilization available to the whole human race."

The magnitude of these problems is without precedent. Achieving significant improvements will depend on the co-operation and the good will of innumerable people all over the world. Securing a better future for all may involve sacrifices and will require profound changes in attitudes (including cultural attitudes) and behaviour, not least in people's social priorities, the educational system, the patterns of consumption, and even the most basic beliefs about how the individual should relate to society and the earth. Governments and political leaders will have to play a crucial role in convincing their citizens of the need for change and in suggesting novel political, economic and social strategies. Yet much will depend on the citizens' own willingness to confront the disturbing facts, to draw their own conclusions, and put them into practice in daily life. It will also depend on their ability to make governments responsive to social needs and demands.

Ever since the emergence of Homo Sapiens, human groups have been able to exchange discoveries and innovations, institutional experience and knowledge. Societies have evolved through the co-operation of peoples with contrasting cultures and it is important to promote cultural conviviality, through new socio-political agreements that should be negotiated in the framework of a global ethics.

Co-operation between different peoples with different interests and from different cultures will be facilitated and conflict kept within acceptable and even constructive limits, if participants can see themselves as being bound and motivated by shared commitments. It is, therefore, imperative to look for a core of shared ethical values and principles.

Undoubtedly, the potential for positive change resides in the values that determine our behaviour. The Commission considers it one of its tasks to sketch the contours of a global ethics and to examine what contribution culture can make. In its search for a new ethical orientation, the Commission is not alone but rather resumes various efforts already being undertaken by a number of thinkers and by the recent Commission on Global Governance. The realities of the emerging global neighbourhood require, says the body's report, that

[We] should develop a global ethics that applies equally to all those involved in world affairs. Its efficacy will depend on the ability of people and governments to transcend narrow self-interests and agree that the interests of humanity as a whole will be best served by acceptance of a set of common rights and responsibilities.

This points to where we must go. The idea is that the values and principles of a global ethics should be the shared points of reference, providing the minimal moral guidance the world must heed in its manifold efforts to tackle the global issues outlined above.

## Culture in search of a global ethics

It is not difficult to see that the search for a global ethics involves culture and cultural aspects in numerous ways. To begin with, such an endeavour is itself an emphatically cultural activity, including questions such as Who are we? How do we relate to each other and to humankind as a whole? and What is our purpose? These questions are at the centre of what culture is all about. Moreover, any attempt to formulate a global ethics must for its inspiration draw on cultural resources, on people's intelligence, on their emotional experiences, their historical memories and their spiritual orientations. Culture, unlike scarce resources, will in this process be invigorated and enhanced rather than depleted.

Still, the role cultures may play in the search for a global ethics is more complex than the observations so far suggest. In order to see clearly what their contribution more specifically might be it is essential first to dispel certain widespread misunderstandings.

Cultures are often regarded as unified systems of ideas and beliefs. Thus people frequently speak of Japanese, or Chinese, or Islamic, or Western culture as if the ideas of each of these formed a coherent whole easily distinguishable from the others. Yet this view has to be qualified in several ways. First, cultures overlap. Basic ideas may, and do, recur in several cultures because cultures have partly common roots, build on similar human experiences and have, in the course of history, often learned from each other. In other words, cultures do not have sharply delineated boundaries. Second, cultures usually do not speak with one voice on religious, ethical, social or political matters and other aspects of people's lives. What the meaning of a particular idea or tradition maybe and what conduct it may enjoin is always subject to interpretation. This applies with particular force to a world in rapid transformation. What a culture actually "says" in a new context will be open to discussion and occasionally to profound disagreement even among its members. Third, cultures do not commonly form homogeneous units. Within what is conventionally con-

sidered a culture, numerous “cultural” differences may exist along gender, class, religion, language, ethnicity and other fault lines. At the same time, ideas and clusters of beliefs may be shared by people of the same gender and of similar race or class across cultural boundaries, serving as bases for solidarity and alliances between them.

All of this said, it is obvious that cultures are very difficult to delineate and ascertain. Hence, one might be tempted simply to reject the idea that they may guide us in our search for a new global ethics. Yet, the Commission believes that there is indeed an important role for cultures and the experience they embody. But it is one of support rather than of formal authority or unequivocal moral instruction.

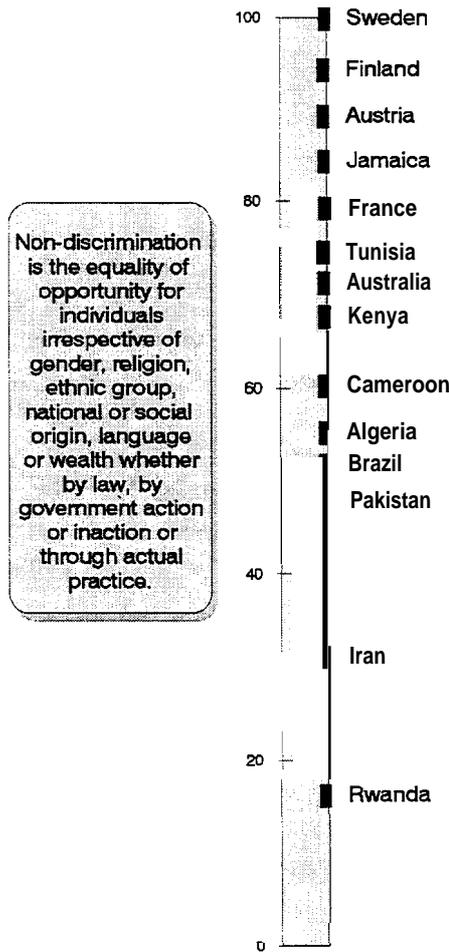
## Sources of a global ethics

There are some recurrent themes that appear in nearly all cultural traditions. They can serve as an inspiration for a global ethics.

The first source is the idea of human vulnerability and the attendant ethical impulse to alleviate suffering where such is possible and to provide security to each individual. Some notion of this is to be encountered in the moral views of all major cultures. As, for example, the Confucian teacher Mencius observed already long ago, “every man is moved by fear and horror, tenderness and mercy, if he suddenly sees a child about to fall into a well . . . no man is without a heart for right and wrong” (Meng-tzu, III, 6). Similarly, it is part of the fundamental moral teachings of each of the great traditions that one should treat others as one would want to be treated oneself. Some version of this “Golden Rule” finds explicit expression in Confucianism, Taoism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and is implicit in the practices of other faiths. The deeply human urge to avoid avoidable suffering and some notion of the basic moral equality of all human beings together form an indispensable point of reference and a strong pillar of support for any attempt to work out a global ethics.<sup>2</sup>

When searching for additional building-blocks of a global ethics we should not only look to what is conventionally called “cultures”. There is evolving in our time a global civic culture, a culture which contains further elements to be incorporated in a new global ethics. The *idea of human rights*, the *principle of democratic Legitimacy*, *public accountability*, and the emerging *ethos of evidence and proof* are the prime candidates for consideration. The ideals and purposes of the United Nations bodies have acquired a certain ideological legitimacy. Demands for human rights, and the consciousness of a shared earthly ecosystem, which shape expectations throughout the world, are other manifestations of this world culture.

### Non-discrimination remains wanting: selected countries, 1995.



Source: Mahbub ul Haq, *Reflections on Human Development*, 1995.

One of the most encouraging trends in the last few decades has been the gradual development of international human rights standards. These standards, envisaged in the United Nations Charter and formulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, have subsequently found legal and institutional expression in a number of treaties, above all in the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights, and on Economic and Social Rights and also in several regional treaties such as the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights, the American Convention of Human Rights, and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. Today, the idea of human rights, though still challenged by recalcitrant governments, is a firmly entrenched standard of political conduct and will have to be a corner-stone of any global ethics.

The emerging global civic culture seems to give rise to further new normative elements. In particular, the Commission draws attention to the principle of democratic legitimacy. What type of governance to practice is no longer seen merely as a national concern impervious to international apprehension. As various cases of election-monitoring show, the international community increasingly recognizes that democratic participation must be a significant international concern. Democracy is an important political and social value in itself and, moreover, a crucial long-term precondition of institutional efficiency, social stability and peace. There is a growing demand for forms of democratic participation also to make their way to the international level. While the main responsibility to tackle pressing global problems clearly lies with governments, international organizations, and multilateral co-operation, non-governmental organizations offer their own views and propositions. Their participation will not challenge the pre-eminence of states but it can exercise pressures on these states. The world's search for new solutions to its problems may gain considerably from citizens' direct contributions. The involvement of citizens may add novel perspectives, improve the quality of outcomes, and thus help to bring about better and more stable results. The Commission holds that democratic participation is a crucial element of good national governance and that some form of democratic "voice" should also be heard on the international level. Democratic legitimacy will have to be an indispensable principle of a global ethics.

The main trends that are usually seen as indications of a new and global culture probably lie outside politics. Undoubtedly one of the most spectacular of those global trends is the rise of science and scientific thinking. Even though the record is ambivalent in a number of ways, there can be no question that any successful effort to cope with the ecological and other global challenges ahead will require scientific expertise and the use of technological means. Now science and empirical research exemplify an ethos whose core demand is to make judgments based on evidence and proof. It is of course true that value conflicts and clashes of antagonistic interests cannot be resolved on the basis of scientific reasoning. Science cannot replace politics. Yet political issues often involve empirical questions to be answered on scientific grounds. The efforts that governments and citizens undergo to produce, assess and contest empirical evidence in national and international disputes indicate that science and the scientific ethos are increasingly gaining significance and credibility. Recent practices such as dispatching human rights observers to areas of conflict and monitoring the fairness of elections reflect not only a consensus about what is morally right or wrong but also a shared commitment to ground political assessments and policies on empirical evidence. Similarly, international efforts to find ways to stop the depletion of the ozone layer and cope with

## The end of certitudes

How can a successful dialogue be launched between the traditions specific to each non-Western culture and modern science which originated in the Western world? This question is a deep and controversial one. Hideki Yukawa, probably the greatest living Japanese scientist has written: "It may sound strange but I have an ever-growing feeling of the estrangement of contemporary physics from my own self in spite of the fact that I am a physicist myself." Why this estrangement? Science constitutes a dialogue with nature: but nature is not given, it involves a construction in which we all take part. Western science and the Western conception of nature were based on the formulation of "laws of nature". The supreme example remains Newton's law relating force to acceleration. This law has two features: it is deterministic and time reversible. It deals with "certitudes". It implies symmetry between past and future.

Western science went through two great revolutions this century, namely, quantum theory and relativity, yet the two characteristics of Newton's law, "certainty" and time reversibility, have survived to this day. We can well understand Yukawa's estrangement. In Chinese the word nature stands for "that which is so by itself". The concept of nature emphasizes spontaneity and creativity.

"Is the universe ruled by deterministic laws? What is the nature of time?" These questions were formulated by the pre-Socratics at the very beginnings of Western rationality. Two millennia and a half later, they are still with us. But in the second half of this century a radical change of perspective is taking place which may bring science and cultural traditions closer together as well as close the breach between the cultures – to use C.P. Snow's term – that has emerged in the Western world.

Classical science emphasized stability and equilibrium. Today we observe instabilities, fluctuations and evolutionary trends on practically all levels, starting with cosmology and going through fluid mechanics, chemistry and biology to the large scale systems studied by the environmental sciences. Notions such as chaos and self-organization have become quite popular. Non-linear mathematics is in full bloom. Descartes in the seventeenth century and Einstein closer to us hoped to describe nature as *res extensa*, as an intemporal geometry. In contrast, recent developments emphasize the "narrative" element in nature. Physics comes closer to Darwinian biology. This, however, requires a revision of the concept of "laws of nature". In this perspective the latter no longer express "certitudes" but "possibilities". We stand before a much more complex, much more structured universe than we could ever have imagined.

This recent evolution of physics makes science more acceptable to other cultural traditions. It also leads to new openings for inter-disciplinary research. The behavioural sciences, be it sociology or economics, have so far taken the Newtonian, deterministic paradigm as their model. But the newer vision, as Karl Popper has emphasized, would make unidirectional change, and therefore also human history, an illusion.

I in fact believe that this end-of-century will be associated with the birth of a new vision of nature and of a science which brings man closer to nature, a science that makes humankind and its creativity the expression of a fundamental trend in the universe.

Ilya Prigogine

the greenhouse effect demonstrate a willingness to resort to scientific method in order to solve empirical disputes. While its importance must not be exaggerated, this trend maybe supportive of a global ethics that emphasizes truthfulness, respect for the facts and objectivity that contrasts with the wilfulness that in politics is still far too pervasive.

## **The main elements of a global ethics**

The potential sources identified above have many facets and are too general to allow the derivation of a comprehensive system of precepts for a global ethics. They provide inspiration and indicate which principles or forms may find natural support in views people already hold and in practices they already affirm. Yet a global ethics must draw on further considerations. It will have to rely on certain universal principles, even if some particular culture may oppose them. This means that the justification of ethical principles is not dogmatic and derivative in character but is a matter of adducing and balancing numerous considerations of different kinds, origins and levels of generality. When the Commission now submits a number of moral concerns indispensable for a global ethics, its proposals should not be discarded merely as an attempt to impose certain arbitrary ideas and postulates from above. It is the Commission's view that these principles are well-grounded in various fundamental ideas which either carry great moral weight themselves or for which good reasons can be marshaled. Also, the Commission has carefully and self-critically sought to avoid any political partiality in its work. It has listened carefully to scholars, statesmen, artists and others from all parts of the world. Proposing a new global ethics must not be a political vehicle designed to patronize certain regions and demean their cultural traditions and values.

The Commission suggests that the following principal ideas should form the core of a new global ethics:

### **1. Human rights and responsibilities**

As has already been outlined, today human rights are widely regarded as an indispensable standard of international conduct. Protecting individual physical and emotional integrity against intrusions from society, providing the minimal social and economic conditions for a decent life, fair treatment and equal access to the mechanisms for remedying injustices are key concerns a global ethics must make its cause. Though the core of human rights is fairly well delineated, formerly unforeseen trends such as fundamental threats to human life from human intervention in eco-systems suggest that

new human rights such as a right to a healthy environment adequate for human well-being may have to be included in existing codifications.

At the same time it should be recognized that rights have to be combined with duties, options with bonds, choices with allegiances, liberties with ligatures. Bonds without options are oppressive; options without bonds are anarchy. Modernization has widened choices, but destroyed some connections. Indeed, choices without bonds can be as oppressive as bonds without choices. The aim should be a society in which liberty is not libertine, authority not authoritarian, choices more than *actes gratuits*, bonds more than painful restrictions.

There has been little examination of how different people perceive human rights or of the dynamics between the rights of individuals and collectives. In many cultures rights are not separable from duties. In South Asia, for example, human rights activists have discovered that indigenous people often find it difficult to respond to a general question as to “what are your rights?” in the absence of a contextual framework (such as a religion, a family, or some other institution). Second, they have found that in responding, people begin by explaining duties before they elaborate on rights. Third, people may resist speaking of rights with reference to instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that are either unknown or perceived as remote from their own experience.

Critics reject the idea of human rights and dispute their universality on grounds of their Western origin and their alleged individualism. The idea has roots in many religions and cultures, and the West has adopted and adapted many ideas from other cultures. But above all, the basic moral concern – to protect the integrity and to respect the vulnerability of human beings – is universal in its appeal and can be shown to be part of all major traditions of moral teaching. The criticism that human rights foster an individualism alien to non-Western cultures may be based on a misunderstanding. Although the idea of human rights does obviously make use of the notion of rights, these rights may better be seen as general principles denoting the fundamental moral concern that in a social and political community ought to find adequate reflection. How exactly these principles should be implemented and what type of institutional arrangements they enjoin is a matter of political imagination and requires taking into account already existing traditions and institutions. Some of the concerns expressed in the idea of human rights are indeed best expressed in a system of individual legal rights. Yet others, such as the human right to the social and economic conditions necessary for minimally decent life, call for a complex mix of institutions and policies. And the right to fair treatment may involve, inter alia, educating police and security forces and making them familiar with due process and similar principles. If some of the institutional arrangements instrumental for implementing human rights do involve indi-

vidual rights, this is not because the idea of human rights is unduly individualistic. Rather, the reason is that individual rights give appropriate expression to the notion that in a limited number of ways all human beings are to be regarded as equal and such essential equality outweighs any claims made on behalf of group and collective values.

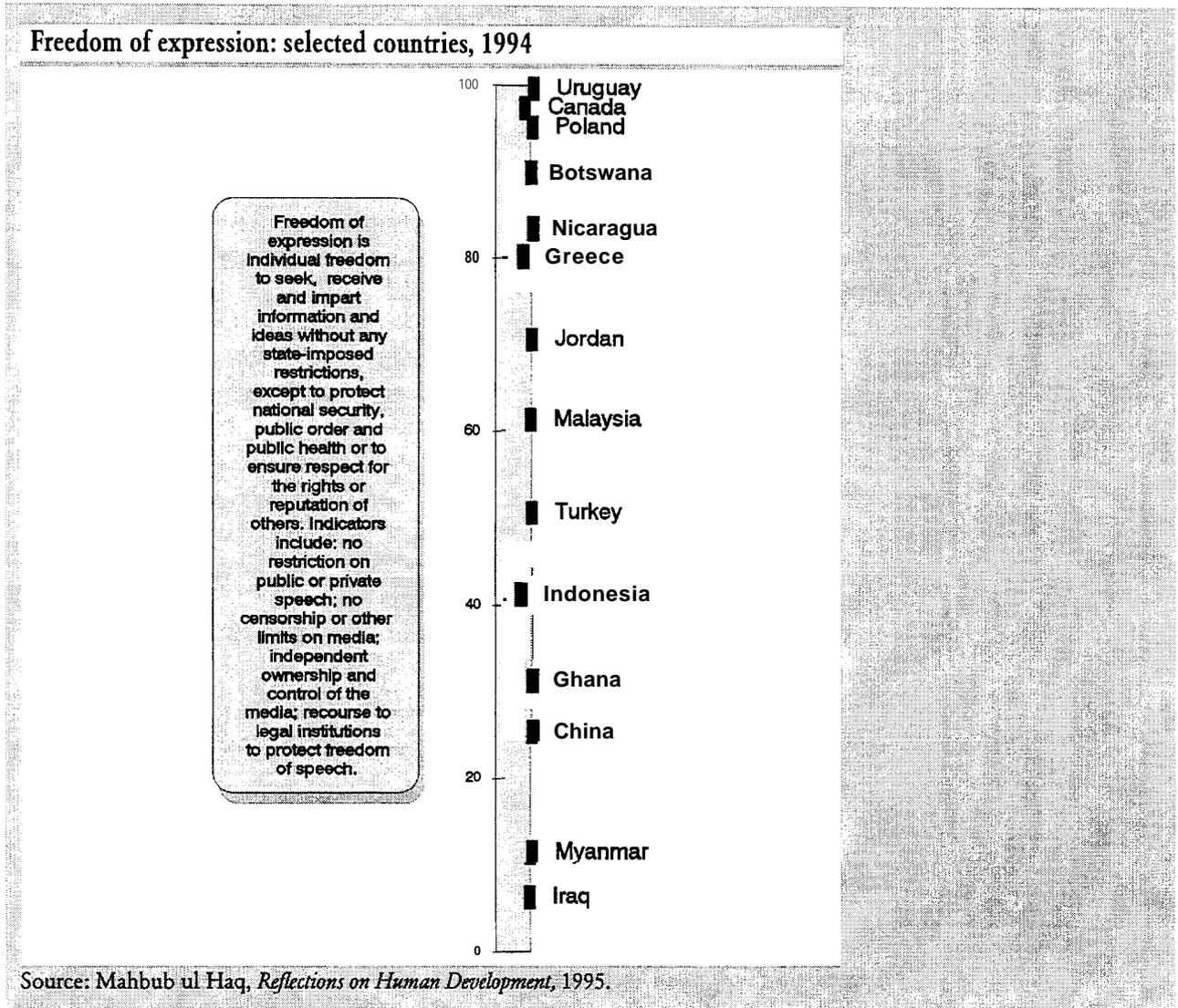
Making human rights standards effective worldwide requires the activities and co-operation of numerous actors. States and governments everywhere must show a sincere commitment to implementing human rights and practices conforming to them. There is scope for extensive international co-operation among all states. Yet there are also important roles for translational actors, for international co-operation, and for the global civil society. Non-governmental organizations are crucial in carefully documenting individual cases and in generating publicity about human rights violations. Indeed, development is largely about making human rights effective. It means providing for every human being born into this world the opportunities to lead a full life, to exercise fully his or her economic, social, political and cultural rights.

## **2. Democracy and the elements of civil society**

Like human rights, democracy must today be seen as a central element of a global civic culture in the making. Democracy embodies the ideas of political autonomy and human empowerment. It is no longer some vanguard or self-appointed élite but the people themselves who should decide about how to organize their collective life and what future to choose.

Beyond being a value in itself, democracy is also closely interlinked with several other important values. To begin with, there is an intimate connection between democracy and human rights. Democracy provides an important basis for safeguarding the fundamental rights of citizens. Governments are forced to take preventive action under the pressure of public opinion. Giving voice to those who have complaints is more likely to prevent major social disasters.

Interdependence and mutual causation again exist between democracy and development. In the long run, successful development depends on democracy. Development is not a technocratic enterprise to be implemented from central government downwards but requires the active participation of all members of society. People will be much more motivated to make a contribution if they can see themselves as true citizens who have a say in what direction their country should move and what development priorities it should adopt. Freedom of expression is both an end in itself, and as such is part of the meaning of development, and it has also instrumental value in promoting development. At the same time, democracy also



depends on development. It is entirely consistent with good development performance, as Botswana, Costa Rica, Mauritius and other countries show. Although some authoritarian governments have also a good record of economic growth, such as some East Asian countries, once development, and particularly human development, with its emphasis on wide-spread benefits in nutrition, health and education, has proceeded beyond a certain stage, and when a literate and politically aware middle class exists, the claim of the people to participate in the political process becomes irresistible. The evidence for this is world-wide, from the ex-Soviet Union to East Asia to Latin America to South Africa. Only development can bring about those favourable conditions necessary to make democracy flourish.

There is also a complex link between democracy and peace. Democ-

racy can be an important stabilizing factor internationally as democracies are less likely to go to war against each other. Nationally, the connection between peace and democracy is more precarious. If democracy is given a chance to take roots, it can in the long run diffuse conflict, though some measure of tension and even conflict is a mark of democratic politics and is to be welcomed. Conflicts over divisible resources can be the glue that holds society together. Much depends on politicians' skills and willingness to recognize grievances early on and to seek solutions in a conciliatory fashion. Especially in newly created democratic systems (but in mature democracies as well) the freedom of political expression is sometimes used for aggressive politics designed to deepen cleavages, to vilify others, and to deny them their rights. Moderation is a virtue vitally important for peaceful democratic politics.

While free, fair and regular elections, freedom of information and a free press, and freedom of association constitute basic ingredients of democracy and a free civil society, democratic procedures must be supplemented by constitutional safeguards protecting political, ethnic and other minorities against the tyranny of the majority. In a world in which, as has been remarked, 10,000 distinct societies live in roughly 200 states, the question of how to accommodate minorities is not of academic interest only but is a central challenge to any humane politics.

### 3. The protection of minorities

The powerful trends towards globalization have not erased national and ethnic movements claiming self-determination. On the contrary – and the experience of Eastern and Central Europe after 1989 is evidence for this – nations that were thought to have disappeared long ago are re-emerging. Too often, majorities are inclined to react with discrimination and repression to cultural minorities insisting on their identity and demanding some form of self-rule.

The desire of cultural minorities to assert their cultural identity or to give it political expression in some form of autonomy must be taken seriously. But, for economic reasons such as the existence of integrated national markets, the creation of new states is not always the best solution. Moreover, the creation of new states often gives birth to new minorities and new conflicts. Political and cultural ingenuity and imagination can bring new political solutions to old cultural conflicts.

In such situations, certain priorities should be established. First, members belonging to the minorities must enjoy the same basic rights and freedoms, and the same constitutional safeguards granted to all citizens. Second, whatever form of government is established (self-government, par-

tial autonomy, a confederation or any other), the human rights of all members of majorities and minorities must be guaranteed. Human rights take precedence over any claims to cultural integrity advanced by communities. Third, tolerance and cultural conviviality should be promoted, encouraging cultural diversity. Experience warns, however, that cultural politics are sometimes used as a means to sow discord and conflict rather than forge mutual understanding and respect.

#### **4. Commitment to peaceful conflict-resolution and fair negotiation**

As will be explained in more detail below, the principles and values embodied in a global ethics must be seen as a moral minimum to be observed by all without qualification. Now those basic standards (such as human rights) do not suffice to resolve all international and global issues that involve ethical questions. For example, human rights cannot answer what constitutes fair trade or how the costs of eliminating environmentally damaging technologies should be distributed among the countries concerned. Though problems of justice and fairness are undoubtedly central to a global ethics, it is not possible to solve them by philosophical fiat because a simple and generally accepted principle of justice does not exist. Justice and fairness in translational politics cannot be found by imposing some pre-conceived moral principle on the world. In this situation, all interested parties must be allowed to have a say. The resolution of disagreement must be sought by negotiation: all affected parties must be represented and have a voice in what principles or rules should decide the matter. Therefore, the Commission deems it imperative for a global ethics to include a strong commitment to peaceful conflict-resolution and fair negotiation.

There should be a commitment to building a “culture of peace”. The enormous economic, social and human costs of armed conflict exceed the bounds of the tolerable. Military expenditures are a tragic waste of limited resources throughout the world. Unfortunately, military establishments are not convinced by the number of schools or village pharmacies that can be had in lieu of a tank. General arguments about higher social priorities are ineffective. They will have to be convinced that the build-up of arms is counterproductive in terms of their own objective, to wit national security. At the same time, the threats to peace, security and human development stem from our own policies and our collective choices, including the profits yielded from trade in arms.

The culture of peace is not just a theory or a set of principles. It is, as Frederico Mayor has pointed out, “a process by which positive attitudes to peace, democracy and tolerance are forged through education and knowledge about different cultures”. It is a process that is built on the proactive

stance of peace-building: preventive action before a conflict has broken out and corrective action after it has taken its human toll. It involves the participation of all parties to any conflict, the fostering of democratic process and respect for rights, and the non-violent management of conflicts. Peace-making techniques have existed in almost all cultures as people have used different practices to prevent the outbreak of conflict and bloodshed. Many cultures have revered their "peace promoters", individuals who served to mediate and defuse conflicts. It is the responsibility of each of us to expose the interests behind the arms build-up and to cultivate the skills of conciliation, peaceful co-operation and tolerance.

## **5. Equity within and between generations**

Universalist is the fundamental principle of a global ethics. The ethos of universal human rights proclaims that all human beings are born equal and that they enjoy these rights irrespective of class, gender, race, community or generation. This implies that the basic necessities for a decent life must be the foremost concern of humanity. Universalist requires that in our anxiety to protect future generations we must not overlook the pressing life claims of the poor today.

The basic principle of intergenerational equity says that present generations must take care of and use the environment and cultural and natural resources for the benefit of all members of present and future generations. Each generation is a user, a custodian and a potential enhancer of humanity's common natural, genetic and cultural heritage and must therefore leave for future generations at least the same opportunities that it enjoyed.

How we human beings should relate to the earth and what our responsibility towards unborn generations is are two of the most challenging philosophical questions. Answers will have to draw on many sources. Perhaps modern civilization might have something to learn from local cultures that view individuals and generations as members in a chain of familial lineages.

How the principle of intergenerational equity should be understood cannot be answered without at the same time developing ideas about how to give it institutional form. One of the most interesting recent ideas is the proposal that the best way to protect the interests of future generations might be to provide for a representative in the form of a Guardian and a Guardian office to be set up within the framework of the United Nations and international law.

## **Global ethics in global governance**

Many elements of a global ethics are now absent from global governance. Several important institutions of global governance - particularly the Bretton Woods institutions - cannot claim full democratic legitimacy because they are based on the formula "one dollar, one vote", rather than on the consensus of the people. Nor are the rich nations willing to accept the same moral principles they recommend so eloquently to the poor nations. For example, laundering of drug money through the banking system is rightly condemned, while certain banks all over the world quietly accept vast sums of corrupt money from the officials of poor nations. They make a handsome profit on it, while their politicians criticize the poor nations for corrupt practices. Even the burden of structural adjustment is passed on almost entirely to poor countries, while the rich strongly resist any cuts in their high consumption standards. Market principles are advocated in all fields except in the use of the global commons, such as the global environment, where the rich nations use up over 80 per cent of the environmental resources without paying for them. Concrete suggestions for remedying this situation are made in the International Agenda.

## **The role of a global ethics**

The principles and basic ideas of a global ethics furnish the minimal standards any political community should observe. The Commission thinks it unwise to go further and spell out a comprehensive image of the good polity. Peoples have always differed in their political visions. Influenced by their cultural heritage and historical experience they often have different views about what further values their society should uphold and what specific projects it should pursue. Expressly acknowledging such diversity, a global ethics provides the minimal requirements any government and people must meet but otherwise leaves scope for political creativity, social imagination and cultural pluralism.

Confining a global ethics to certain basic principles and criteria also reflects an awareness that societies do not, need not and cannot follow identical development patterns and development styles. While insisting on a number of fundamental normative standards, a global ethics abstains from committing societies to only one and the same path on which to advance. The modernization of the West need not be the model to be copied by all societies.

## To whom it may concern

Even in a world of pervading international and global interdependence states remain the primary actors in the global system. Though they differ enormously in capabilities, resources and options available to them, it is the states that define and maintain the legal and political framework within which they and everybody else moves. Unfortunately, governments and their judicial and executive organs are often the main violators of the global ethics. Gross violations of human rights, authoritarianism, oppression and the use of violence to settle domestic and international conflicts are widespread.

It is, nevertheless, first of all for governments and their respective leaders to implement the principles and precepts of a global ethics. There are a number of ways open to them to achieve this. Governments can give ethical considerations more weight by consistently bringing them to bear on the legal underpinnings of international society. This may mean strengthening the international rule of law, extending the scope for independent legal review, improving existing procedures and introducing new legal mechanisms designed to protect the basic moral values mentioned above.

States can also give greater emphasis to ethical considerations within international and intergovernmental organizations. They may do this by subjecting organizational policies more rigorously to criteria of moral conduct, reforming existing organizational structures and setting up new agencies that reflect ethical principles.

Moreover, governments have crucial ethical responsibilities within their own territories. In the absence of an ideally integrated international society, the worldwide attainment of some measure of order and the realization of the basic moral values vitally depends on the existence of national communities capable of preserving order and securing those values within their jurisdictions. It must be the states that are the chief architects seeking to erect and maintain a global constitutional order that is built on moral principles other than power politics.

There are moves under way towards the formation of translational but less than global regional unions: the European Union, the North American Free Trade Area, and other more limited trade and monetary agreements between groups of like-minded countries. Although these could, in principle, be steps towards a more fragmented world with more powerful self-contained blocks (as was the case before the Second World War), it looks more likely that they are moves towards a global order with freer movement of goods, services, capital, money, people and ideas beyond the confines of the regions.

Next to government and states, there are three influential actors on

the global stage: translational corporations, international organizations, and the global civil society. Translational corporations have been praised for making the most valuable contributions to development and condemned as not perhaps the devil incarnate, but at any rate the devil incorporated. No doubt, they wield considerable power and are not under global control. And different corporations behave very differently. Their power and influence enjoins a corresponding role and responsibility in a global ethics. Their economic power is often greater than that of some states and their activities can affect the politics of many governments and many people. Not only do they command enormous wealth and power to hire and fire, but they also have a powerful influence through their advertising on consumer choices. Ideally and eventually, a system of global incorporation, global taxation and global accountability should match the global reach of these companies. Meanwhile international (i.e. inter-governmental) co-operation will have to limit the abuse of their power and attempt to steer its use to the public good.

The United Nations family and other world-wide international and regional public agencies and organizations are specifically charged with promoting the general interest in different spheres. Here again, a greater degree of public control, accountability, transparency, and more particularly wider participation by voluntary societies, religious congregations, trade unions, private firms, professional organizations, women's and youth associations and so on would be desirable. In principle it is these international agencies, together with the fledgling global civil society, that are the seat of the global conscience of the world.

Last but not least there is the global civil society. The bonds of global non-governmental organizations, voluntary societies, grassroots organizations, churches and other religious associations, action groups, professional societies, interest groups and similar institutions stretch across national frontiers and forge links that bypass national frontiers and loyalties. They constitute the core of any future world citizenship, even though their loyalties may be confined to quite narrow issues or specialized interests. They can mobilize world opinion in order to draw attention to global problems, such as some environmental or human rights groups have done so successfully. Greenpeace on environmental issues or Amnesty International on human rights, or Oxfam on public education in development issues, as well as the execution of projects are examples. Other organizations provide humanitarian relief or engage in co-operation beyond state frontiers of their own, for example by linking with local self-help groups elsewhere and supporting their health, education and other projects.

Undeniably, non-state agents differ vastly in their capabilities, and some of them appear to possess hardly any influence at all. This seems to exempt them from any role in a global ethics. Still, to the extent that they

do have leverage within their specialized sphere of activity, they have a responsibility, and they must strive to make their own specific contribution to the realization of the principles and values a global ethics considers fundamental. The same is true for individuals. They may not wield political power but they may have influence in their capacities as officials, managers, teachers and professors, as consumers, and not least as citizens.

All societies need a basis of moral principles for their self-regulation, for social control and for their international relations. If we observe, say, bilateral international negotiations we find that both partners attempt to formulate and appeal to (often tacit or implicit) moral principles accepted by both sides. Individuals and groups are ready to make sacrifices for the communities of which they are members. Trust, loyalty, solidarity, altruism and even love, though readily dismissed by currently fashionable economists, no doubt do play a part in human relationships. Unlike material goods, they grow on what they feed on. No society is capable of surviving without them.

The principles of morality do not stop at the frontiers of the state. In the present fashion of stressing only self-interest, we run the danger of underestimating the power of moral and humanitarian appeals and motives. Holland, Norway and Sweden devote a higher percentage of their national incomes to aid than most other countries. This can be regarded as an indicator of the willingness to put international relations and the obligations of the rich to the help the poor, including help to help themselves, on a moral basis.

Whatever the rhetoric of national self-interest, moral principles are bound to guide international co-operation. As hypocrisy is said to be the tribute that vice pays to virtue, so excessive emphasis on the national self-interest by politicians seems to be the tribute that virtue pays to vice. Citizens are often, as their responses to disasters and emergencies clearly show, ahead of their politicians in implementing their loyalties, obligations and fellow feelings to human beings in need, wherever they may be. There is no reason why ethics should stop at the national border.

## Notes

1. From a speech made at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, June 1992.
2. John Hick, comments made at a seminar on "Cultural and National Identities and a New World Order" organized in 1993 by the Fundación BBV, Spain. The proceedings are in press and will be published shortly as *Identity Passions: a Philosophical Background* by Documenta BBV.
3. Participation is stressed in many parts of this Report. It should, however, always be remembered that some forms of participation are simply dominations by local power élites. In hierarchical and paternalistic village societies the reality is far from the

romance of the Golden Age of egalitarian participation and village democracies that some Westerners cultivate. Some local cultural groups are hierarchical, dictatorial, sexist and unjust. Actions for the poor and oppressed often call for powerful central state action, such as legislation and an independent Supreme Court. It should also be remembered that participation takes time, and time has to be freed for people, especially very busy women, to participate in the political life of their community.

2

**A  
COMMITMENT  
TO  
PLURALISM**

*As long as any civilization applies political intellectual and moral coercion on others on the basis of the endowments nature and history have bequeathed to it, there can be no hope of peace for humanity: the negation of the cultural specificities of any people is tantamount to the negation of its dignity.*

Alpha Ouma Konaré, President of Mali, 1993

2

## No culture is an island

No culture is a hermetically sealed entity. All cultures are influenced by and in turn influence other cultures. Nor is any culture changeless, invariant or static. All cultures are in a state of constant flux, driven by both internal and external forces. These forces may be accommodating, harmonious, benign and based on voluntary actions, or they may be involuntary, the result of violent conflict, force, domination and the exercise of illegitimate power.

In the light of this, the need for people to live and work together peacefully should result in respect for all cultures, or at least for those cultures that value tolerance and respect for others. There are some cultures that may not be worthy of respect because they themselves have been shown to be intolerant, exclusive, exploitative, cruel and repressive. Whatever we may be told about the importance of “not interfering with local customs”, such repulsive practices, whether aimed at people from different cultures or at other members of the same culture, should be condemned, not tolerated. Even individuals from the intolerant cultures should, however, be left free to express their views, as long as their actions do not infringe on the rights of others who do not agree with them.

But for the rest, more than tolerance for other cultures is required. We should rejoice at cultural differences and attempt to learn from them, not to regard them as alien, unacceptable or hateful. Governments cannot prescribe such attitudes and behaviour as respect and rejoicing, but they can prohibit attacks on people from different cultures and their practices and they can set the legal stage for mutual tolerance and accommodation. They can outlaw some of the outward manifestations of xenophobia and racism.

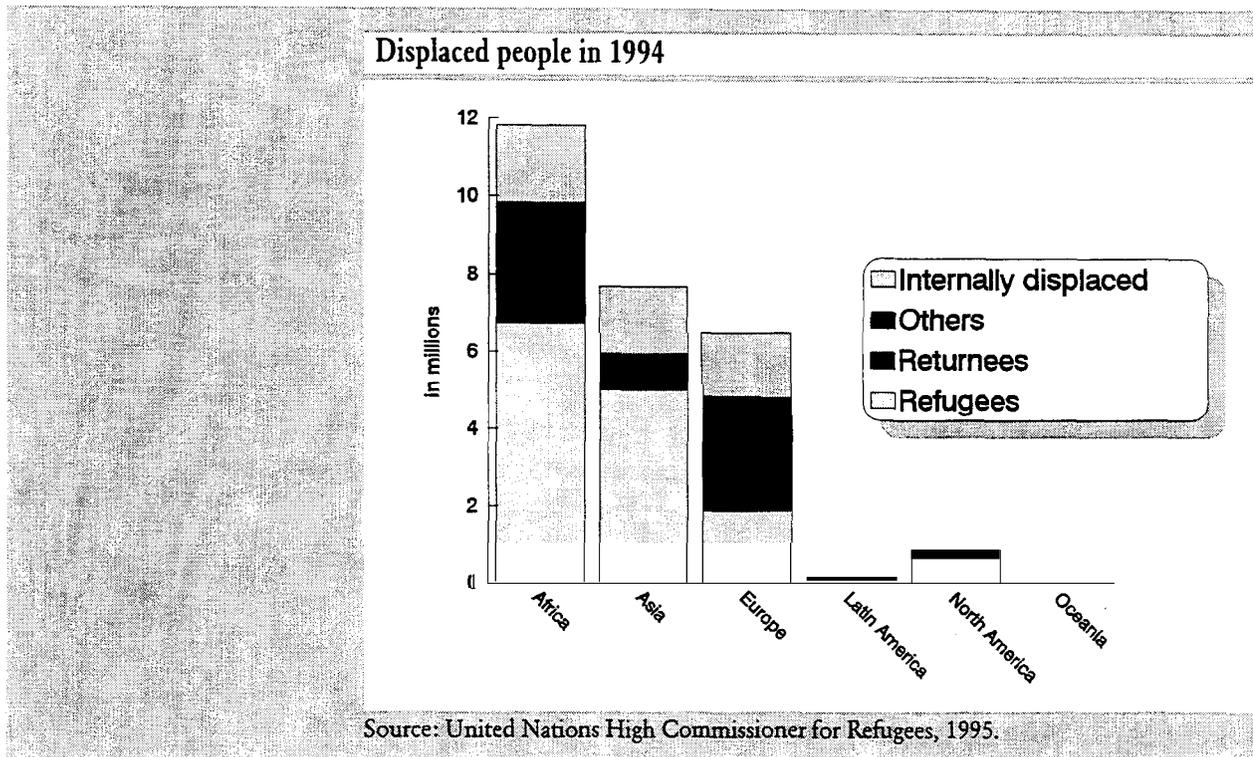
Intolerant attitudes become particularly pernicious when they become the policy of intolerant governments. Discrimination, segregation and exclusion based on cultural traits then become official policy. In these cases strong international pressures should be used to denounce and punish such policies, including all forms of racism, persecution of people because of their beliefs, and the curtailment of freedom of their own people.

The diversity and plurality of cultures has benefits comparable to those of bio-diversity. Pluralism has the advantage that it pays attention to the accumulated treasure of all human experience, wisdom and conduct. Any culture can benefit by comparison with other cultures, as it discovers its own idiosyncrasies and peculiarities. This does not imply cultural relativism: it is entirely consistent with an assertion of the validity of some absolute standards.

Liberalism, tolerance and pluralism incline us to find pleasure in the idea of a multiplicity of visions; the desire for objectivity, and universality,

on the other hand, leads us to desire that truth be but one, not many. The logical and ethical difficulty about relativism is that it must also endorse absolutism and dogmatism; absolutism does not have to endorse relativism. Since many past and alien visions are intolerant, if we endorse them, in our tolerant, liberal way, we endorse intolerance. Notoriously, there is no room for the assertion of relativism in a world in which relativism is true. Cognitive relativism is nonsense, moral relativism is tragic. Without an assertion of absolute standards, no recommendation of this Commission would be possible, indeed no reasoned discourse could be conducted. Let us rejoice in diversity, while maintaining absolute standards of judging what is right, good and true.

The principle of pluralism, in the sense of tolerance and respect for and rejoicing over the plurality of cultures, so important in dealings between countries, also applies within countries, in the relations between different ethnic groups. These relations have become problematic in the course of development. As populations shift and their status changes, people turn to cultural distinctions embodied in their traditions to resist what is perceived as a threat to the integrity, prosperity or survival of their community, to the continuity of its culture or the transmission of its values. The mobilization that time and again occurred around a group's identity has led to a new "ethnic politics". The stakes include gaining control of (or access to) state power, achieving higher social status or gaining community security or a larger share of income and wealth. Where ethnic groups have enjoyed relatively equal shares of power and wealth, tensions can arise as soon as one or several of them begin to feel that their relative position is slipping. Such tensions, often inevitable as economic conditions change, have led to contention over rights to land, education, the use of language, political representation, freedom of religion, the preservation of ethnic identity, autonomy or self-determination. Whereas the world is made up of some 190 states, many of them are polyethnic, enclosing within their borders a large number of cultures and ethnic groups. Standard development models have paid little attention to this diversity, assuming that functional categories such as class and occupation are more important. It has become recognized, however, that many development failures and disasters (the civil wars in Nigeria, Rwanda and Burundi, the break-up of Pakistan) stem from an inadequate recognition of cultural and ethnic complexities. Ethnicity is a determining factor in the nature and dynamic of the conflict, as language, race or religion, among other features, are used to distinguish the opposing actors. All too frequently, state power has been assumed by one specific group, and state building has rendered many other groups devoid of power or influence. Where it is perceived that the government either favours or discriminates against groups identifiable in terms of ethnicity, race or religion, this



encourages the negotiation of benefits on the basis of this identity and leads directly to the politicization of culture. The dynamics of this process are such that when any one group starts negotiating on the basis of its cultural identity, others are encouraged to do likewise. This process has often been cumulative.

New identities may also emerge. In Pakistan, for example, the economic and political privileges of one province have provoked a growth of “nationalism” in other provinces. Among the groups excluded from claiming such provincial identity was the numerically small but politically and economically visible group of people who had migrated into Sindh province from India after the partition of 1947. Elements from within the migrating groups who did not even share a language or ethnic affiliation in undivided India, constructed a new sense of ‘nationality’ on the sole basis that their parents had been immigrants. Born in Pakistan, these youngsters now speak of the *mohajir* nation (*mohajir* is the Urdu word for migrant). At the community level, the political party representing their interests is active, finding jobs and resolving disputes. It is filling the vacuum between the state and a dislocated immigrant community that no longer has a coherent tradition to refer to.<sup>1</sup>

## Minorities

Conflicts between majority and minority populations, and often between minorities themselves, are among the key problems of pluralistic societies. Although the term “minorities” has been used in different senses, the accepted international usage is to designate marginalized or vulnerable groups who live in the shadow of majority populations with a different and dominant cultural ideology.<sup>2</sup> These groups share systems of values and sources of self-esteem that often are derived from sources quite different from those of the majority culture.

Minorities often find it difficult to participate fully in the activities of societies that favour dominant groups. Sometimes this discrimination is embedded in the legal framework that denies these minorities access to education, employment and political representation. More generally, however, the lack of participation is less a matter of official policy than of everyday practice.<sup>3</sup> The challenge consists in first removing discriminatory barriers and then creating the basis for the empowerment of these minorities.

Minorities are subject to repression - both organized and spontaneous, often violent - in many countries. Indeed, minority rights have been a major geopolitical issue in this century, with antecedents going far back in history. In Europe, international regulations protecting minorities go back to 1555, when the Peace of Augsburg provided for the protection of religious minorities. Later the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 and the Polish-Russian Convention of 1767 and 1775 guaranteed rights of dissidents in Poland, while the Vienna Treaty of 1815 gave religious minorities not only freedom to practise their faith but also certain civil rights. The peace treaties of 1919 required many old and new states to assure full protection to all their inhabitants without distinction of birth and nationality, language, race or religion. In subsequent years, the League of Nations worked out a procedure for the settlement of minority disputes. However, the League's treaties were only feebly enforced.

After the Second World War, states in the newly-created United Nations chose to focus the Organization's human rights machinery on a universal and individualistic conception of rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights did not mention the protection of minorities, although some countries wanted it. Their proposals were rejected because it was feared that they may promote separatist tendencies and movements, and because it was thought that rights are best thought of as inherent in each human being, irrespective of what cultural group he or she may belong to. Since 1989, however, it has proved impossible to evade the question. The Charter of Paris adopted by the CSCE Summit meeting on 21 November 1990 and the creation of a High Commissioner for National

### A world of minorities: selected groups and countries, 1989

Country	Minority	Number (in millions)	% of total population
USA	Mexican Americans	12.1	5
Canada	Indians and Metis	0,6-1,2	2,5-4,75
Guatemala	Maya	3-5,6	38-70
Bolivia	Quichua, Aymara	4	50
UK	Welsh	2.64	4.5
Western Europe	Roma	1.5	0.45
Bulgaria	Turks	0.9	10
ex-USSR	Native People (North)	5	1.7
Egypt	Copts	6	12-15
Morocco	Berbers	6	40
Israel	Druzes	0.07	1.5
Djibouti	Afars, Issas	0.5	50
South Africa	Indian	0.87	3
Namibia	San	0,03	2-3
India	Adivasis	5.2	7.5
Sri Lanka	Tamils	27	18,2
Japan	Burakunin	2.3	1,6-2,5
Laos	Hmong	0.4	10
Malaysia	Chinese	3.9	34
Australia	Aboriginal	0.3	1.5
New Zealand	Maori	0.4	12

Source: Minority Rights Group, *World Directory of Minorities*, 1980.

Minorities are examples of this growing awareness. In 1992 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, the first comprehensive, universal standard-setting instrument in this area. It formulates the obligation of states to protect the existence and identity of minorities within their respective territories. At the same time it adheres to the view that rights are inherent in individual human beings, and that group rights can be defined only in conjunction with these individual rights.

Among the rights of persons belonging to minorities it lists the right to enjoy their own culture; to profess and practise their own religion; to use their own language; to participate in cultural, religious, social, economic and public life, as well as in the decision-making process concerning the minority to which they belong; to establish and monitor their own associations; to establish and maintain without any discrimination free and peaceful contacts with other members of their group or other citizens of other states to whom they are related by national, or ethnic, religious or linguistic ties.

The thought behind the minorities issue is the confrontation between two political conceptions of the state: that of ethnic (or religious) nationalism against that of the civil state. The ideal of the civil state implies the respect for the interests of the members of all groups on the basis of

common citizenship rather than bonds based on real or imaginary blood-ties. Instead of a dominant group's claim to privileged access to economic and political power all groups have equal rights and are encouraged to defend their symbols, values and interests.

A recent world-wide survey of national policies reveals a range of policy stances towards minorities. Some states provide no legal framework to deal with their needs. While the fiction of a homogeneous nation, consisting of a single ethnic group, is not current today, most governments still define and practise policies of assimilation. These, however, are beginning to give way in the face of pressures, lobbying and activism on the part of many minorities. A number of states recognize minorities, and governments provide arrangements such as group autonomy on a territorial basis, special representation in the legislature, formal and informal power-sharing, and administrative protection.<sup>4</sup>

Minority rights are at the intersection between individual and collective rights, for although they result from membership in a group, they can also be asserted by any individual belonging to that group. As a corollary, they must include the right of any individual to leave the minority group voluntarily. Multicultural societies need therefore to consider very carefully whether there are groups within them that should be treated as minorities and if so, they should develop principles to recognize this status. In advocating the cultural rights of minorities it is important to consider cultural awareness and cultural exchange projects to raise their profile as people with their own sense of self-esteem and distinct identities. In our age of massive migrations it is important also to encourage projects for community cultural development that facilitate interactions between dispersed and displaced populations and their root cultures.

One of the most sensitive issues is that of language, for a people's language is perhaps its most fundamental cultural attribute. Indeed the very nature of language is emblematic of the whole pluralist premise – every single language spoken in the world represents a unique way of viewing human experience and the world itself. Language policy, however, like other policies, still is used as an instrument of domination, fragmentation and assimilation. It is hardly surprising that claims for language are among the first rights that minorities have asserted; such claims continue to pose problems ranging from the official and legal status of minority languages, language teaching and use in schools and other institutions, as well as in the mass media. The problem of endangered languages is discussed in Chapter 7 in connection with the cultural heritage.

Enlightened policy towards minorities should preserve their languages, while providing them with the opportunity to enter into the larger community. Schools should teach several languages, in particular both the local (or minority) and majority language, so as to provide people with the

Despite its defects, I believe that on the whole the universalist approach, based on rights inherent in each individual being, remains the most hopeful one. We ought not, after all, to idealize minorities or to forget that today's underdog may be tomorrow's power-crazed bully. Or that certain custodians of minority cultures, and certain vehement exponents of minority political rights, may already be playing that role in their own little community. In these conditions, we ought in effect, I suggest, to be saying to governments something like this: "We seek no special rights for minorities, your ones or any other ones. Members of minority groups should have the same human rights as members of majorities, no less and not necessarily any more for the moment than those set out in the Universal Declaration to which you subscribe. But we have evidence that shows that members of such and such a minority are being denied with inevitably undesirable results for your country's reputation and prospects."

Our most pressing concern should now perhaps be not to define what rights minorities should have, but to find what techniques are most appropriate for conveying to governments the message that decency in relation to minorities is a quality helpful to any country in its international relations.

Conor Cruise O'Brien<sup>5</sup>

choices which enhance their capabilities. This is tantamount to designing a form of education that is truly multicultural, i.e. one that would give minority cultures a better place not only in the educational system but also in the image of the "national culture" each country seeks to adopt and project. Such an approach still faces resistance, however, whether from the politicians who still see this as a threat to national integration, or from societies in which successive waves of immigration have created the "melting pot" ethos that requires immigrants to assimilate.

Some states (Malaysia, Mauritius, Singapore and South Africa) have attempted to resolve problems such as the ones discussed above. Many others have ignored or neglected them. A few governments have even become parties to conflict itself, when they are controlled by or identify strongly with a dominant or majority ethnic group, or occasionally with a powerful, dominant minority. Some of the world's most acute and avoidable political conflicts stem from the inability or unwillingness of governments to respond to the increasingly vocal demands of the groups that do not control power.<sup>6</sup>

The demands of minorities have fluctuated and varied between full social integration into the larger society, economic, technical and functional equality without full social integration, the opposite of political secession and independence, and the permission to leave and get out. For most minorities, it is a question of one or other form of integration. Independence is asked for only if the process of integration has broken down. World opinion by itself cannot prevent a state from maltreating its minorities. But criticisms and sanctions can be effective. Few countries are capable of defying international public opinion totally. There is evidence that countries have yielded to outside pressures.

## **Economic benefits against social strife**

In multicultural societies (and most societies today are multicultural) the easing of internal social and cultural conflicts depends, in the long run, on an expanding economic base, with rising employment and improved living standards. Yet it is also true that the process of economic development itself can create or exacerbate social and cultural conflicts. Modernization schemes involving ambitious literacy and educational programmes have resulted in large numbers of educated and semi-educated youths, often without employment or without the kind of jobs they seek. Aspirations have been aroused in advance of what the economy can deliver, and this is the breeding ground for discontent and eruptions against other groups. Unemployed youth in urban centres has been the most visible and active participant in ethno-nationalist movements and riots. In India the Hindu nationalist movement with anti-Muslim sentiments is composed largely of semi-educated unemployed or underemployed young people of upper and middle-caste origins. Similarly in Sri Lanka two groups of disaffected educated youths suffering from felt discrimination and relative deprivation, one drawn from the majority Sinhalese population, the other from the minority Tamils, have mounted insurgences.

Large-scale population movements and migrations in recent decades have caused dramatic changes in the demographic ratios and social and cultural mixes of people in some regions, and caused the local population to feel endangered and beleaguered. The process of economic development facilitates and encourages this kind of mobility, which increases economic efficiency and normally improves the living standards of both migrants and domestic population. At the same time, the resulting clash between different populations has favoured a heightening of ethnic identification, particularly when migration leads to competition for control over access to economic wealth, political power and social status. This is also true when there is a strong notion of territorial ethnicity, certain ethnic groups seeing

themselves rooted in space as “sons of the soil”, or when migration brings about swift changes in the demographic balance and the mix of ethnic groups, most notably in fast growing metropolitan cities and industrial towns.<sup>7</sup> And it is also true of groups of immigrants, sometimes initially admitted as “guest workers” into many countries that import labour. They often suffer discrimination and segregation by the dominant culture.

In recent years the main receiving high-income countries registered net immigration of approximately 1.4 million annually, about two thirds of whom originated in developing countries. Keeping in mind that international migration entails the loss of human resources for many countries of origin and that it may give rise to political, economic and social tensions in countries of destination, we should explore at least those root causes of the problem which relate to the spheres of culture and development: the strong appeal of certain ideas, institutions and accomplishments to people all over the world, such as the welfare state, material security, social security networks, health, educational and communication infrastructures. In addition to these forces of attraction or pull, there are also powerful forces of push: the existence of economic imbalances, poverty, bad governance and human rights violations in many places are strong incentives to emigrate. Governments of countries of origin and of destination must try harder to make the option of remaining in one’s own country viable for all.

In many of the world’s fast growing cities, migrants from rural regions, sometimes speaking different dialects and practicing regional customs, or immigrants from low-income countries, attracted by the better prospects and the cosmopolitan environment, take on unskilled and low level work (in construction, road building, harbours and ports, domestic service and so on). The plight of these low level migrant or immigrant workers naturally deteriorates whenever economic conditions worsen and the local population wants to expel the newcomers.

But the opposite may also occur, migrants having skills and capacities superior to those of the locals, and enjoying affluence and social prestige. This can lead to particularly acrimonious and contentious situations, especially in post-colonial and post-independence times, when formerly disadvantaged indigenous people wish to displace the successful “aliens” and newcomers. This often happens when the local population has produced its own educated youth who aspire to take over the occupations and enterprises formerly held or managed by the migrants. Such moves to displace people in favoured positions become particularly acute when employment in the modern sector is not expanding fast enough to incorporate rising locals into the middle class. Successful migrants are then viewed as obstacles to the social mobility and well-being of the local majority. In Northeast India, Assam, Tripura and elsewhere the collisions between the local hill tribes and the incoming West Bengali Hindu and Bangladeshi

### Ethnic and religious conflicts: selected countries, 1980-1992

Country	Group rebellion, 1980-89	Major armed conflicts, 1989-92	Refugees from the country (in thousands), 1992
Afghanistan	yes	yes	4720
Mozambique	no	yes	1730
Iraq	yes	yes	1310
Somalia	yes	yes	870
Ethiopia	yes	yes	840
Liberia	no	yes	670
Angola	yes	yes	400
Myanmar	yes	yes	330
Sudan	yes	yes	270
Sri Lanka	yes	yes	180

Source: *Human Development Report*, 1994.

Muslim migrants; in Uganda, Idi Amin's expulsion of Indian merchants and professionals; with the dissolution of the Soviet Union many Russian professionals and administrators, who were sent or migrated to the various non-Russian republics are all faced with threats of displacement. And there have been programmes of peasant colonization in many countries, typically sponsored by government agencies, in which poor peasants and landless people, living in densely populated areas, are relocated in other less densely populated regions of the country where excess land can be developed for agriculture. In South Asia and elsewhere the local peasantry has risen up violently against the newcomer "colonists" whose transplantation has been seen not as a measure to relieve their poverty but as a device to alter population ratios between ethnic groups.

Ethnic conflicts often result in human rights violations against groups, ranging from genocide to illegal and arbitrary detention, torture, mass population removals, deportations and segregation, to lack of due process of law, discrimination in public and private institutions, and other forms of open or subtle antagonism. When they are committed by private individuals or groups, the legal system can usually act, provided the government in power is willing and able to let it do so. This is not always the case, for example when human rights abuses are committed by economically or politically powerful groups against a marginalized one, such as a local people. Nor is it the case when official state policy is intolerant, racist or discriminatory, and when the state uses terror and violence against minorities or dissenters.

All conflicts of this kind are not only a hideously wasteful expenditure of social energies, but are against the economic interests and the cultural creativity of all those engaged in them. Economic growth and economic welfare call for maximum voluntary mobility not only of goods (free trade) but also of people within and between countries, and this implies cultural contacts and cultural diversity of an unprecedented magnitude. That these contacts be handled in social harmony and justice, and that peaceful solutions be found to resolve the inevitable tensions and conflicts, are major challenges today.

## Xenophobia and racism

Xenophobia, the fear or hatred of foreigners, is fanned by many sources today. Frustrated expectations of development, perceived threats to cultural values in an international environment of freely circulating influences, interactions and pressures, changes brought about by science and technology have fostered a rhetoric calling for the protection of national or ethnic identities. Demagogues call for the protection of the native stock against contamination or “submersion” by “invading hordes”.

The rapid expansion of communications and transport, population growth with growing international inequalities, the breakdown of traditional economic and social structures, the flight from tyranny, want and disasters, the dream of a better life in some other part of the world, have in recent decades driven more people across national frontiers than ever before. The number of foreign workers is estimated at over 40 million, the number of refugees at about 15 million and the number of people who had to leave their country because of political upheaval since the Second World War at no less than 37.5 million.<sup>8</sup>

Large-scale immigration was encouraged by the high income countries of Europe and North America during the years of rapid economic recovery and growing labour shortage, especially for the least qualified jobs. While in earlier centuries European settlers colonized many areas of the world, in recent decades the flow of migration has been reversed and immigrants are now settling their former metropolitan countries and forming ethnic enclaves there. In Europe immigrants constitute over 5 per cent of the population in countries such as the United Kingdom and France. It is estimated that there are about 18 million of these migrants, including about three million people from former colonies who have availed themselves of the right to settle in their former metropolitan countries. They include Asians, West Indians and West Africans in the United Kingdom; West Indians and *harkis* in France; Surinamese, West Indians and Moluccans in The Netherlands. These immigrants arrived in addition to the established pattern of

### “Bryan and the Dogma of Majority Rule”

In exploring this dogma it will be best to begin at the very beginning with the primitive intuition from which the whole democratic way of life is derived. It is a feeling of ultimate equality and fellowship with all other creatures.

There is no worldly sense in this feeling, for it is reasoned from the heart: ‘There you are, sir, and there is your neighbour. You are better born than he, you are richer, you are stronger, you are handsomer, nay, you are better, wiser, kinder, more likable; you have given more to your fellow men and taken less than he. By any and every test of intelligence, of virtue, of usefulness, you are demonstrably a better man than he, and yet – absurd as it sounds – these differences do not matter, for the last part of him is untouchable and incomparable and unique and universal.’ Either you feel this or you do not; when you do not feel it, the superiorities that the world acknowledges seem like mountainous waves at sea; when you do feel it they are slight and impermanent ripples upon a vast ocean. Men were possessed by this feeling long before they had imagined the possibility of democratic government. They spoke of it in many ways, but the essential quality of feeling is the same from Buddha to St. Francis to Whitman.

Walter Lippmann<sup>9</sup>

European multi-ethnicity that had resulted from the historical process of nation state formation. In many parts of the world people are crossing borders in search of employment, greater freedom or simply security. Immigrant workers figure prominently in the labour markets of the Gulf, South Africa and Singapore, to name but a few. The problems they and their host countries face are similar.

Racism as a prejudice or overt antagonism against others based on a belief in one’s own superiority has characterized many different peoples. It permitted a rationalization of colonialism and provided the basis of Nazi ideology. Racial differentiation or segregation has no scientific basis in biology. The practical import of the doctrine of human equality is not that all people ought to be treated as if they had equal capacities, but as if they were equally to count. Walter Lippmann expressed the basis of our belief in equality well in an essay entitled “Bryan and the Dogma of Majority Rule”.

Well-intentioned reformers want to minimize the differences between groups, between men and women, young and old, able-bodied and crippled; too often they mistake the need to avoid discrimination based on differences for a need to deny the differences themselves. It is this mistake that irritates ordinary people when told to use gender-neutral or non-ageist language. Equality is not possible between identical atoms. It is important to remember the moral of the philosophical doctrine of the ‘identity of indiscernible’ and to realize that only different things can be equal.

On 26 February 1995 the European Parliament decided that the European Union should set up a watchdog body to monitor and curb racist attacks. The assembly was reacting to a wave of violence against foreigners (or more precisely against poor immigrants) in Europe and in particular against the recent killing of four Gypsy men in Austria, allegedly by a neo-Nazi group.

In the process of nation-building in the Americas and Australia, indigenous peoples were seen as an obstacle to national integration. In several countries state violence and military expeditions “cleared the land” for cattle ranchers and new entrepreneurs of the agricultural frontier. Many Indian peoples were exterminated. Racism was clearly at the root of the matter, since the indigenous people were considered inferior to those of European stock.<sup>10</sup> Racist views and behaviour, however, are no monopoly of the West; one also finds them in the mindsets that claim Africa for the Africans, Asia for the Asians, and so on.

Racism is not a marginal phenomenon, tied to a particular time or circumstance. It will surface time and again in response to social identity crises. It is not enough to simply condemn it or to appeal to human rights or moral imperatives. Nor can the problems it poses be solved by merely technical or legal measures. All of these are important, but the attack on it has to be root and branch.

Laws, regulations and an independent judiciary can do much to thwart racism. The vicious circle of prejudicial negative attitudes leading to discrimination, to unemployment, to loss of self-respect, to unacceptable personal habits and even crime, reinforcing the prejudice, can be broken by policies that provide empowerment, education and training, credit, and productive, remunerative, satisfying jobs. The pattern of values underlying racism must be countered through a free debate. Such a debate can be stimulated by an expression of alternative values in cultural programmes, in artistic activity, in school curricula and in the activities of the civil society.

As in the case of local minorities and migrants discussed above, the irony is that these immigrants are substantial economic assets to the country of immigration. Not only do they themselves and their families benefit, and in many cases also their original home country of emigration by their sending remittances (and sometimes by returning home with added skills),

but they benefit the country to which they migrate by doing jobs that domestic workers are not prepared to do, or for which the required skills are scarce. The value of the goods and services these people add to the economy is normally substantially above the economic and fiscal costs that they impose on the society. Here again, what is economically beneficial to almost everyone is often regarded as socially and culturally disruptive.

## **Religious revivalism: fanaticism or search for meaning?**

Religion appears to be a resurgent force in human affairs today. In many parts of the world the long-term trend towards secularization may well have slowed down, if not reversed itself. As traditional norms and values dissolve, religion is perceived as a bulwark for the increasingly vulnerable sense of identity of individuals and groups.

The different faiths stand as cultural, symbolic and intellectual creations which, in their own way, reflect the diversity of human experience and the various ways people have of coming to terms with the promise, challenge and tragedy of human life. Indeed some new forms of “fundamentalism” (which should more properly be termed religious revivalism), and the search for religion generally, may be viewed as constructive phenomena. They represent a search for identity and meaning in a harsh world of conflicting values, a creative response to the crisis of identity, a terrain for socio-cultural experimentation.

But as history also shows, religion has often been linked to awareness of national identity. It has a.fleeted and sometimes poisoned the relations between majorities and minorities. It has also often afforded a pretext for material or territorial conquest. Even today, politicized religion often appears to contribute more to the intensification of conflict than to the construction of peace. We are all familiar with the unending cycle of conflicts between Hindus and Muslims in India, between Shiites and Sunnis in Iraq and Pakistan, between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland, as well as the appeal to Catholic, Orthodox, and Islamic loyalties in the complex knot of conflicts now ravaging the former Yugoslavia. The Shia and Kurds in Iraq, the Bahai in Iran, the Maronites in Lebanon, the Copts in Egypt, and democratic idealists throughout parts of the Arab world are being persecuted.

Extreme doctrinaire views look to an imagined past, seen as both simpler and more stable, thus preparing the ground not only for a variety of overtly violent acts but also for the intimidation of individuals and indeed entire communities in matters of thought, behaviour and belief, coercing them into accepting a single, “orthodox” point of view. And while

perceived threats to cultural values may incite people to turn back to supposedly original, “fundamental” truths, they should be reminded of what Al Ghazali clearly discerned some ten centuries ago: “There is no hope of returning to a traditional faith after it has once been abandoned, since the essential condition in the holder of a traditional faith is that he should not know he is a traditionalist.”

The late twentieth-century presents politicized, fundamentalist tendencies in all religions. As a scholar of comparative religion has pointed out “Religious extremism . . . is not restricted to any one religion. . . . The challenge today, as in the past, is to avoid the easy answers yielded by stereotyping or the projection of a monolithic threat, to distinguish between the beliefs and activities of the [peaceful] majority. . . and a minority of extremists who justify their aggression and violence in the name of religion, ethnicity or political ideology.”<sup>11</sup>

## Indigenous peoples

There are thousands of distinct groups, measured by their local language, and hundreds of millions people belonging to them. Different interpretations of the term “indigenous” exist and there is even resistance among such groups to being so called. However, we shall abide here by the definition given in Article I of ILO Convention number 169 concerning indigenous and tribal peoples in independent countries.<sup>12</sup>

In China and India they makeup seven per cent of the population (80 and 65 million respectively). In Latin America, the largest numbers are found in Peru (8.6 million) and Mexico (8 million). In Africa they number over 25 million, in North America 2.5 million, and over 160,000 members of the Inuit and Saami groups populate the Arctic and northern Europe. In several parts of the world the very survival of such peoples is threatened, sometimes by natural conditions (nearly 125,000 Tuareg nomads in the Sahara starved to death during the droughts of the 1970s), sometimes by health conditions which continue to be the most appalling in the world, and sometimes by the pressure of surrounding populations and government institutions.<sup>13</sup> Hence a basic principle concerning them was affirmed by Agenda 21 adopted by the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in the following terms: “national and international efforts to implement environmentally sound and sustainable development should recognize, accommodate, promote and strengthen the role of indigenous people and their communities.”

In some cases, extreme climatic conditions (in Australia, Greenland or the Sahara) have led to the development of highly specialized ways of life

## The importance of land rights

*'You ask if we own the land. And mock us. Where is your title? When we query the meaning of your words you answer with taunting arrogance. Where are the documents to prove that you own the land? Title? Documents? Proof of ownership? Such arrogance to speak of owning the land. When you shall be owned by it. How can you own that which will outlive you. Only the race owns the land because only the race lives forever.'*

These were the words of a chief of the Filipino Kalinga people talking to a government engineer. The chief would later be assassinated for leading the opposition to the Chico River Basin Project, a development plan that threatened to inundate 16 towns and villages and force the evacuation of 85,000 people in the Kalinga area.

Source: Ponciano L. Bennagen, 'Tribal Filipinos' in *Indigenous Views of Land and the Environment*. World Bank Discussion Papers, 188. Washington, D.C., 1993.

which are incompatible with those of the consumer society surrounding these people. More generally, however, indigenous peoples have been, and continue to be, forced off their lands, formerly by conquest, now by the processes of planned development (hydroelectric and irrigation projects, mining, military installations, roads and railways, sanctuaries, parks and urban growth), or denied adequate political representation in matters which concern them directly.

The cultures of the indigenous and tribal peoples have been historically marginalized and continue to face an unequal conflict with powerful external political and economic forces. In an overwhelming number of cases, there is a loss of cultural symbols in which lives are enmeshed. To compound this loss, the newer cultural symbols to which they are exposed – television, advertising, consumerism, and so forth – give rise to a structure of meanings and values that further undermines social and cultural security.<sup>14</sup>

Quite frequently, however, their disappearance as identifiable communities is not simply a regrettable by-product of development but results from a stated or implicit policy. This process has been called cultural genocide or ethnocide. It has economic as well as cultural aspects. Economic ethnocide flows from the belief that pre-modern forms of economic organization must give way for either private or multinational capitalism or state-planned socialism or mixes of these. Cultural ethnocide is the process

whereby a culturally distinct people loses its identity as its land and resource base is eroded, and as the use of its language and social and political institutions, as well as its traditions, art forms, religious practices and cultural values is restricted. This may be the result of systematic government policy: but even when due to the impersonal forces of economic development it is still ethnocidal in its effects.

Things appear to be changing, however, and the recent proliferation of grass-root movements has taken the ruling élites by surprise. Many of these movements contest not only the material distribution of benefits or the lack of social welfare services, or entrenched systems, or discrimination and oppression, but the very symbolic aspects of the current patterns and hegemonic values of economic development. They are also putting increasing emphasis on another key point, which is that indigenous peoples are directly dependent on their lands. This means that we should talk about respecting not only their cultural expression but also the fundamental material basis for the existence of these societies. Agenda 21 thus asks for "recognition that the lands of indigenous peoples and their communities should be protected from activities that are environmentally unsound or that the indigenous people consider to be socially and culturally inappropriate."

These movements, some of them using new communications technology, may ultimately constitute an effective democratic power base working in favour of pluralism and the injection of broader ethical values into the developmental discourse.<sup>15</sup> Such initiatives depend on an alert civil society. Others depend on the state.

In the post-Communist world, the pains of the transition to capitalism may well undermine the appeal of the democratic ethic. In that setting, there may be a greater proclivity to take refuge in more organic and more tightly binding beliefs such as ethnicity, religion or xenophobia, perhaps fuelled by disappointment with and contempt for the "corrupt and selfish West".

The challenge today, for nations committed to cultural pluralism and political democracy, is to develop a setting that ensures that development is integrative and that there are best practice institutions built on genuine commitment to being inclusive. This means respect for value systems, for the traditional knowledge that indigenous people have of their society and environment, and for their institutions in which culture is grounded. It means securing the rights of these peoples to their subsistence base and its produce, enforced by the state and by international law. It implies the adoption of educational systems that embody such respect, including the right to use their own language at different levels of schooling. It also means giving them full access to modern instruments of information, communication, technology and advice, and the right of these communi-

ties to decide their own priorities in peaceful co-operation with others.

The Commission strongly supports the process started in the Human Rights Commission of drafting a UN declaration on indigenous peoples that aims at developing a stronger international protection of indigenous peoples and of creating a permanent forum that will be the voice of these peoples at the international level.

## The future of pluralism

A World Link report stated that humankind, for the first time, “has the sophistication to build its future not on the illusion of a one-sided, ill-conceived ideology but on a set of universal values which we all share, even if their optimal balance may differ from people to people, from religion to religion and from individual to individual and where there is great respect for such a difference.”<sup>16</sup>

The ideal is clear enough: the quality of the relations between groups essential to human development can be improved, and the criminally wasteful misdirection of social energies in ethnic and religious strife avoided, only to the extent that ways are devised to protect the right of individuals and groups to manifest their cultural uniqueness and to find acceptance and understanding of it by others. One may legislate against rejection or exclusion on grounds of cultural difference and punish criminal excesses. But one should also go to the roots of the problem.

While the negotiated acceptance of differences will be of the essence, negotiation will never produce a “definitive settlement” - nor should it seek to do so. Identity implies the establishment of limits - and limits generate tensions. This is as it should be. And though we share a common humanity, this will never make us members of a single, universal tribe. It is the splendid and sometimes bewildering diversity of the human race that has its roots in this common humanity. Today, with the end of imperial and totalitarian rule, we can recognize our commonality and begin the difficult negotiation it demands of us.<sup>17</sup>

The reality of the world, however, in which this ideal must be applied is both complex and full of moral pitfalls, and admits of no uniformly applicable solution. Socio-political histories leave their mark on the manner in which conflicts are handled. Thus, many new states are composed of different groups whose common point of reference was sometimes only the colonizer or the hegemonic power. These communities may have had their own social institutions, ranging from local adjudicating mechanisms managed at the village level to the autonomous administrations of local rulers or spiritual leaders. These structures may have a more immediate hold over people than the new state, which represents groups that either had no

Some time ago, I was travelling in the state of Morelos in central Mexico, looking for the birthplace of Emiliano Zapata, the village of Anenecuilco. I stopped and ask a campesino, a labourer of the fields, how far it was to that village. He answered: 'If you had left at daybreak, you would be there now.' This man had an internal clock which marked his own time and that of his culture. For the clocks of all men and women, of all civilizations, are not set at the same hour. One of the wonders of our menaced globe is the variety of its experiences, its memories, and its desire. Any attempt to impose a uniform politics on this diversity is like a prelude to death.

Carlos Fuentes<sup>18</sup>

interaction earlier or whose interaction was as often one of conflict as of peace. There is obviously a need to understand the role of such "informal" social structures – "informal" in relation to the new states – that groups rely on for mediating among themselves or between themselves and the state. To promote pluralistic societies and resolve existing conflicts requires the recognition of the variety of structures that acquire legitimacy for different aspects of social life.

The complexity of the world situation today calls for action in different directions. Acts of flagrant disrespect for pluralism, born of conflict and often tantamount to crimes against people and cultures, continue to occur throughout the world. There is a role for the international community in setting out more precisely the obligations of governments. There is a need for standards to ensure protection and effective exercise of cultural rights. The power of the United Nations' moral persuasion or approval and international public opinion can have an effect. "Moral approval" could be granted to states which do not seek to discriminate culturally against some of their citizens while it is denied to those that do.<sup>19</sup>

Pluralism is not just an end in itself. The recognition of differences is above all a condition of dialogue, and hence of the construction of a wider union of diverse people. In spite of the difficulties, we are faced with an inescapable obligation: ways must be found of reconciling a new plurality with common citizenship. The goal may be not just a multicultural society, but a multiculturally constituted state: a state that can recognize plurality without forfeiting its integrity.<sup>20</sup> Local forms of autonomy, formerly swept aside by nation states, should perhaps be reinstated today and offered certain guarantees. Yet visible national entities are also crucial.

At a time when the United Nations is rediscovering its mandate for the construction of peace and is urgently striving to map out some new approaches, common vision and perseverance will be more necessary than

ever. Ways must be found of combating rejection or exclusion of the "Other" on grounds of cultural difference and of promoting the cultural rights of minorities and indigenous peoples. No adequate strategies have yet been devised to prevent or at least defuse problems and conflicts arising from the assertion and aspirations of national and cultural identity. The character of the international order now emerging will be determined in great part by how effectively we achieve this and by how successful we are in building a true culture of peace. This task needs the support of all creative and imaginative forces: governments, academic and humanitarian institutions, private, voluntary associations, foundations, churches, individuals and the entire United Nations system.

**I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the culture of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any.**

**Mahatma Gandhi**

In our view, the founders of UNESCO had a premonitory vision when they stated fifty years ago that a peace based exclusively upon the political and economic arrangements of governments could not secure the unanimous, lasting and sincere support of the peoples of the world, and that it must be founded, if it is to succeed, upon the recognition of the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind.<sup>21</sup>

If the communities of the world are to improve their human development options they must first be empowered to define their futures in terms of who they have been, what they are today and what they ultimately want to be. Every community has its roots, its physical and spiritual affiliations reaching back symbolically to the dawn of time, and it must be in a position to honour them. It is crucial that a people's understanding of its values, beliefs and other cultural patterns be developed – in the first place by the people directly concerned. These patterns play an irreplaceable role in defining individual and group identity and provide a shared "language" through which the members of a society can communicate on existential issues which are beyond the reach of everyday speech. But also, as each one goes further and deeper into the unexplored territory of his singularity, we have good reasons to hope that he or she will discover there the unmistakable footprint of a common humanity.

The message of this chapter is that cultural pluralism is an all-pervasive, enduring characteristic of contemporary societies, and that ethnic identification is often a normal and healthy response to the pressures of globalization. Ethnicity acts as a trigger for violent conflict only when it is mobilized and manipulated to do so. There are many policy approaches to

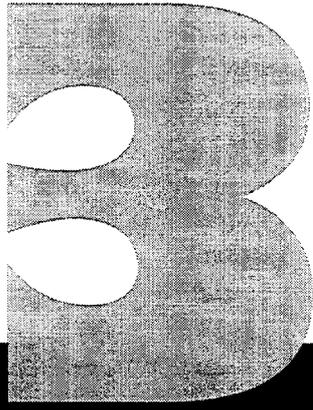
ethnic diversity, such as constitutional formulas, different types of electoral systems, bills of rights, and economic and cultural policies. Attempts at “nation building” through making all groups homogeneous are neither desirable nor feasible. Nor can the domination of one ethnic group provide long-term stability in a society. The most durable way to accommodate ethnic diversity is to create a sense of the nation as a civic community, rooted in values that can be shared by all ethnic components of the national society. Such a sense of community is best achieved if the concept of “nation” is freed from any connotations of ethnic exclusivity.

## Notes

1. Farida Shaheed, ‘Parallel and Intermediary Institutions within Nation-States’, paper prepared for the World Commission on Culture and Development, June 1995.
2. The term “minorities” embraces four different categories of groups: (1) Autochthonous or indigenous peoples, whose line of descent can be traced to the aboriginal inhabitants of the country having a particular relationship with their territories and an accentuated feeling of ownership of what they consider to be their land. (2) Territorial minorities, groups with a long cultural tradition who have lived in national contexts where minorities are numerous, as in many countries of Europe and North America. (3) Non-territorial minorities or nomads, groups with no particular attachment to a territory. (4) Immigrants who will tend to negotiate collectively their cultural and religious presence in a particular society.
3. *Human Development Report 1993*, p. 26.
4. United Nations University Survey of the legal situation and human rights of minorities cited by Rodolfo Stavenhagen, *The Ethnic Question. Conflicts, Development and Human Rights*, United Nations University Press, 1990. This comprehensive discussion of ethnic issues has been alluded to at various points in this chapter.
5. Conor Cruise O’Brien, ‘What Rights Should Minorities Have?’, Preface to *World Minorities*, Georgina Ashworth, ed. Quartermaine House Ltd., 1977
6. Rodolfo Stavenhagen, op. cit.
7. See Stanley Tambiah, “Challenges of Cultural Pluralism and Diversity in Asian Societies”, paper presented at the Regional Consultation for Asia and the Pacific of the World Commission on Culture and Development, Manila, November 1994.
8. Sources: International Labour Office (ILO) and United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR).
9. Walter Lippmann, *Men of Destiny*, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1928, pp. 49-50.
10. Rodolfo Stavenhagen, “The Culture of Resistance in Latin America: New Thinking about Old Issues”, paper contributed to the Fifth Session of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, Chile, 1994.
11. John L. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat (Myth or Reality?)*, Oxford University Press, 1992.
12. ILO Convention no. 169 concerning indigenous and tribal peoples in independent countries, Article 1: “1. This Convention applies to: (a) tribal peoples in independent countries whose social, cultural and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community, and whose status is regulated wholly or

partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations; (b) peoples in independent countries who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonization of the establishment of present states boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions. 2. Self-identification as indigenous or tribal shall be regarded as a fundamental criterion for determining the groups to which the provisions of the Convention apply. 3. The use of the term "peoples" in this Convention shall not be construed as having any implications as regards the rights which may attach to the term under international law."

13. Amareswar Galla, paper prepared for the World Commission on Culture and Development, May 1995.
14. Smitu Kothari, "Cultural Pluralism and Development", paper prepared for the Commission, May 1995.
15. Several international instruments contain provisions establishing special rights or calling for special measures. They include the Convention against Genocide, the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Art. 27), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination . . . the new minority rights declaration from 1992 and several normative texts from UNESCO such as the Convention against Discrimination in Education and the Declaration on Race Racial Prejudice. Special measures to the benefit of minorities and indigenous peoples exist mainly in the fields of education, culture language and religion; but they have also been extended to political, economic and social affairs. ILO Convention no. 169 on indigenous and tribal peoples as revised in 1989 adds land rights, land resources and group rights.
16. In a "World Link" report on the World Economic Forum in Davos, 1995.
17. Michael Walzer, *The Obligation to Disobey*, New York, Irvington, 1993.
18. Carlos Fuentes, *Myself with others*, London, Picador, 1988.
19. Charles William Maynes, "Containing Ethnic Conflict", in U. Kirdar and L. Silk, cd., *A World Fit for People*, New York, UNDP, 1994.
20. Bhikku Parekh, comments at the Fundación BBV's seminar "Cultural and National Identities and a New World Order". To be published.
21. From the Constitution of UNESCO, adopted in London on 16 November 1945.



# CREATIVITY AND EMPOWERMENT

*Both capitalism and socialism . . . have shown themselves incapable of extricating the majority of our people from misery. . . . And the cultural question therefore is this: is there another solution, a solution of our own? Don't we possess the tradition, imagination, intellectual and organizational reserves to elaborate our own models of development, consonant with the truth of what we have been, what we are, and what we want to be, responsible before the civil societies which have been expending themselves in our countries from below and from the periphery?*

Carlos Fuentes'

3

As Ilya Prigogine has observed, the twentieth century has transformed the entire planet from a finite world of certainties to an infinite world of questioning and doubt. The active intention conveyed by the term culture in its original meaning must be restored. Culture meant to cultivate. Today it is ever more necessary to cultivate human creativity, for in our climate of rapid change, individuals, communities and societies can adapt to the new and transform their reality only through creative imagination and initiative.

Hence the notion of creativity must be broadly used, not just to refer to the production of a new artistic object or form but to problem-solving in every imaginable field. Far from being germane to the arts alone, creativity is vital to industry and business, to education and to social and community development.

Humanity has been much more successful in exercising its imagination in the arts and in science and technology than in social invention and innovation. In each human group, the extent to which its latent creativity can be brought into play determines often whether the group reaches its goals. "Creative and organizational processes must engage, must mesh with each other if social institutions are to be fully productive. Seen in this way, creativity is not something special, for special people in special situations; it belongs to everyone."<sup>2</sup>

Broad usage, however, should not prevent clear thinking about the emphasis that the word was intended to establish: on making and innovating, both individual and collective. Human groups, and their institutions and organizations, can all be creative. This implies not just that they include creative individuals but that, as collectivities, they are able to develop new modes of living together and new senses of direction. These capacities can be neither imposed nor taught. But they can be nurtured.

Just as the notion of creativity is broader than cultural refinements, it cannot be spoken of in isolation. There is no such thing as the creative spirit divorced from a particular human group, from specific social institutions and values, even from certain political constraints. Hence creativity is an intangible whose nurture can and indeed must be managed and not squandered.

At one extreme of modernity, promotion of creativity is seen as essential for industrial productivity and innovation. A new kind of organization for managing creativity, known as the "entrepreneurial conglomerate", for example, has come into being during the 1980s. The Japanese project dealing with the fifth generation of computers, the Centre Mondial de l'Informatique in France, and firms such as Catalyst Technologies in the United States of America are examples of this trend.

At the other end, where tradition meets modernity, a process of "hybridization" is well under way. Many Latin American Indian populations are seeking deliberately to master both modern technological

knowledge and cultural resources - despite strong movements against "Westernization". One observer notes how they are combining traditional healing techniques with allopathic methods, how they are adapting to their own ends democratic changes in the economic and political spheres, and how they are aligning their traditional beliefs with Christian movements that generally have a more radical approach to the promotion of modernity.<sup>3</sup>

Many tribal communities in India have age-old technologies and practices in such diverse areas as hill-top agriculture, medicine and health care, community education and socialization. On the surface, their attitudes appear to be to be anti-modern. But a closer look reveals that through a complex process of assimilation they are absorbing and using modern technology and political systems as a path to power and betterment. Society's ritual base is modernized to fit into and serve its political and economic ends. In this way they help, in unobtrusive and effective ways, to bring together the instrumental and constitutive roles of culture.'

These people, and others like them, are empowering themselves and deploying their creativity in three distinct yet related areas: in artistic expression, in technology and with regard to politics and governance.

## **Broadening the concept of creativity**

Everyone is potentially creative. An over-emphasis on rationality alone, technocratic reasoning, restrictive organizational or community structures and an over-reliance on traditional approaches can restrict or destroy this potential. This is why it is important that the prestige attached to the arts should not lead to the neglect of countless, modest imaginative undertakings that inject a vital substance into the social fabric. All people need to communicate their experiences, their hopes and fears, as they have always done, and many local initiatives help them to do so without having to ask whether what they are doing is "creative" or even "art". Suffice it that it aims at its chosen public in a fresh and stimulating way.

Precisely because the creative approach cannot be taught or commanded, it has to be nurtured wherever it appears. In spite of its universal potential in a favourable environment, the spark of artistic creativity is in fact so rare that it needs careful fanning wherever it flickers, in the hope of generating a fire. Creativity clearly thrives in a fostering environment. But it is also unpredictable and undefinable. During the past two decades the social and economic conditions of artistic work have been radically transformed. Western artistic orientations and standards, transformations of art markets and cultural industries have spread around the world, apparently leading, wherever the market gained a foothold, to rendering it homogene-

ous along lines imposed by Western entertainment and leisure activities and a culture dominated by the mass media. Concern over this trend is universal.

The European Task Force on Culture and Development, established by the Council of Europe as a complement to the work of the Commission, has emphasized a concern over the apparent decline of basic creative energy in Europe. The question is whether European creativity, as traditionally viewed, is moving to the peripheries of the continent or even to new multicultural centres of activity or whether European art and literature are finding new stimuli in the present economic, political and social turbulence.

Aware of such questioning, the Commission wishes to emphasize the value of creativity in an open and pluralistic society. Ideas and expressions from traditional or new sources, from majority or minority voices, should be encouraged. Educational and civic efforts should help to expand novel forms of exchange and dialogue. Governments should promote interaction and co-ordination between artistic creativity and other policy domains, such as education, working life, urban planning, industrial and economic development strategies, for the benefit of all, including minority and immigrant populations.

In the United States during the 1960s the creation of murals in public spaces became the spearhead of an authentic popular art movement that responded particularly to the need for expression felt by community groups to whom access to visual creativity had previously been barred. The blank walls of the street became living museums, carrying a message everyone could understand (e.g. Chicano art). In recent decades the subway, city façades and urban fittings have again become a fashionable showcase for the arts. They provide a favourable background for a revived urbanism in search of a new form of 'urbanity' in its original, positive sense. Improving the quality of life in the urban setting is indeed one of the main objectives of street art, to provide the city-dweller with the opportunity to participate in the creation of a more colourful environment. By its very nature as shared space, the street lends itself to collective creativity. Proof of this is to be seen across the world in the growing number of wall paintings that young people, artists and educators have created collaboratively.

Street art can also help to save, rehabilitate or give new life to areas doomed to demolition, dereliction or anonymity. This was so in the working-class area of La Boca, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, which changed totally after its wood and corrugated iron houses were repainted in contrasting shades. This project, carried out some fifty years ago, gave a new sense of identity to an area that had previously been lost in an urban complex that today has over twelve million inhabitants.

Creativity has always been the lifeblood of cities, allowing them to

work as markets and trading and production centres, with their critical mass of entrepreneurs, intellectuals, students, administrators, powerbrokers, crafts people and artists. The concept of the Creative City, proposed by a think-tank in the United Kingdom, suggests that cities in the next century will depend more on the generation of information and knowledge and less on natural resources. This requires a new, holistic way of thinking. Creative thinking will help to cope with change, shift the focus from the physical to the ambient, to atmosphere and “soft” infrastructures. Cities using creative thinking could solve new urban problems by putting them in a different focus and applying the right tools.

## **Artistic creativity and cultural expression**

“From the days of Mesopotamia, and Moenjodaro to the humblest hamlets and villages of contemporary Asia and the Pacific, the arts have been part and parcel of the functionality of life. They have been integral to ordinary work. The arts were fostered by the community, were and are intrinsic to daily and annual life... Creativity is the patrimony of both rich and poor, majority and minority, literate and illiterate.”<sup>5</sup>

The arts are the most immediately recognizable form of creativity. All art deserves laudation as the representative of the concept of creativity itself, since it springs from sheer imagination. Yet while the arts are among the highest forms of human activity, they grow out of the soil provided by the more modest routines of daily life. They provide people with opportunities to consider and communicate their reality and visions in new ways.

In a world of commodified culture, however, creativity is too often taken for granted or dismissed. Perhaps this is because it is not always understood and is difficult to measure. This is especially true when its expression is not an individual but a collective act. Indeed, most cultural traditions give a far less salient role to individual self-expression in the creative process than does the West. Many great artistic achievements continue to be group creations, much as Europe’s Gothic cathedrals centuries ago. In such contexts, the artist or craftsman or craftswoman is very much a person, but not necessarily a “personality.” When art is the creation of a community, its makers express far more than their own personal thoughts and feelings. This contrasts also with the emphasis of global mass culture in which the “stars” of the day, whether film celebrities or sports champions, are idolized disproportionately to their creative contribution. Active participation in cultural expression by the people remains undervalued. Whether it is the amateur artist or community efforts, creativity as a social force is often neglected.

Its corollary, innovation, is frequently seen as being in conflict with tradition. But tradition is not immutable. It has evolved through generations in a never-ending process of invention, elimination and drawing on other cultures. This pluralism in the creative process has deepened today, both at the individual level, as artists from many different cultural backgrounds, particularly in music and the visual arts, enrich the world repertory of "high art" and at the collective level, in the creative opposition, often perceived as a tension, between the global and the local. As the Argentinean scholar Néstor García Canclini pointed out to the Commission, the ability to combine cultural tradition and modernity is no longer limited to the world's intelligentsias. It is also observable "among those Indians who from their pavement pitches, in Lima and Caracas, in La Paz and Bogota, in the big Latin American cities, sell medicinal herbs alongside imported tape recorders, and handicrafts cheek by jowl with electronic gadgets . . . [in] the syncretic iconography of grass-roots movements, expressed for example in the figure of Superbarrio, in Mexico, a character who combines the image of masked wrestlers with that of Superman and has become a symbol of neighborhood associations fighting for housing. Even among the working class, there are now large sections that are polyglot, multi-ethnic and migrant, their identity a patchwork of several cultures."<sup>6</sup>

These people, like countless others on different continents, have realized that the unalloyed preservation of past traditions is not the best way of maintaining their identity and improving their lot. Local cultures can grow and expand by becoming cosmopolitan. In Michoacan, Mexico, for example, the relative prosperity achieved through a recent reorganization of craft traditions has enabled people to spend more money on revitalizing their ancient rituals. Something similar is happening with the Mixe and the Mixtec of Oaxaca, who are using computers to record their oral traditions.

The arts have provided the inspiration for their own protection and renewal. They have also been called into service in positive ways. Cultural expression at the local or "grassroots" level has been used by development agents working with communities to strengthen group identity, social organization and the community; to generate social energy; to overcome feelings of inferiority and alienation; to teach and raise awareness; to promote creativity and innovation; to foster democratic discourse and social mediation; to help cope with the challenges of cultural differences and to enter the economy directly through the production of goods and services.

Many people in the Caribbean, for example, have discovered a new sense of worth as citizens, and chart their future directions by practicing and expressing their creative roots in dance, song, theatre and oral histories. As they see it,

Reggae music . . . is emerging from our equivalent of the ghetto, where the disinherited and the lost of this earth are beginning to articulate their misery, to articulate their demand for change, to articulate their need for new ordering of society. . . . This is the people singing their own story of change and making clear to the world the direction they expect change to take.<sup>7</sup>

Cultural expression thus ‘used’ can, however, be a two-edged sword: positive when it is supported by sensitive groups, genuinely interested in reinforcing cultural identity and creative endeavors; negative when used as a tool for manipulation. In commenting on the use by development agents of folk media to achieve developmental goals, a Latin American specialist warns us that their “obsession with goal achievement and not with human growth may take up these folk media as another set of instruments for changing a people’s way of thinking, feeling and behaving. And this is not the purpose and the function of the traditional communications media. Their purpose is expression, relationship, communion, escape, fantasy, beauty, poetry, worship.”<sup>8</sup>

Cultural expression is also a domain in which, as a scholar has observed, “experience is articulated and communicated, where the circumstances, events and conflicts of everyday, private, political and economic life are appropriated by consciousness, given form and made available for social dialogue and initiative.”<sup>9</sup> The social changes of the last five decades have led, throughout the non-Western world, to the increasing autonomy of artistic expression. What was perceived earlier as part of the seamless web of culture is now seen separately. An aesthetic domain has emerged that understands itself as such. This has involved partly a process of secularization through which instances that earlier had been inseparable aspects of ritual or religious life are transformed into aesthetic forms. It has been accompanied by the emergence of institutions such as ministries of culture, museums, theatres, publishing houses, literary societies, and so forth. This process of differentiation promotes the development of new forms of articulation and discourse. It leads not only to new forms of manipulation and control, but also of new possibilities for communication, understanding and action.

In spite of the human and humanizing effects of creative work, individual artists and others representing the dreams and visions of the community are frequently the target of repression. Precisely to the extent that by asking hard questions and refusing to give stock answers, artists are constantly and explicitly stating what others silently perceive, they are often exceedingly unpopular with those who have a vested interest in stock answers; so much so that it is sometimes found convenient to dissuade or even do away with them. Salman Rushdie naturally comes to mind, but he is not alone: intelligent, learned, gifted and creative men and women are

being intimidated, persecuted and even assassinated in Algeria, Bangladesh and elsewhere. Carlos Fuentes again aptly put it:

Ours is an age of competitive languages. The novel is the privileged arena where languages in conflict can meet, bringing together, in tension and dialogue, not only opposing characters, but also different historical ages, social levels, civilization and other dawning realities of human life. In the novel, realities that are normally separated can meet, establishing a dialogic encounter, a meeting with the other.<sup>10</sup>

The artists who represent emerging modern aesthetic cultures in these societies also play an important political role because they can be autonomous and express themselves freely. "By mapping out their own space of articulation and insisting on the dialogic principle, they automatically come to represent the rights of difference and disagreement and, in despotic societies, to provide their own alternative, symbolical arena for the mediation of conflicting needs and views."<sup>11</sup> Modern artists everywhere thus assert their right to use all the sources and media available to them, defying expectations that their creations should look or read in a certain "traditional" way.

Examples of this include the performances of the Amakhosi theatre group in Zimbabwe, which attacked corruption and nepotism in political and business life and succeeded in focusing on what were felt to be urgent issues for social debate, or the poetry of the late Dambudzo Marechera, combining surrealism and irreverent criticism, which has achieved the same effect. Indeed, the space of freedom they claim is as essential for all those who question through their art.

## Technological creativity

As long ago as 1964 the South African designer Selby Mvusi, never one for the conventional wisdom, stressed that "peoples of low-income countries cannot allow themselves to be left out of the new awareness and the new responsibilities now defined by modern technology. . . . Many false ideas calculated to promote cultural colonialism have been circulated; of these, important is the idea that the ingenuity of non-Western cultures cannot stand up to the full pressure and implications of twentieth century technology."<sup>12</sup>

Societies faced with the intrusion of modern technology must find ways of adjusting their cultural patterns to the new practice. All societies base their understanding of the world and of experience on a body of latent and explicit rituals (both ceremonial and everyday behavior), and of narratives and myths, which are a commentary on this ritual, from which

### A cautionary tale from Sri Lanka

From the 1960s to the mid-1970s, 2000 inboard motorcraft were brought into fishing villages of Sri Lanka to improve yields. Costing each about 10 to 15 years' of a village family's income, the boats were introduced under a hire-purchase scheme. Few of the fishermen thus precipitated into a cash economy had any savings. Wage costs plus loan repayments placed their new income under considerable strain. With no margins to draw on, many of the fishermen went bankrupt. The critical, unforeseen expenditure was for repairs, nothing in their past experience having prepared them for the task of maintaining Norwegian boats equipped with Japanese engines. When a boat broke down and the owner could not fix it, it lay idle, thus preventing the continued repayment of loans. This allowed wealthier owners to acquire the second-hand boats, and build up fleets that increased their advantage over the previous "inefficient" canoe-based fishing system.

Fishing output in one village rose by 7 to 8 times in 15 years. Meanwhile the total number of people employed in fishing decreased by 50 percent, and unemployment reached the point where 35 percent of males under 25 had no job at all. Formerly, there had been a very small élite of one or two families and a large class of free peasants; now there was a somewhat larger élite of ten to fifteen families, while about 200 families lived close to or below subsistence level. Finally, traditional obligations of village life disappeared as a result of the erosion of traditional social relations governing production, and the fish, which had once been eaten in the village, was now exported 210 kilometres away to Colombo.<sup>13</sup>

accepted patterns of values are derived. The introduction of modern technical procedures which have proved effective elsewhere entails the intrusion of unfamiliar values. These inevitably lead to an erosion of the authority of traditional knowledge. When reinforced by images beamed by satellite to the village television, new symbols and patterns of behaviour tend to displace the established ways and forms of relationships.

In some cases, an entire society must undertake some inspired tinkering with its founding myths in order to acquire the symbolic basic instruments of something as obvious to others as money. So it is with Aboriginal

tribes in Australia who have always used song, dance and dream-procedures to preserve and adapt the body of knowledge indispensable to their survival. These tribes have been forcibly settled and partially integrated into the monetary economy over the past forty years. This was a wrenching innovation for many of them, and has led, in recent years, to the development of an intertribal cult, the Jurrulu, designed to integrate the notion of money into the cultural patterns of the tribe.<sup>14</sup>

Just as mentalities need to adjust to unfamiliar practices, so must ways be found of adjusting technologies to the needs and possibilities of different cultural and economic contexts. Failure to adjust technology to local conditions and practical knowledge can yield disastrous results (see box previous page).

Nevertheless, transfers from the "global" to the "local" system have been successfully achieved when cultural factors have been explicitly and carefully taken into consideration in the design of the policy. Such transfers call for technical, economic and social innovation, as people themselves regain the initiative for their own needs.

In terms of the choices available today, power does not lie in technical expertise alone, but in capturing both social and technical capability together, building cultural resources to use this appropriation, and forming partnerships between the local and the global.

The most advanced scientific and technological knowledge, properly adapted to local circumstances, can be used to empower people with traditional and local knowledge. In Asia, the Green Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s resulted both in heavy subsidies for production and consumption of pesticides and in the elimination of many of the natural enemies of rice pest insects. In the 1980s a major international programme of pest control was initiated by the FAO based on the management and exploitation of local knowledge of natural biodiversity of rice paddies. Covering nine Asian countries, the programme was particularly successfully in Indonesia where 60 per cent of pest reduction has been accompanied by a 15 per cent increase in rice production between 1988 and 1993.

Special attention must therefore be paid to the knowledge that each culture has contributed to the world's intellectual legacy. Such knowledge comprises valuable information on botany, agronomy and other areas of the natural environment, as well as specific technological solutions to problems. Priority has to be given to the collection, systematization and dissemination of such knowledge, as well as to combining it with modern technological knowledge.

On the other hand, given the power issues involved, the articulation of local and global knowledge and technology must allow space and facilitate its local adaptation which in turn may identify new needs to be addressed.

## Adapted medical practice for and by the Sikuani

Colombia's health service asked anthropologists to help rescue a medical programme for the Sikuani Indians that was on the verge of collapse because local paramedicals seemed powerless to halt the spread of various diseases. Part of the problem was the inappropriateness of their training, which had been based on the needs and experiences of highland Colombians rather than the lowland tribal communities. But the team also began to question the programme's technically narrow focus, wondering if the real problem was not the inability to treat tropical diseases but the failure to promote health. Probing beneath medical symptoms for deeper sociocultural roots, the team proposed a programme of participatory research in which the paramedicals would explore Sikuani history and myth together with their communities. Slowly a picture formed of how the transition from a hunter-gatherer lifestyle to a sedentary, agricultural lifestyle had polluted streams and resulted in lower protein diets and widespread malnutrition. As the research deepened, a classification emerged for traditional medical practices that was incorporated into the health programme, not only recovering knowledge about alternative food sources and curative plants but also providing clues about how communities could apply Western technologies by making them their own. Beyond the technical aspects of this story, it illustrates the case for empowerment. The Sikuani have institutionalized this process by teaching a second generation of paramedicals to guide their communities in attacking a wide range of medical and economic problems. This has gone together with the rise of a representative political organization to defend the interests of all Sikuani communities vis-à-vis the outside world.<sup>15</sup>

Initiation to development mediation with the artifacts of technology is sometimes most effective when it assumes quite simple forms. An artist in Java gives painting lessons to villagers, encouraging them to represent technological objects. In this way they are familiarized with them through an artistic rather than a technical approach, whose concepts would be foreign to them.

Business practice in the 1990s is witnessing a rediscovery of human engagement in the development, transfer and adaptation of technology. It is now clear that technology is complex, multi-dimensional and partly specific to a particular firm. A large part of technological capability is tacit (that is, uncodifiable) knowledge that derives from trial, error and learning, rather than from the systematic application of science-based knowledge. Technological development is therefore cumulative, much deriving from “learning by doing”, while search is localized. People and their skills are at the heart of transfer; efficient social organization and cultural resilience that enable the firm to capture technical knowledge and rapidly relate it to social demand. People’s minds capturing flows of technology in organizational cultures that are capable of casting an institutional net across these flows are more important than the rather more simplistic notion of transfer of a technological artifact from one place to another.

Hence the potential opportunities for “small players”. Novel structures of both creation and use of scientific knowledge and the capture of flows of technology offer advantages to small farmers and businessmen who can capture both social and technical capability and develop a local organizational culture that is responsive and open.

It is important that meaning and knowledge be elaborated locally in preference to the passive unskilled dependence on global meanings, knowledge and systems that are created elsewhere. As an African observer has pointed out, “past generations of Africans had highly creative minds. For example, the village medicine men or women who mix herbs and roots for their patients and patiently observe their reactions and progress have a better mind than the physician who is satisfied with prescribing formulae invented six thousand miles away by his European colleagues. The rural blacksmith who fashions out a hoe, a knife or cutlass is more creative than the African engineer, trained in London or Moscow, who simply repeats hackneyed theories which may have no relevance to the problems of his society. . . .”<sup>15</sup>

Creativity can take the shape of entrepreneurship. The entrepreneur responds to opportunity and is free (both personally and collectively) to act according to this opportunity. If creativity implies a vision of what is possible, putting this creative vision into practice calls for initiative and leadership to guide the work of a group of people. In some cultures, like that of Peru, these entrepreneurs are constrained by the wrong kind of government intervention and even harassment; in others, like those of Africa, by family obligations that claim a share in the profits and prevent accumulation. The links between religion, culture and entrepreneurship, pioneered by Max Weber, are an interesting research topic. Certainly many religions and cultures other than Protestantism have produced creative entrepreneurs. Austria and Malta, two Catholic countries, have done su-

perbly well economically. Mauritius, a kaleidoscope of ethnic and religious groups, is an outstanding model of successful economic development. Korea's culture had been regarded only a few decades ago as incapable of generating economic growth. It has turned out to be a model of equitable development. Similarly, Japan had been thought to be incapable of development. One of the most striking, though under-reported, connections between religion and development is the link between the rapid spread of fundamentalist evangelical Christianity in East Asia, Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa, and entrepreneurial attitudes such as hard work and thrift.

**"If the Pacific has emerged as the most dynamic region of the world, it is because it has drawn on the best practices and values from many rich civilizations, Asian and Western. If this fusion continues to work, there could be explosive creativity on a scale never before seen."**  
Kishore Mahbubani<sup>17</sup>

Technological advances have not been an unmixed blessing, however. There are three reasons: first, these advances have been partial and have left large groups of people unaffected by their benefits or actually harmed by the progress; second, they have brought with them not only the fulfilment of dreams, but also technological nightmares; and third, some have been counter-productive in terms of their own objectives.

Among the technological nightmares are modern weapons that can destroy the whole planet; the electronic nightmare, creating the fear that electronically-stored information can lend itself to totalitarian control; the nightmare that the impact of modern technology can lead to mass unemployment; the Frankenstein nightmare that human rights and human integrity can be violated by the ability to shape the genetic structure of humans; the nightmare of the terrorist's atom bomb in the suitcase, or the threat to civil rights that may arise from attempts to prevent such terrorism, and so on.

Perhaps the worst fear is that modern technological progress will cause mass unemployment, the fear of jobless growth. Kurt Vonnegut, in his novel *Player Piano* (Mayflower Books, London, 1962) describes a future nightmare society in which the divine right of machines, efficiency and organization has triumphed, and a large underclass of unemployed are handed out, by a small group of affluent managers, plenty of goodies, but lack what the philosopher John Rawls regards as "perhaps the most important primary good" which is self-respect. In the novel the unemployed eventually revolt. Michael Young in his prophetic essay *Meritocracy* foresaw a similar future.

The concern in the advanced countries has become jobless growth.

Recently there has not been all that much growth in Europe, but growth of output without more work is, of course, in principle to be welcomed, not to be condemned. While many today would regard employment as a basic need, Sidney Webb, the co-founder of the Fabian Society, regarded leisure as a basic need. Many forms of monotonous, hard or dangerous work are a burden, not a blessing. It is highly desirable for productivity to grow, because it means more production with less work. Increases in output per worker are to be hailed; but only as long as either output grows rapidly enough to absorb all those seeking work, or the reduced work load can be spread evenly and people can spend their increased leisure satisfyingly. The first condition was met in the golden Keynesian age after the Second World War. But if, as has been the case in the OECD countries in the last decade, output grows insufficiently fast to generate employment for the whole workforce, we find ourselves in a society in which John Kenneth Galbraith's private affluence amid public squalor is joined by private affluence amid private squalor. Anyone walking through the streets of New York or London has witnessed the homeless sleeping in mid-winter in the open. Whether the cause of growing unemployment is inadequate growth of demand (due to fears of inflation and balance of payments imbalances), or technological change that calls for new skills that are and will remain scarce, or low-cost imports from developing countries, the unemployed underclass today does not even benefit from the handouts in Vonnegut's novel. They lack both recognition and necessities; neither their self-respect nor their physical basic needs are met. Doing "more with less" (as a popular classic on re-engineering puts it) is good for economic growth and for the economy, while people become redundant. The market does not nurture the dignity of the worker.

An adequate increase in demand (e.g. through public investment) would remove much of the "structural" unemployment, as we witnessed during the Second World War. Training and adjustment assistance would also help. And it is clear that our society could use plenty of health workers, nurses, attendants of the old, gardeners, protectors of the environment, and other service workers who do not need the high and scarce skills demanded by modern technology and whose services cannot be replaced by imported low-cost goods from low-income countries. Many of these jobs are, however, in the currently despised public sector.

There remains the problem of the insiders-outsiders. A small, mainly male, insider elite workforce coexists with poorly paid, not fully recognized outsiders. Such polarization has occurred in the United States. Europe, by contrast, has shown greater job security, high wages and high social benefits, combined with a more rapid growth in unemployment.

A contributing cause to unemployment in Africa, Asia and Latin America is the transfer of an inappropriate, expensive, capital-intensive,

labour-saving technology. This, in turn, is caused partly by the wrong price signals and incentives, partly by the absence or weakness of research into more appropriate technologies, and partly by the absence of institutions that facilitate search and research into efficient, capital-saving technologies. Among desirable institutions are technology banks that provide information about technologies used in other developing countries, credit institutions for small businesses and institutes for applied research.

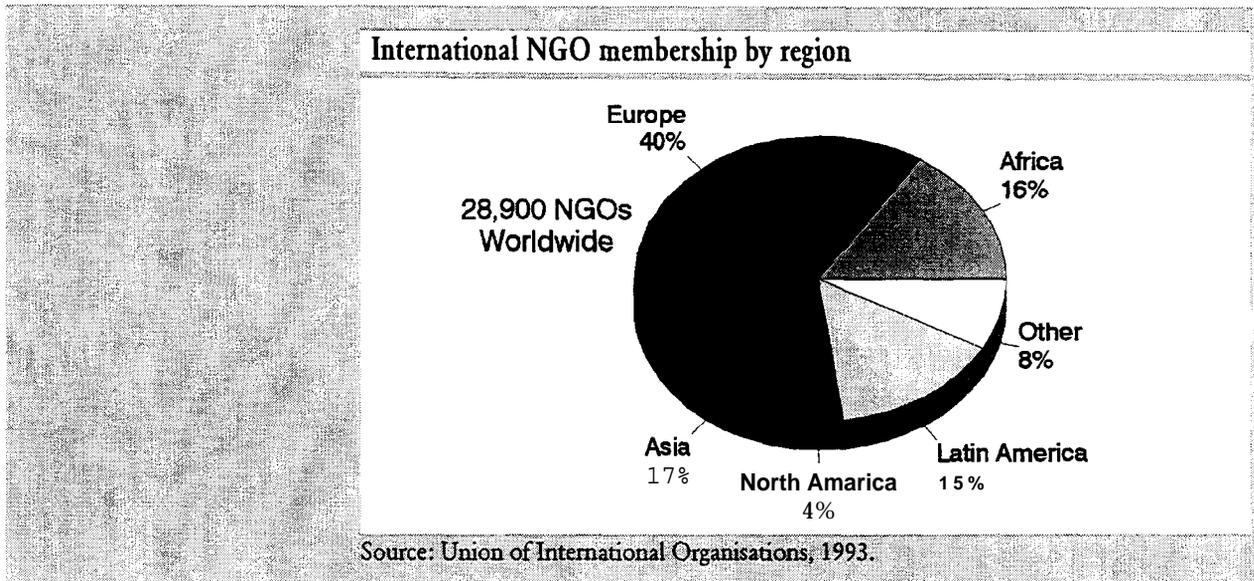
The Commission does not believe that technical progress inevitably must lead either to mass unemployment or to environmental pollution, highly detrimental raw material exhaustion, or other forms of environmental doom. In fact, technical progress can be directed at combating these dangers. And many innovations are completely innocuous, neither using heavily raw materials nor polluting the environment. Painless dentistry, the anti-polio vaccine, optic fibres, the microchip, heart-bypass surgery, magnetic imaging and organic fertilizers may serve as examples. But problems such as those cited in the previous paragraph and other nightmares do raise the question whether technical progress should be halted or slowed down, or redirected. The motto seems to be "If it can be done, we should do it". We apply cost-benefit analysis to many other fields, but not to technical "progress".

Another indictment of some forms of technical achievement is not that they have, like nuclear power, had undesirable side-effects, but that they have been counter-productive in terms of their own aims. More and faster cars have led to congestion and a slow-down of movement; medicines and hospitals have produced iatrogenic illnesses, that are caused by their use; arms accumulated for preservation and protection have destroyed property and killed people; prisons produce more criminals; agricultural progress has ruined the soil and later human communities, irrigation produces salivation; sanitation systems have polluted the water and water filters have caused cancer.

On the other hand, science and technology clearly can contribute and have contributed enormously to the reduction of poverty and the relief of suffering, to the maintenance of ecological balance, to basic research across the spectrum of human knowledge, to making life easier, fuller, more comfortable and more pleasant.

## **Creativity in politics and governance**

The nurturing of creativity means finding ways of helping people to create new and better ways of living and working together. Our social and political imagination has shown an inertia, quite out of line with the leaps and bounds made by our scientific and technological imagination. There has



been a cultural lag between science and technology on the one hand, and our social and political institutions on the other. Scientists have explored the innermost recesses of the atom and the outermost regions of space, they have broken the genetic code, they have learned to engineer our biological inheritance and to send messages across vast distances at lightning speed; but socially and politically we are stuck with centuries-old institutions like the nation state, or the hoary dichotomy between the public and the private sector, or disputes about the merits and drawbacks of capitalism and its alternatives. It has been said that central government, which has usurped more and more power to itself, has become too small for the big things and too big for the small things. Delegation of certain functions downwards and of others upwards could greatly improve the way we live together and resolve contentious issues.

Delegation upwards implies innovating with global institutions that would avoid the mutually destructive and ultimately self-destructive actions of sovereign states acting in their perceived national interest without co-ordination in areas that are of global concern. Delegation downwards means more emphasis on decentralization, empowerment of poor and weak groups, non-governmental and grassroots organizations and civil society generally.

Delegation is not enough. We have heard a lot recently about the need to decentralize government and to draw more on participation in the political arena. At the international level, this means the inclusion of representatives of civil society in international organizations and wider participation in the councils of rich country groupings (see International Agenda Action 8 and Action 9). At the national level, the world has found

unworkable and has rejected the process of centralized decision-making in centrally-planned economies and is calling for more decentralization and participation. But the very same process of centralized decision-making governs the relations between management and labour within both private and public sector firms. We know that under regimentation, people do not give their best. Democracy and participation should be introduced not only in political institutions but also in the private profit-seeking sector; and not only in government and in profit-seeking firms, but also in private voluntary societies and non-governmental organizations such as trade unions and churches. Even in the family there is a need for greater democracy and participation, particularly by women and children.

One important recent social innovation, and with it even the creation of a new concept, is the notion of empowerment. This results in people's ability to exercise wider options by directly participating in the decision-making process, or having access to and influence on those who have the power to decide. "Empowerment includes the power to express themselves to the full richness of their evolving cultural identities . . . evolving by their own manifest abilities in response to their own wishes and aspirations. The empowerment idea manifests itself at all levels of societal interaction. It is found in giving voice to the disenfranchized, in allowing the weak and the marginalized to have access to the tools and the materials they need to forge their own destinies."<sup>18</sup> It is also found in creating new institutions that guarantee accountability and control of those who democratically exercise power.

Professor Yunus, founder and head of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, has said that "if society creates an environment that allows the individual to develop his creative abilities, the reduction of poverty is feasible". Such an environment may appear unattainable, however, for the very poor. As many as one billion people in the world still live in absolute poverty. They can barely meet their minimum basic needs and they lack the means of adequate social participation. They are marginalized from mainstream society even though they may constitute a majority of the population. They may have to be content with their own cultural practices, which institutionalize the dichotomy. They may experience the drift, and the self-deprecation associated with the ultimate adoption of negative images of self and society, and the consequent problems. This is especially true for the young, whose frame of reference and values is adrift from traditional beliefs and whose conditions and resources marginalize and prevent them from effective social participation.

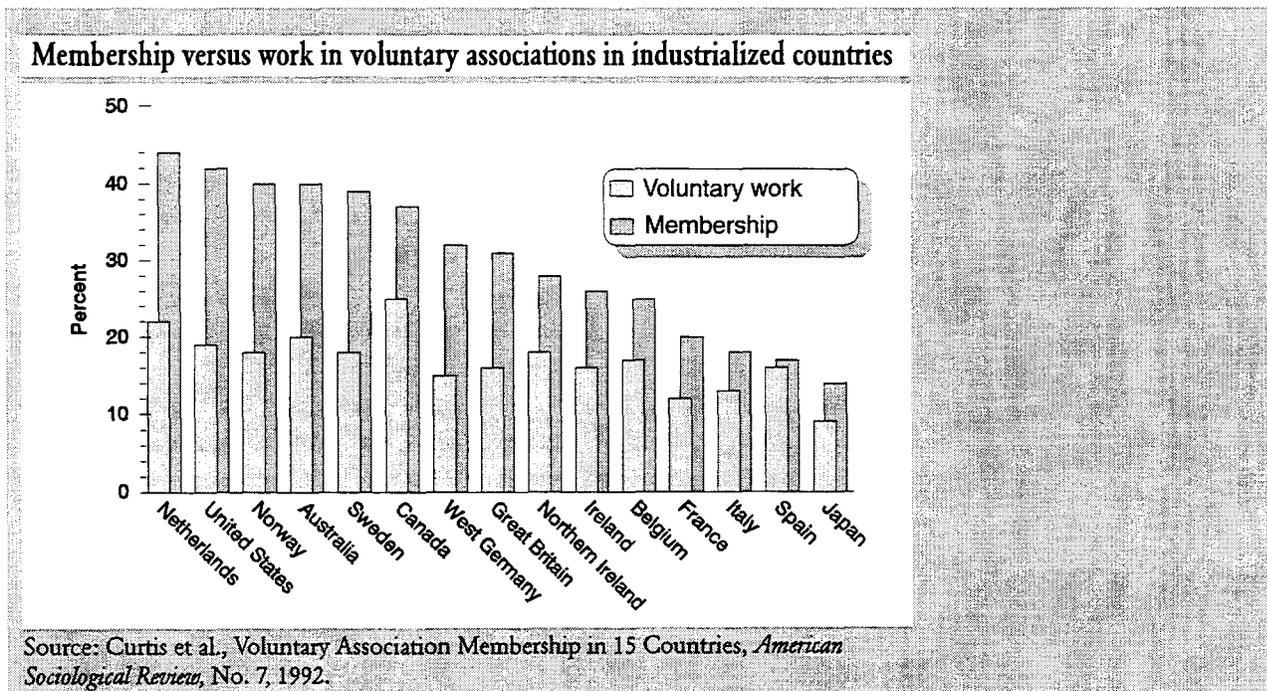
Efforts at poverty eradication, therefore, should include the cultural dimension. This is not just for the benefit of the poor, but because without such efforts, the entire society and polity will be impoverished. Worse, without them the door would be open to less constructive tendencies of an

It is not enough merely to provide the poor with material assistance. They have to be sufficiently empowered to change their perception of themselves as helpless and ineffectual in an uncaring world. The question of empowerment is central to both culture and development. It decides who has the means of imposing on a nation or society their view of what constitutes culture and development and who determines what practical measures can be taken in the name of culture and development. The more totalitarian a system the more power will be concentrated in the hands of the ruling élite and the more culture and development will be used to serve narrow interests. Culture has been defined as "the most recent, the most highly developed means of promoting the security and continuity of life". Culture thus defined is dynamic and broad, the emphasis is on flexible, non-compelling qualities. But when it is bent to serve narrow interests it becomes static and rigid, its exclusive aspects come to the fore and it assumes coercive overtones. The "national culture" can become a bizarre graft of carefully selected historical incidents and distorted social values intended to justify the policies and actions of those in power. At the same time development is likely to be seen in the reductive sense of economic growth alone. Statistics, often unverifiable, are reeled off to prove the success of official measures.

Many of the countries in the Third World now striving for meaningful development are multiracial societies where there is one dominant racial group and a number – sometimes a large number – of smaller groups: foreign, religious or ethnic minorities. As poverty can no longer be defined satisfactorily in terms of basic economic needs, "minority" can no longer be defined merely in terms of numbers. Once again, as in the case of poverty, it is ultimately a question of empowerment. The provision of basic needs is not sufficient to make minority groups and indigenous peoples feel that they are truly part of the greater national entity. For that they have to be confident that they too have an active role to play in shaping the destiny of the state that demands their allegiance. Poverty degrades a whole society and threatens its stability while ethnic conflict and minority discontent are two of the greatest threats to both internal and regional peace. And when the dispossessed "minority" is in fact an overwhelming majority, as happens in countries where power is concentrated in the hands of the few, the threat to peace and stability is ever-present even if unperceived.

Democracy as a political system which aims at empowering the people is essential if sustained human development, which is "development of the people for the people and by the people", is to be achieved. The true development of human beings involves much more than mere economic growth. At its heart there must be a sense of empowerment and inner fulfilment. This alone will ensure that human and cultural values remain paramount in a world where political leadership is often synonymous with tyranny and the rule of a narrow elite. People's participation in social and political transformation is the central issue of our time. This can only be achieved through the establishment of societies which place human worth above power, and liberation above control. In this paradigm, development requires democracy, the genuine empowerment of the people. When this is achieved, culture and development will naturally coalesce to create an environment in which all are valued, and every kind of human potential can be realized.

Aung San Suu Kyi



ideologically charged populism with its degraded version of the popular and its appeal to inherently negative values.

Such a framework can emerge only from the reality of democracy itself. In the many countries experiencing the transition from authoritarian to elected rule, the struggle against authoritarianism does not end when the first national elections are held. The struggle for the enlargement of citizenship rights and for citizens' participation does not even stop at constitutional reforms, let alone official declarations. In practice, the public institutions responsible for guaranteeing rights operate very unevenly. As an old-fashioned Brazilian politician once said, "for my friends, anything – for everyone else, the law."<sup>19</sup> Thus, the transition to democracy involves dismantling anti-democratic forms of exercising power and the transformation of the institutions of civil society. In turn, people must embrace beliefs and practices that are suitable to, or consistent with, the notion of democracy and they have to learn to behave within the renewed institutional system. The challenge of democratization lies in the capacity to combine formal institutional changes with the expansion of democratic practices and the strengthening of a culture of citizenship.

From a social perspective, it is useful to formulate the concept of citizenship rights in terms of the varying degrees of access to basic political and civil rights. This diversity of access often has a cultural basis, since in most societies certain socially constructed groups (ethnic, regional, gender) have more rights, or more consistent guarantees of them, than others.

Moreover, even in countries that are formally democratic, authoritarian political machines remain alive under the trappings of “modern” politics. Yet in spite of much dismissive rhetoric about “merely” formal democracy, certain so-called formalities of formal democracy matter most to the politically weakest members of society. Starting with freedom of assembly and association, and including unconditional access to voter registration, guaranteed ballot secrecy, and pluralistic access to political information, such “formal” political rights are crucial steps for the political entitlement of the weak. They are necessary means for the fights for their interests and for their ability to choose their own representatives and leaders.

The quality of democratic governance depends on the working together of two sides: on one side there is the nature of the state institutions, and the responsiveness and accountability of state officials; on the other there is the nature of civil society and its ability to exert control over the state apparatus. Both have to be promoted, nurtured and gradually and often painfully constructed. Rather than postulate that the type and degree of citizens’ sense of civic responsibility is a cultural fact, a historical legacy immune to change, it should be seen as one of the areas where there is scope for creativity and innovation. As Albert O. Hirschman found, experiences of community development groups in Latin America “shared one striking characteristic: when we looked into the life histories of the people principally involved, we found that most of them had previously participated in other experiences of collective action, that had generally not achieved their objective, often because of official repression. It is as though the protagonists’ earlier aspiration for social change, their bent for collective action, had not really left them even though the movements in which they had participated may have aborted or petered out. Later on, this “social energy” becomes active again but is likely to take some very different form”.<sup>20</sup>

Indeed the initiatives that people manage to sustain in inhospitable environments are often responses to past failures. There are many examples of successful efforts (and failures) by religious groups, non-governmental development organizations, and even reformists in authoritarian regimes to promote participation and social mobilization. It is clear, however, that for groups to come together and form associational webs and networks that encourage good government, development and a culture of responsible citizenship, some degree of freedom of association is necessary. This takes one back to the state and the degree to which governments allow citizens to gather to form autonomous associations. In this process, social actors and movements have a double role: first, they are collective systems of reciprocal recognition, expressing old and new collective identities, with important cultural and symbolic components and second, they become (mostly non-party) political intermediaries who bring needs and demands of

### Traditional institutions for decision-making

In Burkina Faso the governing principles of the traditional Mossi institution of *Kombi-Naam* – which inculcates society's fundamental values in young males – have been used by the International Association "Six-S" (*Se Servir de la Saison Sèche en Savanne et au Sahel*) as the basis for a more widespread community organization, called the *Groupement Naam*. The innovative elements were that its membership was broadened to include women and the elderly. The elders, in fact, became the "counsellors" of the organization providing it with a moral direction.

The first Naam group was created in 1967. By 1977 there were 126 groups and by 1993 over 4,500. They have formed larger networks at the village, district and provincial levels, even evolving into national federations. Today, in this country of enormous cultural and ecological diversity – made up of nearly sixty ethnic groups including village-based agricultural societies, and pastoral tribes – the concept of the Naam decentralized local groups has set the basis for training people, pursuing activities that promote self-sufficiency and increase the revenues of their members, while combating desertification. Much of the land is arid and the problems of natural resource management and agricultural and livestock development are considerable.

Source: Bernard Lédéa Ouedraogo, founder and head of "Six-S" in *Traditional Knowledge and Sustainable Development*, Proceedings of a World Bank Conference, September 27-28, 1993.

unarticulated voices to the public sphere, linking them with state institutions. The expressive role in the construction of collective identities and social recognition, and the instrumental role of challenging the existing institutional arrangements, are both essential for the vitality of democracy. Rather than interpreting the inability of political parties and formal institutions to co-opt them as a weakness of democracy, social movements and non-party or non-state organizations should be seen as a way to ensure a dynamic democracy - one that carries within itself a device for the expansion of its own frontiers.

The key policy issues linking democracy, empowerment and culture involve the processes of access to voice and to power. By definition,

## The Sámediggi model in Norway

This system of autonomous governance by the Sami people is based on elections held in thirteen constituencies all over the country. People who have at least one Sami parent or grand parent and who speak Sami as their first language are eligible to vote. They must take the initiative of registering themselves as voters and are entered on an electoral roll. They elect 39 representatives to the Sami Parliament – called the Sameting in Norwegian.

This body has jurisdiction over the identification and protection of Sami cultural heritage, for funding Sami arts, small-scale industries and crafts activities. It is consulted by central and local government on development projects which can have an impact – whether positive or negative on all aspects of Sami culture.

A special Commission was set up in 1980 to study the question of land rights in order to make policy proposals as soon as possible with a view to the return of land to the Sami people. The creation of the Sámediggi in 1989 was itself a result of this Commission's work.

empowerment requires the sharing or influencing of power, and this process has a state dimension and a social dimension. On the state side, the question is whether public institutions are constructed to promote balanced input from the diversity of interests in society. On the society side, empowerment requires pluralistic access to information, as well as channels for expression, representation and redress. There is no single institutional formula that can produce these results across historically and culturally diverse societies, but several common tensions cut across the wide range of society-specific institutions that shape the expression of citizenship rights.

One of the most favoured approaches to the problem of representation and accountability vis-à-vis the centralized state is to advocate decentralization. Whether political or administrative or both, the goal is the devolution of power from higher to lower levels of representative government. In contrast to systems of proportional representation or cultural or ethnic autonomy, the organizing principle of decentralization is usually territorial. In principle, the closer governmental decisions are to the citizens, the more likely it is that citizens will be able to influence governmental actions. In practice, however, local governments vary greatly in their degree of accessibility and responsiveness to the citizens they ostensibly represent. Both public institutions and civil societies vary greatly between

states, and therefore the results of decentralization vary greatly as well. Within the same society, a programme of decentralization could both strengthen responsive, effective and economical government in some regions while bolstering entrenched authoritarian local élites in other regions. Decentralization can also increase regional inequalities, and central government resources are needed to correct such tendencies. If one is concerned with the fate of the blacks in Mississippi, one does not delegate power to the state but insist on central legislation and rely on the Supreme Court for implementation, together with empowering the blacks. The basic democracies in Pakistan in the 1960s were attempts to decentralize power to the villages, but they increased the power of the big local landlords and weakened the poor. Central authorities still have a crucial role to play in defending basic democratic rights throughout entire societies, to permit citizens to defend their rights in regions that lack representative, accountable government and reflection of the rights of minorities at the local level. Indeed, one of the most promising approaches for democratizing local government is through a strategy of combined reform pressures from both above and below.

A new approach to the problem of cultural autonomy for indigenous people is being developed in Scandinavia. In each of the three countries where most of the Sami people live (Finland, Norway and Sweden) an elected representative body has been established on language criteria. These are essentially advisory bodies but they do have certain limited jurisdiction for the funding of cultural activities.

## Notes

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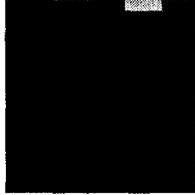
## CHALLENGES OF A MEDIA-RICH WORLD

*Information, or more accurately being informed, can be both a blessing and a curse. We crave more information; at the same time we feel inundated, intruded upon and lacking control. The key concern as we move forward is to ensure that the real end-user remains in control of the outcome. The consumer, not some technobuffs, must remain the sole judge of demand and consumption in this media-rich world coming in to being.*

Michael Spindler<sup>1</sup>

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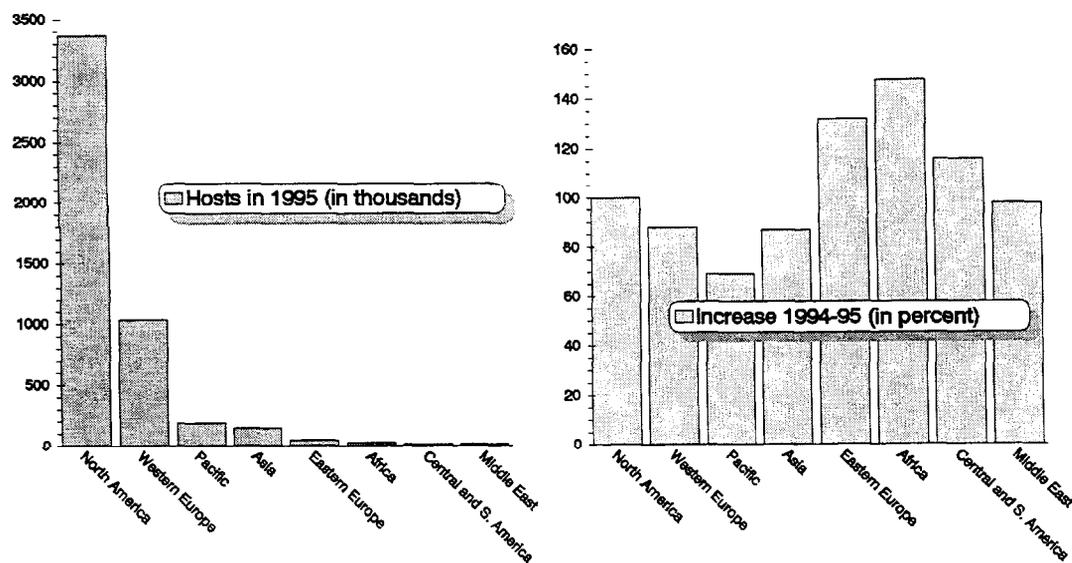
A century ago, in 1895, Marconi sent the first wireless message. Two decades earlier Edison had invented the phonograph.

The nineteenth-century industrial age would soon transform humanity's ecology of communication, taking the world from the "Gutenberg Galaxy" to the threshold of an information revolution.

As the twentieth century unfolded, technical progress accelerated, with the invention of radio, then of television, and subsequently of broadcasting in both media. In the last three decades, however, humanity has taken a quantum leap. Technological advances have been breathtaking in their pace and exponential in their impact.

The first international communication satellite systems, Intelsat and Intersputnik, were put in place in the mid-sixties. Since then, space-age telecommunications, informatics and optical electronics have converged with conventionally understood "mass media" to give people an unprecedented array of tools - from the simple cellular telephone to the Internet - to diversify their perceptions, to express their options, to interact with others, to understand and react to change, even to amplify human thought. While some of these tools are so expensive that they will remain the privilege of the few for many years to come, the unit-cost of much modem communication technology has plummeted. Lower costs, together with increased sturdiness and greater ease of handling, now put these capacities into the hands of local communities in ways that could not have been

### New Internet communities show largest growth, 1995



Source: Internet Society, *The Economist*.

## Nelson Mandela among the Inuit

In his autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom*, President Mandela recounts a stopover he made north of the Arctic Circle at Goose Bay where a group of young Inuit had come to get a chance to meet him:

“... in talking with these bright young people, I learned that they had watched my release on television and were familiar with events in South Africa. “Viva ANC!” one of them said. The Inuit are an aboriginal people historically mistreated by a white settler population; there were parallels between the plights of black South Africans and the Inuit people. What struck me so forcefully was how small the planet had become during my decades in prison; it was amazing to me that a teenage Inuit living at the roof of the world could watch the release of a political prisoner on the southern tip of Africa. Television had shrunk the world, and had in the process become a great weapon for eradicating ignorance and promoting democracy.”<sup>2</sup>

envisaged just two decades ago. And the fragmentation of application can empower every individual.

This new mediasphere has greatly enlarged our communication choices. It has already shrunk the world and dissolved its borders. Information drives the world economy and allows new ideas to be shared worldwide in a single instant. It multiplies opportunities for inter-personal encounter, giving those in the remotest places access to sound and images from other places throughout the world. Cyberspace eludes territorial jurisdiction and creates instant links for intellectual co-operation, for the exchange and sharing of data and experience. It broadens access to educational opportunity.

It is promoting freer flow of information. Expanding distribution capacities are ushering in new and increasingly diverse services. “Narrow-casting”, interactive, educational and other networks are among delivery systems that now respond to hundreds of different needs, tastes and interests. By the same token, the ease of reproduction and transmission has made it much more difficult for any government to control – let alone censor – the information people receive or send. The media of today are helping sustain people’s movements as well as create a better-informed citizenry. By enhancing public access and participation in democratic life, they are contributing to human development.

They are also strengthening the sense of global solidarity, without

which no global ethics could begin to crystallize. "Media images of human suffering have motivated people to express their concern and their solidarity with those in distant places by contributing to relief efforts and by demanding explanations and action from governments."<sup>3</sup> It is no longer possible for oppressors to conceal acts of repression from the world at large or for the privileged to avert their faces from natural or man-made disasters in distant lands.

Multimedia are broadening the horizons of artistic and intellectual creativity. New techniques have inspired creative minds to invent video art, holography and virtual reality. Electronic images are replacing traditional means of recording and sharing memory.

These are consequences to be welcomed. The Commission is aware, however, that there are negative aspects as well.

Many people still remain voiceless or unheard. Control of some of the most powerful new media tools is still concentrated in the hands of a few, whether nationally or internationally, in private or public ownership or under governmental monopoly. Such dominance raises the spectre of cultural hegemony; a fear of "homogenization" is widespread and widely expressed. A linked apprehension is the raising of unrealizable expectations among people now widely exposed to the lifestyles and languages of the affluent, while the pace of material progress in their own environment is painfully slow.

The world has transcended the mindsets that spawned the strident debate over a "New World Information and Communication Order" over a decade ago. Yet some of the questions that set off that debate have still not been answered. The "New Communication Strategy" unanimously adopted by UNESCO in 1989 was designed among other things to tackle these questions. What is to be done when information flows from and within the least developed countries are so meagre and the means so highly concentrated? And in the industrialized and information-sated nations, concentrations of ownership are leading to a demand for a better balance between market freedom and the public interest, making it necessary for governments to attain social goals the market fails to achieve.

There are serious questions about media content. Gratuitous violence and pornography are pervasive. The sounds and images carried by the media may offend certain deeply-held beliefs and sensitivities. What kind of world do they portray to the younger generation? Such questions are not asked in "traditional societies" alone. As the British film producer David Puttnam has put it, "someone has to say, 'Enough' – because this is disaster, we are destroying ourselves. It's bad for us, we're damaging ourselves. We are untying the fabric of our society."

The question is, who will say "enough" and when? How to find the dividing line between desirable freedom and unacceptable licence?

A final but vital set of questions concerns the availability of means. How can the communications revolution reach the billions without electricity in hundreds of thousands of human settlements in the developing world? They are still the have-nots of the information revolution. The haves are a minority, mostly in developed countries, and urban residents elsewhere, who can hope to be connected to satellite television or the international information networks. Of the 52 African countries – with a combined population of over 600 million – 45 have national broadcasting services. These enjoy a combined viewership of more than 90 million. In Asia, however, 18 per cent of some 386 million households now have access to cable or direct-to-home (DTH) satellite services.

For developing countries, the weak link in the infrastructure chain is often the “last mile” from the local exchange to the household. Some African countries are indeed so poor in telecommunications that there is less than a single line per 1000 people. Or, to put it more starkly still, there are more phones in Tokyo or Manhattan than in the whole of Africa.

But technology is not everything. However marvelous and compelling, it only provides the tools for human communication, that courses through and provides the motive force for all human endeavour, now and since the beginnings of society.<sup>4</sup> The tools it makes available today are revolutionary because they provide “instantaneous global access both to other people and, in the end, to the totality of mankind’s knowledge.”<sup>5</sup> In this sense, communication in all its forms, from the simplest to the most sophisticated, is a key to people-centred development. Rural newspapers may be more important than the information superhighway. Yet at whatever level the issues of communication are envisaged, there is a shared challenge. This is the challenge of organizing our considerable capacities in ways that support cultural diversity, creativity and the empowerment of the weak and poor.

We can meet this challenge both nationally and internationally and this search is now under way. Its success will determine how well cultural and human development capabilities can be maximized.

## **The search for principles in national settings**

Governments, citizens and media interests themselves have taken up these challenges. They have collectively defined a number of principles. These relate to issues of structure as well as content and the Commission focused its attention upon four of these. The first principle it considered, one of structure, is that the communication media ought to flourish in a competitive environment. The second, one of content, is that competition itself should promote a diversity of voices. A third principle, also one of content,

is that freedom and diversity need to be balanced by certain principles - this refers not to the ethics of information as a whole but to the increasing presence of violence and pornography on our screens. And fourthly, an overarching structural principle, the idea that the three previous principles can only be respected and sustained if efficiency and equity are balanced.

### **The need for competition**

Until recently, most broadcasting and telecommunications were state monopolies practically everywhere. With very few exceptions, they were seen as the vehicles to ensure that “national culture” was properly reflected by delivering information, education and quality entertainment to all. Often nation-building has been involved, as in the case of Palapa, the Indonesian satellite broadcasting service which spread the use of a common language, Bahasa Indonesia, amongst the country’s different ethnic groups. In 1980 most European States, whether through state-controlled or public service broadcasting, held a monopoly in these domains. In Africa national broadcasting was strictly government-owned and operated. Countries such as Australia, Brazil, Canada, Finland or the United Kingdom had mixed systems. Community broadcasting was rare.

This picture has changed completely. Governments are now having to deal with the delicate task of opening up protected monopolies to competition. The causes are mostly technological, since satellites cut across all borders. They are also political: not only the passing of totalitarian systems of state control but also increasingly vocal pressures for access and voice in democratic societies, where communication is still predominantly “top-down” in nature. They are economic as well, in the search for profit in a free market environment. The role of regulatory authorities needs not so much to be removed as to be redefined in this context. Competition is often ephemeral, and refers to a repositioning within industry, in which new dominant players inevitably emerge to form new conglomerates. For there is nothing in the nature of laissez-faire that either establishes or maintains competition. But the virtue of markets depends on the existence of competition.

In most of Europe, state-controlled or public service broadcasting prevailed until the beginning of the 1980s. In the United Kingdom, commercial television stations were admitted side by side with the BBC in 1959; commercial radio was accepted in Italy in the 1970s and commercial television in 1980. France and the Federal Republic of Germany followed suit in 1984. By the end of the decade, all the European countries were admitting private providers to the market, while government continued to facilitate infrastructure development.

In the rest of the world, apart from the United States, public interest is still equated with public service broadcasting; the problems facing media in the transition to democracy are typical of the entire democratization process; and independent public service broadcasting is far from a working reality. But forces in civil society are increasingly ready to pre-empt the issue. In the early 1990s, for example, over 700 "illegal" radio stations were set up in Turkey, challenging a law which gave a monopoly over radio and television broadcasting to the state authority.

The situation in Central and Eastern Europe has changed in a special way, as less well-supported state media are having to compete with private companies. Broadcasting organizations in the Commonwealth of Independent States operated until early 1995 in a legal vacuum since there was no legislation on radio and television broadcasting. Its International Television Congress based in Kiev intends to launch an international satellite channel "Culture Via Television." A remarkable initiative is the proposal of Cable Plus, a private Czech cable television company, to create a cable television union to work out principles and co-ordinate actions in the field of legislation, technology and financing - a task that governments would normally have been expected to assume.

The movement to deregulate broadcasting is strong in Sub-Saharan Africa. Mali, with more than fifteen operational private radio stations, is a showcase for private broadcasting. Burkina Faso has licensed more than nine stations. The National Broadcasting Commission of Nigeria has granted licences for one radio and six television stations as well as eleven cable/satellite retransmission stations. These new private stations suffer some major limitations, however. They tend to broadcast a restricted diet of popular music and religion in a limited number of national languages. Many such stations appear to be following in the footsteps of their most commercial counterparts elsewhere, focusing their attention on advertising targets and entertainment-oriented programming. It has also been pointed out that licences tend to be granted to individuals with close connections to government.

Media in the Arab world are characterized by state control. Each country has a broadcasting system that is either operated by the government or run by an organization directly under its tutelage. It is difficult in these circumstances for media to play an independent role. As a reaction, there is a wide availability of regional and international media channels. International viewing is pervasive in the Gulf States, which may provide the world's biggest video cassette market and which are major purchasers of pirated American and British television programmes.

As poor - or small - nations cannot upgrade their telecommunications networks without foreign investment, skills and technologies, privatization is the only answer: Singapore and the Republic of South Korea in

1993; Hungary, Pakistan, Peru, and Russia in 1994; Bolivia, Côte d'Ivoire, Czech Republic, India, Turkey and Uganda in 1995. Some 26 telephone-company privatizations are scheduled for the next three years. Such plans still encounter political resistance, however. A developing country's state-owned telephone company may well be the largest employer; its tariffs serve to subsidize many activities and stiffly surcharged international telephone-call revenues are a source of hard cash. Such negative attitudes are being broken down, however, by international pressures. The World Bank, for example, has tied telecom loans to deregulation in both Kenya and Nicaragua.

## Diversity

Greater competition can promote diversity in the media. Yet deregulation, or the relaxation of government controls of the operation of markets, which is one of the means used to promote competition, may also promote concentration of ownership. The high costs of attractive programming and the need to produce for very large markets have compelled companies to form groups on a regional and worldwide scale. Recent giant mergers, claiming the merits of synergy, are evidence of this. Such concentration certainly offers economic advantages. Among the main disadvantages is standardization.

There is a growing awareness too that pluralism of information, together with diversity of production and distribution, are prerequisites for, as well as indicators of, a properly functioning democracy. Unless people have clear, prompt and reliable information about what their governments are doing, they have no basis for assessing their leaders or participating in the democratic process. The breadth of access to information also determines the degree to which citizens are able to establish informed opinions and therefore participate in public affairs. Yet tensions emerge in the definition of public access. Advocates of freedom of access to information have every reason to be wary of governmental regulation, yet the market is not necessarily better at allocating access.

Societies are tackling such issues by taking various measures at the community, local and national levels. These include independent public broadcasting networks, open regulatory frameworks, community and local media and strong, culturally-oriented copyright policy. A growing trend is to frame these measures in terms of cultural policy orientations rather than purely in terms of the political control of information. Governments are beginning to envisage regulations for both the private and public sector, enforced and monitored by independent agencies, so that government in fact supports growth and access instead of impeding them. Resources are

## Media finance for political campaigns

Where access to the media in election campaigns is left completely to the free market, this access favours groups with more resources. The resulting electoral process may well be “free” but is certainly not “fair” in the sense of providing a level playing field of competing alternatives to the public. In response to this problem, many societies have decided that public access to electoral information is a “public good.” Governments remove campaigning from the “free” market and regulate equality of access across the political spectrum. Removing electoral use of the media from the market inherently weakens the influence of money over politics and makes more accessible a politically and culturally balanced array of views.

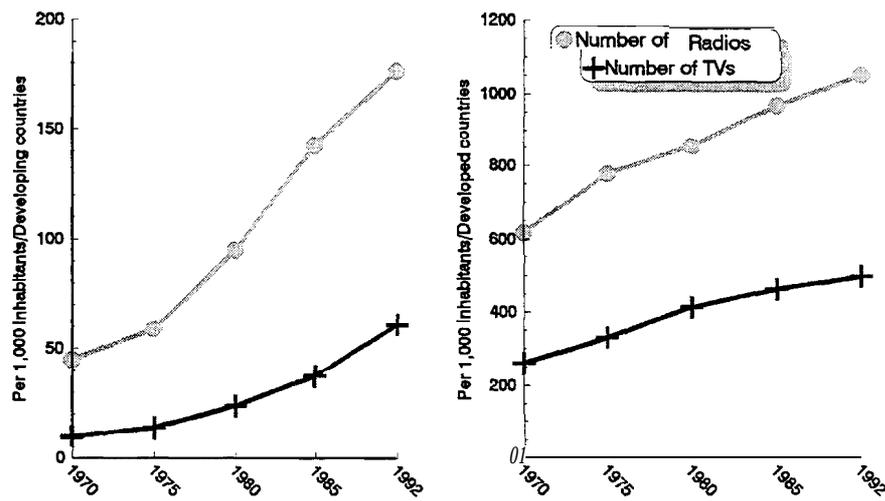
Jonathan Fox<sup>6</sup>

also being set aside for high quality programmes based on “indigenous” content or inspiration.

Independent broadcasting services provide a venue for people’s immediate interests. Direct and indirect public aid for programme production still needs to be strengthened, however, so that the local context can be reflected. This is where community radio and television come into the picture. Wherever a modicum of funding, political commitment and infrastructure is being made available, community media complement public and commercial broadcasting. They have become important fora of expression in the last two decades. They provide information on a range of issues in a form and language local audiences understand and identify with. Appalshop, a community media centre in the underdeveloped Appalachian mountains of Kentucky, was created in the mid-1960s under the United States federal governments “War on Poverty”. Since then, Appalshop has helped preserve and celebrate the culture, voices and concerns of people in this marginalized region. Today it runs a television station, a local newspaper, a local community theatre group, a radio station, recording label, and a range of cultural projects and festivals. Peasants and miners in Bolivia have set up their own radio stations, broadcasting in Quechua, Aymara or Tupi-Guarani. Local participation in management and programming is growing. In Australia, for example, Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders have pressed, on the basis of their own successful experience in community broadcasting, for the establishment of an Indigenous Broadcasting Corporation funded by the government.

In addition to supporting domestic and local programming, many

### The numbers of TVs and radios in developing countries are increasing, but lag behind developed countries



Source: UNESCO Statistical Yearbook, 1994.

governments are placing higher priority on the reform of copyright and neighboring rights so that, as technology moves forward, programme content will evolve in truly diverse ways. This is critical with regard to multimedia production, to the education and training of copyright experts and to raising public awareness of the need to respect creators through copyright protection. The new technologies make it easy to manipulate, reproduce and broadcast works without the permission of the owner. To ensure balance, therefore, between the free circulation of cultural products and the protection of rights holders, there is growing stress on the review of existing copyright and neighboring rights regimes.

Even if rules exist, however, unless piracy can be halted or reduced, inexpensive, easily copied imported video and music programming will continue to dominate many markets. Hence many developing countries face the need to develop practical mechanisms to encourage local creativity and foster local commercial production.

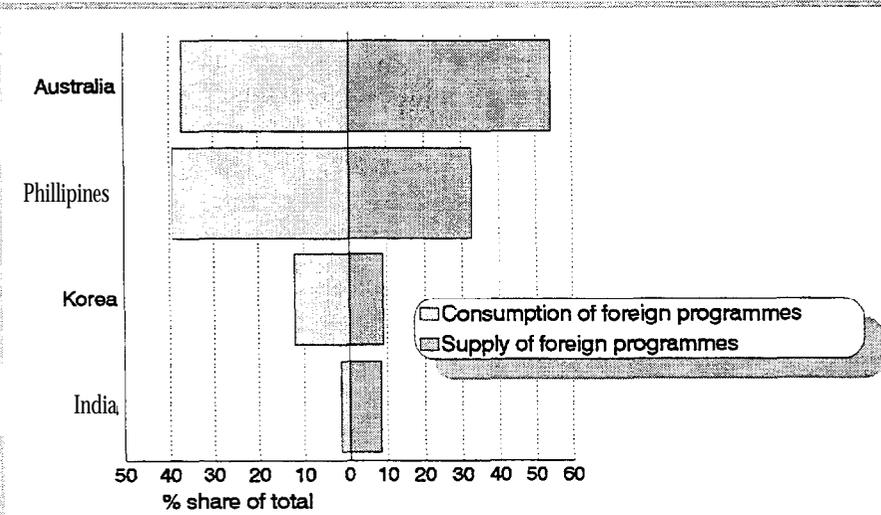
At all these levels, however, a major question is the high cost of media development in poor countries. This applies to conventional as well as front-edge forms: radio, film and video production, sound recording and publishing as well as many other content-based, market-oriented cultural industries have become the dominant transmitters of cultural images, ideas and values while contributing substantially to economic growth. They have widened individual choices and access to cultural expression, information and education. The cultural industries reflect and reinforce the diversity of

interests of the people using them. This is particularly the case with the most technologically advanced tools, i.e. multimedia.

Despite the universal appeal of the products of mass culture the world has observed for so long, specific publics are now increasingly demanding specific types of programming as well. But there are good economic reasons for using low-cost imported material; its other causes range from almost non-existent alternative local supply to low production quality and the lack of trained people. Although these problems are serious in developing countries, audiences appear to prefer quality home-made fare if given the choice. In a 1995 survey of prime-time viewing covering almost forty countries from Brazil to India, one in three appears to be indifferent to foreign products. When a choice exists, local programmes tend to score higher in the ratings than imports.<sup>7</sup> This is also true for the European television market, where American programmes failed to rank among the year's top ten in eight of a dozen countries surveyed.<sup>8</sup>

There is growing recognition of the need to use multimedia in teaching and learning. In countries with high rates of illiteracy and semi-literacy, multimedia can provide alternative paths towards the acquisition of knowledge and skills. We must remember that young people, who acquire computer skills quickly, form a much larger portion of the population in these regions than in the industrialized world. The government of Malaysia has committed itself to providing its people with cutting-edge educational innovations. By the year 2000, the Ministry of Education expects to have

Share of foreign television programming differs from the amount watched: selected countries, 1994



Source: Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Centre, 1995.

equipped every school with CD-ROM and multimedia facilities and to have trained its teachers in these new technologies. With 15 per cent of the national budget invested in education, Malaysia has today a literacy level of 70 per cent and a growing publishing industry. This is largely a result of a clearly defined policy, one that the Commission believes should be set out by other governments as well.

### **Media and moral standards**

Today's media can deliver messages and symbols, imported or domestic, directly into every home. Even the tiniest fingers can press the wrong button, making parental control difficult if not impossible. The fitness of media content, particularly but not just for children, is a question of growing importance. How to tread the fine line between censorship and community standards?

Violence on the screen causes great anxiety everywhere. The question is increasingly asked whether the growing incidence of everyday violence – among children especially – is not induced by screen violence. Reuters has just quoted a study carried out by the Center for Communication Policy at the University of California at Los Angeles which highlights the rising presence of “sinister combat violence” in a large number of television cartoons screened for children on Saturday mornings.<sup>9</sup>

Pornography is another major concern. It is debasing women and children by mixing violence and cruelty with sensuality.

In all countries, a growing number of citizens holds that it is time to set some limits. But there is no single way of doing so. A combination of measures is being sought, depending on specific needs and contexts. Regulation is one solution. Volunteer codes of conduct are another. As freedom of speech must be paramount in any democratic society, many efforts to respect community standards have been voluntary, as the media industry itself has responded to the mounting pressure of public opinion. In co-operation with public authorities, private and public broadcasters alike have begun to elaborate and respect such codes. Although it is obviously difficult for regulators to impose penalties on broadcasters who fail to abide by these standards, some countries have decided that such measures simply have to be taken. Disciplinary measures that already exist include the conditional attribution, suspension or denial of a broadcast license. Still, the responsibility rests first with the informed viewer. This is why efforts to encourage media literacy are made in countries such as the United Kingdom so as to arm parents with the information required to make sensible decisions regarding what type of content is viewed in their households.

General principles based on community moral standards have been introduced in the European Union and in countries such as Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America. Broadcasters there and elsewhere are now voluntarily classifying the material they show (by designating some for universal viewing, other programmes as unsuitable for children, and so on). Viewer warning signals such as distinct squares or triangles on possibly offensive content is another method. Programme scheduling systems transmit sensitive material at times when young children are asleep. There is growing acceptance for ideas such as a "safe harbour" period for family viewing and the formulation of "family viewing policies." Such approaches require broadcasters and parents to share in protecting children from explicitly or implicitly violent programming. Blocking devices based on agreed classification systems could help.

The banning of satellite dishes by certain Islamic States is a radical way of responding to the objections that some of these countries have to the programmes. Such measures represent attempts to exercise what regulators call "the right to refuse". Ultimately, however, because of the nature of the technology, this right is illusory. An alternative procedure is the Singapore system, also used in China, of broadcasting through a cable system only so as to ensure that content can be reviewed before it is aired.

Violence and pornography are not found in the broadcasting media alone but also in electronic games, computer supported fax networks, independent video production and, increasingly, the Internet. Children are tempted to practise the violence they watch on their toy screens and interactive games allow them to take this one step further. For children as well as their parents product packages which combine children's programmes, toys and advertising are difficult to resist.

Advanced media technologies may also be applied in odious ways, for instance by North American hate groups, who propagate their ideas through all the means available. Grouped at the leading edge of a vast communications web, nearly 250 hate groups are currently exploring new ways of purveying hate, transmitting their call to re-establish a white homeland and asserting their need to live separately from other races. In the United States, legislation to combat the dissemination of hate material and pornography on Internet was introduced in early 1995. Very difficult questions about whether the service should be regarded as broadcasting or as private "telephone" exchange are compounded by the problem of actually enforcing any kind of law on this precursor to the borderless information highway.

## Balancing efficiency and equity

Most of the world's population now has access to free radio and television broadcasting, often through a mix of public service with one or more commercial channels. But only a very small minority, found mostly in developed countries and among urban residents elsewhere, can benefit from other services, usually through cable and audio or video tape player. Only very limited segments of society can be connected to more advanced forms of international communications such as satellite television and information networks. There is a yawning gap between those who have access and those who do not.

The liberalization of broadcasting and telecommunications leaves its future development primarily in the hands of the private sector. This is particularly true of industrialized countries, where market demand and deregulation provide attractive incentives. In developing countries, financing new equipment and infrastructure and the corresponding operational know-how requires investment expenditures estimated to run into the billions of dollars. Hence it behooves policy-makers to find ways of reconciling the interests and energies of the market-place and the public good. The key notions are access for all and support for innovation, creation and production. In particular, greater equality in the access of women to being admitted as producers, directors and writers in the media is long overdue.

When giant companies such as AT&T project the creation of a fibre-optic ring around Africa, they are serving their long-term strategic interests. The major international operators and suppliers of telecommunications seek to establish themselves in such markets with the intention of replacing existing unreliable networks by new ones to be used by a specialized, mostly international, corporate clientele. It cannot be assumed that new services, when they appear, will be automatically responsive to the needs of the people.

As they look to the future, decision-makers know that negotiations between private, public and community interests are needed if equity, diversity and human development capabilities are to be reinforced as guiding principles. Governments are seeking an environment that encourages the private sector to invest in broadband information infrastructure. For most of the developed economies, this will not involve substantial government expenditure but rather an effective deregulation, for example, of the telephone and cable industries so that they can operate more freely.

## **From the national to the international**

Despite increasing globalization of information, the principles discussed above have not been transferred from national settings to the international arena. Ample testimony provided to the Commission leads it to believe that the time has come for such a transfer to take place. There is room for an international framework that complements national regulatory frameworks. Of course, such national frameworks do not yet exist everywhere and therefore still have to be encouraged in a number of countries. Some existing systems are outdated. In either case, governments should be reminded that their responsibility for human development also requires them to define their stances in accordance with the key principles.

Concentration of media ownership and production is becoming even more striking internationally than it is nationally, making the global media ever more market-driven. In this context, can the kind of pluralist “mixed economy” media system which is emerging in many countries be encouraged globally? Can we envisage a world public sphere in which there is room for alternative voices? Can the media professionals sit down together with policy-makers and consumers to work out mechanisms that promote access and a diversity of expression despite the acutely competitive environment that drives the media moguls apart?

The Commission does not have ready answers to questions such as these. It does believe, however, that the questions must be squarely posed in the context of culture and development. It is also convinced that tabling such questions can contribute to a richer international dialogue.

Many specialists have told the Commission how important it would be to arrive at an international balance between public and private interests. They envision a common ground of public interest on a translational scale. They suggest that different national approaches can be aligned, that broadly acceptable guidelines could be elaborated with the active participation of the principal actors, that new international rules are not a pipe-dream but could emerge through the forging of translational alliances across the public and private media space.

### **Encouraging competition**

Although the emergence of international communications networks such as Internet defies control by one or a few interests, this is not the case throughout the communications and media sector. Rather, the convergence of interlocking technologies and the positioning of domestic market leaders abroad have favoured the international concentration of ownership. An unprecedented round of alliances, mergers and acquisitions has affected

every sector in the last decade: consumer electronics, media production, television, cable, publishing, computer and telecommunications are all striving to position themselves in the global market. Producers themselves are blurring the distinctions between information and entertainment, software and hardware, product and distribution.

New alliances are being forged between owners of content and owners of infrastructure. For example, in May 1995, MCI, the American long distance telecommunications carrier, announced a 2 billion dollar investment in Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, bringing together the fibre optic pipeline hardware and the "software" content. A vast array of films, television programmes, publishing and multimedia will henceforth be distributed through a fibre-optic telecommunication network with access to Internet. The Time Warner agreement to buy Turner Broadcasting System for US\$7.5 billion has been trumpeted as the creation of the world's largest media company. The 19 billion dollar merger of Capital Cities/ABC with the Disney empire will lead to what Disney's chairman Michael Eisner sees as "the world's greatest entertainment company in the next century". There is much talk of giants seeking synergies. AT&T appears at the same time to be getting smaller. But the impact on the workforce is the same: jobs in jeopardy, careers in chaos. While global efficiency gains, communities suffer from these reshuffling. Towns are losing corporate headquarters and civic-minded business leaders are replaced by transient managers.

In the face of such awesome power, where will the world find checks and balances? This concern is giving way to anxiety in many quarters. More and more informed observers are asking for some countervailing influence of both government and the citizens to be put in place.

At the moment, however, there is little international policy to promote such a development. Mechanisms of co-operation between national policy makers and regulators are rare. Various United Nations agencies have some say in the workings of the international communications sphere, but only a very limited voice when it comes to promoting competition. The International Telecommunications Union (ITU) is primarily involved in harmonizing technical telecommunications standards, the allocation of radio spectrum usage and providing some development assistance. UNESCO is an important forum for discussion of the cultural and social aspects of communications and information and also actively encourages through its programmes the free flow of information at all levels, press freedom and independent and pluralistic media. The World Trade Organization (WTO) has a limited mandate with regard to basic telecommunications services and does not deal with cultural matters.

In this setting, the Commission asks whether the world should not consider a co-ordinated regulatory approach, a possible international com-

petition policy. It may also be necessary to establish some form of international broadcasting policy regarding satellite broadcasting and other media-related services. Within nations independent agencies already oversee telecommunications and broadcasting activities. Could a parallel world body of this nature be envisaged?

In terms of the technologies, just as the regulatory approaches to national infrastructure need revamping if they are to tackle new global realities, consistent rules of the game for all the world's regions may also need to be established from a wider social and cultural perspective. This means that issues such as liberalization, inter-operability, universal service, tariffs and interconnections should all be explored with capacity-building for human development in mind.

Observing that there reigns in the world today "a high degree of convergence of attitude and common interest in creating a regime that supports business but outlaws abuses", the Commission on Global Governance has suggested that WTO negotiate an international code of good practice regarding foreign investment, and give accreditation to transnational companies that accept the basic principles of good conduct that the code would embrace. It observes that most translational companies are responsible entities, and that they should welcome an explicit global agreement which recognizes their property and certain other rights.<sup>10</sup> It does not seem far-fetched to envisage a similar arrangement that encourages media competition.

Because ideas such as these merit careful reflection, the Commission proposes in its International Agenda that a feasibility study be commissioned for this purpose. In the search for the better functioning of media markets world-wide, some steps could be taken immediately. One would be for countries to determine amongst themselves how their own existing methods of encouraging competition could be harmonized. Such questions have indeed been raised in *ad hoc* gatherings of national regulatory agencies from countries such as Australia, Canada, France, Japan, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. Those taking part, however, were interested in applying foreign lessons in their own countries. It is now urgent that those who have experience in promoting competition nationally should work together to foster it internationally.

### **Encouraging a diversity of voices**

A degree of access and choice of content is available through the international commercial media. This is especially so now that satellite services which include some local programming are being introduced in most regions. It also makes good business sense. When media managers discover

that their “global culture” product is hard to sell they become willing to diversify content so as to satisfy their market. For example MTV, the US-based satellite music video channel, has revised its worldwide strategy and is now developing regional services with local colour. It plans to combine global presence and single brand with a product designed for separate markets (United States and Canada, Europe, Brazil, Japan, US Hispanics, Taiwan and India). Other compromises indicate the difficulty of balancing public and private as well as global and local interests. The June 1995 decision of the Indian Government to allow CNN International to have better access to the Indian market by having it provide limited broadcast time to the government’s radio-television monopoly – Doordarshan – underscores national efforts to temper the information flow of global media.

But is this enough? Despite adaptations to local markets, both technology and economic considerations still favour standardization. When audience ratings are paramount, creative possibilities will be constricted. This is equally the case where freedom of expression is restricted by regimes exercising control over information. If the benefits of the international media in the exchange of information amongst peoples are to be maximized, more of the service mix found in national models is required.

Technological advances in digital compression now allow almost unlimited distribution capacity. There remain few technical hurdles in increasing the number and diversity of signals around the globe. In the context of a global market, calls for a more plural media system now raise questions that are primarily policy-related. Can the nationally-accepted role of public and alternative media as equalizers be applied internationally? On what basis could resources for alternative international services be secured?

The concept of public media services centres on the notion that public and private media space can co-exist. The public media space, as seen through the tradition of media regulation and public service radio and television broadcasting institutions or systems, is well-established in most countries. Alternative educational and community media, whether local newspapers in Malaysia or community broadcasting in Latin America, help to fill out this public space. Although we have witnessed the extension of some public broadcasting services beyond national borders, as exemplified by the BBC World Service, these are not founded on a notion of an international public space.

Ten years ago CNN launched its international satellite channel. Today we have the solid beginnings of a global infrastructure for information and communication. The question of public broadcasting and public space must therefore take on an international dimension. As public media are or should be platforms that allow all sectors and levels of society to be heard, is there not a corresponding need for international

## **An alternative global television service**

**WETV is a new international satellite network created by a consortium of public and private sector interests in the wake of the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. The consortium includes agencies and programmes of the United Nations, bilateral development agencies, foundations, non-governmental organizations, broadcasters and private sector investors. They came together in response to Agenda 21, which called for countries to "establish ways of employing modern communications technologies for effective public outreach." The result is WETV, an alternative global public service television network in which audiences can access the diversity of the world's culture and society and a wide range of viewpoints on important matters of social and cultural concern. Through affiliate broadcasters and independent producers in both the South and the North, it promises to offer international programming of a variety never seen before on television. A large segment of WETV's initial programming will be produced in developing countries. WETV plans to offer programming which address global issues, global cultural diversity and capitalize on the power of television to reinforce life-long learning. Prior to its launch in early 1996, WETV began to co-operate with the United Nations and some 50 broadcasters to provide a preview of its services on the occasion of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in September 1995.**

**Source: WETV**

systems which are better able to address the diverse needs of all peoples?

Commercial satellite services use the earth's airwaves without reference to the concept of a public space. The global space defined by the radio frequency spectrum of satellite orbital slots is there to be used by all. As Alvin Toffler has stressed, "the spectrum . . . like the ocean floor and the planet's breathable air, belongs - or should belong - to everyone, not just a few". Yet the use of this global spectrum is allocated through international agreements managed by ITU in which the concerns of individual governments have so far prevailed. Each government seeks and manages its allocated frequencies in terms of its own objectives. In return for the use of this public good, *domestic* telecommunications and broadcasting services are usually required to meet performance requirements and contribute licence

fees. But there are no comparable public requirements or obligations for *international* services which use and benefit from the global media space.

This hiatus should beat the heart of the coming debate over how best to share the *global commons* in media terms. One simple idea would be to use international taxation to generate new revenue that may be invested in alternative regional and global services and programming. A tax might be levied on the commercial use of the global commons, much like taxes which have been suggested elsewhere for cross-border capital flows and fossil fuel consumption. One might explore approaches comparable to proposed compensation that would be paid by the commercial fishing, shipping and mining industries for the free use (or misuse) of the high seas. Detailed study is required to see if such ideas could be adapted with a view to funding alternative public media services and, obviously, several jurisdictional implications would have to be assessed.

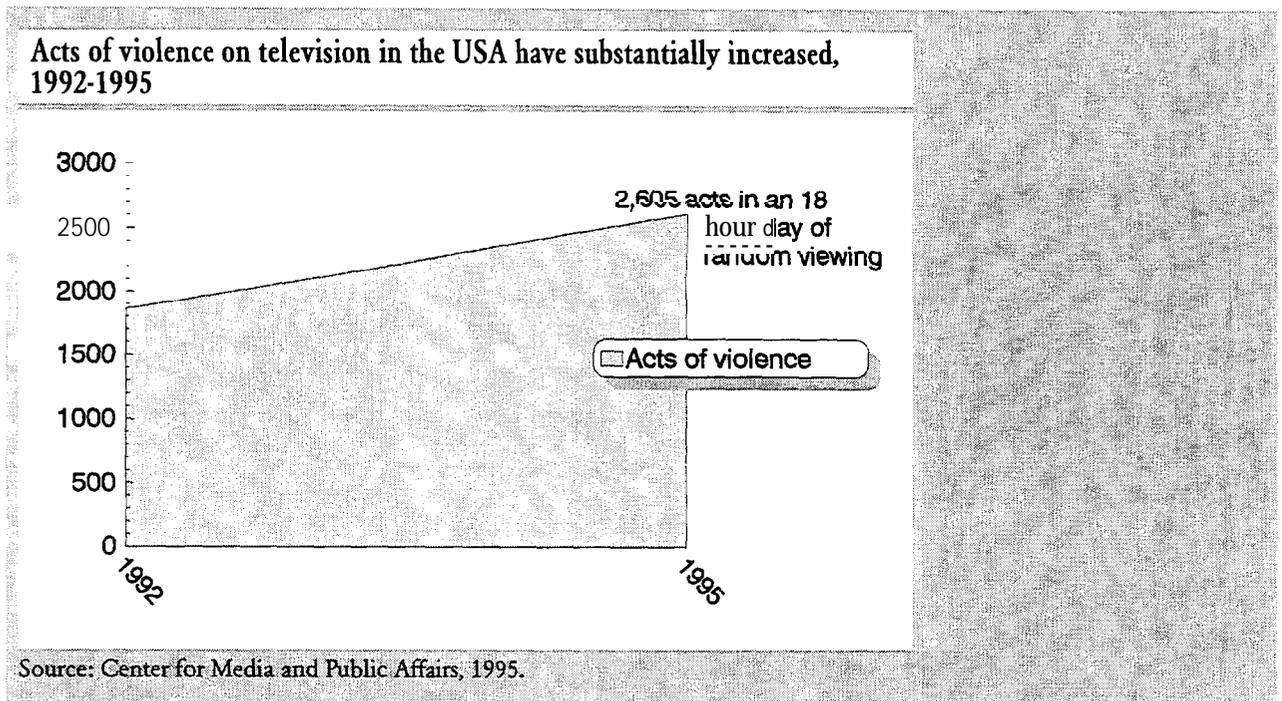
An alternative would be an investment-oriented strategy: a tax, equivalent to a small percentage of gross revenues from *all* commercial media and communications services, would contribute to an investment fund for the production and distribution of alternative content. Such an investment fund could be established without the use of an agency to regulate frequency spectrum-based licence fees. It would be non-discriminatory, taxing both foreign and domestic commercial interests.

The Commission recommends therefore that the feasibility of these and other funding choices be seriously examined. It underlines that any effort to generate diversity of content through the definition of a public media space would be in the interest of the private sector which is already investing heavily in international communications infrastructure. Creating demand for new programming and services, especially when capacity is no longer an issue, may even encourage further investment in regions where such infrastructure development is sluggish. Whatever approach is used, there can be little doubt that multimedia technologies will soon provide a far more flexible and interactive vehicle world-wide for programming, expression and distribution.

### **Balancing freedom and moral standards**

The global information environment arouses not only hopes but also fears that are fuelling a growing international debate. The aspect of this many-sided debate that the Commission has chosen to focus upon is the question of whether the national search for balancing freedom with moral responsibility can be mirrored at the international level.

Weighing the benefits of exposure to globalized popular media, voices in every region, from young people in France to parents in the Philippines



or even potential candidates for the presidency of the United States of America, express deep concern with the growing tide of gratuitous violence, explicit sex and offensive language and images produced and distributed today. What all fear most of all is the impact of such material on children.

Although film and television programming from the United States of America flood the world's airwaves, nowadays such material also comes from many other sources. A recent survey of programmes in India revealed that more than 70 percent of these were considered violent by the people surveyed. In another survey of nine Asian countries, all with a fairly high level of local programming, at least 60 percent were perceived to be violent.<sup>11</sup> It was very much a question of local context versus foreign images. For example, concern amongst Thais and Koreans was focused on the "brutal samurai and erotic dramas" of Japanese programming and "the mental aggressiveness alien to their values". With the rapid development of new communications technologies, such reactions are not limited to foreign television and pop music lyrics; they may extend to the kind of offensive material now carried by networks such as the Internet.

The national efforts already discussed have shown us that this value-loaded confrontation must be dealt with by society as a whole, in an open and constructive dialogue between the public authorities, the industry and the public. In many countries a consensus has formed around basic principles.

If such efforts are to be internationalized, the media themselves must

The worst word I know is "entertainment violence" which is our Swedish expression for fictionalized or media violence... Those who are in a position to make money out of media apparently do not bat an eyelid at the prospect of a thousand children being harmfully affected by this entertainment violence... I wonder how many children there are all over the world who have had images instilled in them, images which torment them to the point of madness every night. It's a ghastly thought.

I would like to pick up a brush – a soft one – and stroke these tormented children's brows, sweeping away all dreadful images they have absorbed.

Astrid Lindgren<sup>12</sup>

not be dictated to: a more enlightened public stance would be to encourage them to take certain initiatives themselves. The management of CNN has in fact already acknowledged that as "we are a 24-hour news and current affairs organization, this means that any hour can be early morning or breakfast time or evening supper time somewhere else in the world. Therefore we try to restrain ourselves from overly violent images throughout the 24 hours."<sup>13</sup>

Can we respond internationally to the challenge without falling into the traps of censorship? And whose responsibility should it be to launch the process: governments, regulators, broadcasters, parents? The Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted in 1989, already provides an international normative framework by referring, in its Article 17 dealing with the media, both to the need for States Parties to ensure that children have access to information and material from a diversity of sources and to "encourage the development of appropriate guidelines for the protection of the child from information and material injurious to his or her well-being . . .". The efforts of the European Union or the Council of Europe have already shown that the harmonization of standards is very difficult. Hence their agreements - a Directive in the first case, Conventions in the second - reflect a regional consensus that each country honours by ensuring that at least the minimum standards are respected.

These are precedents that should be followed at the global level. What guidelines to the global media services apply? The first step would be to compare national standard-setting practice, whether regulatory or voluntary, as a basis for international discussion. Some broad and difficult issues will have to be faced: they include conflict between existing national legislations, programme classifications that are commonly acceptable, the scheduling of "safe harbour" periods taking into account time zone differ-

ences and, of course, different scales of values on the core issues. Such a forum of ideas could contribute to finding the attainable common ground.

### **Efficiency and equity: towards a global balance**

Is the global information infrastructure fated to develop iniquitously and increase the North/South divide? How can the largest possible number of people be offered a ride on the "information superhighway"?

Internationally, the task of balancing the efficiency of market forces with considerations of equity is at least as urgent as it is nationally. Without human and financial support, many countries may ultimately find themselves voiceless and without access to the empowering opportunities of media technologies. The challenge is to strike a balance between the marketplace and government action, between private freedom to act and the public need to regulate, between the thirst for technology and the scarcity of resources.

A good deal has been attempted already by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Universal Postal Union (UPU), the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and UNESCO, but with mixed results. Increased multilateral co-operation and commitment are urgently required. "In the developing world, it was observed, it is interesting to hear discussions about 'information highways' but the majority on the continent still need a 'foot highway.' However, it was pointed out that while there might be more important needs in society, the relevance of new technologies to everyone, even those in the lower strata of society, is a reality that cannot be denied."<sup>14</sup>

Paradoxically though, unencumbered with decades-old copper wire, developing countries that have made communications a priority are installing digital switches, fibre-optic lines and the newest cellular and mobile technology. For example, the most sophisticated national networks are in Djibouti, Rwanda, the Maldives and the Solomon Islands, where 100 per cent of the main lines are digital, compared with 49.5 per cent in the United States of America. Developing countries as a whole will be spending some 200 billion dollars in the next five years in order to build over 300 million main lines and upgrade their present telephone networks.

Given the scale of the task of building such infrastructure, governments will be obliged to encourage the private sector to make the huge investments required, yet ensure that social and cultural concerns are taken into account. Developing countries will need far more resources than any development agencies can provide. Hence the usefulness of a programme such as USAID's 75 million dollar telecom development programme for Africa, not to build new networks, but to "help with regulatory reform and

other changes". When markets open up, investment capital quickly flows, and in many parts of the world, previous monopolies and closed telecommunications markets are being opened to competition, privatization and foreign ownership. Carefully and fairly managed such co-operation can help poorer countries obtain the advanced infrastructure technology that will allow them to "leap-frog" forward in many senses.

The Commission is aware that methods will differ from country to country and region to region, as will the required mix of advice and assistance. Private investments will shoulder much of the cost. In many countries this effort will not involve substantial public expenditure but the encouragement of a process of deregulation of the current telephone, cable and broadcasting industries, allowing them to broaden the scope of their activities to other available forms of communication - voice, video and interactive communications - which can service their public. These new opportunities will attract new investment. Elsewhere, the development of a digital infrastructure needs to be tied into privatization efforts. In countries which do not have extensive cable networks, there may be a stronger role for government in infrastructure investment. They should also be encouraged to incorporate enhanced digital technologies (ISDN) that enable existing telephone lines to move towards interactive multimedia potential without more expensive fibre-optics.

The Commission is convinced therefore that innovative partnerships should be encouraged between international agencies, governments, the media industry and civil society. Such co-operation should be launched everywhere, and not just in the industrially developed and already media-rich world.

## Notes

1. Michael Spindler, President and Chief Executive Officer of Apple Computer. From a speech made at the 1995 Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum at Davos, reproduced in *New Perspectives Quarterly*, Vol. 12, No. 2, Spring 1995.
2. Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, Macdonald Purnell, 1994.
3. *Our Global Neighbourhood*, Oxford University Press, 1995.
4. See Erskine Childers, "Communication in Popular Participation. Empowering People for their Own Development". Paper presented at the International Conference on Popular Participation in the Recovery and Development Process in Africa, Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, February 1990.
5. Michael Spindler, op. cit.
6. Jonathan Fox, op. cit.
7. This 1995 survey of primetime programming is based on 80 broadcasters in 40 countries with emphasis on the role that imported and domestic programming play in broadcasting schedules. The effects of content quotas and other import restrictions are not noted. "Peak Practices", *Television Business International* April 1995.

8. Kagan World Media, Ltd. analysis of Mediametrie data, "American Hits Decline", in *European Television*, 30 April 1995.
9. Reported in the *International Herald Tribune*, Thursday, 21 September 1995.
10. *Our Global Neighbourhood*.
11. Vijay Menon, in *Non-Violence, Tolerance and Television*, UNESCO, 1994, p. 11.
12. From a statement prepared by Astrid Lindgren, a well-known writer of children's books, and read on her behalf at the UNESCO conference on Violence on the Screen and the Rights of the Child, organized by the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO in Lund, Sweden, 26-27 September 1995.
13. UNESCO, *Non-Violence, Tolerance and Television*, April, 1994.
14. *Seminar on Media Development and Democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean* (United Nations, UNESCO, UNDP) Santiago, Chile, May 1994.



# **GENDER AND CULTURE**

*The time is past when a women's movement had to exclude men in the fight "against" patriarchy. The time has come rather for women's visions to restructure and redefine work in order to fashion a new society for women and men based on women's experience and skills as caregivers and reproducers. It is not a question of adding gender to the world's major cosmologies, but rather of rewriting the latter at their very roots.*

Wendy Harcourt

5



Gender is one of the existential issues that is a major concern of every culture (others being kinship and death). Every culture not only offers its children an account of the existence of the two genders and their multiple roles, according to kinship, sexuality, work, marriage and age, but also provides them with broad guidance on how to handle the relationships between them. There can be no substitute for this type of account and guidance transmitted to each individual through a body of attitudes, narratives, images and myths.

The cultural interpretation of gender is central to the identity of every individual. Such identity is defined in terms of the web of relationships into which the individual is integrated from birth – and in which gender plays a central role.

Gender has turned out to be among the most sensitive issues in a changing world, all the more so since any transformation in this realm inevitably disrupts the patterns of identity of both genders and touches upon issues of dominance (and hence of power). It consequently affects not only the inner person in his or her self-representation, but also the outer one in his or her exercise of power within the group. Power, then, is obviously an issue. But also, to the extent that gender identity itself is relational (men define themselves as men in and through their relationship to women, and vice versa), any change in the condition of women in a given society will also, and inevitably, affect the self-image of men in that society. If men can no longer interact with women in the fashion familiar to them from childhood (i.e. “as their fathers did”), they may tend to feel that these women are no longer “real” women, and they themselves no longer men. Nor can any amount of argument dispel such feelings, since this fundamental relationship is expressed in ritual and symbolic, not rational terms. This no doubt accounts in part for the resistance to change so often shown by men and women in this area.

Yet change is inherent in life and new types of role have time and again threatened the old, established patterns, and consequently the perception both women and men have of themselves and of each other. The crucial, down-to-earth issue in this particular domain thus remains the need to preserve one’s identity as feminine or masculine, and the resulting capacity for delight in the interaction between men and women. The issue must consequently be approached on its own terms, through the adaptive symbolic process inherent to every culture.

## **Gender and the paradoxes of globalization**

Economic and cultural globalization has created paradoxical consequences for the analysis of gender issues in general, and women’s rights in particu-

lar. On the one hand, there has been a powerful drive to define women as significant actors in the process of development and, since the first United Nations Conference on Women in Mexico City in 1975, an attempt to close “gender gaps” in education, labour force participation, health and welfare and political and civic rights. Initially grounded in modernization theory, the elimination of inequalities between men and women was seen as a self-evident goal which made sense in terms of both promoting more effective development and securing the human rights of women. On the other hand, more recently under the joint influence of critiques of modernity and of development itself, notions of “cultural specificity” came to the fore in novel ways. As material and popular culture appeared to be becoming increasingly homogeneous, “cultural distinctiveness” became more closely identified with the arena of gender relations and the appropriate conduct of women, who are often singled out as the bearers and signifier of their “culture”. Both “culture” and “gender” became politicized in new ways and attributions of cultural authenticity or difference became part of the political armoury of diverse social movements and ideologies.<sup>1</sup> This has had serious and paradoxical consequences both for women’s rights and for our entire understanding of the place of culture in development. We are now faced with the serious challenge of developing agendas that avoid the dual pitfalls of ethnocentrism and Western bias on the one hand, and unprincipled forms of cultural relativism that deny women their basic human rights in the name of “difference”, on the other.

Substantial improvements have been made in the two decades separating the United Nations Conferences on Women in Mexico City and the meeting in Beijing that was held just at the time this Report was being completed. The context of the first two United Nations conferences in Mexico City (1975) and Nairobi (1985) was a view of development that presented the achievement of parity between genders both as a lever in the fight against poverty and as a distributional and human rights issue. A specific policy interest in women was first expressed as part of the broader concern with poverty and basic needs, an interest congruent with the priorities of the development establishment in the 1970s.

The realization that women are treated as inferiors in virtually all societies in the world favoured the emergence of a “woman-centred” approach to development which tended to overlook or de-emphasize the importance of relations between men and women. The first generation of writing on “women-in-development” flowed from modernization theory by demonstrating the failure of “trickle-down” assumptions with respect to women. Inadequate planning and implementation as well as cultural resistance (here we find “culture” as an obstacle to development in the typical vein of modernization theory) were held primarily responsible for gender disparities.

## Every country has made progress in developing women's capabilities, but women and men still live in an unequal world

Gender gaps in education and health have narrowed rapidly in the past two decades, although the pace of this progress has been uneven between regions and countries:

- Female life expectancy has increased 20 per cent faster than male life expectancy over the past two decades.
- High fertility rates, which severely restrict the freedom of choice for women, have fallen by a third – from 4.7 live births per woman in 1970-75 to 3.0 in 1990-95. Life choices are expanding as women are progressively liberated from the burden of frequent child-bearing and from the risk of dying in childbirth. Maternal mortality rates have been nearly halved in the past two decades.
- More than half the married women of reproductive age in the developing world, or their partners, used modern contraceptives in 1990, compared with less than a quarter in 1980. This planned parenthood has brought women much greater control over their lives.

In adult literacy and school enrolment, the gaps between women and men were halved between 1970 and 1990 in developing countries. Women's literacy increased from 54 per cent of the male rate in 1970 to 74 per cent in 1990 – and combined female primary and secondary enrolment increased from 67 per cent of the male rate to 86 per cent. Female rates of adult literacy and combined school enrolment in the developing world increased twice as fast as male rates between 1970 and 1990.

... But it is still an unequal world. Among the developing world's 900 million illiterate people, women outnumber men by two to one. And girls constitute 60 per cent of the 130 million children without access to primary school. Because population has grown faster than the expansion of women's education in some developing regions, the number of women who are illiterate has increased.

... Women's special health needs also suffer considerable neglect. Many developing countries do not provide qualified birth attendants, good prenatal or postnatal care or emergency care during deliveries. In most poor countries, pregnancy complications are the largest single cause of death among women in their reproductive years. Nearly half a million maternal deaths occur each year in developing countries. Too often, the miracle of life becomes a nightmare of death.

*Human Development Report 1995*

By the end of the decade, a more critical approach, best exemplified by the positions of a network of Third World activists and researchers, DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era), was linking the subordination of women to broader issues of global maldistribution and North/South power differentials. The proponents of this approach advocated forms of action based on the grassroots experiences of Third World women and their contextually defined needs. This encouraged a shift away from efficiency and poverty-based approaches to an empowerment perspective, challenging the exclusively instrumental and technocratic

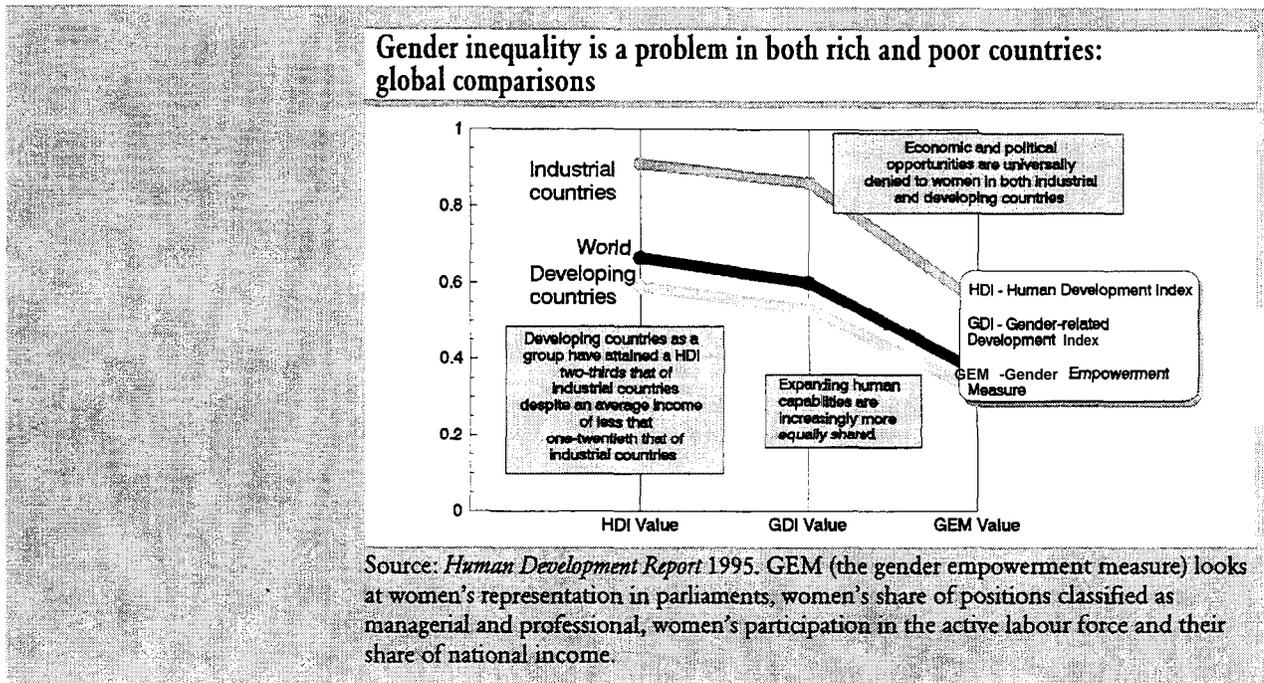
approaches of development agencies. However, the approach remained “woman-centred” in that it evinced uncritical optimism that women could somehow deliver ecologically sound and equitable development. It also skirted the issue of how self-reliance could be achieved in the context of deep financial and economic crisis.

Over the last decade, the questioning of the premises upon which notions of development are based – the critique of the universal narratives about social transformation – has found echoes in a body of feminist criticism which reveals the gender-biased and masculinist premises of discourses about human rights and citizenship in the West.

Before the 1980s it was assumed that all women shared a common oppression, that the reasons for their oppression were amenable to explanation and that a common struggle could achieve their liberation. The late 1980s witnessed a breakdown of this consensus and set the scene for an internal debate about “difference”, including the debate over multiculturalism and identity politics. In the context of this debate culture is, in fact, a double-edged concept. mobilized for positive assertions of identity, on the one hand, and invoked to ensure forced compliance to communal norms and to punish deviance, on the other. In the same way that it is not possible to subscribe to the notion of some seamless “women’s culture” based on assumptions about women’s inherent natures, so can we not condone essentialist depictions of assumed “cultural entities” devoid of any internal heterogeneity or potential for transformation. This constitutes one of the main pitfalls of appeals to cultural identity in a feminist agenda, since a discourse on “difference” designed to assert a cultural identity against a dominant Other (white, colonial or élite) can itself become imprisoning, especially for those who have least control over the production of cultural meanings and symbols.

This debate within the feminist thinking coincides with the variety of claims made in many societies in the name of cultural relativism. The fact is that a number of cultures now invoking traditional laws or religious freedom show more concern with the defence of men’s existing privileges than with the preservation of women’s rights. Indeed, we have yet to see any example of laws and codes enshrining women’s rights or privileges “being tenaciously clung to or fought over in the name of cultural integrity. To cite but one example, men’s right to polygyny is treated as a central tenet of shar’ia law in Muslim countries while women’s rights to inheritance, also encoded in law, are frequently ignored.”<sup>2</sup> It does indeed appear to be a standard pattern that certain sectors of the male population, faced with an unexpected shift in their relationship to women, should attempt to deal with it by assuming a dominant stance.

A new emphasis on gender which is a relational concept – has opened up possibilities for looking at the full range of social and cultural



institutions which reproduce gender hierarchies and gender-based inequalities. It has also restored to sexual divisions of labour their full cultural complexity. Gender issues are currently very much at the core of a variety of claims made in the name of cultural relativism. This Commission considers that when it comes to bringing about changes in societies and defining the ways and means of attaining individual and collective well-being for men and women, "the principle of cultural relativity does not seem to excuse us from exercising judgment about the function, meaning or utility of a given practice. Rather, it is a warning that this judgment must be made in terms of the cultural context in which it is embedded."<sup>3</sup> The cultural meaning of certain oppressive practices such as female genital mutilation or widow burning or female infanticide must be understood in depth, although this does not prevent the strongest condemnation.

The need therefore is for distinguishing between living cultures as everyday reality, encompassing our stock of current and transmitted knowledge about the world, and what we might label "culture-as-politics", namely self-conscious articulations about what constitutes the "true" nature of a collectivity. It is clear that, in the latter case, there will inevitably be struggles over meaning which empower certain categories of social actors as cultural brokers and which marginalize others. Although women themselves participate in such struggles, they are more often than not excluded from politics even when they are the direct target of the resulting policies, whether these be compulsory veiling, pro-natalist or anti-abortion campaigns.

The post-Beijing era confronts us with the challenge of articulating notions of cultural diversity and distinctiveness which do not merely act as a fig-leaf for covering up existing forms of hierarchy (see for example the reservations placed by some countries on the ratification CEDAW, the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) but which are enabling, energizing and liberating.

In defending women's rights on a global scale, the need is to protect the rights of women in culturally sensitive ways, bearing in mind that the definition of culture is always a politically contested exercise and that women may become the victims of the effects of cultural backlash. The *Human Development Report 1995* provides a clear indication of what is going on in the world today, and where the priorities of action are.

Areas pinpointed for change include legal equality (a goal that has not yet been achieved in many countries) and access to education and health (in order to speed up the closing of the gender gap). Change in opportunities – access to credit, managerial positions and elected governmental offices – requires a commitment by governments and powerful national and international financial institutions. This is the challenge of the future.

At the 1995 Beijing Conference, considerable emphasis was placed on the need to have more women in power. Only about 10 per cent of governmental and parliamentary positions world-wide are filled by women – a blatantly unacceptable ratio. Women must be eligible for election, and election to high office; women must be designated to high-level positions in national, regional and local government.

## “Bottom-up” perspectives

Since development initiatives take place against a background of intricate cultural forms and complex divisions of labour, their validity must be in doubt if they disregard, disrupt or destroy this delicate fabric. Especially in the area of rural development, we have become increasingly sensitized to the value of local knowledge and to the fact that, in many communities, women are crucial actors in the preservation and dissemination of such knowledge. Women are not only competent food producers, foresters, bee-keepers, silkworm tenders, poulterers and dairy farmers, but often healers and herbalists. They are also the transmitters of such knowledge through rich local oral traditions.

Some women's NGOs have responded to the challenge of evolving a “bottom-up” approach in which decisions are based on a dialogue rather than unilateral, technocratic prescriptions from development agencies. Recognizing women's existing skills and areas of competence is a first step to reducing sources of gender inequity. A substantial body of work on envi-

ronmental resource management (in social forestry, livestock production and cultivation) illustrates that sustainability, especially in fragile eco-systems, is better achieved by paying attention to the knowledge, skills and techniques of traditional producers, which include many women. This does not necessarily imply that women are naturally more environment-friendly: on the contrary, under the pressure of poverty, women, as well as men, may turn into environment depredators.

At a more general level, there is accumulated evidence that some development projects rupture existing divisions of labour by gender, without offering any viable alternatives, sometimes leaving women worse off. Being mindful of culture, in effect, means that there can be no "blueprint" for women in development: an approach evolved in sub-Saharan Africa, or designed to assist women-headed households in the Caribbean, may be, at best, totally ineffectual and, at worst, severely disruptive as in South Asia or the Middle East. This does not imply an uncritical endorsement of all existing arrangements between genders but an acknowledgment that there are many systems of meaning and action – in which women fully partake – and that there is a need to explore various potentials for growth, modification and even transformation.

An important component of gender equality, which cannot be easily quantified by standard indicators, resides in women's own perceptions of their communities. Local cultures also embody different "cultures of resistance" which women and other subaltern groups may draw upon to articulate their grievances or to seek redress. A "bottom-up" perspective aids in identifying such idioms and in taking them seriously as promoters of women's interests.

Another important issue for those favouring "bottom-up" approaches is understanding and recognizing local forms of organization, association and self-help. Women exhibit resourcefulness, creativity and initiative in solving their daily problems of sustenance and survival and often demonstrate organizational skills. There are numerous examples of such initiatives in savings clubs, credit and loan schemes, labour exchanges, and communal service provision. Development projects often bypass existing social networks to set up alternative institutions. Even if women are not bypassed, alien structures imposed upon them may not take root if they clash with previous ones. The best documented cases concern the formation of production and marketing co-operatives. The record suggests that women are bypassed and marginalized either because they lack the requisite skills (literacy, book-keeping, and so forth), or because men take over the more profitable activities, or because women's heavy and undiminished domestic burdens make attending meetings and participating in decision-making difficult (usually a combination of these). Even when projects succeed in mobilizing women, these are generally older, past childbearing responsibili-

ties and of higher standing in their communities. There is therefore a long way to go yet in devising more creative ways of enhancing women's institutional participation, since such participation is one of the keys to greater equity.

However, culturally-sensitive approaches are not a panacea: they merely weed out obvious forms of failed recognition and misrepresentation implicit in policies and projects which often produce adverse effects for women (and other less powerful groups). The resources required to ensure adequate levels of social provision – in education, sanitation, health, transportation and communication – clearly depend on more centralized allocations at the level of states or governmental districts. Local forms of self-help and self-reliance should not serve as a justification for the unavailability of necessary resources or their maldistribution. Here again, culturally sensitive development is a double-edged weapon when employed to secure more sustainable and equitable outcomes, on the one hand, and deployed to deny deprived communities access to resources by assuming they will make do with what they already know and have, on the other. Indeed, traditional health practices refine medical delivery systems and should not deprive a community of access to modern medical facilities. We therefore need to go beyond the local and national levels for a better understanding of global influences and their impact upon local cultures.

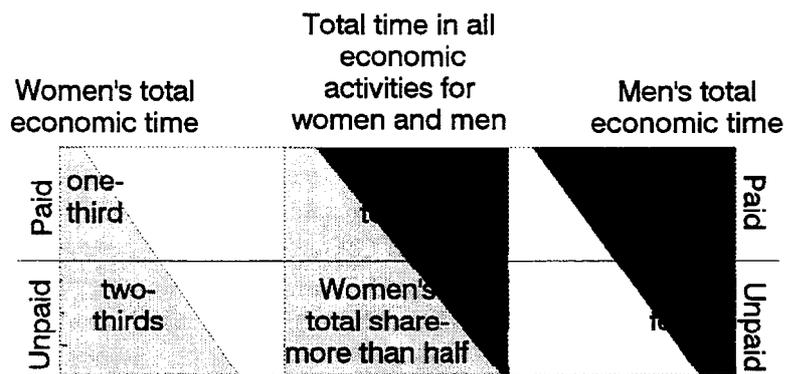
## Women at work

In many cultures, women's problem is having work that is too much and too heavy. Not only do women in these societies work hard and for long hours, but, in addition to their housework, they tend to be crowded into a restricted range of occupations such as domestic service, vending, low-status clerical work and prostitution, and excluded from higher and better-paid jobs. Women also receive lower pay when working at the same jobs as men.

The adjustment policies of the 1980s and 1990s have created additional burdens. As family income falls, women have to spend more time searching for food and preparing it. Women's issues are closely linked to environmental, energy and political issues. In Africa, the desertification, deforestation and soil erosion resulting from the cutting of firewood derives in part from the fact that women who collect fuel are poorly represented on village councils, as well as the absence or erosion of women's user or property rights.

The conceptual framework now in use to analyse women's issues incorporates the seven roles women play in life and work: parental, conjugal, domestic, kin, occupational, community and self-actualizing indi-

### Recognizing women's contribution



Source: *Human Development Report 1995*. The report estimates that around US\$16 trillion of human activities are not included in the official estimate of US\$23 trillion for global output. Of this US\$16 trillion, US\$11 trillion is the non-monetized, invisible contribution of women. A revaluation of women's work will thoroughly challenge the present conventions. If women's work is accurately reflected in national statistics, it will shatter the myth that men are the main breadwinners of the world. The basis of ownership of property rights, terms of divorce settlements, collateral requirements for bank credit – to name only a few areas where women are presently treated as economic non-entities – will completely change. Men will also have to share more of the burden of household and community work.

vidual. Data collected under these headings can provide evidence for the links between, for example, the conflict between the maternal and the occupational role and fertility, number and age of children, health, mortality and family structure. Women's roles as mothers not only limit their availability for employment on the supply side but also reduce the demand of employers for women workers and their status in the labour market.

Women and men everywhere are being affected by changes in life-cycles and labour market participation. The driving forces of this transformation are demographic, economic and ideological. Life expectancy has increased, families are having fewer children, and some human indicators have recently improved. Meanwhile migration and urbanization are changing the composition and division of labour in countless households and technologies have disrupted the earlier interdependence of male and female activities in rural households. Technologies have also reduced the demand for physical strength, which used to give men a competitive edge in the labour market. Women's role as mothers and wives is increasingly combined with such professional activities as managers of a widening range of social relationships and as professional workers in the economy. Cultural values are going through mutations to adapt to these new patterns of private and public life.

All these changes are occurring in different paces and at different rates in countries and regions. Global influences are having different local gender-specific effects.

Globalization and economic interdependence create new forms of decentralization of production and organization of work in which women are participating increasingly. Commentators on workforce patterns in newly industrializing countries sometimes go so far as to argue that industrialization is as much "female-led" as it is "export-led." This is obviously a response to the fact that the workforce in many export processing zones in the textile, optics and electronics industries includes large numbers of women, many of them young, unskilled and unmarried. The principal reforms needed here are improvements in the quality of life at work, the upgrading of skills, greater stability of jobs and the creation of better prospects for alternative employment, including self-employment, for laid-off women. This relatively new and much discussed phenomenon does not involve a major share of female workers, although this share is increasing. In developing countries women are still mainly concentrated in agriculture and in the informal sectors of rural and urban economies. Unlike men, who are often unemployed or underemployed, women suffer from too much and too heavy work, though this is often not taken into account.

New divisions of labour present cultural dilemmas, and generate a certain amount of malaise and debate. Indeed, what are the implications of a young unmarried girl finding herself as the only stable breadwinner in a

Belen Mersado, a mother of three, is planning to leave her Manila home again. She is one of the 2,3 million Filipinas working abroad. Until recently, men were the ones to migrate. Today they represent only 35 per cent of the country's estimated 3,5 million expatriate workers. Belen's first overseas experience dates back to the late 1980s when for four years she worked sixteen hours a day as a domestic servant for US\$250 a month in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Her second trip to the Middle East ended abruptly after nine months of fighting for the promised salary of US\$200 a month instead of the 150 she was actually paid.

For many women, it is a desperate last resort. For others it is a way out of domestic problems and a chance to travel. Social and personal costs of motherless homes are high. On the other hand, Belen says she is proud that she can send her children to university.

"Working women leave home", in *Maimichi Daily News*,  
11 June 1995

low-income household? What are the implications for the marital contract of women being main breadwinners in areas of high male unemployment? They can easily be perceived as a threat to existing age-gender hierarchies and patterns of authority within households. On the other hand, what happens in developed countries if women want employment in certain lines of activity, but none is available? Will young women, as happens now in many Western European countries, see their formative years go by with no possibility of applying their skills? In societies in transition, such as those of Central and Eastern Europe, how are women participating in rebuilding their societies for democracy and the market economy?

Women's rights in Central and Eastern Europe offer some of the best illustrations of the paradoxes inherent in the move from a centrally planned to a market economy. Women have been adversely affected by the loss of welfare provision in the areas of child-care, health and education; the increase in gender segregation in job markets is forcing more women into informal sector and part-time work, and ideologies of maternal responsibility are inviting them to retreat into domesticity.

The value attached to domesticity has to be seen in the context of a backlash against official policies in which women's demands include recapturing their lost femininity and reverting to a "natural" division of labour disrupted by the artificial impositions of Communist regimes. This valorization of the family and the private sphere finds parallels in new nationalistic sentiments, which claim "authenticity", against the imposed "internationalism" of Communist regimes, and kindles essentialism discourses about gender (i.e. what "real" men and women are meant to be) and about primordial identities (expressed in ethnic or religious terms). At the same time, the rhetoric about family and national values does not shield women from the effects of deregulation in the context of generally low levels of growth or even reduced incomes and production, effects which are plainly evident in the dramatic increase of young women resorting to prostitution. It is also legitimizing new forms of discrimination which have marginalized women's participation in economic and political life. It remains to be seen whether women will be able to organize themselves into pressure groups, voluntary associations and social movements in order to claim their rightful place in newly emerging civil societies.

Cultures are not inert entities, merely there to be disrupted by the action of changing global economic demand. Rather, men and women from different cultures actively shape the ways in which such demand is met. We still have a very partial and inadequate understanding of how culturally specific both the patterns of female labour supply and their consequences have actually been. Very little attention has been paid to influences other than those of states and markets. This neglect may be squarely attributed to a general failure to look at culture as an integral part

of the society, and this neglect has nowhere been more detrimental than in understanding gender-based divisions of labour and systems of resource allocation. Employment promotion policies for women have not paid sufficient attention to this dimension and comparative work in this area should be a priority for research.

## **Drawing together and apart**

Unprecedented population movements across borders and continents set the scene for a heightened awareness of cultural differences, and in some instances reflect and create disparities in power and privilege which fuel resentment and conflict.

Successive waves of migration, both legal and illegal, have brought a variety of new cultural groups into so-called "host" communities. While men often show passive resistance to change, it is the women who have generally borne the brunt of its destructive effects on cultural dynamics because they have been caught between two opposing forces: between a practical pressure to change, and a moral (male and female) pressure not to do so. Women, both in immigrant communities and in countries affected by the forces of change, are generally less assimilated, both culturally and linguistically, into the wider society. They are thus considered the guardians, practically the symbols, of cultural particularisms. Immigrant women reproduce their culture in a new context by the continued use of their native language, by the persistence of culinary and other habits, and by exercising their responsibility for the socialization of the young. Even in their native land, women of minority communities are more inclined to keep to themselves than are the men who have more frequent contacts with the dominant culture through easier access to schooling, through dealings with state bureaucracies or daily contacts at work. Even women's dress and deportment serve as indicators of cultural differences.

But even in majority communities women are controlled in different ways in order to demarcate and preserve the identity of national and ethnic collectivities. For instance, regulations concerning whom a woman may marry and the legal status of their offspring aim at reproducing the symbolic identity of their group. Until recently, white South African women were forbidden by law to have sexual relations with men of other groups. Similarly Muslim societies do not usually condone their women marrying out of the faith, although no such strictures exist for men since Islam is transmitted through the male line. In addition, women's reproductive rights and choices may be severely curtailed in the service of nationalist policies (pro-natalist or otherwise), or in the name of religious dogma. This makes women hostages to their immediate communities and often deprives

them of their full rights as citizens, even when such rights are enshrined in national constitutions. These conditions are exacerbated in situations of communal strife or ethnic and national conflicts, where definitions of “us” against “them” introduce stereotyped language stressing cultural distinctiveness that make women’s conduct crucial to the constitution of identity.

Together with more or less permanent migrations, tourism represents another major population flux and vector of change and exchange, particularly for many low-income countries that have pinned great hopes and substantial investments in this sector. Tourism has incited people to define, commodify and “package” their culture for foreign consumption. In many regions, however, tourism has had very mixed effects on women. They may benefit from the expansion of service sector jobs, either as salaried personnel or as small entrepreneurs, but many of them have been drawn into the fastest growing sector of the leisure industry: prostitution. So-called “sex-tourism” has had predictably nefarious consequences and, in the age of AIDS, some of these at least are far from remaining merely local. Also, an international traffic in women - often illegal and clandestine - leaves an increasing number of vulnerable individuals at the mercy of unscrupulous brokers and middlemen. This seamier side of the global market understandably prompts appeals for a return to a virtuous order through tighter control over women’s movements and sexuality.

The dramatic increase in refugees as a result of war, ethnic strife, political repression and natural disasters represents one of the most acute forms of dislocation of culture and habitat that results in the erosion of normative obligations towards weaker members of groups such as women and children. Human communities, no matter how unequal and hierarchical their gender orders may be, usually display some form of reciprocity of obligation, often based on kinship ties, which may act as a safety net in times of ordinary distress. In the exceptional conditions of the present, in which distress is sometimes disproportionate and community structure is being pulled apart, we witness the total breakdown of such normative arrangements. Studies of famines, for instance, suggest that a disproportionate number of women of child-bearing age lose their lives as a result of their relative inability to obtain food for their children or themselves, and because they are left to their own devices when all are obliged to fend for themselves. Such vulnerability is further heightened in times of war, and it is a significant development that rape has finally been formally recognized as a war crime since the inception of the Bosnian conflict.

## Equity versus efficiency

There are two grounds on which women's rights can be asserted: that of equity and that of efficiency. Equity (which refers to equality of opportunities and choices) calls for an end to being a disadvantaged, second-rate, underprivileged group. Women have been discriminated against in education, income, consumption, status and access to power; they have in many countries a worse health record than men; they suffer from social, cultural and legal discrimination and often from violence.

Exponents of the efficiency model point to the fact that discrimination in the workplace against women means that half of humankind is not properly used: women are a grossly under-utilized resource. If properly used, total production would increase and everybody would benefit.

The removal of discrimination on grounds of inequity and of inefficiency points partly to the same policies, but there can also be conflict. The conflict illustrates one aspect of two distinct views of development: the

### **While doors to education and health opportunities have opened rapidly for women, the doors to economic and political opportunities are barely ajar**

Poverty has a woman's face – of 1.3 billion people in poverty, 70 per cent are women. The increasing poverty among women has been linked to their unequal situation in the labour market, their treatment under social welfare systems and their status and power in the family.

Women's labour force participation has risen by only four percentage points in 20 years – from 36 per cent in 1970 to 40 per cent in 1990. This should be compared with that with a two-thirds increase in female adult literacy and school enrolment.

Women receive a disproportionately small share of credit from formal banking institutions. They are assumed to have no collateral to offer – despite working much harder than men. For example, in Latin America and the Caribbean, women constitute only 7 to 11 per cent of the beneficiaries of credit programmes.

Women normally receive a much lower average wage than men, because they hold low-paying jobs or work in the informal sector and because they are sometimes paid less than men for equal work. The average female wage is only three-fourths of the male wage in the non-agricultural sector in 55 countries that have no comparable data.

All regions record a higher rate of unemployment among women than men.

In developing countries, women still constitute less than a seventh of administrators and managers.

Women still occupy only 10 per cent of parliamentary seats and only 6 per cent of cabinet positions.

In 55 countries, there are either no women in parliament or fewer than 5 per cent.

*Human Development Report 1995*

human resource developers' view that human beings are a resource, an input, an instrument for development, from the investment in which economic returns are to be expected; and the humanitarians' view that people are ends in themselves, and that improving their education, health and status does not need to be justified in terms of economic returns. Different solutions may be indicated and different political constituencies may have to be mobilized according to which view is dominant. For the achievement of equity, the redistribution of resources, status and power from men to women is necessary. This reduces inequality and calls for an end of discrimination against women and for sacrifices by men. Not all men in all cultures are prepared to render these voluntarily.

Interventions and policies to rectify injustice and inefficiency require first a political and ideological commitment by governments. As Cecilia Lopez and M. Ronderos say, "The aim is to design economic policy with a social outlook, and social policy with a gender perspective."<sup>4</sup>

There are at least four areas where such policies can be devised and applied. First, redistributive strategies are to be devised and equity has to be introduced as a key criterion for decisions on macroeconomic policy. A gender perspective can be introduced into macroeconomic policy only as a substantive part of the issue of equity. For instance, macroeconomic policies determine the relative prices of tradable and non-tradable goods, and of exportable and importable. Where women tend to be concentrated in the non-tradables sector (as in most of Africa) a shift to tradables, the aim of adjustment policies, can be expected to redistribute incomes away from women. Hence the need for redress.

Second, there are social services to meet basic needs and eliminate poverty. There is a direct link between social expenditure and women's welfare. The experience of Latin America in the 1980s shows that a reduction in social expenditure on health and education leads to an increase in women's work, which has to compensate for the decline in the public contribution. As a result, women suffer a decline in their health and their income, and an increase in the time worked. Rural water programmes or research into efficient, low-cost cooking stoves would free women's time, which can be used for production, or political participation or leisure. From the point of view of cost-benefit analysis, it has been shown that the education of girls yields higher returns, as well as better child welfare and lower family size, than that of boys. The current bias in most cultures is, however, to favour the education of boys.

A much discussed question is whether poverty has been feminizing. Women are especially serious victims of discrimination and poverty for several reasons:

- (1) they work for longer hours than men; in addition to their market activities, they do housework;

- (2) partly for this reason, their chances of seizing new and better paid work opportunities are poorer than men's;
- (3) they suffer reduced access to paid employment;
- (4) their access to political power is severely limited;
- (5) they earn less than men for the same work;
- (6) they have less access to education; and
- (7) widows in many societies face additional barriers to employment and remarriage, condemning them to continuing poverty.<sup>5</sup>

Poverty therefore tends to be more frequently chronic than transitory for women. A gender perspective should guide a model of social policy that goes beyond the fight against poverty. It should integrate the various disadvantaged sectors of society in production and consumption.

Third, modernization policies involve the improvement of the living standards of the people and the growth of productivity, creativity and the potential of all citizens. These objectives are to be achieved by improved access to the factors of production, new technologies, training, scientific education, and to cultural life and the arts. In so far as women have been discriminated against in their access to the factors of production and remain the objects of discrimination and segregation, these barriers should clearly be removed.

The fourth area of government action is the introduction of policies for the development of citizenship. Women have been largely absent from the administration of justice, political power and information. Yet women have shown that they have organizational abilities that could be mobilized. A particularly important question is, how can the political pressures for improving the lot of women be built up? Some policies for reducing gender inequality are positive-sum games, and for them the support of men can be enlisted. Efficiency in the achievement of many development goals is of this kind: poverty reduction, growth, modernization, demographic transition, and so on. Better utilization of resources raises not only female, but also male living standards. But others are zero-sum games, challenging male privileges. Issues of equity and equality (social justice) relate to redistribution of income, assets and power from men to women. There are now huge inequalities of ownership of assets and differential returns on these assets. (The latter indicates inefficiencies.) Hence opposition by (some) men is to be expected and the political economy of creating a political base for these policies points to the empowerment of women, as well as appeals to fairness in men.

## **Areas of policy priority**

The Commission considers that it is now time to broaden the discussion of strategies and actions that encompass fundamental changes in the structure of society in countries and regions that are transforming women's lives so profoundly, and direct them to help women cope with these new situations and take their own decisions. In the light of the above considerations, the following areas are priorities:

### **Women's rights as human rights**

As indicated earlier, some of the most serious consequences of debates concerning universalist vs. cultural relativism have been felt in the area of women's rights. It is in this area that protestations about cultural distinctiveness and religious freedom are most frequently heard. The Commission stresses that the international community and the United Nations system should honour their duties of norm-setting and monitoring for women's rights and should make it a general practice to co-ordinate monitoring at international level of women's rights, both through extensive national policy reviews and the development of criteria for such monitoring in different fields such as education, the law, employment, immigration, welfare services, violence and so on. There is a need for quantitative measurement, for a composite set of cultural and rights indicators to assess women's rights. There are areas that require improved legislation for women and promote the exchange of experience among governments in the application of improved legislation. Finally, legal or rights awareness programmes which inform women of existing laws and help them to evaluate them critically are also needed.

### **Reproductive freedom**

Reproductive choice was long equated with population control in the interests of social and economic development. However, as suggested by the conclusions of the 1994 United Nations Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, freedom of choice for both women and men in deciding the number and spacing of their children, in securing their free access to methods of family planning and respect for their sexual choices, has emerged as an item of their human dignity. Given that different cultural interpretations of reproductive "choices" are evident, as are the wide discrepancies in culturally sanctioned forms of sexual conduct, the Commission recommends that international agencies and national governments

enact, apply and enforce culturally sensitive policies that enhance rather than curtail choice, aiding individuals to make informed rather than ignorant, free rather than coerced decisions.

### **Gender-aware planning as culturally-sensitive planning**

Since the area of gender is plainly one of the most important points of entry for an understanding of the local effects of development, being aware of some of the failures experienced by the "Women in Development" approaches that targeted women as the only beneficiaries, and aiming at a culturally sensitive development, the Commission recommends that international co-operation agencies and United Nations development bodies encourage a gender-aware approach in their planning and project cycles. This means integrating from the beginning women's concerns, needs and interests into their design, resource allocation, execution and evaluation. These bodies should make it a general practice to work at the level of the concrete, trying to understand local idioms of gender co-operation and conflict and avoid the imposition of cultural 'packages' that abstract women from the complex and culturally specific webs of relationship they are enmeshed in, thus producing apathy, resistance or non-sustainability in the longer term.

### **Enhancing the civic and cultural participation of women**

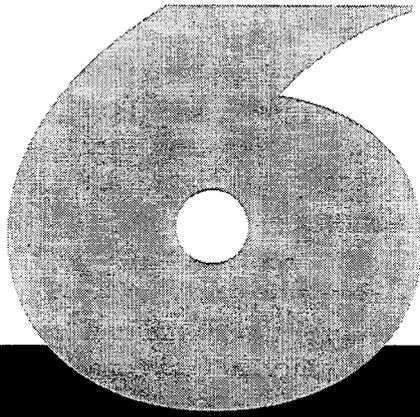
Awareness of the dramatic changes experienced by women across the world has not been translated into corresponding levels of their participation and influence in public life, or into recognition that women's civic participation and hence cultural presence in the mainstream is severely constrained by the marginal and undersourced nature of their organized activities. The Commission recommends that the international community and national governments should commit themselves to promote direct political participation of women in elective, professional and executive capacities. Also, that they should continue to strengthen and expand existing channels of direct support for organized forms of women's institutional involvement in the areas in which women's associations operate such as information, resource centres, refuges for battered women, professional associations (artists, media), associations for the promotion of local arts and handicrafts, charities and local and international NGOs.

The above four priorities point to diverse possibilities for both research and projects at the international, regional and national levels, which could include the following:

- (a) A comprehensive evaluation of studies on gender and development with a view to generating case-studies illustrating the cultural patterns of development. This material already exists but has to be examined and re-evaluated.
- (b) The links between cultures and economies are poorly understood and require systematic study. This lacuna is particularly apparent in explaining different patterns of women's labour-force participation. Comparative research on different outcomes of the interactions between culture and economy should also be integrated into a broader typology.
- (c) Systematic and comparative inquiries into women's organizations, movements and civic participation rates in a longitudinal perspective would shed light on the diverse patterns of civil society and political culture and point the way to programmes of ending discrimination.

## Notes

1. The importance of the gender discourse dates back at least to the colonial period when it was used to render morally justifiable its project of eradicating the cultures of colonized people. In it, women became the embodiment of "tradition". See H. Mani, "Contentious Traditions: the Debate on Sati in Colonial India" in *Recasting Women - Essays in Colonial History*, K. Sangari and S. Vaid eds., Delhi.
2. Deniz Kandiyoti, "Gender, Culture and Development", paper prepared for the Commission, March 1995. The analysis in this chapter is based mostly upon this contribution. The Commission is also grateful to Dr Farida Shaheed for her comments and suggestions.
3. Clifford R. Barnett, "Is There a Scientific Basis in Anthropology for the Ethics of Human Anthropology", in Theodore E. Downing and Gilbert Kushner, eds. *Human Rights and Anthropology*, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
4. This section draws on Cecilia Lopez's work. See especially: Cecilia Lopez and Margarita Ronderos Torres, "Reforma social con perspectiva de genero: aportes para la discusión", paper presented at the Conference on Women in the Americas: Participation and development. BID-CEPAL-UNIFEM, Guadalajara, Mexico, April 1994.
5. See Michael Lipton, 'Growing Points in Poverty Research: Labour Issues', paper prepared for a symposium on "Poverty: New Approaches to Analysis and Policy", organized by the International Institute for Labour Studies, Geneva, 22-24 November 1993.



**CHILDREN  
AND  
YOUNG  
PEOPLE**

Today

*We are guilty of so many errors and  
many faults.*

*But our worst crime is abandoning the  
children,*

*Neglecting the fountain of life.*

*Many of the things we need can wait,  
the child cannot.*

*Right now is the time.*

*His bones are being formed*

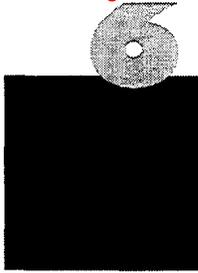
*His blood is being made*

*And his senses are being developed.*

*To him we cannot answer 'Tomorrow:*

*His name is 'Today;*

Gabriela Mistral



In most parts of the world young people and children are a majority of the population. Indeed, no generation has ever been so numerous and so young: roughly one-fifth of the world's population is between 15 and 24 years old. While the number of young people in the high income countries will decline between now and the year 2000, there will be a large increase in the young age groups in the developing countries. In these countries, young people and children will make up over 50 per cent of the population as the third millennium begins. These numbers testify to the unprecedented nature and enormity of the challenges posed to contemporary societies by the presence of young people and children in their midst.

No generation in the history of humanity has been faced with such swift and sustained transformations as the present one. These rapid changes profoundly affect the living conditions of children everywhere and need to be taken into account if children are to become full participants in the world of tomorrow. How can societies ensure the economic inclusion, civic and cultural participation, health and educational needs of all? How can they best respond to the aspirations and dreams of the young? Most importantly perhaps, how can the new generations learn to get along in the future, how can we construct a world in which the defences of peace are built in institutional settings and in their minds?

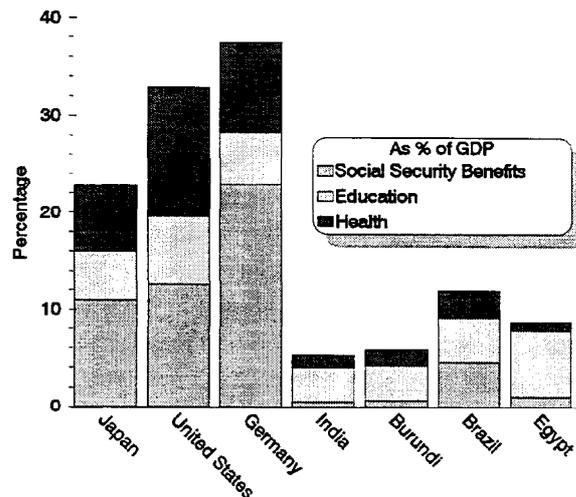
Many of the answers to these challenges can and will come from young people themselves, if they are given a chance to express themselves. The potential is considerable. In spite of enormous disparities in education, no generation has ever been as literate, as aware of the multicultural nature of the world, as informed of existing inequalities and conflicts, as the present one. Rather than be treated as passive consumers and indifferent spectators of their own destiny, they should become involved as active agents and participants in the life of their communities.

### Listening to the voices of children

The task may seem particularly daunting in view of the great inequities still facing young people, and of the plight of children who are often the first victims of violence in their society. For example, it is estimated that 1.5 million children have been killed in armed conflicts in the last decade alone. Old problems of child abuse, exploitation and slave-work have resurfaced in full force: over 100 million "street children" in the world are excluded from the family of humanity. Millions of children need to be rescued from the degrading conditions of slave labour where their basic health, education and well-being are sacrificed.

There can be no single universally applicable solution to the victimization of children across the world. Each situation presents different con-

### Social expenditure in selected countries, 1992



Source: *Human Development Report, 1994.*

texts and priorities. Yet, three approaches are essential: to educate, to protect and to listen.

Consider some stylized facts. Forty per cent of the population in the South is under 15 years old; twenty per cent in the North. The percentage of the population between 5 and 15 years old and to be educated is therefore twice as large. The developing countries enjoy at best 1/20 (in some cases only 1/200) of the national income of rich countries. Teachers' salaries there are four or five times the national average (in Africa seven times); in rich countries they are near or below the average. Hence eight to ten times the resources of a much smaller total national income have to be devoted to primary and secondary education. The task appears daunting.

But many of these countries, in spite of their low incomes, spend funds on unnecessary prestige projects, on loss-making public enterprises that subsidize the middle class, and, above all, on their military. There is also often large capital flight from these countries. Within the social sectors, tertiary education and health care for the children of the urban middle class absorb many times the funds needed for primary education and preventive rural health services. In 1988, Iraq and Somalia spent five times as much on their military than on all education and health; Ethiopia, Nicaragua, Oman, Pakistan and Syria between two and three times as much, and even Tanzania spent more than 100 per cent. The ratio of soldiers to teachers is 6.25 in Iraq, 5.91 in Somalia, 4.16 in Ethiopia, 3.50 in Nicaragua, 3.02 in Syria, 3.00 in Mauritania, 2.91 in Vietnam, 2.80 in Singapore, 2.69 in the United Arab Emirates and 2.60 in Cyprus. Costa

Rica alone, the only country in the world which has no army, has a ratio of zero and no poverty to speak of, while the Vatican City has a ratio of infinity: it has no teachers. Military as a percentage of combined education and health expenditure was in 1990/91: 373 in Syria, 293 in Oman, 271 in Iraq, 222 in Myanmar, 208 in Angola, 200 in Somalia, 192 in Qatar, 190 in Ethiopia, 151 in Saudi Arabia, 138 in Jordan, and so on.<sup>1</sup>

The benefits of basic mass education, particularly in the poorest countries, are substantial. Above all, it is an end in itself. Access to the store of human knowledge is the right of every human being. Second, it leads to higher productivity. A well-nourished, alert, educated, trained, healthy, well-motivated labour force is more efficient and productive than an unskilled, undernourished, weak, diseased, inert, apathetic work-force. Third, it leads to lower reproductivity. Educated parents desire a smaller family. The schooling of females in particular leads to a decline in infant mortality; a decline in fertility; a decline in morbidity; a reduction in school drop-out rates; better educated children; a reduction in child labour; a reduction in inequality and greater occupational mobility. Fourth, education is good for the environment. Uneducated, poor people contribute to and are the main victims of local environmental degradation such as soil erosion, deforestation and desertification. Fifth, it promotes social stability, participation in civic activities and the formation of social capital. And sixth, it can promote political stability if satisfying, productive and remunerative jobs are created for the educated, so that they do not swell the ranks of the educated unemployed. The latter tend to be a hotbed of disgruntlement rather than a source of productive activity.

Compulsory universal primary education should precede economic growth. It is essential, not only for laying the foundations of a skilled labour force, but also for the elimination of child labour. The employment of children worsens the lot of the poor. Child labour depresses wages and displaces adults. Educated children have higher lifetime earnings, their health and safety improve, and unemployed adults find jobs if children are removed. Child labour is not only the result of poverty but one of its causes. Education is a basic human right but it is also an obligation. It is an obligation for parents and governments. The failure to eliminate child labour is the result of wrong human and social attitudes, not merely of poverty or of the pressure of interest groups. Children represent the future. Investing in them as members of the future labour force, and, more important, caring for them as human beings, should be a top priority. Compulsory primary and secondary education, realistically enforced, and compensating families for the lost earnings of their children would be important first steps; the elimination of child labour would make room for the employment of young adults. The market, left to itself, can lead to cruel exploitation of children and the neglect of young people.

By asserting children's rights we refer not only to nutrition, health and education, but also to an end of exploitation, and of the labour of barely educated children. We are aware of the difficulties and the arguments on the other side (not being exploited at all can be worse than being exploited, work can be a form of education, education leads to the desire for urban jobs, and so forth).

The challenges of education for victimized or underprivileged children call for flexible and adaptable approaches. Education should reach the unreached, and include the excluded. Acutely aware of this problem, more than 300 agencies are working with street children in seventeen Philippine cities. The Bahay Tuluyan Centre in Manila, created in April 1989, is one of them. As part of its children-teaching-children experiment ("the Junior Educators programmes"), a group of young people provides street children with the fundamentals they need to function effectively in society. The programme employs non-conventional teaching methods such as drama, song and painting. Children's daily lives are made the themes for discussion and performance. Children are encouraged to compose songs, write poems, take photographs or produce plays or dances related to their group discussions.

Protection is another essential element. It involves the recognition of the child's inherent right to a full life; the consideration of the best interests of the child as a primary consideration in policy-making; the protection of children against discrimination and exploitation. This is the message of the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, by which signatory countries are committed to a broad range of legislative, administrative, social and educational measures concerning children. As of 1 August 1995, the Convention had been ratified by 176 countries.

As shown by the implementation of this Convention, the success of any effort to improve the well-being and opportunities of children must rest not only on sound principles, but also on the realization that respect for basic rights is a long-term social project, involving a profound understanding of the constraints and capacities of specific countries. Local circumstances often raise complex cultural, economic, social and political barriers to immediate, durable and effective relief. The aim should be to involve partners at all levels - from local actors and NGOs to ministries and eminent moral authorities - and bring them to the realization that there is a convergence of interest between agents of civil society and public institutions in seeing children universally protected against hunger, disease and exploitation, and in identifying them as both the most vulnerable members in the human family and the most precious resource for the future. Violence to children, including sexual violence (incest, rape and molestation) and hidden violence within the family, is part of the larger problem of interpersonal and group violence. The complexity of the task

can never serve as a pretext for inactivity. Violence against children, especially female children (including female genital mutilation and selective female infanticide)<sup>2</sup> and exploitation of children are sometimes justified by their perpetrators in the name of cultural difference. It must be re-emphasized that respect for different cultures should not be used to deny children their basic human rights in the name of cultural diversity.

Perhaps the most constructive attitude is to solicit and listen to the views of the children themselves. They are their own best advocates, and in the process can become the advocates of others, as Iqbal Masih (the 12-year old Pakistani killed in 1995) was able to do by recounting to audiences of adults and children his experience as a victim of *peshgi* - the debt contracted by a family with local usurers and redeemed with enslaved labour. Iqbal had been sold into slavery to carpet manufacturers by his parents for \$12 when he was four years old to work off a family debt. An assassin's bullet ended his short, tragic life on Easter Sunday, as he rode a bicycle outside his grandmother's home. This system uses 8 million Pakistani children in carpet and brick factories where they are frequently chained to their stations and beaten. The situation in India is similar. If compulsory schooling were to be enforced, this form of exploitation would end. But poor families would have to be compensated for the loss of their children's earnings.

Listening to children presupposes that effective platforms be given to the expression of their voices. In cultural institutions and in the media, the creativity and capacity of children to contribute to cultural development should be explicitly recognized and nurtured. Expression by and for children should be encouraged.

In Benin, the challenge of bringing children, education and cultural heritage together was successfully taken up in 1991-1992 by the "Centre des Activités du Bénin" (CAEB), an NGO which chose the Honmè Museum (former palace of the Porto Novo kings in Benin) to familiarize children with the relation between school curriculum and museum exhibits. A concordance was thus established between disciplines and museum lessons, such as: "history" and "the Kingdom of Porto Novo"; "mathematics" and "figures, the rectangle"; "civics" and "respect for customs"; "sports" and "walking"; "drawing" and "drawing of ancient artifacts".<sup>3</sup>

## **Promoting the participation and employment of young people**

The dominant discourse of modernity has stressed the irrelevance of the past, encouraged skepticism about traditions and indigenous cultures, and in many cases discredited the indispensable parental model and weakened

the ties between generations. Parents themselves, perplexed by the immense and ceaseless transformations of the world, are often no longer sure of where they stand, what they should do, or whether their behaviour is suitable in relating to the young. Most societies today - the industrialized ones certainly, but most others too - are caught in the turbulent waters of a historical transition in which the patterns of relationship which formerly defined the identities of individuals are muddied.

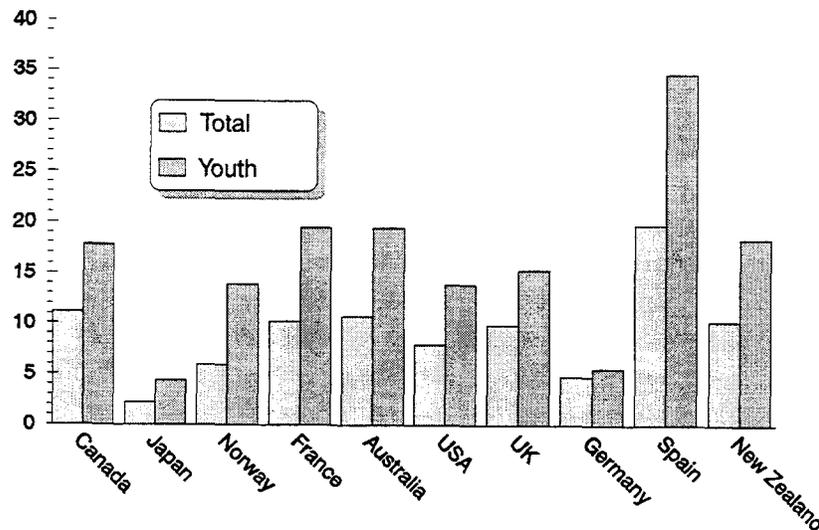
Already in 1983, studies commissioned by the Office of the Japanese Prime Minister revealed that only one Japanese youth out of five felt that his family actually gave some meaning to his life. Another survey devoted to a thousand high-school students concluded that only ten per cent of them felt they could respect their parents, while 43 per cent saw nobody deserving their respect.<sup>4</sup> Such figures may be considered all the more significant since respect for elders has long been a dominant trait in Japan.

Unfulfilled expectations among many of them have led to a massive loss of confidence in governments and politics. The point is painfully illustrated by what has emerged from the Aum Shinrikyo inquiry in Japan. This sect had managed to assemble a whole "ministry" of bright and competent young people - chemists, specialists in aerospace physics, heart surgeons and the like - graduates from Japan's top universities. What had attracted them to this implausible cult? The fact that it gave meaning to their lives: "I did not want my life to be meaningless," said one of them.<sup>5</sup> Their intensive, high-level university training undoubtedly gave them a formidable mastery of scientific know-how but, as this candid admission clearly suggests, not an iota of "know-why" - no sense of meaningful purpose or value. The problem is by no means limited to any one country and the success of this millenarian sect is an eloquent indicator of what many societies around the world are failing to give young people: a sense of purpose, inclusion, participation and fulfilment.

Modes of development that provoke such fractures not only weaken the ability of the young to make sense of change, to think critically about the world, but may actually weaken their ability to participate fully in the life of the community and diminish their desire to contribute to its future. Young people are more politically aware than their parents were: they have the potential and will to participate in civic and cultural life, but in a more self-determined and issue-specific way. They want to be able to play a role in the decision-making process.

The Commission therefore considers that governments have the responsibility of introducing and consolidating educational, social and cultural strategies developed by and for youth. A thorough re-evaluation of concepts and policies directed towards the understanding of the needs and aspirations of young people is becoming urgent. Their active and direct involvement in the development of their country and communities, and

### Unemployment strikes young people in particular in industrialized countries



Source: *Human Development Report, 1994.*

their presence in the building of a democratic society should be further promoted. It is important to allow young people to take part in decision-making and in the conception, design and implementation of all youth-oriented programmes.

Societies need also to provide landmarks. In a society that sometimes rewards expressions of hatred and violence in the media, an essential part of the socialization of young people lies in the definition of clear boundaries of acceptable and permissible social behaviour. It is important to identify new potentialities as well. Young people are the recipients, consumers and beneficiaries of new technologies and new media – satellite broadcasting, CDs, CD-ROMs, video-recording, computers and computer networks. They are also the privileged vehicle of those innovations, the most powerful source of inspiration for their constant evolution, and the creators of new forms of expression in media. By appropriating these latter for their own cultural ends, they make sense of them for people of their generation.

Many factors contribute to the marginalization of young people, such as rapid population growth and the widening gap between rich and poor. Employment is the crucial step to establishing a degree of independence in any society. It means being able to establish one's own household and to found a family. Yet in both industrialized and developing countries the number of unemployed and under-employed young people is dramatically

increasing. Youngsters entering the labour force do not find jobs and may live without ever having known paid employment. They become demoralized and a potential source of violence and social upheavals, quite apart from the waste of productive capacity. As future parents of children, they are poor role models and tend to perpetuate unemployment. In addition, today's careers have ceased to be so certain or linear. "Life-time" jobs, especially in the growing service sector, are all but extinct. This fosters a sense of chronic marginalization.

In sub-Saharan Africa, a person under 25 years is three times as likely to be unemployed as a person over 25; this is partly the result of the high rate of population growth. Opinions differ as to whether youth unemployment is a problem that will be solved in time, as the young gain experience and become older and as government policies improve, or whether it is a structural problem, so that they become permanently unemployable. At the same time, protection against child labour is essential and can make a contribution to the employment of young adults.

What remedies are considered appropriate for the problems of youth unemployment depends upon the underlying theory. A neoclassical approach will emphasize the need to reduce wages, to raise the cost of capital, and to reduce the rigidity of labour markets. A structuralist approach will emphasize the need for education and training in skills that are in demand, for research into appropriate technologies, for changing attitudes to work, and for creating the right kind of institutions for credit, information and technology. A Keynesian approach will stress the need to expand aggregate demand and the supply of factors co-operating with labour. In wartime Britain, when demand for labour was insatiable, structural, frictional and regional, unemployment disappeared rapidly. A combination of all three approaches may well be necessary in some countries.

Throughout the world, young people have moved from traditional, rural localities to more industrialized centres. Particularly vulnerable, they find themselves in places where they often discover all the negative and dangerous aspects of industrialized, urban life. The resulting alienation and distress gives rise to a range of social ills. Juvenile delinquency and prostitution, together with alcohol and drug abuse, have become a worldwide scourge. Thousands of young people (many barely in their teens) die every day from addiction to drugs.

The Commission considers it essential to identify new educational and training strategies that favour the integration of young people into the world of work. Education and literacy are a precondition of all democratic participation, especially in the elective process and in the exercise of democratic rights. Indeed, democratic values today are no longer viewed as an imported model outside Europe and North America. For young people everywhere, they are basic.

## A sense of self: cultures of youth and children

### Potentials and challenges of education

Three and a half decades have passed since the right to education was recognized as a fundamental human right (Convention against Discrimination in Education, 1960). Yet this fundamental right is still denied to some 885 million people and to 28.8 per cent of women and girls. The potential of young people cannot be achieved without ensuring this right and the democratization of access to education. This right is often denied in the name of “culture” and “cultural” norms. It should be recognized that education in all its forms *is* human development.

Education has improved over the past decade; adult literacy rates have increased, while inequalities in literacy rates between countries have decreased; the “schooling gap” between most countries in the South and developed countries today is less than four years, and approaches or reaches parity in certain cases.<sup>6</sup> Three-fourths of the world population are now literate, against a little more than two-thirds in 1980, and the figure is expected to rise to about 80% by the year 2000. The size of this transformation and its probable impact on cultural and economic demands and practices cannot be underestimated. From 1995 to 2010, the adult literacy rate is expected to climb from 77.4 per cent to 83.1 per cent.’

But it is important to qualify this piece of good news, first, because “literacy” is a changing and socially conditioned notion. To the extent that they can be trusted, literacy figures are only one indicator of educational change, and but a partial indicator of the relative adequacy of access to knowledge. Gauging the progress made in the ability of individuals to adapt to a world in constant change requires a broader understanding of the numerous social, economic, cultural and political circumstances that limit the positive effects of literacy. Thus, it is not sufficient to educate. One must also use the educated well, in particular by offering to the young the possibilities to use their acquired knowledge and to contribute fully to society. What is the use of a diploma, if there are no jobs available or if one is overqualified for the available jobs? In France, while higher education registration reached 32 per cent of the 19-21 age group in 1993, about one-third of students leave the University without a degree.<sup>8</sup>

Secondly, the benefits of the educational “New Deal” are very unequally distributed: in addition, the number of primary-school-age children who do not in fact attend school was estimated at 107 million in 1988, 90 million of whom lived in South Asia and in sub-Saharan Africa. In many countries, more than half the children simply do not attend school.<sup>9</sup> Thus, humanity will enter the twenty-first century with 881 million adult illiterates, or 20.6 per cent of its adult population. There have been some

improvements in the disparity between the education of female and male children, especially in primary education, but the gap is still considerable.

Gender equality in educational opportunities is still something to be achieved. Conceived first and foremost as a human right, access to education on the part of girls has to be openly promoted. It is important to note also that a higher level of education allows girls to change their orientation towards life and more specifically towards reproductive family life. From that point of view, it is necessary to envisage expanding the opportunities for secondary education and training, especially for girls.

## **The challenge of technological change**

The creativity and capacity of children to contribute to cultural development should be explicitly recognized and nurtured. Young minds have no problem entering cyberspace if given an opportunity to do so.

New technologies are making their impact felt on the lives of children and youth. Many are opening up opportunities. Yet it is all too easy to overestimate and idealize the potential of new technologies for young children, to underestimate the difficulty of acquiring tools that require investments beyond the capacities of many, or to wax lyrical about the quickened pace of information exchange. In every country the technological revolution raises new questions of access and marginalization which have a direct bearing on education. For the 600,000 human settlements without electricity today, what can the information highway possibly mean?

Exclusion from technology places those concerned at a disadvantage in the coming "information society." It creates an ever larger rift in every society, especially where massive rural exodus has occurred, between high technology and the modernization of the elite on the one hand, and the marginalization of the majority of the population on the other. The swift pace of high-tech advances drives another wedge between youngsters. "The 'haves'," says Harvard Business School Professor Rosabeth Moss Kanter, "will be able to communicate around the globe. The 'have-nets' will be consigned to the rural backwater of the information society."

This trend should prompt decision-makers to change strategies and organize a transition towards facilitating access to computer technology, equipment and know-how, to electronic devices, networks and data banks. New technologies offer new opportunities. Thus, the Vancouver-based Commonwealth of Learning (COL) promotes distance education in Canada through the deployment of modem communications and information techniques (audio teleconferencing, video conferencing, Internet access, desktop publishing, audio-visual programming and regional learning

networks) as a major instrument for widening access to education and training. In order for young people around the world to benefit from the promises that future information highways hold in promoting diversity, expression, empowerment and capacity-building, they need to have access to those highways.

At the same time, today's world also needs to assess what impact globalization and the media may have on youth and children. Are young minds equipped to appraise critically information and values spread by modern media and entertainment industries? Are they ready to see through the manipulation of symbols, whether religious, ethnic or political? Are they prepared to embrace the challenges of globalization without betraying the substance of their traditions? Does education develop their cognitive, affective and psychomotor capacities harmoniously, encouraging them to think and act as creative and responsible individuals? Are they being made sufficiently aware of their future roles as citizens? All too often, the answer to these questions is "No."

It is also necessary to assess the relative value and function of new media, and the neglected potential of old ones, for the information, education and development of youth. In many countries of Africa and Latin America the hunger for books (especially in local languages) still goes unsatisfied. In 22 out of 93 countries responding to a recent survey, less than 60 per cent of first level pupils had a sufficient number of school books.<sup>10</sup> Why or indeed how is one to buy computers, when even books are scarce?

There are other ways to bring children out of their cultural isolation, especially where it is the consequence of physical isolation. One of them is through the spread of reading. The "Opération Lecture Publique" (OLP) in Mali, is a network of 46 public libraries for all ages, one-third of them children's books. It aims at increasing the number of children's books as well as to publish children's books. "The library has done more to free us from isolation than the new road connecting us with Mopti and Gao", says an organizer. The OLP was the 1994 recipient of the Reading Promotion Award set up in 1996 by the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) together with the Japanese newspaper company Asahi Shimbun. Such initiatives reach rural villages, children in city slums and children's wards in hospitals. Their advantages are many: adaptation of book circulation to local needs (library services in rural areas, portable libraries, home libraries), creative participation of children (children's newspapers, storytelling, painting competitions, meet-the-author and illustrator events), promotion of local languages and traditions, publication of children's books.

Far from replacing them, new technologies - automated databases, interactive compact disks and multimedia applications, computerized texts

and, in the future, electronic books and interactive multimedia “hyper-documents” – give new value to books. Certain types of messages seem to be better suited to certain types of media: we will gladly listen to the morning news on the radio but prefer to find Aristotle’s ideas, Hyangga’s poems or Einstein’s theories in books.

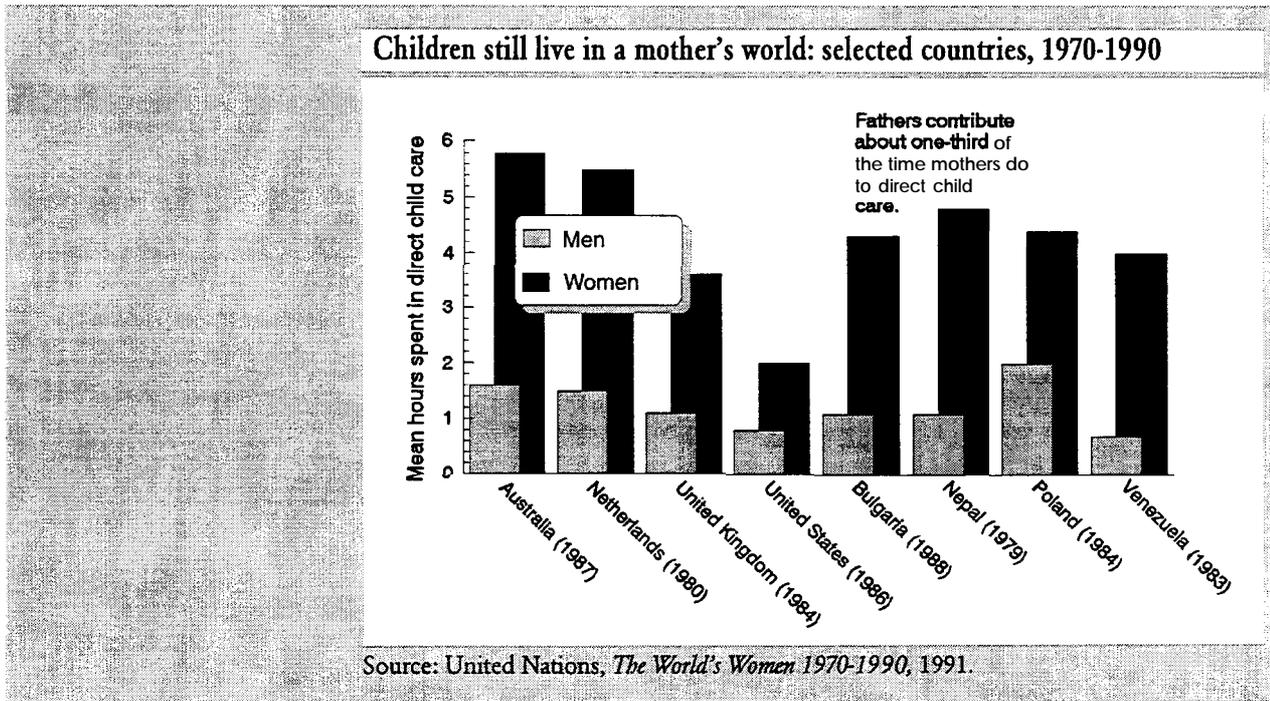
We may conclude that the educational and cultural role of books and the technology directly linked to producing them will need to continue to be adapted to their economic and socio-cultural context in the future.

### **Building the self on culture**

The pursuit of purely economic development ignores the development of the self, which stands at the heart of any viable educational project. Education, as an integrated action aimed at transmitting knowledge and values, establishing skills and training and perfecting people in all their aspects and throughout their lives, cannot be dissociated either from culture, of which education is, par excellence, a means of spreading and renewing, or from development, of which it is a major factor. Policies should strive to stress the humanistic as well as the productive goals of education, and to encourage innovation and creativity. Education must inform, it must provide the young with factual knowledge, but it must also *form*, it must provide them with a sense of meaning to guide their actions in pursuit of humanly desirable and fulfilling goals.

Twenty years ago, *Learning to Be*, the Report of the UNESCO International Commission on the Development of Education headed by the French public figure Edgar Faure, reiterated the humanist goals of education, stating that it “should endeavour, through helping every individual to develop his personal faculties, to free the creative powers of the masses by realizing the potential energies of hundreds of millions of people. And, in view of the fears regarding the long-term effects of immoderate technological progress, it should take steps to prevent the danger of a progressive dehumanization of existence by proclaiming ultimate aims of a humanistic nature.”<sup>11</sup>

Today these aims are expressed more and more in terms of a respect for cultures. The Commission is conscious that there cannot be one education, but adaptive educational strategies. As there is no one universally valid I.Q test, there cannot be one ideal school for the twenty-first century: education must be adapted to the ends and to the means, to the audience and to the teachers. This requires that particular attention be paid to the cultural needs and concerns of children. No teaching can yield results if it fails to take into account the unspoken assumptions of the student: “There is no need to see only one school as the answer. It is possible to have a



dozen school types. It is possible to marry the formal and the informal approaches. It is essential to have different types of schools for different clientele.”<sup>12</sup>

This means, first, an education sensitive to the neglected potential of cultural diversity. Children need to see their own cultures, experiences and languages affirmed and reflected in school and in the media. South Africa, for example, shares with other countries like Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe common languages and historical and colonial experiences. These shared languages and experiences ought to serve as a platform on which is reflected a sense of African identity, character and cultural diversity for children.

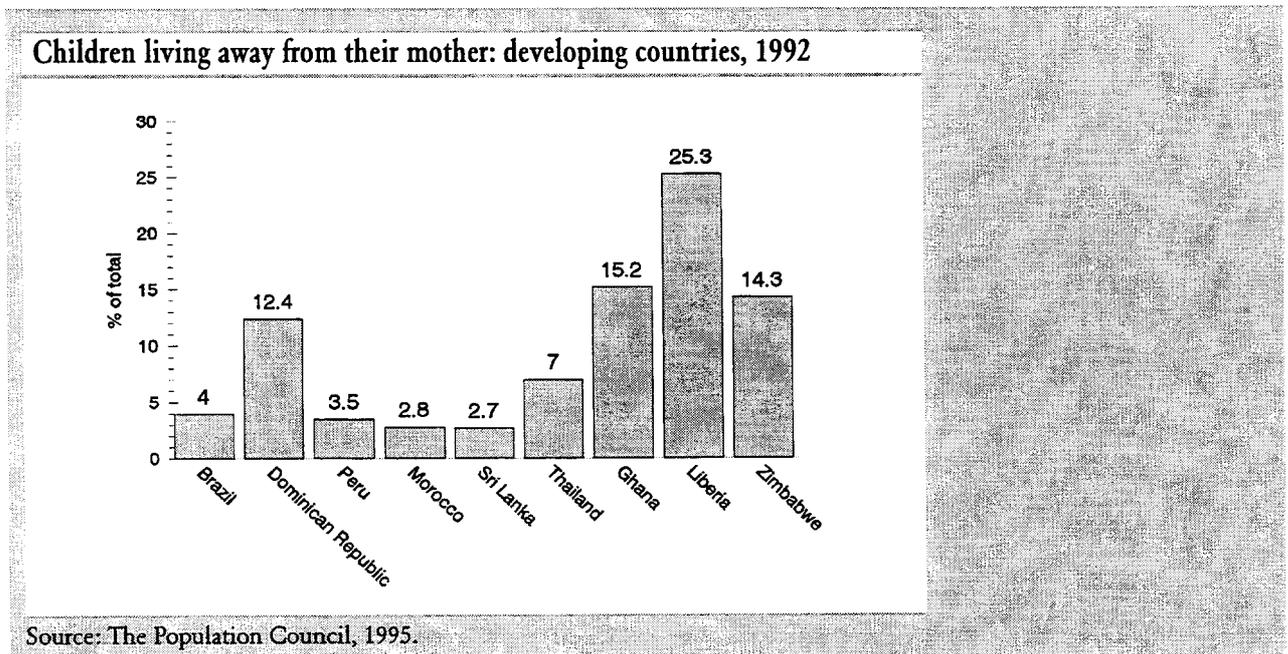
It has been repeatedly suggested that education should provide a bridge between cultural patterns and the demands of development. But representatives of the people concerned, whether in Africa, Asia or Latin America, hold that it must be more than a bridge: education, they argue, should use what students already know as building blocks and work from that, instead of confronting them with ready-made and radically unfamiliar notions derived from concepts forged in a different environment.

Children may want to do new and daring things, but they need a reference and a filiation. It is therefore essential to stress that children are the carriers of cultural traditions which link them to past generations and which they must incessantly reinterpret and adapt to their own needs, forging the basis for future cultural innovations.

The difference sometimes made between “traditional” and “modern” knowledge, between “high” and “popular” science, is in danger of impoverishing the contents of educational curricula. Contemporary science and technology clearly present a challenge to traditional cultures everywhere. Yet they are themselves an integral part of several cultures, and present a serious challenge to traditional views in the very countries in which they originally developed. There is, for example, a striking convergence between the most modern scientific findings and traditional empirical knowledge, teaching and management concerning the environment (see Chapter 8). The Commission encourages policies and approaches that foster and help understand this convergence.

We seem to have reached a point where a number of disciplines are beginning to discover the irreplaceable *functional* character of such traditions. These traditions need to be documented and incorporated into the educational system as they constitute an important body of inherited knowledge. Education can play an increased role in the transmission of the intangible heritage of cultures and their ethical values, especially (but not only) where traditional modes of transmission have been disrupted (for example in countries with rapid demographic growth or affected by a process of accelerated modernization).

In this spirit, child development can also be accomplished in a variety of non-formal settings, for example through play. With its interaction between communication and creative expression, freedom and self-discipline, play is extremely valuable in child development and in helping



children to belong fully to their culture and society. The network of Latin American *ludotecas*, or toy libraries, created in 1986 on the initiative of Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Uruguay, shows that such institutions can do more than fill the gaps in the formal education system: they can also help in solving some serious problems of developing countries, such as dropping out of school, illiteracy, juvenile delinquency and marginalization – encouraging the development of more creative, self-reliant individuals, better equipped to contribute to society.<sup>13</sup> The shortage of schools does not mean that pre-school education is lacking: in Zaire, children play to learn as part of their traditional education.<sup>14</sup>

A reformed educational system can ensure the retention of those traditions that have positively moulded a people over generations: “Without education, we shall forget our historical heritage and learn artificial cultures.”<sup>15</sup> Traditional games – both oral and physical – can be included in the recreation curriculum. The same holds true for the preparation of traditional dishes or the transmission of the wealth of oral literature in the form of stories, songs, ritual and praise poetry. All this cries out to be documented, published and incorporated into the educational syllabus. Many of these activities determine patterns of interpersonal relationships, instilling a sense of discipline in the young, respect for the elders and reinforcing ties between the members of extended families.

African spiritual values, for instance, as enshrined in traditional religion, emphasize the importance of the relation between humans and nature, between the physical and non-physical, between the rational and the intuitive and between past and present generations. All this fund of knowledge and values can be usefully applied to solving such modern problems as saving the environment or mediating differences and conflict situations.

We also believe that the teaching of the history of science needs to be encouraged. Such a study would have the advantage of breaking up the monolithic image of science, revealing it as an ongoing, self-critical process of examination and application, with its self-imposed methodology and limitations, rather than as a sum of uncontested knowledge. It would also reveal that the process has constantly been enriched by contributions from various parts of the world. While research has obviously developed on a more considerable scale in the high income countries which can devote larger budgets to it, science is nobody's preserve: it is open to everyone everywhere.

## Growing up in a pluralistic world: an intercultural education

Having experienced globalization, the media revolution and increased opportunities for access, young people are now better able than their parents to appreciate the diversity of cultural values and forms of expression. In high income countries they are “plugged in”, comfortable with technology, more tolerant of different forms of expression, more open with regard to cultural difference. This process should be encouraged.

If the young are to know where they stand themselves, they need to acquire an understanding of the function of culture in general. With this in view, they must be helped to realize that, to the extent that it is a process and, in a sense, a “language” or a form of communication, no culture can ever be thought to invalidate another – though it may often be able to enrich it by new concepts, categories and insights. This is why we consider it of vital importance to take a holistic view of culture in the sphere of education. While cultures are as relative and numerous as languages, they are as operative as languages. They do not embody the truth – not even the truth of the speaker. Instead, they refer idiomatically and allusively to truths, by expressing values and norms which are common to all.

Region	% who die before age 15 boys and girls	% enrolled in secondary school		Ages 15 - 19 (Females)	
		Boys	Girls	% Ever married	% Having a birth each year
World	10	53	44	21	6
Africa total	17	31	22	30	12
sub-Saharan Africa	18	22	15	30	12
Northern Africa	10	61	49	33	14
Asia (except China)	13	52	37	22	5
China	7	56	45	4	1
North America	1	91	91	5	6
Latin America	7	45	48	17	8
Europe	2	91	93	5	2
ex-USSR	4	63	80	0	5

Source: Population Reference Bureau, *The World's Youth*, 1994.

The international community has already explicitly recognized that the principle of pluralism, together with democracy and human rights, applies to children and to their education. As stated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, education of the child should be in particular directed to: “the development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations” and to “the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origins”. Education should, in that spirit, foster “a respect for cultural pluralism in which cultural tolerance is not based only on a passive acceptance of the right of other cultural groups, including minorities, but implies, further, an active and empathetic knowledge of those cultures resulting in mutual respect and understanding.”<sup>16</sup>

This recognition is in part a result of economic globalization. Deeper crossborder economic contacts, multilateral trade alliances as well as emerging markets (as in China, India or Indonesia) are imposing a new awareness of the diversity of cultures and intercultural dependence. Transaction practices, for example, vary greatly depending on the regions, from traditions of written contracts to traditions of negotiated oral agreements. Higher institutes of education, universities and training programmes have begun to play their part in this field. Mutual respect, understanding and sensitivity for local custom is a precondition to working together.

But pluralism in education is also a translation of the natural dispositions of children. Young minds accept diversity. Their natural response to anything different is curiosity, followed by exploration. Children are eager to understand and to enjoy their new discoveries. Schools can easily encourage positive exposure to diversity. While the physical frontiers dividing nations will not soon disappear, education can help dismantle the barriers that separate and oppose people in their minds. Young minds do not have a problem with multilingualism. In a recent survey of 104 countries, 31 reported two official languages of instruction, and 15 reported three languages or more.<sup>17</sup> In a multi-cultural, multi-lingual world, the earlier one initiates the young to other languages, the better the results will be.

The Commission therefore recommends the development of multilingualism from the earliest age, along with classroom initiation to the plurality of language, cultures and religions. Languages should not be simple linguistic exercises, but opportunities to reflect on other ways of life, other literatures, other customs. The teaching of subjects such as history and geography should also be revised to reflect this exigency, and rather than concentrate on warriors, conquerors and great men, introduce the students to all the actors of history, to the encounters of cultural traditions, and to interdisciplinary approaches. This should lead to co-production of

Work needs to be done among the young, from a very early age, three or four onwards, if only to teach them that there are different languages, so that they grasp the idea of diversity, to show them, for example, that in different languages there are many different names for a rabbit, and that those who call a rabbit by some other name are not necessarily barbarians. Since semiology is concerned with all cultural systems and not only languages, it could help to teach children that there are other ways of dressing, other eating habits, in other words different forms of ritual behaviour in different societies, each of which is meaningful within a given society.<sup>18</sup>

Umberto Eco

textbooks favoured to foster an awareness of a common heritage, shared values and a common vision of the future. Exchange programmes for young professionals (study tours, work stays, co-operation for cultural development) should also be multiplied. Professionals in education should be trained to teach and set examples in intercultural sensitivity.

The young also need to be initiated to the notion of complexity, to the complex workings of personalities and cultures, to the multiplicity of forms and means of expression, to the infinite diversity of individualities, temperaments, aspirations and vocations. Only through a clear understanding of this complexity can they apprehend the notion of interrelatedness. "Education everywhere," says David Hamburg, President of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, "needs to convey an accurate concept of a single, highly interdependent, worldwide species - a vast extended family sharing fundamental human similarities and a fragile planet. The give-and-take fostered within groups can be extended far beyond childhood to relations between adults and to larger units of organization, even covering international relations."<sup>19</sup>

In an increasingly interdependent world, education plays a central role in the prevention and resolution of conflicts through the exercise of rational thinking. As stressed in a recent OECD report, education should promote "rational understanding of conflict, tensions and the processes involved, provoke a critical awareness of cultural interactions, and provide a basis for the analysis of concepts that will prevent obscurantist, chauvinist and irrational explanations from being accepted. School is above all - or at least should be - the place of rational knowledge; its primary task is thus to provide information, explain and analyse problems and subject them to criticism."<sup>20</sup>

Education should therefore inculcate a certain sense of relativity, of

diversity and tolerance, by emphasizing both the oneness of humanity's experience, the variety within cultures, and the long historical record of interrelations between human groups. Identity is a relationship, not a fortress, and such recognition implies a mutual openness, a relationship which is by definition a two-way street. Minority children (and their parents) must be helped to realize that the deepest attachment to the spiritual wealth inherited from the past does not exclude the notion that this inheritance can come to terms with some of the newest and most disturbing aspects of the present. They should be encouraged to learn the dominant language as well as their own, just as the majority should be encouraged to learn the languages of the minority.

The international outlook of youth should be stimulated in order to encourage the creation of mutual understanding and respect on a global scale and to dispel prejudices that tend to isolate children from the world environment. It is important in that respect to allow them to enjoy the aesthetic achievement of human civilizations, connecting them with the past of different cultures. In Russia, museum replicas of small objects belonging to different cultures have been used with success in the past three years as an art history device for teaching world history at primary (and more recently secondary) school level, in Moscow's "Museum of historical consciousness" project. In France, a "cultural classroom" on ancient Egypt was organized by the UNESCO-Vias club: for three weeks, primary school pupils attended classes at the Louvre museum and at the Arab World Institute, learning about art, architecture, daily life, technologies and religious rituals in Ancient Egypt. The children have since decided to finance themselves a one-week visit of Egypt.

The Commission believes therefore in an education that would be clearly aware of the plurality of cultures in each society and of the need for intercultural dialogue. It believes that such an enterprise would greatly contribute to the diffusion of a culture of peace, and to a reduction of social violence.

In the multi-cultural societies of the present, diversity is often a fact of daily life which needs to be handled in school with intelligence and sensitivity. The earlier one begins doing so, the better the results. For example, a primary school in a disadvantaged suburb of Paris, recently took into account the fact that a large number of the children were from North Africa, and launched a programme allowing classes to be taught in both French and Arabic. Results have been promising. The French children have acquired another language, and the Arab-speaking children have done better than before in school. Parents and children of both communities are pleased with the results.

But the discovery of many cultures on a planetary scale can also reach across the world to people living in unfamiliar circumstances and with a

quite different conception of existence, exhibiting the variety of human responses to the challenges of human existence and to those of the environment. The more unfamiliar the environment and way of life, the more instructive it can be in revealing the very essence of a culture: the culture of the Inuit may thus hold a special fascination, say, for European children because of the extreme conditions Inuits have to face. Care must of course be taken to avoid the mere romanticization of otherness: learning does not necessarily lead to tolerance. What counts is the critical discovery of the functional nature of different cultural patterns in the study of human societies.

A synthesis could be made by UNESCO of the lessons of a number of experimental projects which have favoured the reduction of hatred, hostility and violence and the development of empathy and co-operative attitudes, with a view to meditating on and applying such lessons.<sup>21</sup>

One warning should be sounded: the Commission considers it important to resist the impulse to formulate recommendations that are too prescriptive and normative in this domain. The results of education are inevitably unpredictable. Education must respond to the pupil, not to the curriculum. There are therefore few blanket recommendations that can validly be made on a global scale.

This chapter is devoted to children and young people. But it should always be remembered that education should not be confined to children and young people; it should cover adults as well. The most effective literacy campaigns in developing countries have started with the whole rural family: mother, father and children and sometimes grandparents, cousins and aunts and uncles. Mothers' education is not only important in itself to give women access to knowledge, but it is one of main causes of lower drop-out rates of children from school. Teacher training colleges are important for improving the quality of children's education. And the principle of life-long education, the opportunity for adults to return at any stage in their lives to be educated and to catch up with the progress of knowledge, should be the aim of all societies.

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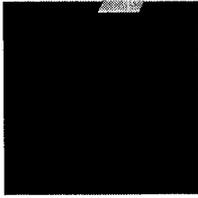
7

**CULTURAL  
HERITAGE  
FOR  
DEVELOPMENT**

*In Africa, when an old man dies,  
a library burns down.*

Amadou Hampâté Bâ

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Our generation has inherited a wealth of tangible and intangible cultural resources that embody the collective memory of communities across the world and buttress their sense of identity in times of uncertainty. Held in trust for humankind, these resources are essentially non-renewable.

Awareness of responsibility for this fragile wealth has crystallized mainly around the built environment: historic monuments and sites. There has been a parallel sense of responsibility for museum construction and attendance, and the concomitant enrichment of museum collections. As a result it is physical objects – great monuments and works of art and craft – that are the main beneficiaries of the notion of heritage preservation. It has become a worldwide movement – the pride of international cultural co-operation, as it cements solidarity between peoples for a common cause.

The intangible heritage has not fared so well. If all forms of cultural heritage are fragile, the immaterial ones lodged in people's minds and hearts are especially so. In the industrialized world many such forms died out decades ago as did those which directly produced monuments, sites and art objects. The past has indeed become a "foreign country".<sup>1</sup> Their sustained existence elsewhere means that the assets of "heritage" are not merely evidence of a past that is valued – if not glorified – in itself and protected. They are forces which actually enter into living practices – mythic, spiritual or ritual-behavioural. Yet understanding of heritage everywhere still conforms to a single vision, dominated by aesthetic and historic criteria. "It is biased towards the élite and the masculine; the monumental rather than the homely, the literate rather than the oral, the ceremonial rather than the workaday, the sacred rather than the profane receive attention and respect."<sup>2</sup> It is time for a broader anthropological approach to gain currency.

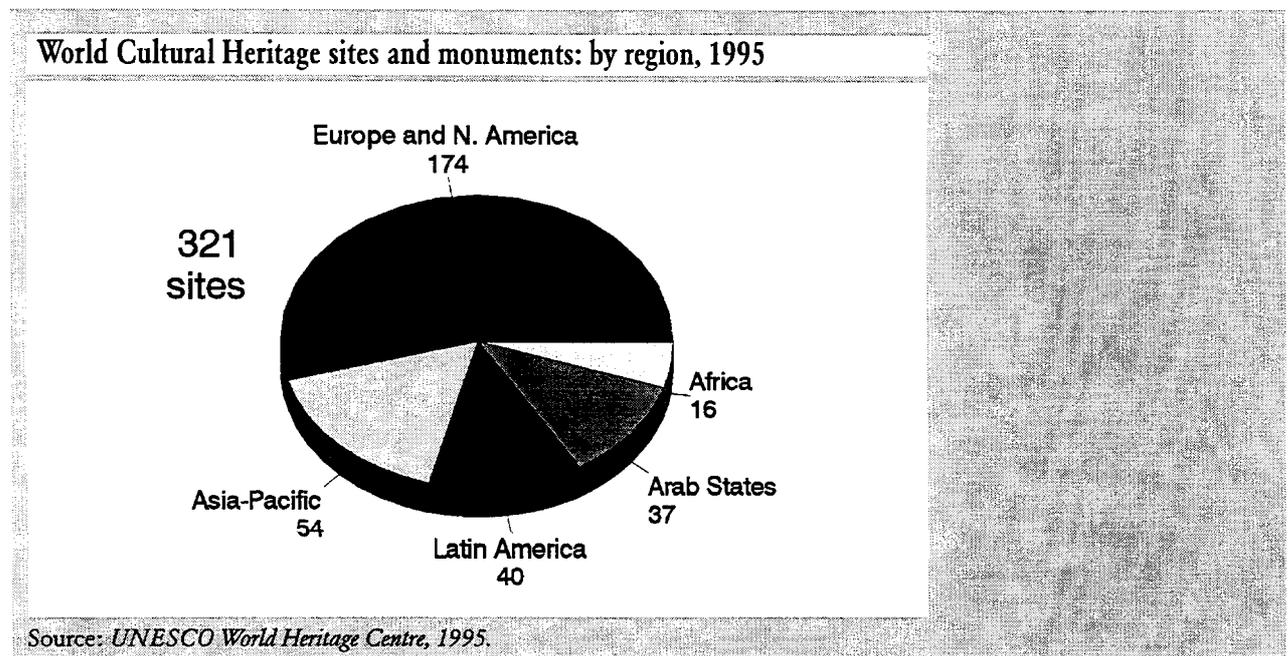
Non-physical remains such as place names or local traditions are also part of the cultural heritage. Particularly significant are the interactions between these and nature: the collective cultural landscape. Only the preservation of these enables us to see indigenous cultures in a historical perspective. The cultural landscape forms a historical and cultural frame for many indigenous peoples.

Were we to accept the wider anthropological approach, diversity would need to be recognised in "heritage" matters as well, leading to the recognition that here too there are no universal recipes for good practice. Like the "cultural industries", historic preservation and museum development have come to be accepted as contributing to economic development. This is all to the good. Yet each society needs to assess the nature and precariousness of its heritage resources in its own terms and determine the contemporary uses it wishes to make of them, not in a spirit of nostalgia but in the spirit of development that is promoted throughout this Report. The Commission shares, therefore, the view of those who consider that the

heritage in all its aspects is still not being used as broadly and effectively as it might be, nor as sensitively managed as it should be.

Although humanity appears to be investing increasingly in “the future of the past” there is still a wide gap between word and deed when it comes to how much is actually preserved and how well. So much seems to need to be conserved, as the heritage concept itself is extended to many new categories of artifacts – including, for instance, the perishable celluloid on which is inscribed cinema and other “moving images”, the twentieth-century art form par excellence. This is a problematical kind of inflation. Our means being finite, how are we to choose? And do we know enough to do so with assurance? It is both physically and economically impossible to preserve all the vestiges of the past. And dare we even attempt to do so when the money and energy may be better spent helping people meet basic needs? Hence questions arise: What should be preserved? Who is to decide? According to what criteria? Have the special needs of diverse heritages been recognized and have their custodians been properly trained?

Behind the West’s commitment to preservation lies half a millennium of evolving attitudes and material realities. Together they have made historic preservation a prominent social value. In the United Kingdom, for instance, the number of historic and natural sites, monuments and buildings with some form of special legal or planning protection has shot up from around a thousand in 1945, and perhaps ten thousand in the 1960s, to close to a million today. Heritage safeguard in all its forms attracts a modicum of public as well as private investment in industrially advanced



countries. It is motivated by broad social commitment, and served by an enthusiastic cadre of trained personnel.

In less affluent countries, however, whose economies cannot afford investing in conservation on the same scale, this is far from being the case. The situation is illustrated by UNESCO's 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. This instrument applies only to immovable and was conceived, supported and nurtured by the industrially developed societies, reflecting concern for a type of heritage that was highly valued in those countries. The World Heritage List, which in mid-1995 carried 411 properties, reflects a framework which is not really appropriate for the kinds of heritage most common in regions where cultural energies have been concentrated in other forms of expression such as artifacts, dance or oral traditions. While 143 States are parties to what is currently the most widely ratified piece of international cultural legislation, the more affluent nations appear to have benefited most from the Convention. Other forms of recognition will have to be developed to match the true range and wealth of heritage found across the world.

Because demand is so much greater than the means available, despite the fact that cultural conservation in the broad sense is perceived as a value in all societies, the Commission has decided to include in its International Action Agenda the idea of broadening the mandate of the United Nations Volunteer (UNV) programme to include a special corps of "Human Heritage Volunteers".

## Language as heritage

A un populo  
mittitilu a catina  
spugghiatillu  
attupatici a vucca,  
é ancora libiru  
Livatici u travagghiu  
u passaportu  
a tavula unni mancia  
u lettu unni dormi  
é ancora riccu.  
Un populu,  
diventa poviru e servu,  
quannu ci arrobbanu a lingua  
addudata di patri:  
é persu pi sempri.

[Put a people  
in chains,  
strip them,  
plug up their mouths,  
they are still free.  
Take away their job  
their passport  
the table they eat on  
the bed they sleep in,  
they are still rich.  
A people  
become poor and enslaved  
when they are robbed of the tongue  
left them by their ancestors:  
they are lost forever.]

Ignazio Buttitta, "Lingua e Dialetu"  
Sicilian poet, born 1899

The world-wide pressures to assimilate are also having a drastic effect on languages, of which between five and twenty thousand are spoken today, each of them reflecting a unique view of the world, pattern of thought and culture. But many of these are in danger of disappearing in the foreseeable future, have no more children who speak them, and are being given up for metropolitan languages where speakers are culturally aggressive and economically powerful. Many of the former are already moribund, and some experts suggest that perhaps 90 percent of the languages spoken today will become extinct in the next century.<sup>3</sup>

Such a perspective is as much a depletion of resources as is the extinction of an animal or plant species. Every single language spoken in the world represents a unique way of viewing human experience and the world itself. If we needed to be reminded of this, the wealth of the Yaghan language of Tierra del Fuego (which, in Darwin's opinion, "scarcely deserved to be called articulate") should suffice. "The Yaghans had a dramatic verb to capture every twitch of the muscles, every possible action of nature or man."<sup>4</sup> Many languages have disappeared in the course of human history. They cannot be kept alive artificially by government decree or by folkloristic interests, but only as a result of the choice of their speakers.

All languages are equal in the sense that they are an instrument of communication and every language has the same potential as a world language. The realization of this potential depends on the opportunities it is given. It was once believed that languages are like living creatures: they are born, grow, decline and die. This picture is false. Languages are wholly both instruments for and results of the societies in which they are used, or abandoned. The fate of all languages is the result of the social and political environment, above all of power relations.

To this one might add the observable advantages of bilingual or multilingual who are more used to switching thought patterns and have more flexible minds. Being familiar with different, often contradictory concepts, they are more tolerant than monolingual, and more capable of understanding different sides of a problem. Linguists thus stress how urgent it is to prepare descriptions and grammars, lexicons, texts, recordings before their extinction.

A people's spoken and written language is perhaps its most important cultural attribute. Social policy has in the past often been used to subordinate one group of people to the ruling group. Language policy, like other policies, has been used as an instrument of domination, fragmentation and reintegration into the ruling political structure.

Linguistic diversity is thus a precious asset of humanity, and the disappearance of any language means an impoverishment of the reservoir of knowledge and tools for intra-cultural and inter-cultural communication. A similar message concerning the costs of reduced biodiversity has

### Linguistic diversity: percentage of national population speaking the same language

Dominant language is spoken by at most 35% of the national population

Country	Main language in %	Number of languages spoken
Zaire	17.7	212
Cameroon	18.5	269
Tanzania	18.6	127
Uganda	19	41
Nigeria	21.4	413
South Africa	21.5	32
Ivory Coast	23.2	72
India	25.4	380
Liberia	28.6	34
Kenya	29.5	59
Chad	29.8	117
Guinea Bissau	32.9	22
Sierra Leone	33.5	23
Zambia	33.7	37

Dominant language is spoken by at least 90% of the population

Country	Main language in %	Number of languages spoken
Korean DPR	99.5	2
Japan	99.2	14
Bangladesh	99.1	37
Burundi	98.2	3
Taiwan	98.1	21
Yemen AR	96.1	3
Egypt	97.8	11
Saudi Arabia	97	6
Somalia	96.1	7
China	93.9	142
Tunisia	93	11
Lebanon	92.9	5
Rwanda	92.7	3

Source: H. Müller, University of Zürich. *The World Cultural Atlas: feasibility study*, 1995.

fallen on fertile ground. That concerning the impoverishment of human thought resulting from the extinction of languages needs also be heard and understood. For example, many medicinal plants are known only to people in traditional cultures, with the languages of such people having specific names for them. With the loss of their languages and cultures, knowledge of such plants and their healing properties is lost, unless a linguist or other interested person has recorded their names and a description of their properties before this happened. The healing qualities of curare and quinine, for example, were known to indigenous people in South America long before contact with Europeans. In northern Australia recently ailments such as severe skin ulcers, which had failed to respond to allopathic drugs, cleared up quickly treated with lotions derived from plants named by members of indigenous Aboriginal groups. The success of this and similar traditional treatments has opened up a wide search for other medicinal plants with the help of Aboriginal people and through the words they use in their now endangered languages.

While languages have been dying out slowly for thousands of years at a slow rate, e.g. Ancient Egyptian, Akkadian, Aramaic, Sogdian, Anglo-Saxon and so on, recent centuries have seen a dramatic acceleration in that

process. Much of this is in the past, stemming from the destructive effects, as peoples came into contact with each other, of Western expansionism and colonization. But some of the factors still operate, such as the destruction of the habitats and the ecological bases of the speakers of local languages, forced assimilation, deliberately assimilatory education and a general preference for their own language on the part of monolingual majorities.

For linguists, an “endangered” language is one which is not learned any more by children, or at least by a good part of the children of the community concerned, for it is bound to disappear with the death of its last speakers. A language can become endangered for other reasons as well. The forced splitting up and transplanting of a speech community, putting small groups or even only individuals of that group into communities which use another language or languages has been one such cause. It also happens that parents in a speech community faced with a more assertive or stronger cultural group encourage their children to use the language of the stronger culture in preference to their own and will themselves tend to speak to their children in that preferred language. As a result, the younger generation soon abandons its original language. Speech communities themselves organize strategies of resistance to such pressures. One of these is to maintain their language secretly. To be able to speak a language which “oppressors” do not understand can boost the self-esteem of people who find themselves otherwise in an inferior position. Language also serves as a powerful means of group identification and may well survive for that reason alone. Some languages which are highly complex and regarded as unlearnable by outsiders serve as strong symbols of such identification, and are tenaciously adhered to. Great complexity and unlearnability may be in direct proportion to the boosting of national pride and self-esteem, as has been observed with Basque, Finnish, Hungarian, Turkish, as well as the Caucasian languages, among others. They may even contribute to a considerable extent to their preservation in adverse cultural and other situations, for instance if such languages are spoken by migrants into another country.

The disappearance of a language can be slowed down or halted by an enlightened language policy. The question arises as to what preservationist measures can be taken when a language appears doomed to disappear? It is here that the notion of heritage preservation must be broadened to encompass the preparation of descriptions and adequate documents such as grammars, lexicons, texts and recordings. “More and more communities whose ethnic self-consciousness is reawakening are clamoring today for such materials. Ainu in Japan has been a recent example of this.”<sup>5</sup> In other cases, decline has been checked by emerging identity awareness, leading to the re-learning of half-forgotten or never acquired local languages. In Papua New Guinea, with its 700 languages or so, there are strong movements of this kind under way. Also, there is increasing awareness amongst speakers of

local languages who are hard pressed by metropolitan languages, that there is great emotional value for them in the continued possession of their own languages as something which the monolingual speakers of the metropolitan culture lack, while the local language speakers can, in addition, acquire a full mastery of the metropolitan language as a useful language for economic and other reasons.

Imparting elementary education in the mother tongue of encysted linguistic minorities is the only way of not just bringing children to school but, more importantly, keeping them there. There are difficulties in the way of making this possible, especially if the minority language has no script. But a multi-pronged approach is then necessary to devise suitable teaching aids and to find trained teachers. Such an approach is necessary if we wish to encourage otherwise vanishing or dying minority languages in many regions of Asia and elsewhere. Language is an essential ingredient of culture. The French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre called languages “our antennae, our spectacles”.

## **Cultural heritage and economics: benefits and pitfalls**

Historic preservation was one of the first cultural domains to be considered “bankable”. Already in the 1970s, for instance, both UNDP and the World Bank began to devote funds to the preservation of the built environment and for crafts development, both of which could be justified in purely economic terms. In historic city centres, the adaptive re-use of historic monuments as public buildings, often as museums, could be cost-effective and even help rejuvenate the economic base of the old part of the city, generating both income and employment. “Preservation pays”, a slogan coined in the United Kingdom in the 1980s, soon found adherents across the globe, as the idea of “conservation as development” gathered legitimacy, both in theory and in practice.

Yet the marriage between economic opportunities and the often alien value systems that conservation represents has not always been happy. The wide gulf between poverty and the preservationist values developed in the West could not be bridged by an approach to the built environment, for example, that has tended to support “elitist commercial operations while dislodging the delicate relationships between prevailing economic levels, neighborhood life, the traditional urban fabric and the monumental fabric that has existed nestled within it, albeit precariously.”<sup>6</sup> Conservation cannot succeed in urban settings unless the relationships between the built environment and factors such as the quality of urban infrastructure (transport, sewerage, garbage management, recreation, and so on) land tenure,

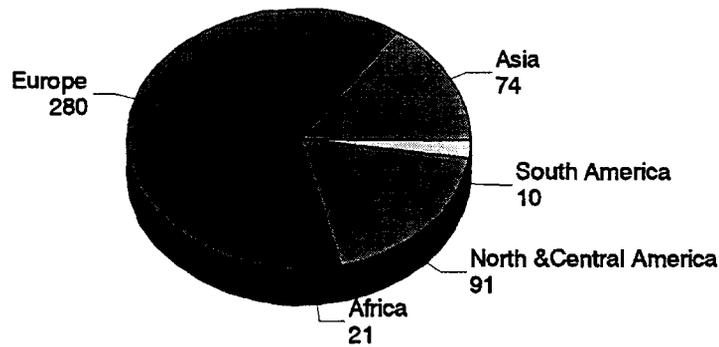
population growth and density, the state of housing stock, health care and urban poverty are taken into account.

This has rarely happened, mirroring other failures of the “top down” urban approaches planned and delivered by bureaucratic centres. The problem has been compounded when state institutions such as departments of antiquities and/or archaeology were established during the colonial period and tailored to the needs of empire. Many such bodies focus on the buried past: the skills of their personnel in respect of the architectural heritage are limited. Many have also inherited the distances created by colonial period relationships between ordinary people and the bureaucracy. This has resulted in a profound hiatus between ordinary civic life and public concern for the cultural past embodied in an officially listed monumental heritage. As a consequence, this heritage has been owned by the state and not by the people, both in a technical-legal sense and in allegorical terms. “Protected” monuments have been relegated to the lowest priority of resource allocation. They often exist behind heavily guarded boundaries in varying states of care, surrounded if not invaded by low income squatters and illegal business premises. Monuments not listed are left to decay and oblivion.<sup>7</sup>

In the post-independence situation, an overzealous belief in modernist paradigms in architecture and city building has led to the demolition of entire sections of pre-colonial cities, for example in medieval Cairo. In such cases nationhood has not been brought nearer to the heritage as a source of identity; instead, the gap between identity and the valorization of the past has widened. Often uncontrolled private initiative has been responsible for the gouging out of large sections of the historic residential urban fabric and its conversion to large scale commercial land use.

Shortcomings such as these have been tackled in different cities across the world. Various grassroots approaches have brought about community development and the upgrading of living standards at economically realistic and technically appropriate levels. Forged by social workers, planners and architects, and other specialists, a number of new institutions have appeared to fill the space vacated by traditional ones that have died out. These new institutions have helped local communities themselves deal with cultural conservation. For their leaders, the most durable return on investment has not been financial but educational and social. Spending on historic preservation remains difficult to justify in the midst of poverty, and the deficiencies of infrastructure and local governance encountered in decaying inner cities throughout the South. Yet non-governmental efforts are beginning to challenge governments to move in this domain as well from centrally conceived and administered programmes to schemes that are based on community participation. In many instances prominent and successful non-governmental agencies are even competing with governments for external aid.

**In 1992, 482 million people travelled: inflow of tourist by region (in millions)**



Source: *UN Statistical Yearbook*, 1994.

Recognizing the contribution of heritage to the promotion of tourism has become a commonplace. Tourism is fast becoming the biggest industry in the world and cultural heritage provides much of its life blood. The burgeoning of a symbiotic relationship between the two is apparent everywhere, having fed the emergence of a “heritage industry”. Neither national or local governments, nor private owners, need to be encouraged to turn that relationship to good account. The Commission is concerned, however, that cultural heritage does not become an exclusive commodity to serve tourism (and is degraded and despoiled in the process), but is brought into a mutually supportive relationship with it. The limits to the “carrying capacity” of monuments and city centres has already been pointed out by many observers. And, just as excessive numbers of visitors have had deleterious effects on the state of conservation, and the social and environmental fabric of many sites, so too tourism itself has been adversely affected in historic city centres plagued by decaying housing stock, uncontrolled traffic and air pollution.

As “cultural tourism” has sometimes harmed the assets on which it feeds, the issue of control has been raised, particularly on behalf of small communities. How can the latter exercise their right of ownership? An often cited “success story” in this regard is the experience of the tiny island of Taquile in Peru’s Lake Titicaca. In the 1980s, the indigenous people organized themselves to respond to the upsurge and external control of local tourism so as to improve the local economy yet preserve the culture. Islanders equipped locally made boats with outboard motors for the purpose of more swiftly transporting tourists from the mainland to the island, where they stay overnight in local homes. This enabled the Taquilenos to break the monopoly on tourist boat transport from the mainland that

concentrated economic benefits in a small group of non-resident entrepreneurs. They also constructed a community-controlled museum to display some of the finest and oldest textiles made by the island's residents.<sup>8</sup>

In Europe and North America, different issues have been raised. While there are many success stories measured in terms of impressive cash receipts and generous business sponsorship, concern is growing among museum curators that pressures to please the public – and tourists in particular - have skewed policy excessively towards display and accessibility, to the detriment of fundamental research and scholarship. The “heritage industry”, they fear, has spawned results such as “a powerful and doctrinaire political lobby, an influential commercially-driven point of view, a demeaning service industry, shallow, tawdry images of the past, commodification and exploitation and, perhaps worst of all, a downmarket denial of proper access to its legitimate pasts to the society whose very curiosity triggered the opportunity in the first place.”<sup>9</sup>

At a time when many new museum projects are motivated by non-scientific considerations, there is a need to take a critical view of opportunistic image-building. All too often slogans of “popular” culture and “democratization” mask the stakes of the market-place and the ballot-box. Opportunities are missed “every day [ . . . ] and at every site and museum to increase the world's understanding of itself by relating across cultures through cultural-heritage interpretation.”

## Museum responsibilities

Museums have come to play an important part in defining the various meanings of “culture” – creating explicit or implicit systems of value for defining “importance” – While generally serving the myth-making process, they also have great potential for examining and questioning unproved traditions, skewed myths and conventional values.<sup>10</sup>

Since the end of the Second World War, there has been an exponential growth of museums throughout the world, and probably well over 90 per cent of the total number of the world's museums post-date the creation of UNESCO and the International Council of Museums (ICOM) in 1946. In numbers, museums are probably second only to public libraries among institutions serving the general public. However, their role is often reduced to that of heritage custodians, whereas many of the important national, regional and municipal museums established in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries emphasized contemporary science, especially knowledge of the earth and its ecology. Museums of anthropology and ethnography created in the same period placed at least as much emphasis on contemporary societies and peoples as on past generations.

The past half century has seen an extraordinary growth of museums which do not fit into any reasonable definition of “heritage” and which may even be beyond the purview of a Ministry or Department of Culture. Examples include the rapidly growing number of on-site and museum-based environmental and ecological exhibits. The same is true of the many new science-oriented children’s museums, and of most science museums and centres established since the creation of the pioneering Exploratorium in San Francisco thirty-five years ago. In terms of size and budget, the Cité des Sciences et de l’Industrie at La Villette in Paris is second only to the Louvre among French museums, while in India no less than one thousand such museums are being created under the current ten-year plan of the Ministry of Human Resources Development, working through the National Council of Science Museums.

In any given year, New York City art museums draw far larger crowds than all New York professional art teams combined. The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York counted 4.9 million visitors in 1994-95, an annual increase of 13 per cent. Large museums are evolving into a blend of playground, café and fair, making the experience easy and comfortable. A modern well-run museum is rather like an upscale suburban shopping mall, just as contemporary shopping, including window-shopping, is acquiring some of the characteristics of visiting a museum. But museums also offer social contact and a place to trade ideas and discoveries with strangers. Other museums have even higher rates of increase than the Metropolitan. The Pierpont Morgan Library had an increase of 23 per cent from the previous year, the Jewish museum 18 per cent and the Studio museum in Harlem also had a record year, though an increase of only 5 per cent. A nation-wide Census Bureau survey conducted in 1992 found that 49.6 million Americans had gone to an art museum or gallery in the last year, against 36.2 million a decade earlier.

Two distinct museum styles have defined themselves around the world over the past few decades. One focuses on a single main subject (art, for instance, or archaeology), or deals with a particular topic or type of collection (biographical museums, museums concerned with a single historic site, or with ceramics or glass). Such museums usually occupy a single building, and are staffed by specialists in the museum’s theme or topic. Some, however, have adopted a more holistic approach, straddling a wide range of subject areas. Such museums attempt to examine and present the natural as well as the human environment, and to address key contemporary issues. They also regard their purview as extending beyond the objects in their collections, and make use of published and unpublished written data, field surveys and the evidence of oral history. This trend is demonstrated by the recent growth of the concept of the integrated, multi-disciplinary, regional or local “museum service”, with a very clear sense of territory and local or

## **New alliances for a new museology**

**The Wanuskewin Heritage Park in Saskatchewan (Canada) opened in 1992 and in two years attracted over 70,000 visitors. The park is a 6,000 year-old Northern Plains Indian gathering place and includes walking trails around 19 archaeological sites, an art gallery, an amphitheatre and an archaeological theatre set inside a dig-size model. Its main objectives are to promote and preserve the cultural heritage of the Northern Plains Indians, to increase public awareness of the history and contribution of their culture from prehistoric times to the present, to promote scientific research, and to establish the park as a model for aboriginal leadership and co-operative arrangements between the public and private sectors.**

**The Board of Management of the Park is, in itself, an excellent example of a partnership between diverse interests – it includes representatives of the Dene, Cree, Dakota, Nakota and Saulteaux Indian Nations, the Saskatchewan Indian Culture Centre, the City of Saskatoon, the University of Saskatchewan, federal and provincial government officials, as well as other representatives of local museums.**

*Source: Perspectives on Culture and Development in Canada, Canadian background paper prepared for the Commission by the Department of Canadian Heritage, May 1995.*

regional identity, aimed at developing a positive role in community building and development.<sup>11</sup>

The territory covered by most museums is urban and a growing number of “city museums” focus their sights on the multicultural nature of their respective communities. They seek to explore and articulate “the sense of shared and contested meanings of urban cultural borders and subaltern histories”.<sup>12</sup> This responsibility towards urban diversity requires a proactive stance, a conscious effort to represent the knowledge, experience and practices of all those who contribute to the human dimension of the city as a whole. The kind of interaction that may ensue will be a happy replacement for the more selective expression of collective memory on the part of museums and help articulate a sense of shared urban space as well as of the “borders” that are being negotiated within it.

All forward-looking museum curators place great emphasis on the close involvement of the entire community in all aspects of the policy and

operations of the museum. Museologists, scientists, art historians, educators and other professionals who form the expert staff regard their role as being at least in part that of “facilitators” working to empower the non-specialist population of the community. Each of these new schools of museology regard their responsibilities as extending far beyond the walls of the museum to include their entire territory or sphere of interest, whether local, regional or even national. They recognize that their working assets are not just the museum’s collections but the total patrimony, whether tangible or intangible, of the territory concerned, and consider that the public they are seeking to serve is not just that formed by current museum visitors, but the entire population of their territory, past, present and future. National, regional and local governments should recognize that museums can and do play an important role in recording and expressing publicly the distinctive identity of their chosen territory (local, regional or national). Hence the support and development of museums in this spirit should be an increasingly important part of cultural policy.

Museums are both repositories and sources of information. The museum’s resources for information are of many kinds. They include material relevant to studies of the environment and of local and national cultures, together with more obvious museum collection data. The potential of museums should therefore be taken fully into account in developing new national information policies and strategies, and they should be supported accordingly. There is a great potential for innovation using the new media, particularly in museum “outreach”, i.e. in fulfilling the all-important educational function of the museum. Although the power of the museum is based above all on the lure of “the real thing”, curators must now find ways to use electronic media as guides to their visitors rather than to control their access, and also “to allow the greater flow of information about objects to cross the accidental boundaries” of particular collections in particular places bound by particular disciplinary boundaries.<sup>13</sup>

As access to information is of the essence, it is going to be increasingly important for museums to have ready and affordable access to both traditional information systems and to the new electronic networks. It is equally important that the ethical principle of free access to information be protected, and that museums, their collections and information be protected against unfair exploitation by non-museum interests, whether commercial or non-commercial. Information about the past should not be distorted by the views of the dominant groups. The history of minorities and indigenous peoples should be presented objectively. This maybe approached by presenting it from different points of view, above all their own.

## Archival institutions

Archives are storehouses of historical records, yet their role as repositories of collective memory is under-rated. They are often seriously in jeopardy in many developing countries. Archival institutions serve several social functions. They are precious evidence of relationships between human groups, of social codes and past contracts, of individual and collective rights as they were fought for and attained. Archives include a wide variety of forms – correspondence, notes, books, plans, maps, drawings, photographs, films, microfiches, sound recordings and computerized data. As such they provide irreplaceable information about our histories. They bear indispensable witness to past acts, to the intensity of past debates on essential questions, to historical decision-making, to the evolution of institutions and organizations and, finally, to individual life histories, as well as the values, beliefs and convictions on which they were based.<sup>14</sup>

Hence archives are important not only for scholars. The records they contain help policy-makers make informed decisions based on past experience. They can partner museums in documenting past, disappearing or extant traditions in many fields. Thus the Senegalese Association for the Promotion of Culture and Cultural Industries (ASEPIC) has launched work on an Atlas of Arts, Letters and Cultural Industries of Senegal. Archives can even have positive consequences on industry. In the United States of America, the country-music industry owes much to the painstaking efforts of the Library of Congress, the Smithsonian Institution and folklore experts to record the sounds of “folk” music and the voices of American oral traditions. They can also serve as sources of information and reference for ordinary people.

So the benefits derived from professional archival work may extend far beyond the intent of their original planners. Debates over the nature of democracy and the role of civil society are enriched by the publication of the papers of a Thomas Jefferson or a Simón Bolívar or a Mahatma Gandhi; our understanding of human rights and responsibilities is deepened by the collection of written and audiovisual testimonies of the survivors of the Holocaust and victims of human evil; land records are needed for the recovery of the rights of many indigenous peoples; commitment to peaceful conflict-resolution and fair negotiation may be strengthened through understanding past successes and failures. In these and many other ways, archival collections provide vital landmarks, evidence of how human history was made. Open public archives are therefore a necessary element of democratic governance and accountability; it is important that governments provide easier access to them. New legislation is needed to ensure access while protecting the public interest and the need for privacy.

Archival material is highly perishable, however. The problems of

unsuitable premises and environmental conditions that accelerate its deterioration common to museums in many countries are acutely felt by archivists, for public opinion is much less aware of them. Conservation of archives should therefore be given a much higher priority. Air-conditioning and humidity control are particularly important – they are a necessity not a luxury. In many instances, archives remain unprocessed, unorganized and uncatalogued, restricting access to vital information, because there are not enough trained archivists, librarians and conservation specialists. In many developing countries the low social status of these professions, as indeed museum curatorship and conservation, is an obstacle to better practice. Many documents from former colonies are now in the possession of their erstwhile colonizers. Others have followed the fortunes of war or the vagaries of clandestine export. Their repatriation is not always feasible; often it is undesirable, when fragile documents would suffer irreparable harm as a result of being moved. In these cases, copies of these documents should be made available to the countries of origin (as microfilms, microfiches, and so on) and projects initiated to insure the safe storage of these documents in situ.

Particular attention needs to be paid to the new problems raised by the preservation of electronic archives. The informatics revolution has indeed transformed the field of archives already, and multimedia technologies now complement audiovisual and film archives, while CD-ROM and other technologies promise access to a wider public as well as increased and more reliable storage capacities. New opportunities also exist for data exchanges and cultural documentation, as are being practised, for example, by the International Centre for Bantu Civilizations (CICIBA, Libreville, Gabon).

The constitution of an archive is a long-term project which requires a high degree of institutional continuity and commitment in both financial and human terms. As with all educational projects, returns on investments may not be immediate or even immediately perceptible. Support to archival institutions and projects should therefore be conceived as a long-term enterprise, not as a short-term proposition. From initial inventories to museum exhibits or scientific publications, archival efforts need to be conceived as part of larger concerted heritage policies. This is one of the purposes of UNESCO's "Memory of the World" programme launched in 1992, which has set out guidelines to help safeguard manuscript collections and archival holdings throughout the world.

## A fair deal for the living heritage of crafts

Some museums have moved towards integrating their curatorial, conservation and educational programmes with growing efforts to create new sources of income through the maintenance or re-establishment of craft production within their specialist field. They have set up programmes to preserve, demonstrate and teach traditional crafts and production methods. The National Handloom and Crafts Museum of India in New Delhi, for example, permanently invites artisans from every region of India to spend between two weeks and six months in the museum demonstrating their skills and products. Their expenses are paid and they receive a modest honorarium, and they are free to sell their production directly to visitors.

Investment in crafts development is recognized for the monetary return as well as employment benefits that can be generated. It has been estimated that handicrafts represent almost a quarter of the micro-enterprises in the developing world, getting money directly into the hands of producers, and providing a means of empowerment to millions of people, many of them women, particularly in rural areas. Handicraft production units can be mounted with practically no investment, particularly where a tradition is alive and well in a community. Craft activity can be tailored to the constraints of differing social needs or cultural preferences; it can be designed for seasonal or part-time work to supplement income, or as a full-time occupation for an individual or group; it can respect the needs of a home or of location in a central community. Indeed crafts objects have an advantage over other commodities because they are decorative items in a market niche where price can often be influenced by the artisan herself through minor changes in design. And finally, because craft objects are not perishable, they can easily be transported over long distances.

Based on past traditions handed down, crafts are truly “living heritage”, as those traditions are renewed in each generation. The processes of creative adaptation and innovation involved are in themselves a contribution to human development. While this potential is beginning to be recognized many obstacles remain. Some are being removed by projects such as UNESCO’s “Ten-Year Plan for the Development of Crafts in the World”. The attention of the Commission, however, has focused on the gap between makers and markets. For crafts people such as those of Bombolulu and Asur depend mainly on faraway markets and have little access to information on current demands and tastes in those markets. Developing a new, appropriate line while retaining power over a margin of profit can be a “one-off” affair unless such knowledge is mastered: this can take time. While ultimately self-reliance or sustainability depends on the communities themselves, its initial development depends on information and training from outside. Processes such as these are quite distinct from the usual

## Marketing successes

**Bombolulu, a collective of four hundred handicapped producers in Mombasa, Kenya, who might otherwise have been considered a burden on their society, generated close to \$400,000 in turnover for its members in 1993. A central office provides special services to the artisans, while a representative travels around the world to market their products internationally. In Chile, Comparte, a co-operative of six hundred villagers with its own central distribution centre, retail outlet for local customers and wholesale catalogue operation, also sold goods for over \$400,000 the same year. A less market-driven initiative is Asur, a group in Bolivia launched by anthropologists to ensure the preservation of certain weaving techniques through the development of new product lines such as wall hangings.**

large-scale craft industry that minimizes the artisan's control over profit margins. In Thailand, for instance, such an industry has created over one million full-time jobs in the wicker sector, while Indonesia exported over five billion US dollars' worth of handicrafts in 1993. A major issue is the share of profits received by the artisans themselves. There is a growing awareness that notions of good business practices need to be redefined to ensure the equitable treatment of individual producers and to reduce the manipulation of buying power over those who are often living from hand to mouth and who have no bargaining power.

The increased respect shown for crafts in the industrialized world calls for a heightening of respect for its producers - the artisans themselves. Hence the need to strengthen the notion of "fairly traded crafts". A more equitable deal for the producers of handicrafts is called for, as proposed by the Fair Trade Federation in the United States, the European Fair Trade Association and the International Federation for Alternative Traders. The Commission underlines the need for an international initiative to define fair trade practices and policies for crafts. This could be based on a mechanism to promote instant consumer recognition of fairly traded crafts through a new "Fair Trade Seal". The first step towards setting up such a mechanism would be to bring together all pertinent current data and information, and explore the legal implications before a strategy is defined. An international awareness building campaign should also be envisaged. As the environmental movement has shown, informed customers can influence government policies and industrial behaviour by themselves making

informed selections of products. With every purchase, consumers have an opportunity to vote for change.

Currently there is little in the media which publicizes fairly traded crafts and there is no way to distinguish between crafts that are fairly and unfairly traded. Suitable market outlets need to be established and sustained. There are not enough such outlets for the distribution of crafts in the international market. One approach to the problem would be to establish an international chain of recognized shops that sell fairly traded goods under an operating agreement with a management company. Another would be to offer low cost loans to selected existing outlets; such loans would help to cover the high start-up cost associated with working with artisans, generally too high for non-profit organizations to carry. Finally, a training programme is required. Scholarships should be awarded to help train artisans in market trend and distribution channels, partly in an on-the-job manner through attending conferences and on-site training workshops. A number of bodies and events exist that could contribute to such an initiative, e.g. Watermark, Aid to Artisans, and the Fair Trade Federation Annual Conference in the United States of America.<sup>15</sup>

## Identifying and interpreting

In many countries the knowledge base for the elaboration of a global conservation policy remains slight. Prescriptions are based on conditions prevailing in the West, where almost all the manuals on the subject are written and published. Assumptions relating to possible sources of funding, for instance, are irrelevant elsewhere and the actions prescribed have little bearing on practical realities in the South.

For example, the very fact of defining a building as being of historical or cultural value means placing it at a certain remove from everyday life. But as two practitioners from Pakistan point out, this everyday life, "includes heavy over-layerings of colonial culture, erasures of local cultural values, and rapidly transforming patterns. . . ." "The latter often unfold on the "stage set" provided by the built heritage, yet they are worlds apart, culturally and topographically, from the elite. This distance leads inevitably to decay of the physical and social context in which these elements are found.

There is consequently a need to reassess what is currently defined as heritage in different countries, and to redefine it in terms of usage, care and maintenance. But again, as no single conceptual framework is suited to all different local conditions, there is no scientific method drawing on both current experience and new knowledge in order to conserve and restore different geocultural heritages. This has led to piecemeal work which lacks a

## The Royal Palaces of Abomey

Of the twelve palaces built by the monarchs of Abomey in today's Benin, only two have survived with their structures intact. The others have been seriously damaged and/or restored in ways that harm the integrity of this site, which is inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List as well as its List of World Heritage in Danger. Experts have repeatedly asked that restoration work here respect traditional construction principles and the architectural coherence of the complex as a whole. It has only recently been recognized, however, that the preservation of these physical structures makes little sense without reference to the living culture that surrounds them. This new awareness of the social meaning of these palaces, which are the venue for ceremonies that commemorate the Kings of Abomey, places their conservation in a different perspective. They are not monuments to a lost past, nor museums, but living social spaces. It is because they have continued to open their doors to deeply-felt and shared ritual practices that these highly fragile adobe structures have come down to the present generation. And it is the broad, international recognition of this social dimension that today provides the people of Benin with fresh motivation to preserve them.

correct reading of the remains, the proper identification of their architecture in the stylistic family to which they belong, and a sensitive handling of their setting. All of these are essential to the meaningful connection between preservation and contemporary life. Their application will require curators to have much greater recourse to other professional groups such as architects and masons. They will also require that, in developing countries at least, a whole series of competent intermediaries between the state and the "public" lend their competence to the identification and interpretation of the heritage.

Such intermediaries would include universities and research institutes able to provide scientific knowledge and an understanding of the significance of the heritage. Religious authorities are important too, for often a historical property is also part of a living cult and no adequate social support can be mobilized without an awareness of its religious dimension. Without proper understanding of the values and aspirations that drove its makers, an object is torn from its context and our understanding of it is inevitably incomplete. The tangible can only be interpreted through the

intangible. This has long been recognized by anthropologists and folklorists and, no doubt, unconsciously by most people. In international discourse and practice, however, the notion of "heritage" has too long been limited to the tangible.

Heritage has become a pawn in the process first identified by the British historian E. J. Hobsbawm as the "invention of tradition". Overtly political conjuring acts often occur, in which the complexities of material cultural evidence are transformed into simplified messages about cultural identity. Such messages tend to concentrate exclusively on highly symbolic objects at the expense of popular forms of cultural expression or of historical truth. The most visible representations of the collective memory are monopolized through the assignment to certain museums and monuments of identifiable "political" and educational functions.<sup>17</sup> The ways of life thus rhetorically evoked may have little bearing on those documented historically, recorded ethnographically, and reconstructed archaeologically – yet their symbolic power and political force are undeniable.<sup>18</sup> As a scholar has observed, these "political symbols radically condense and simplify "reality", and are to some extent devoid of content: that is how and why they work. Perhaps it matters only whether such political ideologies are used for just causes, whether they are instruments of liberation or of oppression."<sup>19</sup>

Often, in fact, they are used both to recapture legitimate rights and to deny them to others.

Increasing interest in the intangible heritage highlights issues of ethics and meaning. How anthropologists can feed fieldwork data back to the peoples they have studied is a long-standing and vexed question. It now spills over into less specialized categories as tourists interested in "ethnic arts" in general contribute to an increasingly artificial demand for dramatizations and ritual enactments of cultural traditions. These are often celebrated out of context in the form of dress, music, dance and handicrafts, while the same traditions are in fact dying out as forces of social integration and regulation. There is also the issue of property rights, of how the creators of popular forms are to be fairly remunerated. Cultural expressions are being commercialized worldwide with scant respect for the interests of the communities in which they originate. These creators receive no share in the economic return derived from their own production. To attempt to remedy this situation, standards have been set in the international arena, recognizing the intellectual property rights of collective creators.<sup>20</sup>

The monetary implications of recognizing such intellectual property rights have not yet been accepted, however, by the industrially developed countries where the major consumers of these resources are to be found. There are four linked issues. The first may be termed "authentication", and concerns the regulation of replication of traditional craft (of Africa or the Americas, for instance), which is sometimes mass-produced, the result be-

ing then dumped on the international market, including local markets in Nigeria or the South-West of the United States. The second issue, expropriation, concerns the removal of valuable artifacts and documents from their place of origin. This is a complaint the great museums of the Western World have been hearing for years, but there is perhaps even greater concern at the continuation of this process today. Third is the matter of compensation: while the national and international circulation of some folk item may be a justified source of pride, there is also widespread resentment at the fact that individuals or communities at the source are not compensated. And finally there is a concern with what may be termed nurture: a fear that commodification will ultimately have a disruptive impact on folk-culture itself.<sup>21</sup>

Viewed pragmatically, the issue brings us back to the idea that since a cultural patrimony is a resource belonging to a group and is to be used for the latter's betterment, certain limits should be placed on how and to what extent outsiders can exploit it. The preservation and sustainability of such a rich resource will depend largely on ensuring that the economic rights to it remain with its traditional creators.<sup>22</sup>

Bolivia was perhaps the first country to pass a law in 1967, providing legal protection of its national folklore. Other affected countries followed suit and in 1973, at their urging, UNESCO launched its efforts to explore the protection of folklore as a legal issue. But the question confronts legislators with a number of fundamental dilemmas.

The most apparent of these arises out of the very notion that traditional cultural groups possess intellectual property right *as groups*. This leads to the radical idea that there can be an intermediary sphere of intellectual property rights between individual rights and the (national or international) public domain. Other fundamental issues concern the concept of folklore and the definition of what is to be protected. The simple notion provided by an imagined primeval cultural source is obviously inadequate here: the Navajo rug, for instance, contains influences which can be traced, through Mexico and Spain, to North Africa. A more promising approach suggests that the word "folklore" should be applied to living creative traditions shaped by powerful ties to the past. It has also been pointed out that "intellectual property" is perhaps not the right juridical concept to be used at all. A case can be made for a new concept based on ideas inherent in traditional social rules. This might be more constructive than trying to make the forms of protection fit within a framework which was never designed for them and where the existing users and developers of copyright notions resist strenuously any such development.

Knowledge also means identifying what *might* be saved so as to decide what *should* be saved. But very few countries have inventories of their cultural patrimonies which would allow one to establish some order of

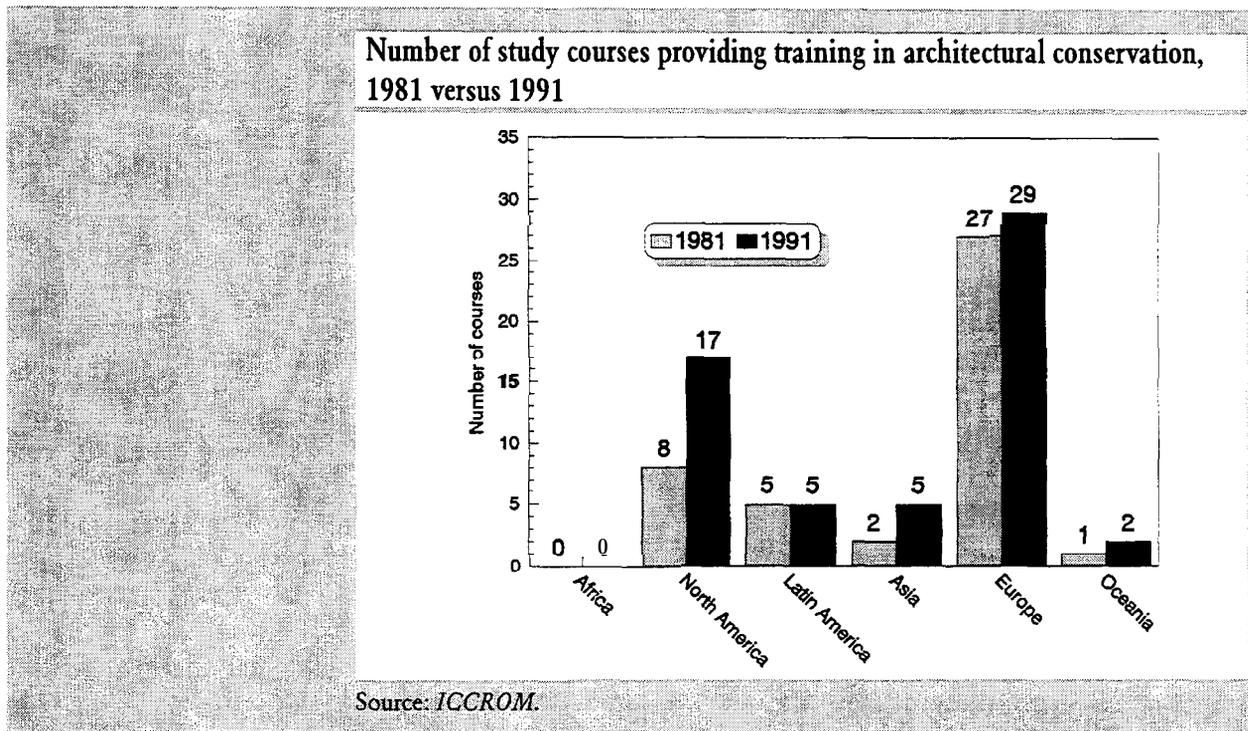
priority - and selectivity. The International Council of Museums recognizes, for example, that a very large number of the world's museums have not yet been able to catalogue their holdings fully. An initiative that seeks to fill in this surprising blank is the Delta Plan elaborated in The Netherlands in 1988, after staggered researchers discovered that few museums had a proper inventory.

## **Lacunae in training and the institutional base**

Without specialized personnel, heritage resources could neither be identified nor conserved and enhanced in imaginative ways. There is a range of disciplines in which training is needed, most acutely, no doubt, when it comes to management skills. In Latin America, the UNESCO/UNDP regional project has trained a variety of specialists in the historic preservation disciplines. Thus, the continent's admirable pre-Columbian objects and monuments, its striking colonial heritage, and the architectural treasures of its more recent past are today safeguarded by over one thousand specialists. They are breathing new life into historic towns like Antigua Guatemala, Ouro Preto and Cartagena de Indias, into churches and missions across the continent, and into ancient Aztec, Inca and Maya sites, making them beacons not only to their own people but also to increasing numbers of international tourists and visitors.

Few antiquities and archaeology departments are equipped to deal with the socio-political aspects of culture and development. New thinking and training is required, so that the relationships of societies to their heritage can be revalued. This means involving the disciplines of the human sciences as well as building a new institutional base, structured around conceptions of the heritage linked to the life of society and to cultural continuities. Finding a better place for the historic built environment in the current ecological dynamic, for example, would require the creation of political lobbies and popular opinion balanced by new legislation and new professional and administrative bases at a fairly high level in the executive hierarchy. A new array of disciplines would enter the picture, from the bio-sciences, through development economics and social sciences, the history of art, architecture and other fields of culture, the urban sciences, urban design and architecture. They would help forge a sensitivity that promotes respect for the built fabric of traditional neighborhoods. Their entry would call for structural changes in the old institutions and the creation of new educational institutions, including non-governmental professional organizations and new departments for conservation in existing institutions of architectural and urban design education.

With regard to the intangible heritage, there is a particularly urgent



need to train the people themselves in the anthropological disciplines that would enable them to interpret their own cultures and past; traditional cultures are a kind of puzzle that needs to be reconstituted, a mass of fragmented knowledge whose strands need to be brought together.

In many countries museum employment still consists largely in just two categories of staff: "scholar-curators" with high academic qualifications who care for and interpret collections and those who carry out security, maintenance and administrative support tasks. But as museums become increasingly complex public service organizations, tasks have broadened, with curators sharing responsibility with many different types of professionals in conservation, restoration, research, education, registration, librarianship and exhibit design and production, as well as financial and human resources management, building and security services, computing and other information technology services, marketing and membership, fundraising, editorial and publishing, retail shop management, public relations, and so on. This growing diversity can be seen either as a serious threat to the survival of traditional professional categories, or as a great opportunity for co-operation, bringing in specialized expertise not previously available to museums, and increasing the level and quality of expertise in response to wider social responsibilities and roles.

## Old scourges in new guises

Spiraling demand, mainly in the affluent societies, for the objects of other cultures is at the root of the continuous plunder of archaeological sites, illicit trafficking and unethical acquisition practices.

Such objects have moved throughout history, often legally, with the full consent of their owners, contributing to the diffusion of knowledge and appreciation. But many other transfers of ownership have been the result of spoliation and conquest. As post-colonial societies across the world have re-appropriated their heritage, they have observed time and again how little remained within their own borders to stock their own museums and how much had been lost. Recovery of such objects can only be achieved piecemeal and will always depend on the goodwill of the present holders. With systems of protection gradually being put in place, however, and a growing sense of ownership, national heritage administrations are keen to keep what still remains. They wish to decide for themselves how and how much they wish to share with others. That objective, however, is constantly being thwarted by illegal trade, which has become a major threat on a global scale.

Recent examples include the outflow of icons and religious art from Central and Eastern Europe; the looting of the National Museum in Kabul, Afghanistan; the illegal conversion to commercial purposes of sacred textiles from Bolivia; and the pillaging of ancient terracottas from completely unresearched archaeological sites in Mali.

Since the 1960s it has been clear that, try as it may, no “victim” country, on whatever continent, can hope to stem the tide on its own. That is why UNESCO in 1970 adopted the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. Despite a steadily increasing number of ratifications of this important instrument, however, “the strength of the art market in the industrialized countries acts as a magnet to the flow of trade, licit and illicit. Only the utmost diligence on the part of museums, collectors and dealers in those countries will therefore prevent traffickers and speculators in illegally gotten goods from passing them into the legitimate market.”<sup>23</sup>

The clandestine art trade is increasingly decried. It was even the subject of a special panel discussion at the 1995 Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum at Davos. Speaking on that occasion, Lord Renfrew, the distinguished British professor of archaeology, pointed out that what we learn about the past from archaeological objects depends on relating them to their original context. Once connections to that context have been destroyed by illicit excavation, such objects can tell us very little about the past.

## **Organized crime and trafficking in cultural property**

The Czech Republic Criminal Cases Data report thefts from museums, castles, churches and exhibition halls. In 1987 it registered 59 cases; in 1988 71; in 1989, 79, in 1990, 695; in 1991, 1151; in 1992, 949; and in 1993, 1068. These data do not include thefts from archaeological sites, cemeteries, gardens or private collections. Since 1990, some 15,000 to 20,000 items have been stolen from the Czech Republic every year. It is estimated that as many antiquities are smuggled out of the country each year.

About 90 per cent of the losses are from religious institutions. A lack of respect for religious objects may have been exacerbated by the country's anti-religious policy under communism. But threats to religious buildings and works of art have existed at least since the Hussite Revolution in the fifteenth century. In the last four years alone, more Gothic Madonnas have been stolen from the Czech Republic than the number now remaining. Buildings with large concentrations of objects of cultural value – museums and castles – are most likely to be victims of organized crime.

Source: Pavel Jirásek, Security Specialist for Museums and Galleries, Ministry of Culture, Czech Republic. *ICOM News*, Vol. 48, No. 1, 1995.

Indeed they become dependent upon what may already have been established by scholarship for dating and meaning. The great sin against humankind in the looting of sites is therefore the loss of information. The question of actual ownership of these objects is a secondary one. The only way to combat such illicit excavations is for respectable scholars and museums to decline to provide the money which funds those excavations: that is to decline to buy any more looted works.<sup>24</sup>

This approach from the "demand" side must of course be matched by better control on the supply side, in other words better supervision of archaeological sites, better museum security and public awareness campaigns within "exporting countries". Nevertheless, the onus of putting an end to this situation is on the buyers. They should refuse to buy any works whose provenance cannot be securely documented.

It is imperative therefore to gain international acceptance for the principle that acquirers should not be protected in their possession of a

cultural object unless they can prove they have been diligent in inquiring into its provenance at time of purchase.

The Commission also recommends that the “importing” countries join in international collaborative efforts such as those undertaken under UNESCO’s 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property and the UNIDROIT Convention on the International Return of Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects adopted in June 1995.

Monuments have always been vulnerable in war. Conquerors have often borne away works of art as prized booty. Recent years, however, have seen a dramatic increase in acts of destruction or deprivation that are more insidiously motivated. These are deliberate acts against cultural patrimony, carried out precisely because cultural objects have become important repositories of cultural identity and collective memory. If in previous great wars the military juggernaut destroyed blindly, the commanders of today’s local conflicts target cultural property deliberately. In ex-Yugoslavia, shells did not reduce the emblematic Mostar Bridge or the famed Sarajevo National Library to rubble by accident. Such intentional acts of destruction have been reported from many sites of recent conflict, whether in Africa, Asia, Europe or Latin America. These acts are cultural crimes. They contradict the international consensus that the shared monumental heritage should be carefully protected from the ravages of war that has emerged from decades of international standard-setting and culminated in UNESCO’s 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. When the shared cultural heritage of humanity thus becomes one of the first victims of armed conflict our voices must be raised in protest.

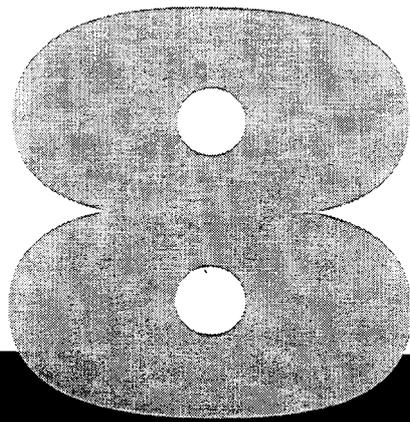
## Notes

1. See David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, Cambridge University Press, 1985.
2. Deniz Kandiyoti, “Gender, Culture and Development”, paper prepared for the Commission, March 1995.
3. Figures and data provided by S.A. Wurm in a paper entitled “Endangered Languages of the World”, prepared for the Commission, June 1995.
4. Bruce Chatwin, *In Patagonia*, Penguin Books, 1988, enumerating some of the entries from Thomas Bridges’ *Yaghan Dictionary*. “The Dictionary,” he adds, “survived the Indians to become their monument.”
5. S. A. Wurm, op. cit.
6. Yasmin Cheema, Arif Hasan, Masood A. Khan, Zahir Shah and Nasir Mahmud, *The Conservation of the Monuments at the Surkh Bukhari-Bibi-Jawandi Site*. . . . The Conservation and Rehabilitation Centre, June 1994.
7. Colonial criteria of selection of antiquities were naturally different from what local ones might have been and only a small fraction of the legacy received by the subject

people was listed. These biases still prevail. In many cases the great majority of protected monuments in post-colonial countries appear to have been listed prior to independence and the colonial selection has not been enlarged to any significant degree.

8. Kevin Healy and Elayne Zorn, "Taquile's Homespun Tourism", in *Cultural Expression and Grassroots Development*, Charles D. Kleymeyer, cd., Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder and London, 1994.
9. Peter I. Fowler, *The Past in Contemporary Society*, London, Routledge, 1992.
10. The research, exhibition and educational initiative of nearly forty national, regional and local museums across Sweden called "Towards a Swedish History", inaugurated in 1993, shows how museums can lead in stimulating debate on fundamental questions of history and identity. The Valentine Museum in Richmond, Virginia, the city that now has the largest black population of any town in the southern United States, offers an example of how a museum can transform itself. Until recently this museum focused largely on the eighteenth and nineteenth century material culture of Virginia's white upper middle class elite. Following a fundamental review of policy, and many board and staff changes, the Valentine Museum now also reflects the heritage of both poor whites and the African-American people, including slavery, to give proper weight at last to the two dominant cultures of the city. For these examples, as well for a number of other points in this chapter, the Commission is grateful to Patrick Boylan for the paper entitled "Heritage and Cultural Policy: the Role of Museums" that he prepared for it in April 1995.
11. Despite significant differences in the terminology used, this trend in many English-speaking countries is closely paralleled in the philosophy of the *écomusée* (ecomuseum) and *nouvelle muséologie* movements in francophone countries and, increasingly, elsewhere in Europe and Latin America. The ecomuseum has been defined as an institution conceived, fashioned and operated jointly by a museum authority (local or otherwise) and a local population concerned with the totality of the natural and human ecology of its defined territory, thereby situating the human population in its natural environment. It aims to serve as a mirror in which the local population may discover its own image, and which it holds up to its visitors to help them understand the ecomuseum's territory and community.
12. Amareswar Galla, "Urban Museology: an Ideology for Reconciliation", *Museum International*, No. 187, UNESCO, 1995.
13. Marc Pachter, "Technological and Cultural Convergence", statement to the Commission's Regional Consultation for North America, New York, 14 March 1995.
14. Jean-Pierre Wallet, *Culture, Archives and Development*, memorandum from the International Council on Archives (of which Mr Wallet, National Archivist of Canada, is the current President), February 1995.
15. Suggestions put forward by Susan Hoskins, in a paper entitled "Handicrafts as a Development Policy" prepared for the Commission in April 1995.
16. Yasmin Cheema and Masood A. Khan, *The Built Heritage Manual: A Methodology for the Conservation of Historic Architecture and Sites in Pakistan* (proposal submitted to the Ministry of Culture, Government of Pakistan and the National Foundation of Cultural Heritage, Pakistan, 1994).
17. Donald Home, *The Great Museum (Re-presentations of History)*, London, Pluto Press, 1984.
18. Thus a handsome exhibition of works of Greek antiquity arranged in Washington D.C. a few years ago by the Greek Government, was criticized for presenting a highly idealized and unscholarly version of life in the period concerned.

19. Roger M. Keesing, "Creating the Past: Custom and Identity in the Contemporary Pacific", in *The Contemporary Pacific*, vol. 1, nos. 1 and 2, 1989.
20. In 1982 UNESCO and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) adopted "Model Provisions for National Laws on the Protection of Expression of Folklore Against Illicit Exploitation and Other Prejudicial Actions." In 1989 UNESCO adopted a Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore which sets out measures for the identification, conservation, dissemination and intellectual property rights of traditional and popular culture, much of it inherited from the past.
21. Alan Jabbour, Director, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington D. C., in an essay entitled "Folklore protection and national patrimony: developments and dilemmas in the legal protection of folklore", in the *UNESCO Copyright Bulletin*, Vol. XVII, No. 1, 1983, p. 10. Our analysis condenses some of the author's reflections on the subject.
22. Charles Kleymeyer has pointed out the special urgency of this issue for indigenous peoples in endangered tropical forests. "A considerable portion of the modern pharmacopoeia derives from the knowledge of flora and fauna embodied in the ethnoscience of native peoples, yet there is no payment for the use of this intellectual property. If fair compensation were made, forest peoples would have a better chance of surviving and of protecting the habitat that still possesses untapped renewable resources."
23. From an Appeal to fight illicit trade in cultural property launched by the Director-General of UNESCO in January 1995.
24. Statement made by Lord Renfrew at the Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum, Davos, January 1995.



# **CULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

*"The Earth is one but the world is not. We all depend on one biosphere for sustaining our lives. Yet each community, each country strives fir survival and prosperity with little regard for its impact on others."<sup>1</sup>*

8

Eight years after they were written, these words have lost none of their force.

Sustainable development, in the words of the report of Gro Harlem Brundtland, chairman of the World Commission on Environment and Development, is "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."<sup>2</sup> This definition has sparked off discussions, bringing greater precision to the concept.

Sustainable development has come to mean much more than maintaining intact the physical capital that produces an income stream (or increasing it in line with population growth, technological developments and intertemporal preferences). Maintenance, replacement and growth of capital assets, both physical and human, are certainly one aspect of sustainability. Physical wear and tear, technical obsolescence, and the depreciation of human capital have to be taken into account.

Secondly, not only physical but also human capital has to be maintained. Technical, managerial and administrative knowledge and its dissemination through education can be substitutes for physical and environmental capital or they can be complementary to it. In the ability of human inventiveness and creativity to substitute human-made for exhaustible resources lies the hope for sustainability.

A third aspect, to which much attention has been paid recently, is maintaining the physical environmental conditions for the constituents of well-being. Unless the environmental resources serving as inputs are valued in themselves (as some of them, such as the Amazon rain-forest, the Tassili N'Ajjer National Park in Algeria, Meteora in Greece or Yosemite National Park in the United States certainly are), it is the results, not the means, that must be sustained. This implies two distinct things: first, avoiding polluting the water, air and land on which our lives and our work depend, and, second, avoiding the exhaustion of renewable resources that are essential for production, unless adequate replacement is provided.<sup>3</sup> (It may imply increasing these environmental resources, again depending on population growth, technology, preferences and so forth). As to non-renewable resources, the implication is that investment in substitutes should take place, so that the productive base for sustaining well-being is maintained.

Related to this is a fourth aspect of sustainability, which is resilience. The system must be able to adjust to shocks and crises, to be sufficiently flexible and diverse, with respect to resources (including biological diversity) and practices (including approaches to knowledge), to maintain itself in the face of an uncertain future.

A fifth aspect is avoiding burdening future generations with internal and external debts. Although to anybody burdened with a debt liability there corresponds an equivalent asset holder, this does not mean that the

net debt burden is zero. Tax liabilities, and the ability to enjoy interest receipts, have important effects on incentives to work, save and take risks, in addition to the distributional impact.

A sixth aspect of sustainable development is fiscal, administrative and political sustainability. A policy must be credible and acceptable to the citizens, so that there is sufficient consent to carry it out. Fear of popular protest in the form of mass demonstrations or riots can frustrate reforms. In order to be sustainable politically, the course of opposition and resistance has to be traced and measures to overcome it have to be designed. The administrative apparatus must be capable of carrying it out on a continuing basis, and revenue must be available to meet the needs of public expenditure. International peace and domestic security are important dimensions of political sustainability.

A seventh aspect is the ability to empower citizens of developing countries to manage projects so that foreign experts can withdraw without jeopardizing their success. This implies training local counterparts and helping to create local technological, managerial and administrative capacity.

Finally, there is the under-emphasized but important cultural aspect of sustainability. We have said that treating culture merely as an instrument for sustaining something else, such as economic development, and treating it as static, is wrong, and we have stressed its constitutive role, its importance as an objective embracing development. In both these respects cultural valuations and cultural activities can be looked at in terms of cultural sustainability. The valuable components of any changing culture should not be eroded by rival demands.

Sustainability is therefore a multi-dimensional problem. It implies responsible behaviour towards future generations – but not, as will be discussed later, at the expense of contemporaries - despite the fact that they have no vote and cannot put direct pressures on policy-makers.

“Sustainability” by itself is in the process of being clearly defined. First, there is the problem, already mentioned, as to whether one should be concerned with sustaining the constituents of well-being or its determinants, whether with the ends or the means, with the objectives or the instruments. Clearly, what ought to matter are the constituents, the health, welfare and prosperity of the people, and not so many tons of minerals, so many trees, or so many animal species. Yet, some of the writings on the subject confuse the two.<sup>4</sup> If in the process of curing ovarian and other forms of cancer the Pacific yew trees (or even the Northern spotted owl, to whom the forests are home) had to be reduced in number, in order to produce the drug taxol, many would believe that people’s health should be given priority over trees.<sup>5</sup> Of course, some would want to attach end-values to many of the determinants, in so far as they are part of “nature” (such as

the Grand Canyon). This view might be called ethical environmentalism in contrast with prudential environmentalism, which regards environmental resources as means. Culture is in this respect quite different from the physical environment. We respect and value it for its own sake.

Then there is the question as to sustainability at what level, or at what rate of growth or decline? There is nothing sacrosanct about the existing stock of resources. Population in Western Europe is stationary or may decline, but Kenya's population will be three times today's in 2025, and world population will be more than 8 billion people, compared with over 5 billion today. Sustaining income per head for humankind may imply increasing the stock of resources. On the other hand, substitution possibilities and technical innovation imply the ability to run some resources down. Population growth, technological innovations, and inter-temporal preferences will determine whether the stock should be increased, kept constant or reduced, and at what rates, or whether its composition should be changed.

The degradation of the environment in many parts of the world has been a subject of great international concern. Numerous development projects have tried to solve the issue, but solutions have proven elusive. Part of the problem stems from a failure to appreciate the profoundly cultural dimensions of environmental management. During the last few years, however, the tide has begun to turn, in part as a result of such international initiatives as the International Conference on Environment and Development and the World Summit for Social Development. Worldwide, social and natural scientists, community development workers, non-governmental organizations and village leaders are rethinking the relationship between culture and environment.

A first significant turn is taking place in relation to local ecological knowledge and traditional management practices. Modernization and the sole trust in positivistic science have led to a long period in which indigenous knowledge was perceived as an obstacle to development, as backward, irrational, mythical or magical. The current shift of perception and practice is noteworthy. In many fields, there is a striking convergence of modern scientific knowledge with traditional knowledge and practices. Indigenous ecological knowledge and traditional management practices offer solutions not only founded on generations of experimentation and observation, but also embedded in local systems of value and meaning.

Echinacea (purple coneflower) has been used by the Plains Indians of North America for thousands of years. It is used against poisonous bites, cancers, toothaches, burns, hard-to-heal sores and wounds, septic conditions, severe infections, influenza and colds. Science confirms many traditional uses, a cortisone-like activity, and insecticidal, bactericidal, and immunostimulant qualities. Echinacea is considered a non-specific im-

mune system stimulant. This can be important in our age of so many immune system diseases such as AIDS, cancer, lupus and so on. More than 200 pharmaceutical preparations are now being made from echinacea plants in Germany. The tinctures, salves and extracts are used for wounds, herpes sores, throat infections and as a preventative for influenza and colds.<sup>6</sup>

Now that Western medicine is acknowledging the serious effects of its over-use of manufactured antibiotics, echinacea, also known as the herbalists' antibiotic, is being increasingly accepted. Unlike penicillin, it works as a preventative as well as a curative. Echinacea, because it does not directly kill bacteria, rarely disrupts the intestinal flora and does not encourage yeast infections as most antibiotics do. A further benefit is that viruses are unlikely to mutate to nullify the effects of echinacea, as they are now doing in response to the "wonder drugs".<sup>7</sup>

India's neem tree has provided farmers with a potent, affordable and ecologically friendly pesticide for centuries. It is sacred to Hindus. It has also become the source of an international trade dispute. A coalition of 200 organizations from 35 countries is seeking to invalidate a 1992 patent on a formulation of the neem pesticide held by W. R. Grace & Co. The assertion of the challenge is that the formulation from seeds of the neem tree is insufficiently novel because Indians have been making versions of the neem-seed pesticide for generations.<sup>8</sup>

A major challenge now is to translate concerns for the traditional methods into practicable projects at the field level, as well as to change policies and instruments in ways that strengthen the cultural dimensions of the relations between the environment and development.

The convergence is not universal. There are areas in which modern science contradicts long-held practices and traditional beliefs. The problem then is to find ways of handling such conflicts. Sometimes, however, practices resulting from cultural patterns can be modified by providing the people concerned with a modicum of information. The Samburu, for instance, a population of 70,000 nomadic pastoralists living in a 21,000 square kilometre area in the semi-arid north of Kenya, were said to have an irrational regard for the non-economic value of livestock. The excessive size of their herds was believed to be a major cause of environmental degradation affecting their region. Yet Gabriel Lochgan, Director of Samburu Aid in Africa, found senior Samburu willing to cut down on stock once they had understood that they could invest the proceeds of cattle sales in the bank.<sup>9</sup>

Second, it has become clear that any approach to sustainable development that deals only with biophysical exchanges between societies and the environment is incomplete. In fact, the dominant environmental view has tried to separate ecology from cultural milieu and to appropriate it

reductively in the name of resource use or the protection of wildlife, and more recently the diversity of the genetic stock. This reductionist view of ecology is in the process of change. The Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean has pointed out the limits of any biological definition of sustainability and urged that the management of natural resources also depends on citizens' participation, policy decision-making and institutions. In this emergent consciousness, ecology is not merely resource management but the calculus of power about who appropriates nature, both its physical resources and the cultural meaning associated with them.

Such is, for instance, the express awareness of the Sikuani community, one of 70 indigenous groups of Colombia composed of some 20,000 individuals spread along the plains of the Orinoquia. "A few years ago," says 27 year-old Sikuani (the group referred to in Chapter 3) Walter Quispe, "our community was doing well. We could feed, clothe and house ourselves by using natural resources. We could cure the sick with medicinal plants. During the last three decades, however, agricultural colonization of our lands has modified our way of life. We no longer have easy access to our usual sources of food. We have become dependent on an unfamiliar market economy. Yet our tradition remains strong. Thanks to it, we will recover the values and customs of the past. The biodiversity of our land is part of our culture. We ask that any outside intervention take our existence and culture into account."

Third, the notion of sustainability raises the question of how nature itself is conceived and consequently of the cultural values that condition a society's relationship to nature. Important variants in attitudes to ecological sustainability demonstrate the need for a culturally diversified approach to issues of culture, environment and development.<sup>10</sup> It calls for an analysis and an explanation of mechanisms that perpetuate views or actions beneficial or harmful to the environment, both in the dynamics within cultures and in inter-cultural contacts. Thus the globalization of goods, services and ideas has a significant impact on migratory trends and on cultural uprooting, which should be taken into consideration in any development initiative.

Fourth, although urbanization and modernization have opened up opportunities for many, they have brought new damage to the environment and to traditional patterns of relationships between societies and their physical environment. Appropriation of natural resources for the sustenance of the industrial and urban needs affects the environment; the effects of urban agglomerations themselves create new challenges for handling water and air pollution, the management of waste, and so forth. Undoubtedly, the future calls for a major change in the urban consumerism life style to curb these damages.

## Diversity and local knowledge

The symbiotic character of the relationship between biodiversity and cultural diversity has not been adequately analysed as yet; but the fact remains that a critical and dynamic relationship did exist between the local community, its natural surroundings and its cultural identity. These have become increasingly abstract and divorced from one another as a result of industrialization. During the past two centuries, this relationship has been threatened less by the communities' own activities and practices and more by the intensive and extensive demand placed on the natural resources for the sustenance of the industrial and urban machine. Grazing lands, watersheds, diverse flora and fauna have been enclosed, degraded and commodified with the control of these decisions resting with those who controlled or legitimated the industrial development patterns. Experience from across the world suggests that substituting monoculture for bio-genetic diversity (like a narrow hybrid seed-based, chemically intensive agriculture or single specie tree plantations), both in an effort to raise productivity and profits in the short term, have contributed to the erosion of bio-diversity and the cultural diversity dependent on it.

The extinction of a species is different from other forms of ecological damage like acid rain, soil erosion or desertification. When the species is gone, it is gone for ever. The best way to prevent the destruction of species by poor people through the destruction of forests and life at sea is to promote the development of these people and eradicate their poverty.

Through centuries of living close to nature, indigenous peoples throughout the world have acquired detailed knowledge of their environment and its natural resources. Living in and from the rich variety of complex ecosystems, they understand the functioning of these systems, the properties of plants and animals and the techniques for using and managing the systems. Equally, ecological concerns are embedded in their very struggles for survival, identity, autonomy, and in many cases democratic rights and governance. Who decides the fate of tribal culture and nature? Do the people decide for themselves? Or does the state or the conservationists? That is why cries such as "Our rule in our villages" or "Our rights over the forests" are being heard in forests around the world.<sup>11</sup>

As local communities perceive increased world attention to their local resources and agroforestry practices, they begin to formulate a new world view. In the Lacandon rain-forest in south-east Mexico, local farmers who have participated in debates with environmentalists, government officials and World Bank experts now position themselves in an international framework.<sup>12</sup> They have created a new notion of their 'locality' in a global setting.

Local communities dependent on these resources seem to be the best

actors to protect and nurture biodiversity. Government forest departments will not save biodiversity. If given appropriate power and responsibility, people might be able to do so.

Both governments and non-governmental groups have been working to create tools integrating local technical knowledge into the design and implementation of development activities based on local leadership in the development process. For example, participatory rapid-appraisal techniques include local people in the analysis of the current situation with its opportunities and problems and give priority to local concerns and goals.

In recent years attempts have been made to learn about the dynamism and creation of local technical knowledge. In all regions, work is done to gain a better understanding of how farmers, herders and forest dwellers experiment and share findings with others and how traditional healers use plants and herbs for cures. There is considerable interest in the field of farmer-initiated research and extension and how research institutions and technical and extension services can better support farmers in their own efforts. Cultural constructs of nature are different and frequently indigenous people do not have the same goals as outsiders or express their problems or successes in the same manner. There is also great interest in documenting and understanding local organizational rules and regulations for managing common natural resources, such as those used by forest dwellers or forest-dependent peoples and those depending on other natural resources.

Local knowledge received a great deal of attention during the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), and references to its importance are found in all of the agreements reached in Rio, including the Convention on Biodiversity and the Statement of Forest Principles, as well as in several chapters of Agenda 21. Several initiatives have been taken in the last two or three years. They include the WWF-UNESCO-Royal Botanical Gardens Kew initiative on People and Plants, which promotes ethno-botany and the sustainable and equitable use of plant resources. A number of projects within the World Decade of Cultural Development focus on the links between culture and resource use. Several FAO activities are rooted in local knowledge of natural resources, such as the programmes on community forestry and on non-wood timber products. Alternative medicine is among the programmes of WHO. At the non-governmental level, the "Indigenous Knowledge and Development Monitor," produced by the Centre for International Research and Advisory Networks, serves the international community of people who are interested in indigenous or local knowledge.

In creating greater awareness of our responsibilities to future generations and greater respect for our natural environment, the key role of young people has been unprecedented. The young have sometimes been accused

of concerning themselves passionately with single issues, losing sight of society and nature as a whole. But as the NGOs that were present at the Rio Conference and the follow-up showed, this has not been true of their attitude to the preservation of the environment. Here is an opportunity to enhance their sense of social and civic responsibility and commitment.

The recognition of indigenous knowledge calls also for special regulations dealing with the appropriation of such knowledge. The Convention on Biodiversity encourages the equitable sharing of benefits arising from local knowledge (Article 8 of the Convention), but does not guarantee it. Whence the interest in developing guidelines and codes of ethics for shaping equitable partnerships in the development of new natural products - partnerships that recognize and compensate for the use of local knowledge and natural resources.

Policy guidelines have been prepared in the ethno-botanical community, and endorsed by the International Society of Ethnobiology. Points addressed in the guidelines include the need to ensure that export and use outside a country have the full approval of the competent authorities, and are carried out with the co-operation of the host country and representatives of the indigenous communities involved. Adoption of a code of practice is recommended which requires legislation at a regional or national level to control the collection and export of biological material, with advice from appropriate professional organizations.

Another perceived need concerns the development of a strict code of professional ethics. Such a code would seek to ensure several conditions. Research participants (e.g. traditional specialists) and members of relevant local organizations (e.g. herbaria) should be fully informed of the objectives, commercial aspects and possible results of research. Confidential information and research participants' requests for anonymity should be respected. Equitable compensation for assistance by individuals is essential, and national or regional organizations should receive fair royalty payments. Finally, national requirements for plant collecting, including collection with local counterparts, should be observed.

Ecological processes are still not well understood. At the margin, the social benefit of additional knowledge about ecological processes is therefore potentially high. This calls for additional expenditure on the acquisition and dissemination of such knowledge. Moreover, while uncertainty about the value of environmental resources is large, and when environmental destruction is at least partly irreversible, there is a strong case for keeping our future options open. This implies the pursuit of a conservationist approach to environmental policy. According to the "precautionary principle," we should preserve more than what standard cost-benefit analysis of the use of environmental resources would warrant.

## The urban environment

### Some basic data

The twentieth century is the century of urbanization and city life. For thousands of years rural existence was the dominant way of life of humanity. But the turn of the century will find us in an urban world, with only small rural pockets. The passage from predominantly rural to urban existence is a complex phenomenon, involving technological, economic, social, political and cultural forces.

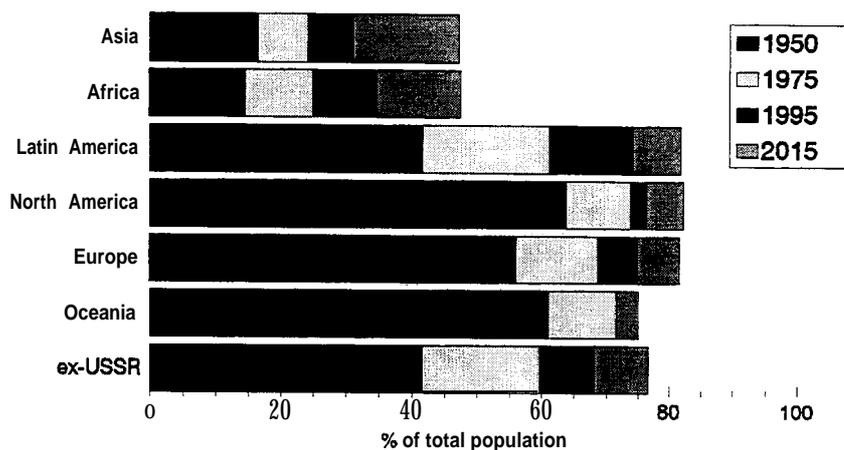
In 1950, 29.3 per cent of the world's population lived in urban areas; in 1994 it reached 44.8 per cent, and the estimate for the year 2025 is that 61.1 per cent of the world population (5 billion people) will be living in urban areas.<sup>13</sup> Between 1960 and 1992, the number of city dwellers worldwide rose by 1.4 billion. Over the next 15 years it will rise by around 1 billion more. These changes imply a massive movement of people from the countryside to towns and cities. To this has to be added the natural population growth.

There are large variations between countries: the highest income countries became urbanized earlier and now three fourths of their populations live in urban areas. This is expected to grow to 84 per cent in the next thirty years. The least developed countries have 21.9 per cent of their population in urban areas, which will grow to 43.5 per cent in 2025.

Megacities of more than 8 million people are growing rapidly, particularly in Asia. In 1950 only New York and London fitted into this category. In 1994 there were 22 cities of this size and 16 of them were in the developing countries (12 in Asia). The Asian share of these cities is growing and will continue to grow (21 of the 33 megacities expected for 2015; 55 per cent of the megacities' population in 1995; 64 per cent in 2015). The proportion of world population living in the largest cities (more than ten million), which increased from 1.7 to 7.1 per cent between 1950 and 1990, is expected to reach 10.9 per cent in 2015.

The megacities in the less developed regions are growing faster than those in the more advanced regions, and are expected to continue to do so until 2015. A double process is under way: urbanization, implying the move from the countryside to the towns and cities, and "metropolization", faster growth in the largest conurbations. In some parts of the high income world, a counter-trend has been setting in: the reconcentration of population from some megacities into suburban areas and smaller cities. This was first experienced in the United States and later in some European countries and Japan. This process is still under way, with declines in some large cities. On the other hand, the populations of some of the North's larger cities have stopped falling in the 1980s. The populations of both London and

### The trend towards urbanization continues: urban population, 1950-2015



Source: United Nations, *World Urbanisation Prospects*, 1992.

Paris, for example, both dropped by nearly 20 per cent during the 1970s. Yet in the 1980s that of Paris levelled off, and that of London recovered from 6.7 million in 1981 to around 7 million in 1991. Even in America, where large companies and middle-income earners flee from urban blight, drugs and riots, by 1990 two more cities had joined the ranks of those with over 5 million inhabitants (New York, Chicago and Los Angeles) – namely San Francisco and Philadelphia. In the future, some counter-urbanization may occur in the less developed areas of the world. In fact, the rate of growth of megacities in Latin America slowed down in the 1980s.

Now 56 per cent of the world's urban population still lives in smaller cities of less than 500,000 and their share is expected to decrease somewhat in the future. Nevertheless, more than half of the world's urban population is expected to live in such cities by 2015. This pattern of urbanization, characterized by a majority of the urban population living in cities of fewer than 500,000, is common to both the less and the more advanced regions of the world.

Capital and information are highly mobile, whereas cities rely on immobile factors: housing, public services, infrastructure and, above all, distinctive political and cultural traditions. Because the mobile factors have advanced much more rapidly than the immobile ones, some have concluded that cities are finished. Although it may seem that modern communication technology and the fall in the share of manufacturing in national income has reduced the advantage of physical proximity, and the need for the static factors, cities are in fact flourishing. They have increased not only in size, but also in economic importance. In developing countries, cities

generate national income on the average twice their share in the population. (Some of this consists, however, not of extra goods, or net additions to welfare, but of ‘anti-bads’, needed to combat the “bads” created by city life, like longer journeys to work, more expensive housing, or the need to be more expensively dressed than in a rural setting.) The secret of the success of cities lies in economies of large scale. Financial services (dominated by New York, Tokyo and London), design, marketing, advertising, film and television will all tend to cluster in one place. Clustering can occur in places other than cities: computer firms in Silicon Valley (near Stanford University) and on Route 128 outside Boston (near the Massachusetts Institute of Technology), fashion design in the Po valley in North Italy. But these locations have a lot in common with what we would recognize as an urban environment.<sup>14</sup>

## The city and culture

If we define culture as a way of life, there can be no doubt that urbanization and the growth of cities are the most significant cultural shifts in this century. Living in a city or in the country makes a big difference to the way in which we organize our lives. Only recently have technical developments in computers, communications and transport made the “hooked-up” rural inhabitant part of the vanguard of the new way of life.

Rural societies have incorporated nature’s concerns in their worldview, while urban societies forget or neglect environmental problems. Urban populations have often lost touch with the natural environment. It is a challenge to the people in towns and cities to reconstruct the links between nature and nurture; this is part of the new global ethics.

Cities create and nurture their own culture. Urban culture brings with it dynamic, creative tensions arising from population density and spatial proximity. The fact that many of the landmarks of the cultural heritage of humanity are in the great cities of the world poses issues discussed in the preceding chapter. It is also manifested in the cultural creativity of everyday life, in the variety, diversity and heterogeneity of institutions, patterns of interaction, and activities catering for minority interests, in the shared meanings and in their expression in the so-called “popular culture”.

Very early in the history of urban agglomerations, the fact of urban life gave way to the concept of the city as the locus of power, as an entity that is more than the sum of its inhabitants. At the turn of the century, the classical thinkers of modernity were treating the city as a cultural creation and as the engine of development (Max Weber, Georg Simmel). They saw cities as the places for diversity and heterogeneity, the places for the encounter with the “stranger”, with the variety of “others” that allow for self-

reflexivity, for the recognition of the uniqueness of ourselves and of the enrichment that emerges from dialogue and interaction.

## The dark side

The optimism that linked urbanization with creativity, innovation and modernity later turned into pessimism as the ills of city life became visible: the under-class, panhandling, drugs, crime, violence, hatred and low mass culture were seen not as frictional phenomena linked to the rapid pace of change, but as permanent and enduring features of urban life. Urban air and water pollution and the dumping of rubbish in residential areas have made urban life hell.

In the developing world there was the charge of "urban bias", that towns were favoured at the expense of rural areas by subsidized food, education and health services, and expensive infrastructure. The better-off urban élites, consisting of the urban middle class (including the industrial workers employed in modern sector firms), civil servants, politicians and the military, were seen to be exploiting the much poorer farmers. "Urban bias" was also reinforced by the belief that urban industrialization, assisted by protection of trade, is essential for development and that an "investable surplus" must be squeezed out of agriculture. The prosperity of the urban workers with jobs is accompanied by a large army of unemployed or underemployed immigrants from the countryside. They have come in the hope of getting a well-paid job, but most of them have to eke out an existence by low- or zero-productivity activities.

The time has come to strike a balance: to recognize the rich texture of urban life and at the same time to face the challenges and problems that cities offer. Policies of urban bias have been greatly reduced or abandoned in the 1980s. Protectionism has become unfashionable. The costs of urban housing have been reduced by site and service schemes and by showing that good houses can be constructed at a fraction of the costs that had previously been thought necessary. Cities have continued to grow.

It should, however, be clear that not all these problems are intrinsic to city life. Rather, some are the consequences of wrong policies, of poverty, great inequality and polarization. Often the anonymity of city life and the uprooting of migration are referred to in this context. It has to be stressed that the urban problems are not necessary or inherent traits of urban life. There is much evidence that change can result in solidarity and mutual support, and that disruptions of normal life are accepted as opportunities for enrichment and innovation.

## **Urban infrastructure: new technologies, new problems, new solutions**

Since the emergence of the first human settlements technological innovations have been a key determinant of social and spatial organization; they, in turn, have been conditioned by diverse needs and features of social and territorial structures. The very idea of a city and its shapes can be seen, through history, as the spatial translation of technical changes in the ways of doing and organizing, conveying at the same time cultural, ideological and even philosophical mutations.

Nowadays, cities - and particularly megacities - are the privileged scenarios for the development and application of new technologies, especially in communications and information. Yet these new technologies have not been incorporated in thinking about and in planning the cities in spite of the fact that there is a double link between technology and social space: undoubtedly technological changes have a significant social, cultural, ideological and spatial impact on the societies into which they are introduced. These technologies, in turn, will be transformed and adapted by the social forces that exert their own demands and pressures on the techniques.

It is not easy for a city or country to introduce modern technology. Recent experience shows that it can be done in an integrated way when the state has a strong presence in the production, provision, management and financing of public services and collective equipment, when the development of science and technology are policy priorities, when there are high-quality statistical information services for the design and evaluation of urban policies, when there are subsidies to collective services and equipment for the poor. Obviously, they also depend on relatively high levels of income per head and not so obviously on sustained political stability. Democratic regimes where local-level political institutions are based on representative government that allow freedom in the flow of information, transparency in the functioning of public institutions and formal and informal participation by citizens in urban management may also be helpful.

Of course, few countries meet these conditions. The trend of economic adjustment policies in many countries goes in the opposite direction. In these cases modern technological innovations will be introduced according to narrow financial considerations, in a fragmented manner, in services that benefit high-income earners.

## Cultural creativity in city life

Modern urban life is sometimes associated with mass society, uniformity of consumption, the tyranny of the marketplace, and the ubiquity of power and domination. If this were true, the result would be the uniformity of the shopping mall, repeated everywhere. It would mean the successful creation, through advertising and emulation, of uniform demands, to be satisfied with uniform products.

Yet, in spite of the concentration of resources and power in the hands of global firms and of the impact of mass production, of cars or TV sets and programmes, of blue jeans and Coca Cola, those who are ready to look carefully will find that ordinary men and women can escape the dictates of mass consumption and "invent" their everyday lives. Be it through practices of resistance, diverse tricks or shrewdness, new uses of language, movement, humour or more practical shortcuts, turns and alleys, people appropriate for themselves whatever is offered to them, creating their own meaningful way of life. Mass society is not a disciplined, obedient and passive crowd following leaders and consuming imposed products. People open their own roads, with their art of using and doing, finding ways to free themselves in order to live, in the best possible way from the violence of power.<sup>15</sup>

This explains why, in spite of the trend towards globalization, we observe a great variety of lifestyles and practices in the cities of the world. Be it in urban infrastructure and technology, or in urban landscapes and layouts, rhythms and peoples, diversity and heterogeneity are to be found. Claiming the recognition of the creativity and ingenuity of people is a good antidote to pessimistic and fatalistic views of the world and especially of the evils of the city. There are, however, dangers in simply celebrating this pluralism and diversity. The danger lies in going to the extremes of radical neo-cultural relativism in an era of globalization and tendencies towards mass culture: the belief that whatever people do is good. This means, ultimately, that anything goes and there are no universal criteria to compare and evaluate social practices.

A further danger implied in this perspective is to accept and even applaud the status quo. Since what is stressed is the inventiveness and apparent freedom of ordinary people, rather than the ubiquity of power and domination and the social dimensions of inequality and polarization, complacency with the ensuing apparent diversity would follow.<sup>16</sup> The key issue here is that the diversity and pluralism to be fostered have to be founded on a minimum satisfaction of basic needs, a minimum that precludes exclusion and marginalization; a minimum of resources and capacities (from freedom from hunger to adequate health, education and shelter) have to be guaranteed to be able to claim "the right to have rights"

(in Hannah Arendt's words) and the right to express one's own unique identity.

From this perspective not all cultural creations and patterns of behaviour found in urban life are equally desirable or permissible. Not all of them can be interpreted as creative responses of subjects who appropriate for themselves what modern mass culture has to offer and, in de Certeau's language, creatively "invent" their everyday life. On the contrary, they often are the recurrent results of deprivation and cumulative social harm, and require political and social intervention to attack these problems at their root.

A first challenge facing policy is how to assure individual and collective access to resources for urban life, resources that become prerequisites for the full enjoyment of choice. A second challenge that would lead to a reassurance of cultural diversity is to find ways to open the world to more voices and products, again with the intention of widening choices, with the multiplying effects of all the creative interactions that this would entail.

To make life in towns more agreeable, the expansion of green and open spaces is essential. Urban pollution has become a serious problem in many cities of the developing world. Pollution and emission rates of pollutants should be monitored and reduced. Spaces should be created for cultural expressions such as music, amateur theatre and the arts.

## The cultural dimensions of population growth

The links between population growth and the environment are complex and highly controversial. Much of the debate remains polarized between two extreme positions. One holds that "an increasing population is the principal threat to the environment because of the planet's finite resources, the other that human creativity will continue to find solutions through improved technology to expand the planet's carrying capacity."<sup>17</sup>

Until recently it was widely thought that demographic pressures inevitably lead to environmental damage in the form of deforestation, desertification and soil erosion. But there has been accumulating evidence that in some environments greater population density can be a condition for less environmental degradation and more sustainable agriculture. In the Machakos District in Kenya, for example, a fivefold increase in population was associated with a shift from highly degrading to much more sustainable agriculture. In Guinea more people have created more forests. In Nepal increased erosion near the forest margins was found to be the result of depopulation and the collapse of terraces was due to lack of people to maintain them. In the Kakamega District of Kenya the density of trees varied with the density of population and the smallness of land holdings.<sup>18</sup>

There are, however, different views on the link between population growth and density on the one hand and environmental damage on the other. Some observers think that rising population is not only one of the most urgent and serious problems to be faced by the world as a whole: it is also one of the major causes of environmental degradation in many countries.

At the same time, rapid population growth may increase the number of poor people. And poverty can be highly destructive of the environment, the consequences of which, in turn, aggravate poverty in a vicious circle. For poor rural households, environmental degradation (vanishing sources of water, receding sources of fodder and fuel) can be both a cause and an effect of a growing population. The poor are one of the causes, as well as the main victims of environmental degradation.

The majority of the world's poor still live in rural areas some of which are environmentally fragile, and they rely on natural resources over which they have little control. Land-hungry farmers cultivate unsuitable areas – steeply-sloped, erosion-prone hillsides; semi-arid land where soil degradation is rapid; and tropical forests where crop yields on cleared fields drop sharply after a few years. The search for fuel wood and fodder can lead to deforestation, the need for ever more crops on increasingly scarce land to soil erosion, and the need for more water to its exhaustion. And it is the poor women who carry the heavier burden. Besides the scarcity of resources for social production, they are most vulnerable to the scarcity of resources for domestic production, such as lack of fuel wood, drinking water, and sewerage and waste disposal systems. Moreover, although poor communities have a strong ethic of stewardship in managing their resources and often look far into the future, their fragile and limited resources, their often poorly defined property rights and their limited access to credit and insurance markets prevent them from protecting the environment as much as they would like.

Whether with strong enforcement of population policies or not, demographic trends are clear. The major decline in mortality rates has already taken place, and fertility rates are declining, in some areas quite rapidly. World population continues to grow, though at declining rates. Until the beginning of this decade, fertility rates were widely held to be the most significant line of demarcation between developed and developing countries. By 1995, however, this criterion had lost its significance, since the rate in more than half the developing countries, from Brazil to China, from India and Indonesia to Mexico, Tunisia and Turkey has fallen below this critical level. Two-thirds of these countries now have fertility rates lower than that of the United States in the 1950s. Conversely, the countries of the North have not converged towards a single "post-transitional" fertility pattern.

In the countries of the North differences in average income or economic growth no longer have any bearing on levels of fertility; fertility may remain high despite increased average income, as in Iran or Saudi Arabia. There is growing evidence that with education, especially of girls and women, better health, reduced infant mortality, higher incomes, and social provision for the handicapped, old and chronically sick, the desired family size falls. It is then important to provide the people with appropriate methods of family planning and family spacing. The most important condition for a successful population policy is to give more voice to women, who bear the brunt not only of bearing children, but also of rearing and nurturing them. Women's education, health and political participation, and human development generally, contributes not only to smaller families, but also to healthier, better educated and longer living children and a better environment.

To understand both the dynamics found within a country and the differences observed between countries, one must recognize the degree to which population dynamics is embedded in cultural life. Attention should therefore be paid to the historical and anthropological dimensions. Family structures, marriage patterns, male and female roles, the division of labour between the sexes and generations, and recognized patterns of social success have often turned out to be very important factors determining fertility. For example, where marriage followed extended negotiations, as in Chinese culture, it was possible to delay the time of child-bearing. But where marriage at puberty was traditional, as in Africa and the Indian sub-continent, this control was not possible. In India and elsewhere fertility rates among the upper income groups are lower than in comparable groups in high income countries, while the high fertility rates in the lower income groups are difficult to control, in spite of efforts by social workers.

In poor countries the majority of the people still live in rural areas. But as we have seen there is large and increasing migration to towns and cities, which are going to be the main residential areas of the future. Urban air, water and solid waste pollution, congestion, the absence of parks and green spaces and of opportunities for cultural expression, and the strains and stresses of urban life will become the dominant problems, affecting large numbers of people. Urbanization and the higher productivity and incomes that go with it raise the cost of bringing up children. As urbanization proceeds, the contributions of the extended family decline, children become less dependable sources of income, and these factors reduce the economic value of children and the desired size of the family.

A recent analysis of the links between population and environment concludes:

To achieve a sustainable pattern of resource use and population growth, a much deeper understanding of the interactions of population and per capita resource consumption as

mediated by technology, culture and values must be developed. . . . The impact of population growth on environmental change must be understood to act along with other mediating factors, such as poverty, consumption levels, access to resource use, gender equity and technology. The crux of the problem of assuring a sustainable world is understanding the full range of possible interactions between and among humans and their natural environment and choosing from this spectrum those forms of interaction that sustain life. Sustainability is only then seen not only as a global aggregate process but also as one that can assure sustainable livelihoods for the vast majority of local peoples.<sup>19</sup>

## Economic development and the biosphere

The preservation of the environment and of biodiversity must be conceived on a global scale. Ecosystems are interconnected in a highly complex fashion. Even if social and political organizations support sustainability, many societies have disappeared because sustainability may depend upon a systemic combination of factors not all of which can be controlled by man. Thus a society's endogenous capability for sustained development has not always guaranteed its survival.

In Copan, Honduras, for instance, palynological records indicate that the decline of the theocratic state coincided with the displacement of fields and food-gathering areas to an ever greater distance from the ceremonial centre – a sign of the depletion of nearby natural resources. There is also evidence – as with other Mayan centres – of contemporary social and political disruptions. Which came first, environmental depletion or political upheaval? In all likelihood, each intensified the other, food scarcity combining with the political unrest brought on by the excessive demands of a central theocracy.<sup>20</sup>

Sustainability should take into account the pressures to which the ecosystem is subjected by dynamic interaction between cultures. The Aru Tenggara Marine Reserve in Eastern Indonesia provides an illustration of the role of culture in environmental management. The Reserve covers 114,000 hectares of sea and islands, with turtle and sea cow hunting, pearl diving, and shark-fin, prawn and fishmeal fishing. Many of these activities are for export and subject to the payment of fishing rights to the local population. While Aru used to harbour the biggest green turtle population in Indonesia, their number has dwindled sharply, not because of local practice, but because in the neighboring island of Bali there is a large market for turtle meat that is used in ritual celebrations. Thus a central obstacle to the proper conservation and management of turtles lies outside Arunese society. Sustainable development therefore depends on taking a different view of partnership, taking local and supra-national interests into account.<sup>21</sup>

Discussions on sustainability have laid too much stress on the large-scale economic relationship between societies and the natural environment. But sustainable strategies should also be considered at the level of individual households and commercial firms, failing which we will only be dealing in over-simplified generalizations with little bearing on actual everyday practices. Many of the environmental issues now being discussed on a global scale are even more urgently felt in micro-social situations.

Thanks to detailed studies of living organisms and their ethology we have the technical means today of developing a much better informed "nature culture" than ever before. There is indeed a "way", but there must also be a will to propagate the idea, starting at elementary school, that we are "the gardeners of the world":

We are part of the earth and it is part of us . . . This we know. The earth does not belong to man; man belongs to the earth. This we know. All things are connected. Like the blood which unites one family, all things are connected. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth. Man did not weave the web of life, he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.<sup>22</sup>

Human beings, although set apart by their capacity to create languages and cultures, are still part of the biosphere as a biological species among others. Insofar as the recognition of the interdependence of humans and other living species is a condition of life, such cultural beliefs should be respected and legally protected. Respect for all forms of life raises broad ethical questions, especially with the development of applied science. Knowledge as such is neutral; its application, however, can be negative, even perverse. In the developing applications of genetic testing to farming practices, science and conscience must go hand in hand. We must carefully weigh the advantages derived from such practices against the risks involved, whilst respecting both freedom of scientific research and the human rights of present and future generations.

## Intergenerational justice

What does intergenerational justice mean? One interpretation suggests that we owe future generations at least the same level of welfare that we are enjoying now. Since we do not know and cannot determine the size of future generations, this may apply to total welfare, distributed among their numbers according to a different set of principles. But there are well-known difficulties in distributing welfare equally, and it can be argued that it is opportunities, not welfare, that should be distributed equally over generations.<sup>23</sup> For example this would mean for energy that we should leave future

generations at least the same productive capacity and therefore the same opportunities to produce that we now enjoy. If we deplete some exhaustible resource, we should have to compensate for this by some technological innovation or capital accumulation that makes any given amount of oil or coal yield more energy, or substitutes some other source for the depleted resource. But compensating for depletion presupposes our knowing how much we should have left to future generations without the depletion. Would it be just if we consumed all the capital we inherited from previous generations and only compensated for the depletion of natural resources we caused? Or would it be just if we added to human-made capital as much as the previous generation had added? Or should we leave the same amount of man-made capital that we inherited, plus compensation for the depletion we caused? These are difficult questions and no answers will be attempted here. They are raised to warn against easy and glib doctrines.

Then there is the question, "what does adequate compensation in practice mean?" If we develop a technology that enables us to raise the rate of extraction by the same proportion that we have used up the resource, that would be adequate compensation. Or if we invent a technology that gives us as much power as we have used up, effectively maintaining performance, that would also qualify. Such guidelines take us some way, but not all the way, for different forms of energy have different benefits and costs, which it is not easy in practice to bring to a common denominator.

The obligation of sustainability cannot be left entirely to the market. Future generations are not represented in the market and there is no reason that market behaviour will take care of our obligations to the future. Taxes, subsidies and regulation can adapt the structure of incentives to protect the environment and the resource base.

In our concern to protect the interests, needs and opportunities of future generations, we must never overlook the claims of the poor today. It is of the essence of the "human development" approach that the rights of all people – irrespective of nationality, class, gender, race, religion, community or generation – be equally respected. The objective of sustainability over generations would make little sense if the opportunities to be sustained in the future were miserable and indigent. Sustaining deprivation cannot be our goal. We should therefore not deny the poor and destitute today the attention that we bestow on the future.

One might object that redistribution to the poor today would harm sustainability by raising consumption instead of investment. But this ignores the productive aspects of human development. Redistribution to the poor in the form of improving their health, education and nutrition is not only important for its own sake, but is also an investment in "human capital" with lasting influence into the future. An increase and improvement in education, for example, will raise productivity and the ability to

raise incomes, now and in the future. The education of women as a basic human right, equal to that of men, should by now be obvious. But in addition, the importance of the education of mothers in raising the quality of life of future generations has been well documented. Human development now therefore should be seen as a major contribution to sustainability.

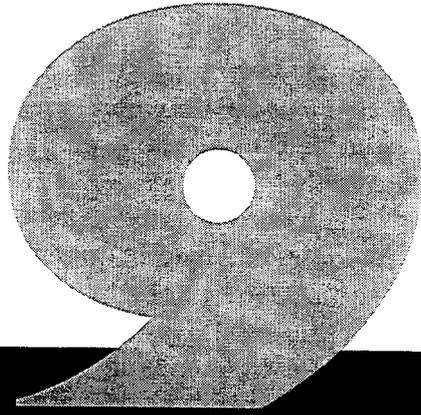
If there is one key interest of young people today, especially in the high income countries, it is their concern for the future of the earth, a deep worry about environmental degradation. It is as if the young today were asking their elders, what kind of degraded environment are you leaving behind for us and our children? Numerous surveys and research projects in many countries attest to this worry of the young. It is interesting to note that it is manifested on the one hand at the community and local level, and, on the other hand, at the global level. The level of the central government of the state is much less in evidence. The militancy of the young in environmental or Green movements is quite surprising in view of the fact that they are apathetic and display a privatist and individualistic mood in other areas of their lives. Initiatives of the young in this field, be they international gatherings or cultural and creative activities, should be encouraged.

## Notes

1. *Our Common Future*, Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, Oxford University Press, 1987, p. 27.
2. Op. cit.
3. Accounting for the depletion of exhaustible natural resources is easier than for environmental values like clean air and water, for the former have market prices, a useful starting point, which the latter do not.
4. We have been, so far, remarkably successful in inventing substitutes for, or economizing in, exhaustible resources. The exhaustion of a natural resource cannot leave us worse off than we were before its discovery. Wilfred Beckerman once pointed out that the world had survived remarkably well without Beckermonium, a mineral named after an ancestor of his who failed to discover it in the nineteenth century.
5. Researchers at the University of Kansas said a Himalayan relative of the Pacific yew tree could serve as an alternative source of taxol. From this tree, *Taxus baccata*, unlike the yew tree, taxol can be extracted without hurting the tree. See *The Wall Street Journal* 20 April 1992, B6. *The New York Times* reported on 31 January 1993 that the company that produces taxol, Bristol-Myers Squibb, says that synthetic production of the drug had made such rapid progress that it can stop harvesting the trees immediately. (It takes about 60 pounds of bark – the amount from four trees – to make enough taxol for the complete treatment of one ovarian cancer patient. A total of 1.6 million pounds was harvested in 1992.) The Indians of the Pacific Northwest have been using the bark of the tree for medicinal purposes for hundreds of years. Taxol, used to fight advanced breast and ovarian cancer, can now be derived from the

- needles and twigs of the more common Himalayan variety of yew tree instead of the bark of the endangered Pacific yew tree. The Himalayan variety is not only more common, but using the twigs and needles does not kill the tree as stripping the bark of the Pacific yew tree does. There is also a semi-synthetic version of Taxol. The name of the drug gave rise to an amusing correspondence in *The New York Times*. Apparently, taxol, which is mentioned in a riveting passage in Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca*, was a well-known French laxative widely used in the first half of this century.
6. Steven Foster/James A. Duke, *Eastern/Central Medicinal Plants*, Peterson Field Guides, Houghton Mifflin, 1990.
  7. Susan S. Weed, *Wise Woman Herbal for the Childbearing Year*, Woodstock, New York, Ash Tree Publishing, 1986.
  8. *The Wall Street Journal*, 13 September 1995.
  9. Gabriel Lonchan, "The Samburu of Kenya" in *Indigenous Views of Land and the Environment*, World Bank Discussion Papers, 188, Washington, D.C. 1993.
  10. Different cultures conceptualize and view differently the relationship between human beings, other living creatures and nature. There are also cultural variations in the way the notion of humanity itself is defined and therefore in the ways diverse rights and responsibilities are attributed to different categories of human beings. As Luc Ferry notes in reaction to a "fundamentalist" ecologism, "every value, including nature, is a human fact and . . . therefore, every normative ethic is in a certain sense humanistic and anthropocentric". There have been times in Western history when animist ideas gave rights and responsibilities to trees and animals. There have been varieties of concerns with nature (including the extensive Nazi ecological legislation) and controversies regarding the place of humankind in nature.
  11. Smitu Khotari, op. cit.
  12. Lourdes Arizpe, Fernanda Paz and Margarita Velazquez, *Culture and global change: Social Perceptions of Deforestation in the Lacandon Rain-forest*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1995.
  13. These and the following data are taken from the *World Urbanization Prospects, 1994* revision, United Nations, 1995.
  14. "A Survey of Cities", *The Economist*, 29 July 1995.
  15. Michel de Certeau, *L'invention du quotidien*, Paris, Gallimard, 1990 (first edition, 1980).
  16. Such a view leads to a reduced emphasis of the welfare state in labour markets. It claims that the ingenuity and creativity of the poor allows them to cope with and solve their problems. This leads to the conclusion that the informal sector should be left unattended, and the allegation that this ingenuity will nurture a new breed of entrepreneurs. The linguistic shift from informal workers to micro-entrepreneurs is symptomatic of this danger.
  17. Lourdes Arizpe, Patricia Stone and D. Major, "Rethinking the population-environment debate", in Arizpe, Stone and Major, eds., *Population and Environment: Rethinking the Debate*, Westview Press, 1994, p. 2.
  18. See Robert Chambers, "Summary of Points made to the Workshop on Ecoregional Approaches to International Research for Sustainable Agriculture", Puerto Rico, 29 May 1993, IDS, Sussex, mimeo. The World Bank's Africa Region's Findings confirms that in the Machakos district in Kenya, which is mainly inhabited by the Akamba people, increasing population was good for the environment. These findings confirm the hypothesis advanced by Ester Boserup that increases in population density induce favourable technological change. There is, clearly, a maximum of population beyond which the unfavorable factors make themselves felt.
  19. Arizpe et al., op. cit, pp. 346-7.

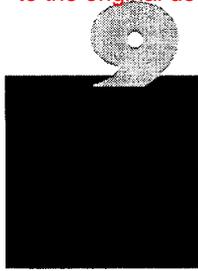
20. Lourdes Arizpe and Fernanda Paz, "Culture and Sustainability", paper prepared for the Commission, July 1994.
21. Gerard A. Persoon and Wouter T. de Groot, "Culture, Environment and Development: An Overview and Example from the Environmental Science Perspective", paper prepared for the Commission, July 1994.
22. Speech delivered in 1854 by Chief Seattle, Chief of the Nez Percé Indian Nation, in response to a demand that he sell his people's land to the US Government.
23. Equality of opportunity is a requirement of a just society. On the other hand, there is no agreement on what this requirement precisely implies and how it is to be balanced against other requirements of justice.



# RETHINKING CULTURAL POLICIES

*Our biggest problem in cultural policy is not, I would suggest, lack of resources, lack of will lack of commitment or even lack of policy co-ordination to date. It is, rather, a misconstrual or only partial formulation and recognition of the policy object itself: culture.*

Colin Mercer<sup>1</sup>



## Expanding the concept of cultural policy

When culture is understood as the basis of development, the very notion of cultural policy has to be considerably broadened. Any policy for development must be profoundly sensitive to and inspired by culture itself.

As we have seen, defining and applying such a policy means finding factors of cohesion that hold multi-ethnic societies together, by making far better use of the realities and opportunities of pluralism. It implies promoting creativity in politics and governance, in technology, industry and business, in education and in social and community development – as well as in the arts. It requires that the media be used to open up communication opportunities for all, by reducing the gap between the information “haves” and “have nets”. It means adopting a gender perspective which looks at women’s concerns, needs and interests and seeks a fairer redistribution of resources and power between men and women. It means giving children and young people a better place as bearers of a new world culture in the making. It implies a thoroughgoing diversification of the notion of cultural heritage in social change. With regard to the natural environment it means building better understanding of the profoundly cultural dimensions of environmental management, creating institutions that give effect to that understanding. Finally, as we shall discuss in the next chapter, it requires new research which pays attention to the hitherto neglected integration of culture, development, and forms of political organization.

While governments tackle these challenges in different ways already, their efforts are spread out among compartmentalized departments, as well as the private sector and civil society. In the view of the Commission, however, the time has now come to build a coherent new paradigm. This would be one in which society’s different actors together mould paths of human development that are sensitive to all the cultural issues and fully recognize them as such. This is what cultural policy must ultimately come to mean. To adapt a well-known declaration by André Malraux, development will be cultural in the twenty-first century or it will not be at all.<sup>2</sup>

In the meantime, however, and as a basic first step in the broadening process, the present concept of cultural development has to change. It has been submitted to critical scrutiny by many already. Awareness of this led the Commission to define among its lines of inquiry “the influence of cultural development on individual and collective well-being”. Cultural development in the commonly accepted usage is the subject matter of cultural policy. It refers to a limited segment of social activity, i.e. promotion of the arts and cultural life, including protection of the cultural heritage, for which governments have established budgets, development plans and public institutions such as museums, cultural centres, arts academies, etc. It is in this field also that government is increasingly seeking the

involvement of the private sector and of the civil society. It is this defined domain that will be referred to in this chapter as the culture sector.

The idea that all this was a normal responsibility of government crystallized in the Western European welfare states in the 1960s but had been gestating in statist societies such as France for several decades. Not surprisingly, a totalitarian extreme of governmental control characterized regimes such as Nazi Germany, which carefully defined and painstakingly applied an extremely detailed arts policy. This was also true of the stance of the Communist command economies.

The range of manifestations that governments choose to see as relevant for their cultural policies has broadened in recent years, as the production of and the demand for artistic goods for mass consumption has expanded, together with the awareness that cultural identity is shaped by many different forms of cultural expression.

Cultural identity was particularly important to peoples shoring up a newly gained, or regained, independence and was therefore a major concern of post-colonial policy formulation in the 1970s. The driving force was the perception that the preservation and promotion of indigenous ways of life was essential for establishing a sense of confidence and pride as a prerequisite for self-realization. For example, Kenya's stated objectives stress the "promotion of self-awareness and the development of human values". In Indonesia, the adoption of the principle of Unity in Diversity inspired an "Agenda of Cultural Development" in which "the development of culture stands essentially for the nation's ideals and aspirations and for its efforts to attain its ideals through development".<sup>3</sup>

Such inclusive language appeared only much later in the declarations of the high income countries. A recent example is the Australian government's cultural statement for 1994, entitled *A Creative Nation*. It calls for a charter of cultural rights and asserts that culture "encompasses our entire mode of life, our ethics, our institutions, our manners and our routines, not only interpreting our world but shaping it". Other governments, such as those of the United Kingdom and Canada, appear to have been pushed towards such thinking by efficiency, cost-saving criteria: merging different mandates into single ministries, linking the arts and heritage with tourism, sport, "participation" and, in the case of Canada, cultural diversity. Nevertheless, such institutional changes do pave the way for a more comprehensive approach to cultural life.

This is the paramount need. It has been stated that, as far as the culture sector is concerned, "very few African governments have a clearly formulated policy containing a general vision of the future".<sup>4</sup> A prominent Ghanaian artist refused to become the Minister responsible for the culture sector because, she felt, her country's official notion of it was too limited in scope, dealing only with traditional music and dances.<sup>5</sup> The same could be

said of most governments on all continents. The point was made over a decade ago, at UNESCO's 1982 World Conference on Cultural Policies in Mexico City (MONDIACULT).<sup>6</sup>

## From principles to practice

The key challenge is to move from principles to practice. Policy-makers throughout the world have been reworking their policies in response to forces that affect all the areas of public policy: tighter budgets, demands for greater individual and local participation in cultural life as part of the democratization process, demands for increased geographical or jurisdictional autonomy and the impact of technology and the market. In the cultural field this has led to the incremental reform of existing models rather than to new approaches, although throughout the developing world there are many who are calling for deeper change. As Patrick Manning, Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, has underlined, "We still look to culture as a means of integration, failing to perceive that cultural integration has long been in place, except that we have not been able to convert it into conscious development energy. What is missing is its recognition and its emancipation into the world of action."<sup>7</sup>

The situation in Central and Eastern Europe presents a special paradox in that cultural expression was previously a language of resistance, a surrogate for political dissent, using parables and metaphors that were widely understood for what they were. The advent of political pluralism has made this function superfluous, reducing social demand for cultural production at a time when these nations face severe economic crisis. Support for the culture sector has collapsed as a result.

The efforts of the state to encourage cultural activities need first of all to be more open. They need to move away from monolithic notions of a "national culture" and move towards accepting diversity, ethnic diversity and diversity in individual choices and group practices. A multi-ethnic policy, a multi-language policy, a policy representing different religious points of view, should replace monolithic presentations. The implications for public broadcasting policy are obvious. Cultural tourism is also a growth industry with major implications, as we have seen, for the safeguard as well as sharing of the cultural heritage upon which it is based.

Such an approach would have to involve consensus-building with the new local-level and private sector actors. It will call for political commitment: constituencies, coalitions and alliances need to be organized so as to overcome a number of entrenched inhibitions and obstacles. These are not always well understood by those whose responsibility it is to introduce new measures; for this reason they would provide a subject for research into the political economy of cultural life.

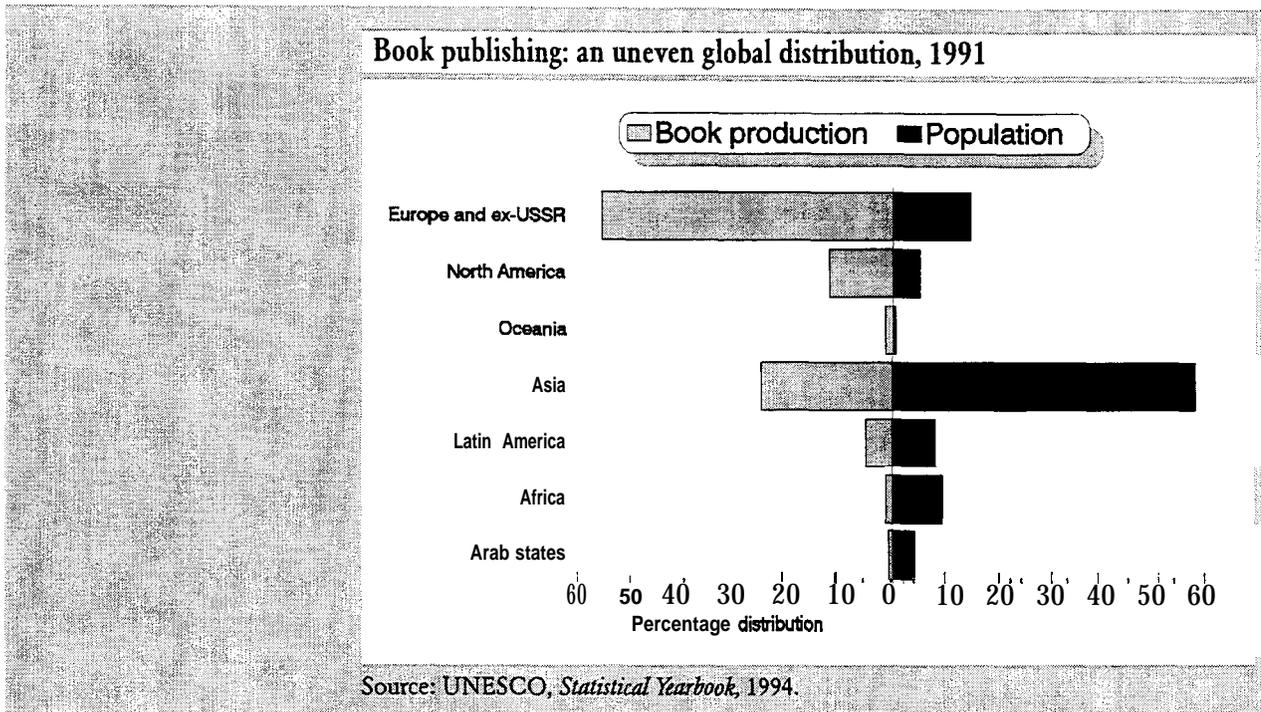
## The economics of the culture sector

The economic importance of the cultural sector is now well recognized. Economic impact studies have been used for some years now by advocates of spending in the arts; because they have provided economic and financial justifications and income and employment opportunities, they have proved particularly helpful in arguing against spending cuts. Such studies, especially in developed countries, demonstrate that the culture sector's contribution to GNP is considerably larger than is generally imagined. For example, in the United States, the entertainment industry has been identified as the most important export sector after aerospace. *The Economist* reported that long-term growth, due in part to liberalization of broadcasting and the commercialization of the institutions of the "worldwide" cultural sector, would remain at about 10 per cent per year, ahead of many other industrial and commercial segments.<sup>8</sup>

If this line of argument is overstated, however, cultural goals are in danger of being overwhelmed by purely commercial objectives. All forms of cultural expression cannot and should not be reduced to commercial value. "The commodification of culture and the creative arts decontextualizes and destroys the meaning of cultural practices. Equating the arts as income-generating products eliminates the spirituality, history and value of cultural practices, the central ingredient that maintains values and celebrates the traditions of disadvantaged communities."<sup>9</sup> For example, "dot" painting has grown considerably over the last two decades amongst Aboriginal artists and communities in northern Australia. These indigenous artists are selling their work nationally as well as internationally, generating substantial income, and at the same time finding new ways of exploring the "dreamings" of their own past.

A related challenge is provided by the free trade moves to incorporate aspects of cultural production and distribution into regional and multilateral trade policies. Both the Uruguay Round and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) required substantial negotiations before limited forms of exemptions or exclusions of cultural industries were adopted. This was reinforced when the G-7 Information Conference in 1995, again with some difficulty, agreed that a global information economy "should serve the cultural enrichment of all citizens through diversity of content reflecting the cultural and linguistic diversity of our people". These various accords are tenuous achievements and will no doubt continue to be challenged as the cultural industries and new media technologies operate increasingly in an open world economy.

The cultural industries, which include the new media, are becoming one of the most important constituents of this economy, although most countries are likely to remain net importers of cultural products and serv-



ices. Governments are faced with an unavoidable tension between commercial interests and the desire for programming that is responsive to the claims different groups make for media representation of their ways of life. While the problem is age-old, rapid advances in digital reproduction, manipulation and transmission have focused our attention upon copyright and intellectual property reform. This is stated mostly in terms of export market expansion although the fundamental objective, the support of cultural diversity, requires policies that support local entrepreneurs and artists and foster competitive distribution.

A clear tension can be observed between commercial and public interests in the field of book publishing. Reading plays a vital role in individual and social development, for it is a basic tool for the democratization of knowledge. Promoting reading is a key ingredient in the book policy of any country that wishes to ensure equal access to knowledge to all its citizens. As part of book development policy, a variety of public incentives can be worked out. These include preferential rates for book advertising, adequate incentives to private initiatives, and national campaigns promoting reading. Such incentives should give priority to minorities and to rural and marginal urban areas where book circulation is unsatisfactory. Promoting access to the book is a long-term objective that obviously needs to be coupled with fostering national book publishing. Developing countries should acquire greater familiarity with the economic and industrial realities of the book publishing industry. Books need to find their place

within the range of priority fiscal, legal, industrial and cultural strategies. Countries, particularly small countries, in which many languages are spoken face difficult problems in deciding how to combine containing costs in the production of books with catering for the interests of all groups. Technical innovation in printing will help. The Commission does not claim to have found a solution to this problem.

Yet it is also true that the globalization of tastes and styles has limited the role government can play in the provision of cultural products both at home and abroad. Government intervention has to be less direct. In the marketplace its role will increasingly be to support producers and distributors, palliating market failure and co-operating in the development of international regulation. As a corollary, government support to non-market initiatives is also needed. This should concentrate on promoting co-operation between cultural institutions, groups and individuals. There is a need for governments to move away from direct intervention as a form of "cultural diplomacy" in favour of a facilitating role with regard to other actors. While the free market mechanism does appear to be meeting a whole range of needs better than any other system yet invented, "the universe of manufactured needs, mass consumption and mass entertainment, motivated by profits and driven by the aggregate preferences of billions of consumers" has become a force one scholar has dubbed McWorld, "the natural culmination of modernisation", that represents "a politics of inadvertence and unintended consequences, in which the seemingly innocuous market quest for fun, creativity and profits puts whole cultures in harm's way and undermines autonomy in individuals and nations alike".<sup>10</sup>

### Urban culturescapes

In response to global pressures as well as decentralization, the culture sector has become an important dimension in the strategies of local authorities. Half of humankind - 3.2 billion people - will live in urban centres by the year 2000, of whom seventy per cent will be in developing countries. Each continent is affected in a somewhat different way. In several Latin American countries, the degree of urbanization has reached the levels of Europe and North America. In Africa, the rates of urban growth are extremely high and difficult to accommodate. In Asia, the sheer size of the population involved is staggering. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, low-income people in poorer regions will be crowded in megacities which are and will be growing faster there until the year 2015. They will be the majority of the world's population and will bring about extremely rapid social transformations in cities throughout the world.

Through the 1980s in Western Europe and North America, urban cultural policies were designed to serve mainly economic objectives. In cities such as Baltimore, Barcelona and Glasgow regeneration efforts have successfully used cultural heritage and cultural activities as “urban capital”. Canada’s popular “Main Street Program” for downtown revitalization reflects an approach that relies more on grassroots initiatives. It is based on principles of community vision and commitment, incremental change, process as opposed to one-time solutions, local entrepreneurship and volunteering. Implemented in small communities of 3,000 to 50,000 inhabitants, the programme is based on hiring a full-time project manager for a short period to work for the downtown merchants. Together they make sustainable use of local heritage resources, help stimulate the economy while involving the local population.

The emphasis, however, has still been mainly on building infrastructure for the arts, providing more cultural goods and services and promoting cultural tourism. Growing experience in some industrialized countries shows that provision of reasonable infrastructure and traditional cultural activities are not sufficient to humanize cities and to overcome social tensions. An approach that is more integrated with the cultural fabric of the city is required.

The city brings together people of different origins and cultural patterns. This is both its chief strength as a centre for social and cultural innovation, and its Achilles heel. The mixing of lifestyles and forms of expression in urban areas can be a source both of creation and innovation and of conflict. Consolidating social integration with respect to ethnic and cultural diversity, and yet inciting them to blossom, is a major public policy challenge facing cities today and tomorrow.

Social integration and effective grass-roots democracy are necessary to create a sense of belonging and responsibility – two ingredients of meaningful citizenship. “Designing and implementing systematic public policies should not only aim at improving people’s quality of life, but also bring social and political stability to our cities, and thereby to our societies.”<sup>11</sup> Social exclusion, segregation and mounting violence, particularly among young people, are urban problems that cry out for solutions. They are cultural problems in the broadest sense. But there are also cultural responses to them in the narrower sense. For example, the discipline of living history can be used to teach young people about the methods of nonviolence. The HIP-HOP Project (Highways into the Past: History, Organizing and Power) is a sort of “Civil Rights Tour” that brings students from the Boston area to visit key sites of the civil rights movements of the 1950s and 1960s to learn about the power of nonviolence from people who were teenagers themselves when they risked their lives and filled the jails in their quest for civil rights. Amateur arts training, free or discounted access to

cultural institutions and activities, have proven effective in including previously excluded members of society. Where arts funding is linked directly to efforts to support diversity, community development flourishes.

## **New visions based on pluralism**

Cultural policies driven by nation-building objectives are being increasingly challenged by individuals and groups who may not necessarily contest this motivation, yet ask for their more immediate needs to be met first. Because of bureaucratic lags, however, the more participatory approaches that governments are ready to define are often out of phase with real needs by the time they are implemented. This is very likely to be true in the domain of cultural life, where change is rapid but policy rigid. A subtler shift in vision is the growing conviction that the state should not be seen primarily as a supplier of cultural facilities and services to the public. The reigning supply-led approach is expensive; it is also top-down and easily overlooks minority needs. Implementing a demand-led policy is more easily said than done, however. Only a handful of countries, Sweden and The Netherlands among them, have defined strategies to promote cultural participation as an important dimension of a cosmopolitan society. In its 1995 proposals regarding the direction of cultural policy in Sweden, the Governmental Cultural Committee calls for further broadening through a recognition that participation in cultural life be linked to forces generally considered outside the arts. Elements in a new participation strategy include increasing the interplay between cultural policies and other social and educational sectors. Such thinking is relatively new. Further comparative research into changing patterns of participation as well as examples of best practices are required to bolster this positive trend. Strengthening the process would help to put people, and not institutions and products, at centre stage. Such a policy would have to be permanently in phase with evolving lifestyles, interests and creative potentials. This is illustrated in Zimbabwe where crafts, dress, design, food, traditional medicine, environmental practices and religion are all important components in that country's new cultural policy.

## **Integrative policy frameworks**

Few governments have institutions that represent adequately both majority and minority interests. Policies rarely reflect the traditions and mores of all segments of the national or local community. In a survey conducted in the United States in 1992, for example, 127 grantees, i.e. the grassroots practi-

tioners, ranked pluralism/cultural diversity second among the most important social or economic issues; 168 grant-makers, however, ranked it fourth.<sup>12</sup> Real access to basic political and civil rights is what determines how much “space” is available for excluded groups to build their own representative organizations. Yet the world’s first national multicultural legislation appeared in Canada only in 1988 when the new Multiculturalism Act gave statutory authority to a range of government policies and programmes to support cultural diversity as a fundamental feature of Canadian society. This was but a first step towards supporting the more fundamental call to “diversify the mainstream” of cultural policy and cultural life. The Commission advocates that this approach should serve as a model for other countries.

Respect for diversity is essential, but it must go hand in hand with the promotion of dialogue if the formation of new ghettos is to be avoided. We must also remember that cultural diversity is not just ethnic diversity. Women are underrepresented and underrated in cultural activities, both in their creative contributions and in their managerial and organizational roles. Ground-breaking initiatives by the Arts Council of England in providing assessment and support for the creativity of disabled people is an example that more countries should follow. Both young and old people often are neglected or ignored, and effective participation programmes that directly offer them opportunities and choices should be introduced.

Considerable progress has been made in the last few decades in the promotion of cultural democracy and the protection of human rights. Many individuals and communities throughout the world, particularly those belonging to minority groups or who are socially marginalized, are still excluded from the cultural life of their societies. Cultural rights are now recognized as belonging to a more recent generation of human rights. The core cultural right is that of each person to participate fully in cultural life. All such rights still need clearer definition, however. They should naturally be incorporated into the policy framework. Their legal status at the international and national level should be strengthened through participatory negotiation between state agencies and diverse groups (indigenous peoples, minority groups, migrants) so that each group can contribute to the formulation of policies for their understanding, respect and acceptance.

Empowerment based on the principle of cultural self-determination is particularly sought after by minorities. It is also desired by the world’s indigenous peoples, as they ask for greater devolution of power to their communities. Their use of the term does not imply political independence, as has been made clear in the way these claims have been brought to international attention in the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations and in the United Nations Commission on Human

Rights. In the latter, a Working Group for Indigenous Populations has been in existence since 1972. Its efforts have led to a Declaration on Indigenous Peoples which aims at achieving not only greater protection for them but also fuller cultural rights. The Commission supports this process.

There is the question of access to power. Formulating and carrying out concrete measures to promote access is the task of both the state and civil society. Only the broader involvement of all levels of society in cultural life assures the full democratic life. It is the state's business to ensure that public institutions are designed to encourage balanced contributions from all sections of society. From the point of view of civil society, empowerment requires access to information, as well as channels for expression, representation and redress. Programmes designed to enhance access to information and the media as vehicles of expression and representation should be further developed, especially those addressing women, the socially marginalized and members of minority groups. The creation of cultural associations and the establishment of community and alternative radio, television and new media networks, can also play a significant role in this field, just as much in inner city Los Angeles as in rural South East Asia.

### **From arts to creativity**

As the Commission has outlined in Chapter 3 it is the creative life that gives meaning to people's existence: yet most policy debates have skirted the issue of creativity. The terms creativity and creative expression are often euphemisms for support of the professional arts and artistic and heritage institutions. The professional arts and artists are of course essential contributors to the aesthetic life of any society. But a focus on them alone can result in the underdevelopment of the creative potential of the community and the benefits that can be derived from an inventive population. Often cultural policy is confined to policy for the arts, with an exclusive emphasis on the pursuit of artistic and institutional excellence. A form of policy handicap ensues, inadvertently diverting debate from the support of diversity, choice and citizen participation to tired questions of "high" versus popular art, professional versus amateur status, or whether craft, folk and other popular art forms should be eligible for support.

The sometimes glorified position of the professional artist should not lead to the neglect of humbler, often amateur, undertakings which inject a vital substance into the social fabric. A wider view of creativity would also give less weight to official designations of what art is or is not and whose art it is. In some settings more support should go to street events and public fiestas than to concerts halls and theatres. Is visual art only pieces showcased in museums and art galleries? What place should be given to murals

on city walls, to inner city graffiti, or, for those with access, the Internet's World Wide Web? To promote creativity, efforts that allow both the creator and the public to participate collectively in the rebirth of a more colourful environment are required. Reggae music's Rasta roots of Jamaica, the Jagran Company street theatre in Delhi and the Bread and Puppet Theatre of New York have all been spontaneous, community creations. Good art, they have carried powerful social messages as well. Providing an enabling environment for such ventures no doubt means support that does not smother them, that is less direct and official.

All people need to communicate their experiences, their hopes and fears, as they have always done, and many local initiatives, notably in Africa and Latin America, help them to do so without wondering whether what they are doing is "creative" or even "art". It is enough that they communicate in a fresh and stimulating way, as do countless local groups producing music or theatrical shows. These people are active above all and in that sense they are, beyond a doubt, creative.

Community-based creative activity should be highly valued and supported. The community arts movement in many countries has incorporated strategies to stimulate local creativity and improve skills and standards by using contributions from professional artists. It goes beyond increasing community skills and actually supports the achievement of cultural development objectives. Cities, for example, are fertile ground for cross-cultural artistic creation and expression, especially in popular music. The ground is under-explored, however, because talented young musicians are not adequately trained and their career development is not properly promoted. This is especially regrettable in view of the vital contribution of music – World Music – to a shared global culture of young people. This is a world throbbing with vitality. Measures should be taken at the international level to develop guidelines and good practice to further the careers of urban musicians, to strengthen local capacities for their training, for the production and diffusion of their work, and for the enhancement of their professional status.

Creativity requires an environment that encourages self-expression and exploration. Educational programmes that allow an imaginative interaction between cultural traditions and new technologies should be encouraged and strategies stimulating creative initiatives in training should be further developed. Support to *emerging* or *experimental* art forms should be considered as an *investment* in social research, creativity and human development, rather than as a mere subsidy to consumption. Cost recovery and revenue generation should not always be expected. If government support to encourage innovation is unquestioned in other economic areas, why not for something as important as the arts? The recognition of the creative imagination as a pillar of society's vitality and development – in economic

## **Making the arts accessible to everyone**

The City Arts Centre in Dublin has been designed as an integrated community resource for education to make the arts accessible to everyone and contributes to creative self-development of the individual and of the community as a whole. It has developed innovative programmes for children, long-term unemployed and disabled people, all groups often excluded from taking part in cultural life. These include an "open submission" exhibition "celebrating disability as difference rather than disadvantage", the Young Playwrights' Project (young people research and write a play based on the theme of disability), as well as a wide range of courses and workshops promoting intercultural learning.

Since 1990, the Centre has been affiliated with Very Special Arts, an international organization, founded by Jean Kennedy Smith in 1974, whose goal is to create access to the arts for people with disabilities. "The ability to communicate, and through such communication to participate, is central to an equal, just and developing society", says Sandy Fitzgerald, Director of Very Special Arts, Ireland.

and human terms – also calls for co-ordination between cultural creativity and other policy domains, i.e. urban planning, leisure and education.

The limiting effects of consumerism on creativity can be alleviated by realigning policies for the cultural industries with cultural policies as a whole. In this way, and as developed in Chapter 4, media pluralism and competition can be encouraged as endogenous cultural production and distribution are subsidized. Policy makers should also acknowledge the importance of creativity and innovation as critical factors in the international competitiveness of nations. In a number of countries, cultural policy overtly encompasses crafts, software development, design, urban planning and architecture. Some would argue that the IKEA home furnishing chain of stores has made popular design the most successful Swedish cultural industry internationally. The company's approach has been to draw on Swedish design strengths. By promoting an identifiable Swedish note throughout its products, presentation and services, IKEA may have contributed more to forging a positive image of its country than the films of Ingrid or Ingmar Bergman or the music of pop groups like Abba and Ace of Base.

## Creativity, copyright and the artist

Protection of artists' rights is fundamental. Technology is opening up many new horizons to artists and their creative work but is also jeopardizing their rights. How can these rights be protected in the light of the many new means of publication – digital compression, virtual imagery, multimedia products of all kinds - which sometimes undermine first principles? The necessary adaptation to technological development does not justify the dismantling of existing conventions and regulations; on the contrary, it does require the extension of copyright law which has to protect the creators' and artists' interests as well as guarantee universal access to artistic works. Technologies such as the Internet may require policy-makers to envision new systems of rights which may not necessarily use the principles of copyright. Advances in information technology are demonstrating that the two do not always fit well together.

The GATT accord, through its Trade Related Intellectual Property (TRIPs) agreement, has caused a subtle reorientation of copyright away from the author and towards a trade-oriented perspective. One challenge will be to maintain the balance between interests of countries exporting copyright and those of countries that import it, especially in the developing world. Defending the legitimate interests of the latter, while difficult, should be pursued through the establishment of adequate protection. The Commission encourages therefore the search for new legal bases in order to assure an effective implementation and protection of revised copyright and related rights to ensure the best possible living conditions to creators and artists. This is especially important for developing countries where inexpensive pirated copies of imported material discourage domestic creativity and production. Legal and technical assistance to those countries should be increased with a view to formulating or adapting legislation on copyright and related rights and help to fight against piracy. This is most evident in terms of audiovisual activity in Nigeria where "local production in 35 mm amounted to only one film in the last two and a half years, and today most of the cinemas in the south of the country have switched to video supplied mainly by video pirates".<sup>13</sup>

There are important links between freedom of expression and artistic creation that go beyond copyright protection. Specific social, legal, financial and institutional measures should acknowledge the special status of the artist. Taxation, social security, employment strategies and professional training are all effective instruments for this purpose, although their use requires close collaboration between professionals working across distinct governmental mandates. While the 1980 UNESCO Recommendation Concerning the Status of the Artist remains a valid, indeed essential guideline today, new initiatives in the areas just mentioned are also required. The

Commission recommends that a comparative evaluation be launched to assess progress towards enhancing the status of the artist across the world, including matters such as taxation, social security and training.

## **Training and awareness-building**

Principles of good management should apply as much to publicly supported arts institutions, programmes and projects as they do to all state-supported services. As the scope of cultural responsibility must be widened, however, building a broader new awareness has become even more essential. A holistic notion of cultural planning has already taken root in some Western countries and Australia but is still relatively uncommon elsewhere. The training provided by existing courses in cultural policy and management does not meet this need. What is particularly lacking is a multi-disciplinary methodology that would enable professionals to work across professional boundaries, bridging disciplines such as arts administration, conservation, curatorship, urban and regional planning, townscape design and tourism development. The training base is usually too narrow to make creative connections between the different perspectives.

The media in general, particularly in urban settings, could become an open forum for citizens to air creative ideas, findings, anxieties, aspirations, polemics and debates. Universities and other research institutions could also play an important role. By the 1980s a number of studies had revealed to municipal-level decision-makers the importance of the arts and the cultural industries in the local economy and their direct and indirect economic impact on employment and wealth creation. Today new research is needed to measure impact on skill enhancement, social cohesion, community development, local identity and capacity building. How do well-organized urban cultural activities promote healthier, more convivial and less wasteful life-styles?

## **Building new alliances**

### **The political dimension**

Unrecognized as a central component of public policy, responsibility for the arts is often subsumed under other, higher priority areas such as social welfare, health or communications. Sometimes the culture sector is a shared jurisdictional responsibility. Though it is often argued that this offers a strategic position to help frame cultural policy within a more inclusive agenda, in practice this is often just wishful thinking. "God help

the minister that meddles with the arts” is a statement attributed to Lord Melbourne, a nineteenth-century British Prime Minister. A century and a half later, governments still have to deal with the predicament referred to by him.

As is evident from the frequent exploitation of historic monuments and sites beyond their carrying capacity, cultural purposes can be abused for economic and employment objectives. Driven by the imperatives of the ballot-box, politicians all too easily miss the most creative ways of taking the culture sector into account when addressing social issues. Even if governments have adopted democratic-participatory and socio-cultural orientations for revised cultural policies, comprehensive approaches to enhance the positive values of the arts in community development, mutual understanding and co-operation are still limited.

Professional policy-makers develop their own technical jargon, which obscures communication with the outside world and constrains their own thinking. They also have systems for legitimizing their actions, often based on evidence which fails to stand up to scrutiny. Such attitudes are difficult to discuss, let alone change. More visible has been the short-term and election-oriented motivation of professional politicians and officials. As prestigious cultural projects loom large in the short-term, election-oriented politicians rarely elaborate long-term policies. Hence the recurrence of the flagship building projects: expensive concert halls, theatres and large sports stadiums absorb funds that might otherwise have been used for less visible and cheaper – and more numerous – training and community-based arts projects. Controversy is inevitable, for many of the small, emerging, experimental cultural products would not appeal to everybody, and some may even be despised by large sections of the population. But the policy can be defended as an investment, with all the risks normally attached to investments, in creativity and human development.

Cultural policy represents a strong pillar of foreign policy. In a recent declaration the Canadian Government depicted the projection of domestic values and culture as one of the three legs of its foreign policy. Often focused on government-to-government relations and trade development, bilateral co-operation and accords generally remain closely linked to traditional forms of cultural diplomacy, where cultural manifestations are used to support unrelated domestic objectives such as using foreign touring of prestigious performing arts companies to promote export development. But the effectiveness of these efforts is being reduced by the increasing flow of exchanges carried out by other private institutions and individuals – artists, producers, international networks and global media and communications. In recent years, there has been an important shift from exchanging ready-made products to joint exploration, experimentation and co-produce-

tion. In the cultural industries, the internationalized market is reflected in substantial translational co-operation and activity, joint ventures amongst film producers, satellite broadcasting services, publishers and the sound recording industry.

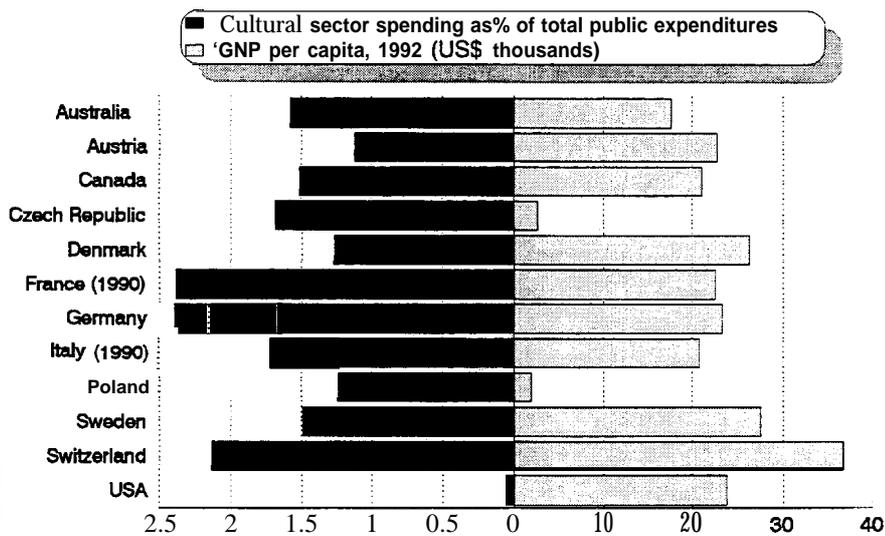
Concern for cultural policies has nevertheless become a more significant objective in several regional bodies, the Council of Europe being the most prominent among them. Elsewhere, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the MERCOSUR in Latin America, the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and groupings such as the ACCT (Agence de coopération technique et culturelle/Agency for cultural and technical co-operation) have initiated programmes on cultural policy as part of their activities. Annual meetings of ministers of culture are now regularly organized in various regions. Multilaterally, co-ordination between regional groupings could open new possibilities. Another important, though still symbolic, acknowledgment of a wider public policy "space" for cultural activities is Article 128 of the European Union's Maastricht Treaty. The article, by requiring that the cultural dimension be taken into consideration in economic, social and political policy-making, reflects the call for the inclusion of cultural impact assessments in major decision-making processes.

## Funding

Arts funding is a perennial challenge. Purposeful policies for the arts have led to increased spending since the 1980s, at least in the high income countries (e.g. Canada, France, Japan) and considerable growth in officially supported cultural activity. But in the 1990s, budget reductions have lowered these funding levels. They have also introduced a new rigour in evaluating the benefits of cultural expenditures and greater emphasis on setting stricter priorities. The fact that cultural activities can contribute to export receipts and to economic growth is recognized everywhere but has not necessarily been matched by the corresponding resources. This goal is elusive partly because comprehensive policies for cultural funding have yet to be worked out. This is due in part to the earlier notion that the arts and arts-spending are frills and luxuries, purely a drain on the economy. If no specific funding strategy has been defined, resources can all too easily be cut by ministries of finance. Only a few countries, such as The Netherlands, have adopted long-range plans that help ensure that this does not happen.

In the former socialist countries, where cultural infrastructure, regulatory frameworks and funding mechanisms have collapsed, the arts and cultural sectors have suffered greatly. Subsidies for even flagship cultural

### Public culture sector expenditures do not depend on GNP: selected industrial countries, 1992



Source: UNESCO/Council of Europe, Questionnaire on the Public Financing of Cultural Activities in Europe (provisional), 1994; Australia Bureau of Statistics, 1994; World Bank, 1994.

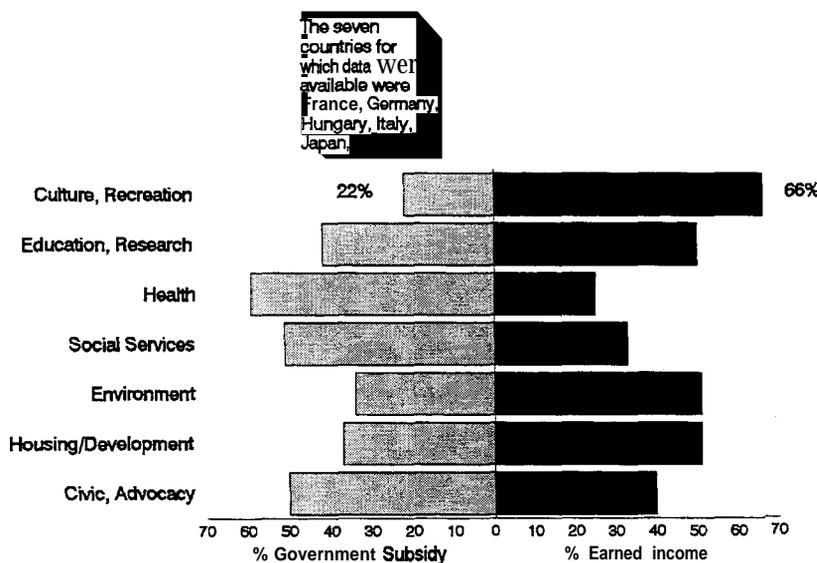
institutions such as the Kirov and Bolshoi Theatres in the Russian Federation, for example, dropped from near 100 per cent to less than 20 per cent of their budgets.<sup>14</sup>With such a funding collapse, it is not surprising that many countries in transition are nostalgic for the former role played by the state, while forgetting the political basis for that role. In poor countries gross underfunding of the culture sector remains chronic.

Worldwide, there is a trend to diversify the various sources of finance, both public and private, that make up the total system of cultural support. The Commission is heartened by the fact that expenditures by independent non-governmental funders such as corporate sponsors, foundations, voluntary associations and other non-profit making entities appear to be increasing. Such increased attention from the "Third Sector" is obviously welcome, as it heralds new coalitions of support for cultural life in human development. Yet business sponsorship and, to some extent, private foundation support as well, appear to have given rise to a number of false hopes. In some countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States of America, where the notion of an official cultural policy has been somewhat foreign to the national tradition, a preference for letting market forces look after the culture sector has led to marked reductions in state spending. The United States Congress decided recently to reduce the budget of the National Endowment for the Arts by 40 per cent for the fiscal year 1996-1997.

Governments attempting to shift large shares of spending on the arts to the private sector, i.e. through business sponsorship, whether for ideological or practical reasons, discovered in the 1980s that business sponsors are not willing to make up for reduced public sector budgets. As in the social and educational areas, not all non-profit cultural activities are suited for corporate sponsorship nor can they be expected to survive without public support. Market processes may well fail to deliver a socially optimal level of goods and services that produce wider social and community benefits. It is often not understood that cultural support in a market system should not be seen as a form of handout in response to special pleading, but as a correction for market failure. It is entirely consistent with the pursuit of economic efficiency. Such funding is likely to come from the state for many years to come.

Governments have sought to promote a number of financing strategies and policy stances that encourage the private non-profit voluntary sector to contribute as well. If a broader approach to the culture sector is to be pursued, such efforts are essential. There is growing reliance on fiscal measures such as tax credits and tax incentives to foster non-state cultural production or heritage preservation. Other methods have included the establishment of endowments from public and private contributions, and implementation of copyright with royalties providing new resources. Recourse to lotteries is a method that casts its net wider. Yet the recently-

### Public investment and earned income in the culture sector: average for seven industrialized countries, 1992



Source: Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project, 1994.

established national lottery in the United Kingdom, for example, has merely restored overall funding to previous levels rather than increase it.

Each of these strategies has been tried in one or more countries. None of them seems to be optimal: hence the growing tendency for combinations to be sought. However, these approaches have often been arbitrarily implemented without the benefit of clear, consistent objectives. This has resulted in overlap or misdirection of resource allocations. The imbalance in the allocation of resources of governments and non-governmental agencies between cities and provinces far away from the centres of cultural and political power is also common. Only limited evaluations of current spending priorities have occurred, with allocations continuing to go to established purposes and institutions.

In the former socialist countries, new models that incorporate multiple revenue sources are only now beginning to emerge. Here, the role of the private and non-profit sector in supporting cultural activities becomes even more important and increased efforts are required to encourage sponsorship, private donations and civic sponsorship. While much can be learnt from trends in established market economies, there is obviously no ready-made funding model which is appropriate for export to the former socialist economies. Instead, the basic orientation for this region should not be the present state of free market economies in the West, but the future information society, in which the role of cultural components is likely to be very considerable.

Throughout the world, there is increasing awareness that "certain tasks . . . with which governments have not coped particularly well in the past and with which they now cannot conceivably cope by applying public expenditure and the machinery of public administration"<sup>15</sup> can be carried out through the private initiative of individuals and organizations. Many of these independent funders are ready to enter into partnerships with governments, intergovernmental organizations and supranational bodies in a number of areas, including many that lie within the compass of the present Report. The Commission recommends therefore a world-wide initiative to promote the role of independent funding. It will be necessary to ensure that the independent funding community be made an integral part of the process leading up to a World Summit on Culture and Development recommended in the International Agenda. This effort could be launched with the co-operation of the various associations and documentation centres set up by independent funders throughout the world. It should be planned in consultation with the agencies that have taken a leadership role and already work closely with UNESCO. These include the European Foundation Centre (EFC), the European Cultural Foundation and the European Agency for Culture. Together, they could build links with independent sector bodies in other regions such as the Washington-based

Council on Foundations, the Mexican Foundation Centre and the Asia Pacific Consortium of Foundations.

## Partnerships

If the culture sector is to be more effectively supported in the open regional and global economy, there is a need for a more flexible mix within and between governments, the marketplace and civil society. A redistribution of functions between national, regional and local authorities should lead to increased responsiveness at all levels. Of the three layers of government - national, regional and local - the third is the closest to its constituents and is obviously the best placed to assess and foster grassroots cultural needs. Indeed, more and more municipalities and local authorities are setting out policies for the culture sector. However, governments frequently do not provide local authorities with the resources to attain these newly-defined goals. This is especially serious when local authorities cannot raise their own taxes or where there is no overall financial estimate of cultural need.

In view of the dominant role played by the market as well as of greater civic activism, the capacities of the private sector and civil society need to be better recognized and encouraged. Space must be provided for other actors and new frameworks; governments should act more as strategic brokers, supporting interaction, consultation and consensus-building with and amongst these partners. This can be enhanced by having decision-making, management and service delivery in the culture sector further decentralized as well as democratized.

The Commission recognizes the vital role played by citizens' organizations in furthering cultural development. It endorses the view of the World Summit for Social Development that local communities' own organizations have a crucial role to play, especially in mobilizing the involvement of poor and powerless people. NGOs perform an indispensable task in mobilizing public support and commitment around positions of principles and specialized tasks. These include those with a specific cultural mandate such as arts centres, youth theatres and local festivals, as well as those with a social or economic mandate which links cultural or identity issues, such as organizations for training unemployed people in the cultural industries or that campaign to protect the physical or cultural heritage. Variety and diffuseness is a characteristic of this sector, and there is no obvious channel by which the Commission could ensure the involvement of representative participants from this sector in the developmental processes it proposes. However, it would be a major gap if we failed to secure such involvement. At both the national and international level, there is a need to support the creation of new mechanisms, based on a number of

examples of successful facilitative collaboration between governments and voluntary community associations.

Within government itself, cultural ministries should pursue consultation and work in harmony with agencies in other sectors. This step is critical, as success in constructing a new framework will largely depend on the capacity of cultural policy-makers to promote and encourage positive interaction between a diverse set of administrative agencies. Cultural policy and its implementation should be made an inter-ministerial and inter-sectorial matter. However, as ministries of culture are generally ranked lower than those responsible for education or social welfare, attaining such a goal will not be easy. In France, the Ministry of Culture has established the Délégation au Développement et aux Formations, with the aim of furthering co-operation with other ministries and tasks such as stimulating regional cultural development. Comparisons of initiatives and experiences in different countries in this area are to be encouraged.

There is now a worldwide consensus on the importance of multilateral co-operation for the preservation and promotion of, and participation in, cultural activities. This is not an issue. UNESCO has a long tradition of promoting the study and development of national cultural policies and it should therefore convene an international forum on cultural policies. Such a forum could function as a unique consultative arena for policy-makers, administrators, researchers, artists and representatives of civil society committed to enhancing the effectiveness of cultural policies at all government levels. The forum could promote the open debate, comparison, testing and transformation of cultural policies through a number of flexible mechanisms. It could draw upon governmental and non-governmental policy research and development efforts in the various regions.

## Notes

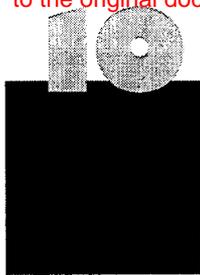
1. Colin Mercer, Institute for Cultural Policy Studies, Griffin University, Australia. From a paper given at the conference "Enhancing Cultural Value", organized by the Centre for International Research on Communication and Information Technologies (CIRCIT), Melbourne, December 1993.
2. Referring to religion, Malraux's statement was: "Le vingt-et-unième siècle sera religieux ou il ne sera pas!"
3. Both references are taken from the preliminary version of country profiles in the Cultural Policy Data Bank, Asia and the Pacific and Africa volumes, CultureLink IRMO, Zagreb, Croatia, 1992.
4. D. Pwono and J. Katula, "Arts and Humanities Capacity Building in Africa: Problems and Prospects", Bellagio Conference on Culture and Development in Africa, May 1995.
5. Ama Ata Aidoo, "Culture, Development - and Africa at Century's End" in *Some Thoughts from the Netherlands on Cultural Development*, Netherlands' National Commission for UNESCO, The Hague, 1994.

6. The Conference called for policy approaches which emphasize a broad, anthropological concept of culture including not only arts and letters, but also ways of life, human rights, customs and beliefs; the interdependence of existing policies in the fields of culture, education, science and communication; and the necessity to take into account the cultural dimension of development.
7. Feature address, 7th meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Culture and Officers-in-charge of Cultural Policies of Latin America and the Caribbean, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, November 1994.
8. *The Economist*, 17 October 1992.
9. Marta Moreno Vega, paper prepared for the Commission, July 1995.
10. Benjamin Barber, *Jihad vs McWorld*, Times Books, 1995.
11. Céline Sachs-Jeantet, "Managing Social Transformations in Cities. A Challenge to Social Sciences", Management of Social Transformations (MOST), Discussion paper series, No. 2, UNESCO, 1995.
12. Nathan Weber and Loren Renz, *Arts Funding: A Report on Foundation and Corporate Grantmaking Trends*, The Foundation Center, New York, 1993.
13. Ben Zulu, "Culture and Development in Africa Film and Video Distribution", May 1995, Bellagio Conference.
14. "Disasters at the Opera", *The Economist*, 7 January 1995.
15. Lord Dahrendorf, "The Voluntary Sector in the European Context". Keynote Address at the Annual General Meeting of the European Foundation Centre, Bonn, November 1992.



*In research the horizon recedes as we  
advance. . . And research is always  
incomplete.*

Mark Pattison, *Isaac Casaubon*, 1875, Chap. 10.



There is general acclaim of and demand for multidisciplinary research, especially on the links between culture and development, without always a clear idea of what this implies. First, specialists in different disciplines may work together on a specific practical problem. Improving nutrition, introducing new varieties of crops, controlling population growth, reducing pollution, planning a new town, may call for drawing on several disciplines and applying their contributions to the problem. In this co-operative effort the disciplines are not transcended but brought together for a practical purpose. This practical need to draw on all relevant disciplines does not affect the methods or the content used in the contributing disciplines. On the contrary, it is precisely because they are specialists in their fields that the different members of a team have a contribution to make to an integrated solution. We might think of them as the members of a Presidential Task Force or, indeed, of this World Commission on Culture and Development, to which each member brings his or her professional expertise to bear on the problems in the hope that the result as a whole is more than the sum of the parts.

Second, it maybe the case that certain assumptions, concepts, methods or techniques, hitherto applied only to one area of study, yield illuminating results when applied to another, previously analysed in quite different ways. There has been a considerable invasion of economic concepts and techniques into the territory of political scientists, anthropologists, sociologists and psychologists. The assumption of maximizing behavior under constraints has been fruitful, up to a point, in illuminating the behaviour of consumers, firms and farms. Its success in these fields has encouraged its application to political activities such as voting, party formation and government decision-making. Calculations of economic returns and cost-benefit analysis have been extended from profit-seeking investments to education, health, birth control, the allocation of time between work and leisure, and among different leisure activities, decisions about marriage and divorce, the size of the family, and even to extramarital affairs.

The “colonization” of the whole of human life, including its most intimate spheres, by economic reasoning has been criticized as intellectual “imperialism”. It has even invaded our language, as people talk of intimate relationships as maximizing needs, about their own emotional assets, about investing in their children, about human capital formation, and so *on*. Occasionally, though much less frequently, concepts used in political theory have been applied to economic problems. Albert Hirschman’s use of “voice” as an alternative to “exit” is an example.<sup>1</sup>

There is a third, and deeper, reason for interdisciplinary work. We may agree that society is a system and that all social phenomena are related, but with growing differentiation of functions and standards, some relationships

become stronger than others. This justifies us (some would argue) in, say, separating business responses from family responses, or economics from anthropology. The need for interdisciplinary studies arises because there is interdependence between variables normally analysed separately. "Lack of specialization among the people being studied in no way justifies lack of specialization among the students. A student of Michelangelo could well confine attention to his sculpture, while caring little for the architecture and painting in which Michelangelo also excelled."<sup>2</sup>

There are numerous illustrations of such interdependence in the field of development studies. One is the relationship between income per head and population growth. High or accelerating rates of population growth are often presumed to reduce income per head, and higher income per head may be presumed in certain conditions to reduce population growth. Or consider the relationship between the standard of living of a deprived minority group, for example a low caste or a racial minority, and an index of prejudice against it. Prejudice is a function of the standard of living - the less educated, the less healthy, the stronger the grounds of prejudice - and the standard of living is a function of prejudice - the stronger the prejudice, the stronger discrimination in jobs, education, access to social services, and so forth. Or take the relation between productivity per worker and the ratio of investment to income. The higher the productivity, the higher will tend to be the savings and hence the investment ratio, and the higher the investment ratio, the more capital per worker and hence the higher productivity. One could also trace interdependence between the quality of interdisciplinary studies and the quality of the scholars they attract.

If such interdependence or mutual causation between variables normally studied separately is strong, there is a case for breaking down the boundaries between disciplines. Such breaking down of boundaries is sometimes called transforming parameters into dependent variables, for instance making originally given attitudes, such as prejudices against a group, dependent on their income and status and vice versa. Family ties and economic calculus, land tenure and responses to incentives, religious beliefs and commercial motivation, prejudice and income level, may interact in this way. When interdependence of this kind occurs, and this is more the rule than the exception, there is a case for interdisciplinary work.

This kind of interdisciplinary work, at a deep level, is the most difficult and is best done either under a single skull, or by a group of closely associated colleagues who, while trained in different disciplines, stimulate and complement one another, and have at the same time a similar basic outlook. Some of the best research is a social activity that progresses most rapidly where a small group of like-minded scholars are not at all troubled by being out of the step with the profession as a whole.

In addition to interdisciplinary research, historical research and com-

parative research are needed. Historical research would point to the varieties of ways in which different societies have evolved, pointing to successes and failures. It would show how existing societies are determined by the path they took in the past. It would analyse the implications of the coexistence of societies at different stages of development, with widely varying levels of income, technology and achievements in other fields. These insights should point to directions in the global ethics discussed in Chapter 1. Diversity would encourage respect without leading to ethical relativism. Analysis of the harmful impact of the impulses propagated by the higher income societies to those at earlier stages of development would point to an obligation to co-operate internationally, and move towards global institutions. Comparative research would encourage synchronically what historical studies do diachronically. Both widen the horizons of scholars and deepen their understanding.

Since the knowledge resulting from the research must be used for the benefit of people, and especially poor people, participator research methods should be adopted whenever appropriate. Only then can we be sure that its results will not be biased in the direction of outside, urban, élite, professional or technocratic observers and that it will be used for the empowerment, the enlargement of choices, and the benefit of the people. For example, in investigating the priorities of poor people, one discovers that what matters most to them often differs from what outsiders assume. More income is only one of the things desired by poor people. Adequate nutrition, safe water, better medical services, more and better schooling for their children, cheap transport, adequate shelter, continuing employment and secure livelihoods do not show up in higher income per head, at least not for some time. There are other non-material benefits that are often more highly valued by poor people than material improvements. Some of these partake in the characteristics of rights, both positive and negative, others in those of states of mind. Among these are good working conditions, freedom to choose jobs and livelihoods, self-determination and self-respect, independence, mobility, liberation from oppression, violence and exploitation, less dependence on patrons, security from persecution and arbitrary arrest, not having to move in search of work, a satisfying family life, the assertion of traditional cultural and religious values, access to power or direct empowerment, recognition, status, adequate leisure time and satisfying forms of its use, a sense of purpose in life and work, the opportunity to join and participate actively in the activities of a pluralistic civil society, and belonging to a community. These are often more highly valued than income, both in their own right and as means to satisfying and productive work. They do not show up in higher income figures. No policy-maker can guarantee the achievement of all, or even the majority, of these aspirations, but policies can create the *opportunities* for their fulfil-

ment. The need for “participatory research” and “empowerment” has been widely accepted, but we have been slower to recognize the changes these concepts demand of us. “We have failed to understand that participation by them means non-ownership by us. Empowerment for them means disempowerment for us.”<sup>3</sup>

Economic growth policies, infrastructure development and programmes and projects in sectors ranging from forestry to surface transport have an impact on culture, both positive and negative, apart from their intrinsic interaction with the cultural values of each setting. Analysis of the foreseeable cultural effects should be built into the drafting of all development projects. This is already recognized by many social scientists. It should now be shared with bureaucrats at all levels, particularly in planning, as well as their political masters. While this is a challenge each society will meet in its own way, an example could be set and progress achieved if the international family of development agencies is itself to develop shared guidelines and procedures for the projects it launches or supports.

In a number of agencies, environmental and social assessment procedures are being used to measure potential effects on environment and society. These procedures are gradually being extended to incorporate cultural analysis. Both the World Bank and UNDP recognize that estimating the value of cultural heritage involves an understanding of aesthetic, historic, scientific, social and economic values and they seek to make such evaluation the basis for determining actions to protect heritage. There is a great need to extend this type of analysis to assess the potential impact of projects on cultural diversity and on the conditions of specific marginalized groups. Such key cultural issues should be addressed throughout the “project cycle”: project identification; preparation; appraisal; negotiations and approval; implementation; and evaluation. Both the environmental and social assessment procedures can be utilized in project screening and in evaluating project alternatives.

## **The limits of economic techniques and analysis**

Recent refinements in social cost-benefit analysis attempt to look at projects and programmes in terms of their *total* impact on human well-being. Direct and indirect costs and benefits have been taken into account, income distribution, poverty, employment and environmental objectives have been incorporated, externalities are sometimes accounted for, intertemporal choices and social rates of time discount have been explored in greater depth, and the prejudicial notion that what cannot be counted does not count (or even exist) has been, to some extent, abandoned. The impact of projects on the physical environment has begun to be taken into

account; the expectation is that we can devise ways of measuring their impact on cultural patterns, institutions and (most difficult) values. Social cost-benefit analysis would find it very difficult to take account of such cultural variables as attitudes to work, work ethic, group solidarity, interpersonal relationships and people's valuations. Though it is generally acknowledged that neglect of these variables frequently leads to unforeseen problems in the implementation of a project, no method has been evolved as to how these parameters can be built into models.

An illustration of this difficulty is provided by the British Commonwealth Development Corporation's Kulai oil palm project in Malaysia. Three types of externality (benefits that cannot be directly attributed to the project) were very important, for which analysts found it difficult to account. (1) For the first time in Malaya smallholders were taught to grow oil palms. (2) A novel method of combining a modern processing factory, marketing, credit and extension services (some of the functions of a "nucleus estate") were combined with smallholder plots. (3) A substantial number of Malayian administrators were trained for management on the estate, many of whom worked later for the Federal Land Development Authority. The experience was later replicated in many similar projects in Africa and Asia. Unless these somewhat intangible external benefits of the project are taken into account, a cost-benefit analysis can be quite irrelevant and seriously misleading.

The conclusion is that social cost-benefit analysis has only limited application, and that a wider view, relating to whole human and cultural development strategies, than one narrowly focused on individual projects must be taken by scholars, researchers and policy-makers, even in the implementation of these projects.

One impact of many projects on people who are economically and culturally the most vulnerable is the displacement or forced dislocation caused by the processes of planned development, e.g. hydroelectric and irrigation projects, mines (particularly opencast mines), super thermal and nuclear power plants, industrial complexes and military installations, weapons testing grounds, railways and roads, the notification and expansion of reserved forest areas, sanctuaries and parks and the use of profit-improving technologies (causing large-scale displacement of traditional fisherfolk and handloom weavers).<sup>4</sup> Other displacements may be caused by changes in land-use, acquisition for urban growth, and loss of livelihood owing to environmental degradation and pollution. Much accumulated evidence suggests that, except in rare cases, forced displacement has resulted in "a spiral of impoverishments."<sup>5</sup>

Against these negative results must be set the potential benefits to other populations, such as electrification or transport improvements, that would have arisen from the project and that would have transformed poor

people's lives. The opportunity costs of respecting some people's (negative) rights not to be removed in terms of forgone opportunities to improve other poor people's lives can be very high.

Land is still the major means of production in many developing countries and its status is very much determined by cultural considerations in terms of allocation, use and management of the environment. Most societies have their "nature reserves". It may be a "sacred grove" or the territory of spirits, ancestors or gods which can in no way be exploited economically. The ownership of land and the methods of utilization have a far-reaching influence on community life. Hence whenever one type of activity is to replace another (cash-crop instead of subsistence farming or cattle rearing instead of crop farming), the change has to be viewed in the cultural perspective of the significance of land.

There are other areas like trading or the transition to a monetary economy in which cultural factors must be analysed and acknowledged. Even the notion of spending may be culturally determined. In many societies in Asia and Africa even the poorest feel obliged to be lavish spenders on certain ritual occasions. This has an obvious impact on savings and investment, and on the distribution of consumption over time, which development policies and projects cannot afford to ignore. Often traditional patterns of giving and receiving gifts have a redistributive effect which should be recognized.

Ways in which traditional skills and technologies can be combined with modern knowledge and know-how also have to be determined. In the medical field (pharmacopoeia and medicine proper) in Africa, China, India and Mexico, there are many instances of experiments using traditional methods or combining traditional and modern technologies. Traditional healers may offer new insights into psychiatry and pharmacology. Traditional knowledge in this field may have real potential for redesigning projects in environmental health, preventive care, nutrition, family planning and child care.

Modernizing subsistence agriculture is yet another area in which cultural impact analysis is necessary. Subsistence agriculture is no doubt subject to ecological conditions of great diversity. But agronomists have begun to recognize ways in which local practices can form the basis for modernizing and improving peasant agriculture. Such practices incorporate traditional knowledge that requires few outside inputs, uses natural nutrients, effectively recycles them, protects cover crops and promotes genetic diversity. Several examples in Ghana, India and Nigeria illustrate the application of new concepts by incorporating existing cultural practices into the modernization of agriculture and in designing agricultural projects.

It is well known that projects that do not take into account sufficiently the "human factor" have a great chance of failing. The "cultural cost" of

adjustment to a new approach, a new technology should not be ignored. These costs generally spread beyond the economic cost or social opportunity cost to the less perceptible and tangible human and social environmental and cultural costs. They call for a fresh look, analysis, review and recasting of a project's cost-benefit profile, or for setting it in a wider framework, supplementing cost-benefit analysis by cultural analysis. This may eventually lead to changing the very definition of costs.

Economists have fully explored the results of self-interested behaviour. This assumption has been extended far beyond the market place into areas such as voting and political behaviour, and all aspects of family relations, not normally regarded as amenable to it. The hypothesis has borne ample fruit. But only recently has thinking and research, at least in economics, turned to exploring the reasons for and the results of altruism, trust, co-operation, loyalty, solidarity, and even affection and love. Projects and programmes will have to be designed differently to make use of research on these cultural mechanisms.

Quantifiable variables are not the only relevant ones. Qualitative judgments of attitudes and institutions for different development paths, of the obstacles and inhibitions that stand in the way of progress, are also necessary. But wherever possible, quantitative indicators, if only ordinal ones, are very useful. There should, for example, be an analysis of self-reliance in cultural activities, and of the content and quality of education, communications and the media. Indicators of technological dependence and technology gaps are also important. Indicators of phenomena that, in the light of the global ethics sketched out above, are undesirable or wrong should be explored. Work on such indicators and on an index of self-reliance is still in its infancy. Analytical work has to be done first, so that we know what precisely we are looking at, followed by the gathering and comparison of relevant data.

## **Research modalities and priorities**

The following areas are intended as suggestions that could become themes for discussion in early issues of the annual reports recommended under Action 1 of the International Agenda. They should not prevent anyone from exploring other fields.

1. Conceptual, methodological, and statistical issues.
2. Culture, development and poverty.
3. The links between democratization, liberalization and empowerment.
4. Sustainable development.

Under each of these headings a few specific topics are suggested.

## 1. Conceptual, methodological and statistical issues

Work on cultural indicators is in its infancy. Data should be collected on measuring both positive and negative aspects, and both the individual and collective dimensions of culture. Neglected aspects of indicators of the cultural dimension include security, autonomy, individual and group self-reliance, a sense of community, participation in cultural activities, positive and negative civil and political freedom and human rights, as well as manifestations of violence, racism and discrimination, illicit traffic of items from archaeological sites, and so forth.

Indicators should be designed of internal heterogeneity in countries that would permit the assessment of the differential social status of various groups (ethnic groups, minorities, gender- and age-related categories) as well as the quality of the relations between these groups. Such indicators are especially important for multicultural societies and for those in which social and economic inequalities are great. Some indicators will not be equally relevant for all countries because their situations will differ. But this diversity and variety is precisely what culture is about, and ways to capture them should be developed.

An area in need of clarification is whether a single cultural index is desirable, and if so, what the appropriate statistical weights for its components should be; if several indicators are used, how they are related to each other and why; whether a lead indicator can be chosen or a wide menu of different indicators should be presented. If arbitrary weights are used for aggregation, sensitivity analysis should be conducted with respect to rankings by different weights. If the index is robust to different weights, why not use a single component instead of a composite index? If a composite index, should the arithmetic or geometric mean be used? Components of an aggregate index should also be related to indicators outside the index. Questions of aggregation or disaggregation of indicators can have important consequences for the direction of policy.

Another area for research is the exploration of the precise meaning and of the interpretation of some of these indicators. Knowledge can be measured by literacy rates, by years of schooling, by the number of scientists and engineers per 10,000 of the population, by the number of books published, by the number of libraries, and so on. Or in measuring political freedom, more than one party is often taken as an indicator of political choice. Does it follow that the more parties there are the better? If there is only one party but a choice between different candidates, is this enough for democratic freedom? The interpretation of any one of these indicators and its qualitative assessment is still largely unexplored.

Related to this is the interpretation made in terms of the positive or negative value of some of these indicators. We have come to accept divorce



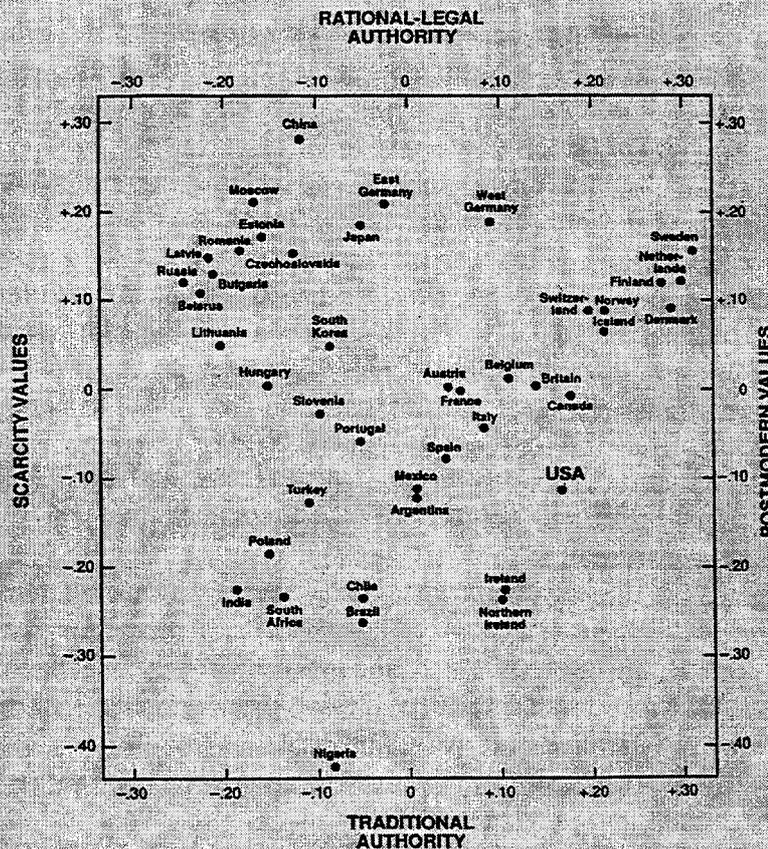
## Scarcity and security: linking cultural and political values with economic development

In his book *Modernization and Post-modernization*, Professor Ronald Inglehart, University of Michigan, has made a convincing case that far from being randomly related, cultural, economic and political variables are closely correlated.

Based on the 1990-1991 World Values Survey – an unprecedented body of data on the values and beliefs of the publics of 40 societies representing 70 percent of the world's population – four main clusters of values emerge and are linked with economic growth rates. Modernization is linked with a consistent shift from traditional to rational-legal forms of authority: this may go with either democratic or authoritarian regimes. Emergence of post-industrial societies gives rise to a shift from scarcity values to post-modern values of security, in which a variety of attributes, from equal rights for women to democratic political institutions, become increasingly likely.

The three figures here show the relative position of a selected number of countries in relation to economic and social correlates and to the four main clusters of values distributed in two axes. Given groups of nations take coherent positions within these value clusters and political and economic correlates.

The vertical axis reflects the polarization of attitudes towards authority. The horizontal axis depicts the polarization of societies' values regarding scarcity and security.



as a normal feature of life, enlarging people's range of choice, though it is controversial whether it should be bracketed with cancer and AIDS as a curse of our times or celebrated along with aspirin and anesthetics as a welcome liberation from past miseries. Similarly, are rising numbers of single parent families (and even some forms of suicide) signs of a wider range of choice, and therefore to be welcomed, or are they signs of the breakdown of the social fabric, and therefore to be deplored? Or should no position with respect to their value be taken?

It is well known that cultural, social, political and human indicators are even less reliable than most other statistics. It should be part of the research to: (1) explore the conceptual and analytical foundation of these indicators; (2) stimulate the gathering of statistics where none exist now; (3) improve the quality of the data that do exist; (4) make them internationally comparable; and (5) suggest ways that enable users to judge the reliability of data, such as giving ranges instead of single figures where the figure is unreliable, or grading the figures according to their reliability.

## **2. Development and poverty**

The ultimate objective of development is to improve the human condition. At the same time, the most plentiful resource of the developing countries is human beings. On both these grounds, people and their culture must be put at the centre of the development effort.

Work on human, social, political and cultural indicators has been going on for a long time, but nothing so far has replaced the powerful hold of the GNP, in spite of numerous attempts to weaken it. One important purpose of the Human Development Index is to dislodge the monopolistic hold of GNP on our minds. We know that poverty can be removed at quite low income levels, and that high average incomes are no guarantee against widespread misery. Research in this area is directly relevant to policy makers and international donors concerned with backing efforts by developing countries to improve the lot of poor people. Research into additional indicators will add to the flexibility of our intellectual muscles and help to avoid intellectual cramps.

We do know how to make shoes out of leather, and energy out of coal or water power. But we know very little about how precisely to transform social services, adequate food and certain institutional arrangements into long, healthy, productive, creative, satisfying common lives. More particularly, what policies promote human and cultural development? This question is at the heart of the development effort. Some countries that show high tax ratios devoted to these social sectors have little to show for them in results, while other countries that spend much less are more successful in

improving the human condition. The linkage between, on the one hand, indicators of "inputs", such as hospital beds, doctors, nurses, teachers or artists per thousand of the population, or school enrolment rates, and, on the other hand, indicators of "results", such as life expectancy, reduced morbidity, improved literacy, better family planning, and so forth, are tenuous, far more so than the links between inputs of capital and labour, and the output of goods.

An important field for research is the impact of decentralization of public expenditure and taxation on the development of human resources. Decentralization (together with deregulation, privatization and liberalization) has become a popular slogan. It is said that it would improve the quality of government activities; that it would be more responsive to local needs; that abuse and the wrong use of funds would be avoided and that these benefits would elicit additional resources.

Against these claims, it is said that decentralized control can increase inequality between communities; can enhance the power of local élites, and be more exploitative than central government; but that there would be a loss of much-needed central finance, and that central action is needed to protect the poor. Systematic study would clarify the issues in this dispute and point to the structure of decision-making at different levels most suited for different purposes.

Related is the question of the participation of the poor, of minorities and of other marginalized groups in the design, implementation, maintenance, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and policies. A careful assessment of different types of participation and organizational forms, including the decisions and actions needed at higher levels to support the participatory efforts, would help to clarify matters.

Finally, there is the topic of gender and development. This was discussed in Chapter 5 and appears again in the International Agenda.

The study of political and social movements based on religious, ethnic, national or cultural identity and their impact on women is a new area for research. Islamic fundamentalism, Christian evangelism, spreading in Latin America, Africa and East Asia, and Jewish fundamentalism in Israel; Hindu and Muslim communalism in India and Sinhala Buddhist communalism in Sri Lanka are radically redefining the social position, the sex role and the rights of women. Why had earlier nationalist and socialist movements built into them a women's emancipation component, whereas current movements regard this as an alien, Western trend?

### **3. Democratization, liberalization and empowerment**

We are witnessing two powerful trends in the world: one towards democratic regimes and the other towards market economies. How are the two related? How are different cultural traditions changed in the process of democratization, citizenship building, and economic liberalization? These are very broad issues and considerable research is already being done. What the research agenda set by the Commission can add to it is the concentration of attention on the role of culture. Comparative and historical research is of major significance in this field, especially since there are different paths to state and market building.

More specifically, key issues include cross-cultural comparative analyses of some crucial institutions and practices. How does the social position of government officials change in the process of democratization? What are the conditions for the emergence of patterns of accountability? How can the logic of corruption (old and new) be changed into an ethics of social service? Studies should also be carried out on the role of the media, including the press, in the process of democratization.

A culture of citizenship and participation by the civil society is part of the building of democracy. Yet there are wide cultural variations in the ways in which people relate to the public sphere. In some societies only certain categories of citizens are entitled to such participation. What new tensions and conflicts emerge in the process of enlarging membership in the citizenry (such as the new South African regime or the recognition of rights of minority or indigenous peoples) and the deepening of the contents of rights? What is the comparative experience of using different institutions (modern judiciaries, traditional mediating agencies for conflict resolution)?

### **4. Sustainable development**

The problems of the environment are different for the rich and the poor, but they arise from both poverty and wealth. The high income countries reduce sustainability by their unrestrained demand for ever higher production of a resource-intensive, polluting character, with the accompanying damage that this causes. (On the other hand, some environmental conditions, such as urban air and water, improve above a certain level of income per head.) In poor countries, the demand for food and fuel of rapidly growing and poor populations leads to deforestation, desertification, soil erosion, salivation, silting, and depletion of water supplies. The poor not only contribute to local environmental degradation, but also suffer most from it. The links between poverty and environmental damage are close, numerous and complex.

The poorest countries are predominantly agrarian and pastoral, and most people depend heavily on renewable natural resources. The activities of the poorest of the poor – their migration patterns, the time and distance required to gather water and fuel-wood, the difficulty of finding fish – often signal the state of the environment.

We do not have adequate indicators of sustainability. Work on environmental indicators and their links with poverty, wealth and human development would be valuable. Similarly, work on national income accounting and international trade that takes the use of environmental resources into account has been started and is useful. The recording and documentation of traditional wisdom with respect to the environment, medical practices, pest control, fertilizing and so on, and the assessment of their efficiency, are urgent.

Transitional problems arise not only in Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, but also whenever a government embarks on radical reforms by attempting to shift from a set of bad policies to improved, culturally sensitive, policies that promote human development. Few guidelines exist on how to proceed on this reform path. Many transitional problems are easily mistaken for mismanagement, which, of course, contribute factor to the dilemma. Fundamental reforms, such as a land reform, a tax reform, an educational reform or an administrative reform can cause inflation, unemployment, balance-of-payment troubles, capital flight, strikes and even coups d'état. The textbooks have little advice to offer for such situations. It is time for a Primer for reform-minded Prime Ministers or Presidents to be published. International organizations should also ease such transitions to more human development policies, and provide human adjustment loans. What criteria should be used and how should the dialogue be conducted? Of special interest are studies that compare transitions and liberalization in ex-socialist countries with those in developing countries and draw lessons from one group for the other.

## Notes

1. Albert O. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice and Loyalty*, Harvard University Press, 1970.
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3. Robert Chambers, "The Professionals and the Powerless: Whose Reality Counts?" Choices, *The Human Development Magazine*, Vol. 4, No. 1, New York, UNDP, 1995.
4. Smitu Kothari, "Cultural Pluralism and Development", paper contributed to the World Commission on Culture and Development, May 1995.
5. Michael M. Cernea (ed.), "Involuntary Resettlement: Social Research, Policy and Planning", in *Putting People First: Sociological Variables in Rural Development*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2nd ed., 1991, p. 195.

## International Agenda

The aims of this international agenda are:

- (i) to provide a permanent vehicle through which issues of culture and development are discussed and analysed at the international level;
- (ii) to initiate a process in which principles and procedures that are a commonplace within nations are extended to the international and global arena; and
- (iii) to create a forum where an international consensus on central issues related to culture and development can be achieved.

### Action 1: Annual Report on World Culture and Development

1.1 The World Commission on Culture and Development recommends that UNESCO sponsor an independent team to produce and publish an annual Report on World Culture and Development, beginning in 1997. The report would be an independent statement addressed to policy makers and other interested parties, and financed by voluntary contributions from the international community, including foundations and governments. It would:

- (a) survey recent trends in culture and development, drawing on the research programme outlined below;
- (b) monitor events affecting the state of cultures worldwide;
- (c) construct and publish quantitative cultural indicators;
- (d) highlight good cultural practices and policies at local, national and international levels, as well as expose bad practices and unacceptable behaviour; and
- (e) present an analysis of specific themes of general importance with policy suggestions.

Besides a survey of recent trends, each Report could explore in depth one particular theme. The themes might include: global ethics; cultural and ethnic violence; new forms of cultural expression; art and cultural life; culture, the economy and government; progress in the recognition of cultural and gender rights; access to media technologies; cultural concerns of indigenous peoples; the use of cultural impact assessments for development decision-making; the fate of minorities, and the state of the world's languages and language policy across the world.

1.2 The independence of the report would be essential. While the manager of the small unit responsible for its production would be appointed by the Director-General of UNESCO, the report should not be a statement of UNESCO policy, nor should it require (or seek) the approval of the agency's Executive Board or national political authorities. In other words, it would be a report *to* UNESCO, to the United Nations system and the international community, rather than a report *of* UNESCO. The integrity of the report is a precondition for its success; its reputation should be based on its objectivity, vision and willingness to examine difficult, sensitive and controversial issues related to culture and development. The report should be seen as a contribution to discussion and debate, as a way to influence international public opinion, and as a testing ground for new policy ideas.

1.3 In support of such a report the Commission also suggests that UNESCO, in co-operation with UNDP, the World Bank and other agencies of the United Nations system such as the Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), UNCTAD, FAO, ILO, the United Nations Centre for Human Rights, and the World Institute for Development Economics Research (WIDER), launch an international research and action programme on the links between culture and development, focusing on:

- (a) interactions between cultures, cultural values and development processes that make up the contemporary dynamics of culture change;
- (b) cultural indicators, including a systematic collection of information on violations of cultural rights; and
- (c) nature and causes of ethnic conflicts.

1.4 To encourage the more systematic assessment of the cultural impacts of development policies and planning, the Commission further recommends that UNESCO, acting as a focal point for an inter-agency task force, support the study and improvement of analytical procedures which measure potential effects of development projects on culture and society. This would be a concerted effort, beginning with a literature review and survey on the current practices of international agencies, as well as innovative approaches used by other governmental or non-governmental bodies, including regional institutions. The lessons learned from this experience would be included in the annual report.

1.5 The Commission recommends that UNESCO, in collaboration with other appropriate institutions, establish a research programme on the interface between women's rights, cultural specificities and socio-cultural change. This research programme would aim at:

- assessing the dynamics of identity, culture and women's rights with a particular focus on their impact on women's rights as human rights;

productive and reproductive sexual and life-style choices; and the civic, cultural and political participation of women at all levels;

- identifying the mechanisms and strategies evolved by women that generate adaptation and innovation in cultural patterns. Of particular interest would be the potential for replication of processes women have used to become meaningful role-models and to influence their own cultures both at the popular and at the institutional levels, e.g. gender-aware tools for development planning.

The results of this gender-related research should be reflected in the annual Report on World Culture and Development.

## **Action 2: Preparation of new culturally-sensitive development strategies**

2.1 The nature of conflicts is changing. Of the 82 conflicts over the last three years, 79 were within nations, according to the 1994 *Human Development Report*. Increasingly, conflicts are between people, not between nations – whether in Afghanistan, Burundi, Liberia, Rwanda, Somalia, Sri Lanka and many other places in the world.

2.2 The underlying cause of many such conflicts is the lack of development that results in a rising tide of human despair and anger. In some countries, it is the wrong models of development that favour some income groups, or some geographical regions, or some ethnic groups at the expense of others. Development divorced from its human or cultural context is development without a soul.

2.3 In conflict situations of this kind, induction of soldiers is the wrong response. Better land development today than soldiers tomorrow. It is better to have preventive development upstream than military operations downstream. It is better to modify wrong and distorted models of development so that they meet the aspirations of peoples. This is the essence of a culture of peace.

2.4 In our time of rising concern for human security, the role of the United Nations naturally has to change. As the United Nations Secretary-General pointed out in 1994, “It is time to balance the old commitment to territorial security with a new commitment to human security: to shift from providing security through arms, to ensuring security through development. . . . The United Nations can no longer fight the battles of tomorrow with the weapons of yesterday.” (Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Address

to the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit for Social Development, 22 August 1994, New York.)

2.5 The Commission, therefore, strongly recommends that:

- professional analysis should be undertaken on the new dimensions of human security (including economic, political, cultural and environmental security) in institutions such as WIDER and UNRISD;
- an early warning system should be developed to alert the United Nations of impending crisis situations within nations so that preventive diplomacy and preventive action can be undertaken in time;
- UNDP and UNESCO, along with other agencies, should take the lead in assisting countries in formulating new human development strategies that preserve and enrich their cultural values and ethnic heritage, rather than destroy them; and
- the United Nations system should greatly strengthen its long-term developmental role along the lines indicated in the Secretary-General's Agenda for Development so as to forestall emergency situations that are beginning to pre-empt most of the UN's resources and energies.

### **Action 3: International mobilization of Cultural Heritage Volunteers**

3.1 The Commission, observing the discrepancy between the ends and means of heritage conservation throughout the world, recommends that international efforts be made to mobilize the goodwill of volunteers of all ages to work as "Cultural Heritage Volunteers" under professional guidance and alongside professional staff. Their permanent mission would be to contribute to the preservation and enhancement of the human heritage, whether tangible or intangible, using modern techniques, in order to disseminate useful knowledge, enrich humanity's awareness of its heritage and promote deeper mutual understanding and respect between cultures.

3.2 The task of organizing this new effort should be entrusted to the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) whose field of competence should be expanded to include cultural heritage activities and should start soon, if possible during 1996.

3.3 This volunteer effort should give priority to the most threatened forms of human cultural heritage: deteriorating monuments, artifacts, books, manuscripts and historical documents; disappearing languages or forms of artistic expression; records and oral testimonies of historical significance; and traditional know-how in a variety of disciplines. This effort should concern the whole world, while giving priority to developing coun-

tries which lack the means to record, preserve, conserve and promote their precious heritage resources.

3.4 UNV should make the best use of existing capacities, whether governmental or non-governmental, acting in close co-operation with the Voluntary Service Unit of UNESCO, the Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service (CCIVS), NGOs active in the field, and any national, community, or municipal body wishing to participate in a common endeavour. These institutions and organizations should join in a spirit of close partnership.

3.5 "Cultural Heritage Volunteers" would be recruited among all age groups and talents and involve young people (especially students and young workers) as well as mid-career and senior-citizen volunteers (architects, artists, craftsmen, archivists, librarians, teachers, and so forth) who may wish to contribute their time and expertise. The volunteers would come from various countries, without discrimination as to race or gender. The modes of participation should be as flexible as possible, with due consideration for the diversity of individual backgrounds and expertise, the nature of the missions and the diversity of national and local circumstances.

3.6 The period of volunteer work may vary in length. The participation of young volunteers should be encouraged through innovative educational designs providing training credits to their students:

- (a) in an educational setting (at primary, secondary or university level) as a period of "internship" or "field-work";
- (b) in a professional/vocational training curriculum as a year of training or apprenticeship.

3.7 The programmes chosen should be distinguished by their scientific rigour and adaptation to local circumstances and the specificity of local contexts at their various stages (definition, implementation and follow-up). UNV should promote contributions or exchanges of academic staff and graduate students with similar institutions in the host countries. Individual projects should be supervised by one or several specialists or experts to ensure the greatest efficiency and continuity.

3.8 A flexible finding system should be envisaged so as to combine:

- (a) a minimum level of stable finding;
- (b) bilateral or multilateral funding of specific programmes on the basis of project-by-project agreements between donors (countries, foundations, NGOs, etc.) and host countries and institutions; and

(c) matching-fund or joint financing involving international, regional or national organizations, as well as private and public donors.

3.9 As this initiative will be based on voluntary work and goodwill, its goals and activities should be made known to as wide a public as possible by using all available channels of communication. It is important that the first projects undertaken have a highly symbolic value, reflecting the importance of the development of mutual knowledge and understanding between people from different cultures and provide the opportunity for the establishment of contacts between volunteers of various cultures, disciplines and age groups.

3.10 The UNV would also encourage and finance the publication and dissemination of academic and scientific works that may result from the activities of "Cultural Heritage Volunteers", possibly in the form of grants or prizes.

#### **Action 4: An International Plan for Gender Equality**

4.1 No society can progress half-liberated and half-chained. No culture can survive if women are not an integral and equal part of such a culture. As the 1995 Human Development Report declares categorically: "human development, if not engendered, is endangered".

4.2 The Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in September 1995 has already adopted a forceful Platform of Action for women's empowerment. The Commission strongly endorses this Platform of Action and urges the world community to translate these words into action. Cultural harmony cannot be ensured if gender inequalities persist and if the present appalling culture of violence against women continues.

4.3 The Commission also draws attention to the following specific areas of action:

- (a) The 20:20 compact agreed at the World Summit on Social Development (1995) should be "tenderized", with women given the first - not the last - claim on additional resources so that present gender gaps in access to basic social services are completely removed over the next decade.
- (b) An International "Grameen Bank" should be set up - building on the special window now being established in the World Bank - to provide small loans to women to start their own micro-enterprises and, thereby, gain real economic empowerment.

- (c) All nations should be urged to prepare separate satellite national income accounts to value and recognize the economic contribution of women which, according to the 1995 *Human Development Report*, exceeds one half of the total economic work on this planet.
- (d) The existing arrangements should be strengthened to collect and publicize detailed information on violence against women so as to create pressure on nations for change. Such information should cover instances of female infanticide, selective abortions of female foetuses, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, rape, genital mutilation, trafficking in female prostitution, and domestic violence. A culture of violence against women is no basis for a culture of peace.
- (e) The United Nations should consider establishing an Under-Secretary General for Gender Equality or even a new agency for Women's Advancement – on the lines of UNICEF for children – so that policy advocacy for women can be carried out every day of the year and not only periodically at international conferences. Even more important, a high-level agency is needed to implement what has been agreed at Beijing and in other forums.
- (f) A concrete timetable should be fixed for the remaining 90 nations to sign or ratify without reservations the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) before the year 2000. New indicators should be created to monitor violations of women's human rights. Let us enter the twenty-first century with full equality guaranteed to women in the laws of all countries.

4.4 The Commission recommends that UNESCO, in co-operation with the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and UNDP, prepare an international action plan to strengthen women's strategies for participation in the cultural, economic and political fields. The plan should be directed for implementation to United Nations agencies such as the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and UNDP, national governments and NGOs.

4.5 Such an action plan would involve the elaboration of tools for gender-aware development planning that is inclusive of cultural issues. Thus it should spell out strategies to mobilize women and make them aware of their options as producers and definers of culture in the context of economic and global change, particularly in the following areas:

- (a) the collection and transmission of women's knowledge in all fields;
- (b) women's cultural contributions to the arts, crafts, poetry and the oral tradition;
- (c) women's initiatives in the media and the arts;

- (d) celebration of pioneers and women's innovations and contributions in science, education, public service, the arts and popular culture;
- (e) encouragement and facilitation for women's groups working at the interface of culture and development;
- (f) women's involvement in decision-making in all fields and at all levels;
- (g) women and culture of health;
- (h) women and entrepreneurial cultures; and
- (i) legitimization of cultural role-models for women favouring actions led by women.

4.6 The Commission would like to emphasize that laws, important as they are, will offer little protection to women unless cultural attitudes and educational curricula fully accommodate women's rights and inculcate a respect for these rights in the upbringing of new generations in the twenty-first century. Gender rights must become an integral part of basic human and cultural rights. And this lesson must be learnt by all human beings, irrespective of their gender, right from their childhood.

### **Action 5: Enhancing access, diversity and competition of the international media system**

5.1 The Commission regards the airwaves and space as part of the global commons, a collective asset that belongs to all humankind. This international asset at present is used free of charge by those who possess resources and technology. Eventually, "property rights" may have to be assigned to the global commons, and access to airwaves and space regulated in the public interest. Nationally, community and public broadcasting services require public subsidies. Just as a major portion of funding for existing public services could come from within the national television system itself, internationally, the redistribution of benefits from the growing global commercial media activity could help subsidize the rest. As a first step, and within a market context, the Commission suggests that the time may have come for commercial regional or international satellite radio and television interests which now use the global commons free of charge to contribute to the financing of a more plural media system. New revenue could be invested in alternative programming for international distribution.

5.2 Many countries have policies to encourage competition to ensure that market activities are consistent with the public interest. There is nothing in the international sphere, however, equivalent to competition and broadcasting policies when it comes to mass communications media, nor

are there public broadcasting services yet to help assure a truly plural media space. A new and concerted international effort, carried out in co-operation with national regulators and national regimes, is required.

5.3 The Commission does not seek to provide artificial protection to local media, be they privately or publicly owned. On the contrary, the Commission recommends an active policy to promote competition, access and diversity of expression amongst the media globally, analogous to policies that exist at the national level. Independent, appropriately funded public service as well as community broadcasting institutions are essential to the functioning of the media in a democratic society. This principle is every bit as important internationally. Our purpose is to ensure that many voices will be heard, that many points of view will be expressed and that minority interests will not be neglected. Modern technology permits an enhancement of choice, an expansion of sources of news, information and interpretation, and an increase of reciprocity and cultural exchange.

5.4 Determining the feasibility of such an undertaking is, of course, beyond the scope of the Commission's mandate. The Commission therefore recommends that UNESCO, in consultation with other United Nations agencies, such as the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), commission two feasibility studies. The first would be on the possibility of establishing alternative services operating at the international level, that would cater for the needs of all peoples and audiences. The 1996 launch of WETV, an international satellite network that will offer an alternative public service television, is a case in point. Alternative public service radio and television networks could complement existing regional and global satellite networks in the way that national public broadcasters (such as the Public Broadcasting Corporation) compete with commercial channels in the United States, the Nippon Hoso Kyokai (NHK) competes with Asian and commercial Japanese services, and other publicly funded media compete with commercial media in other countries. An examination of the range of viable financing approaches would be central to this study. It is recognized that revenue derived from contributions, fees or levies from commercial interests which may prove feasible could not fully fund new services. Development institutions, such as the World Bank and UNDP, should consider financing such cultural services as they do other regional projects.

5.5 How best to favour a competitive and equitable media environment internationally would be the focus of the second study. To foster international co-operation in this regard, the need for a worldwide clearing house on national media and broadcasting laws as well as good practice on the

part of national and translational media organizations should be considered.

5.6 The United Nations University, collaborating with a network of existing research institutions representing the various regions and disciplines of communications research, should be asked to take responsibility for these two studies, examining national and international jurisdictional issues, various funding models, technical feasibility, co-operative initiatives and organizational structures. Suggestions regarding necessary policy formulation, cost and methods of financing would be included.

5.7 The two studies should preferably be completed within one year of being commissioned and form the basis for recommendations to both the United Nations General Assembly and the UNESCO General Conference in 1997.

5.8 The Commission also recognizes that, in the context of an open market economy, the development of the new information infrastructure must be ensured through innovative partnerships between international agencies, governments, industry and civil society. Given the scale of the task, the Commission recommends that governments take a long-term approach to this effort and encourage its balanced development, particularly in adapting regulation that encourages the private sector to make the huge investments required for the construction of this world-wide network of information exchanges – optic fibre cables and technology capable of rapidly transmitting unprecedented amounts of data in two-way communication. Co-operation and collaboration should not be left only to industrialized countries, but require efforts on a world-wide scale.

## **Action 6: Media rights and self-regulation**

6.1 All countries and cultures have struggled to define the line where freedom ends and licence begins. Standards of decency, respect for others and self-restraint vary from one country to another, and from one period to another. While all forms of censorship must be avoided, nowhere is freedom unqualified or allowed to operate regardless of consequences. What is true nationally should be true internationally as well.

6.2 Because of the rapid development and unimpeded flow of new media technologies across national borders, there is an important need to promote a global debate to create a better understanding and co-ordination of national efforts. This may eventually lead to some form of self-regulation

by media professionals, that protects people, particularly children and adolescents, from images of gratuitous violence, human degradation and sexual exploitation, while respecting freedom of expression.

6.3 Many national authorities have introduced general principles supporting community standards, obliging public and private broadcasters to respect these values when developing and implementing their own codes of conduct. Classification systems and viewer warnings have been the most common measures adopted so far. Most efforts to reduce violence on television are voluntary although some countries have decided that enforcement is sometimes required. Authorities in France and New Zealand have legislated the imposition of fines on private broadcasters in breach of the fundamental principles safeguarding children against the programming of violence. In other countries, a range of disciplinary measures exist including the suspension or denial of a broadcast licence in Australia. National codes for television often restrict the showing of adult programming to certain hours when minors are unlikely to be exposed although there are no such codes internationally since time zones are such that evening in one country may be morning in another. There is an urgent need to ensure discussion by media professionals, viewers and listeners of the problems of violence and pornography in the media. International co-operation is required for the systematic collection, updating, dissemination and evaluation of national models. Comparing how, through regulatory, voluntary, individual and technological means the problem is being addressed around the world is the first, important step.

6.4 The Commission recommends that UNESCO endeavour to promote an international forum for reflection on media violence and pornography, whether in television programmes, videos, or interactive games and services.

6.5 International co-operation would draw on a range of national initiatives which include legislative and non-legislative measures, voluntary and self-regulating codes of conduct for industry, media-literacy programmes and the use of individual technological blocking devices.

## **Action 7: Protecting cultural rights as human rights**

7.1 Recent massive breaches of human rights have often been motivated by cultural considerations. These violations have included illegal confinement, persecution or assassination of artists, journalists, teachers, scholars and members of religious and minority ethnic groups; intentional destruc-

tion of the immovable cultural heritage and deprivation or destruction of the movable cultural heritage; restriction of speech or cultural expression; and many acts that curtail cultural diversity and freedom of expression. However, in too many instances, culturally persecuted individuals and communities find no adequate recourse in the existing framework of human rights protection. Cultural rights are now widely recognized as deserving the same protection as human rights. There is therefore a need for the international community to adequately secure the protection of cultural rights.

7.2 As a first step, an inventory of cultural rights that are not protected by existing international instruments needs to be established. This would enable the world community to enumerate and clarify existing standards of international law concerning the protection of cultural rights as expressed in various international declarations and agreements.

7.2.1 The drafting of this inventory of cultural rights would be entrusted to the International Law Commission (ILC) by resolution of the United Nations General Assembly. The ILC would set up for this purpose a drafting committee composed both of eminent legal scholars and other experts in the field of cultural rights. It would work in consultation with all competent institutions of the United Nations system and seek advice from a broad range of interested groups and public figures. The ILC would draw especially on the expertise of UNESCO.

7.2.2 On the basis of such an inventory, an International Code of Conduct on Culture could be drawn up by the ILC so as to provide a basis for adjudicating egregious violations of cultural rights and in order to mobilize international solidarity in their defense. The Code or its provisions could be made a part of the "Draft Code of Crimes against the Peace and Security of Mankind" now under consideration. Its guiding principles would be the promotion of cultural co-existence, the maintenance of cultural diversity and the preservation of cultural heritage.

7.2.3 The ILC could present its first report on its work to the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1998. In addition, it would be expected to make recommendations to advance the recognition of cultural rights and to identify emerging areas for further action.

7.3 The ILC would also consider the possibility of setting up an International Office of the Ombudsperson for Cultural Rights and its relationship to existing mechanisms for the enforcement of human rights.

7.3.1 Such an independent, free-standing entity could hear pleas from aggrieved or oppressed individuals or groups, act on their behalf and mediate with governments for the peaceful settlement of disputes. It could fully investigate and document cases, encourage a dialogue between parties and suggest a process of arbitration and negotiated settlement leading to the effective redress of wrongs, including, wherever appropriate, recommendations for legal or legislative remedies as well as compensatory damages.

7.3.2 Such an Office could also be entrusted with preventing the renewal of similar abuses and contribute with existing agencies to strengthening international means of forestalling them. It could rely on the goodwill of governments, seek the support of existing regional networks and international agencies and, whenever necessary, rely on the power of information and public opinion to expose violations of cultural rights with the greatest publicity.

7.3.3 Such an Office could rely when necessary on the advice and support of persons of great eminence and moral integrity, whose intervention on behalf of affected individuals or groups would give added force and visibility to its action.

7.4 Respect for cultural rights should include respect for women's rights. The Commission recommends that the office of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women at the UNHCR be upgraded to the status of a permanent office on Women's Human Rights.

7.4.1 This office would hear pleas from aggrieved individuals, conduct investigations and mediate with governments and other parties in three areas where there is considerable violation of women's human rights:

- violence against women as defined in the current mandate of the Special Rapporteur;
- women's reproductive rights, and in particular their rights to make decisions affecting their reproductive health, child-bearing and sexuality free of the use of threat or coercion by any individual, group or entity;
- women's rights to equality and justice, and in particular their access to common property resources and credit when development policies, programmes and projects are formulated.

7.4.2 The Office of Women's Human Rights should be adequately funded and staffed so that it can generate professional analysis of high quality, hold regular public hearings, and mediate with governmental and interna-

tional agencies. It should be able to draw on the support of eminent and respected individuals. Its director should have a sufficiently high rank to enable her/him to carry out these responsibilities effectively.

7.5 There is a need to re-examine the international enforcement procedure to ensure the prosecution of violations of cultural rights, ranging from the persecution of individuals to "ethnic cleansing." Once an International Code of Conduct has been drafted and agreed upon, consideration could be given to the establishment of an International Court to hear cases brought before it by culturally-persecuted individuals and groups seeking legal redress, or by concerned people who may not have been directly affected acting on their behalf. This could be a permanent Court acting as a judicial arm of the United Nations, and bringing to bear the full influence of the United Nations to expose such violations. A "filter" system, such as the test of admissibility used by the European Court of Human Rights, could ensure that States are not pursued by frivolous claims. This Court could be made a part of the International Criminal Court (ICC) now under consideration by the United Nations, or its field of competence dealt with thereunder.

7.6 Consideration should be given to a graduated system of enforcement. Thus, an International Office of the Ombudsperson could conduct proceedings initially in confidence, and subsequently in public, if no satisfactory resolution of the matter has been reached. Ultimately, a Court such as the one proposed could hear and adjudicate unresolved cases concerning violations of cultural rights under the full eye of international public scrutiny. Such a procedure could lead over time, and in tandem with an International Code of Conduct, to the emergence of a body of new international case law, providing powerful tools that can be used to embarrass and, when necessary, discipline offending nations. This graduated system would emphasize the universality of existing fundamental human rights and bring international attention to instances where existing recourse are either insufficient or lacking.

### **Action 8: Global ethics in global governance**

8.1 The Commission would like to make it clear that the emergence of a global ethics and rule of law in international conduct will prove impossible unless the powerful nations are as willing to submit themselves to such common rules as the rest of the global community. Equality under the law, democratic accountability, and transparency of information are fundamental concepts that took centuries to develop within nations. It is time to extend the same principles to global ethics in the next century.

8.2 The Commission believes that the real basis of a global ethics is a common morality. The principles of democracy, transparency, accountability and human rights should be universal, not selective. It is in this spirit that the Commission makes the following concrete suggestions:

- (a) Greater democracy in global governance must be considered – including the decision-making processes of G-7. This is an inevitable development since democracy is rarely so obliging as to stop at national borders. At the same time, demands for democracy in international institutions are not very convincing if the countries concerned do not practise democracy at home.
- (b) Respect for human rights should not be expected only from poor nations: rich nations must set an example, particularly by respecting the rights of their own minorities and immigrant populations.
- (c) The rich nations should be as prepared to open their economies and to undertake structural adjustments as they are eager to press poor nations to do so. A global ethics requires at least equal sharing of burdens – perhaps even greater sharing by the richer members of the global community.
- (d) Market principles should be introduced in the exploitation of the global commons, for example through tradable permits for environmental emissions and through levies on the use of global airwaves.
- (e) The same global ethics should apply to the suppliers of arms as applies to the purchasers of arms – on the same lines as producers and consumers of drugs must be held equally accountable for their actions. It is neither wise nor ethical that arms be sold for profit to poor, unstable regimes whose rulers, unfortunately, are willing to spend more funds on modern equipment for their armies than on the welfare of their people.
- (f) There must be greater transparency in bank transactions between officials of developing nations and banks, including Western ones, which are currently parking most of the corrupt money from poor nations.
- (g) Information must be provided in the budgets of high-income nations on subsidies to arms exporters. It is simply astonishing that such information should be unavailable at present even though it involves the use of tax-payers' money.

## **Action 9: A people-centred United Nations**

9.1 An international system based solely on relations between governments is no longer adequate for the twenty-first century. The time has come for the United Nations to practise what it preaches to others: wider partici-

pation by those whose lives are affected by the decisions made. Non-governmental organizations, private foundations, representatives of indigenous peoples and cultural minorities, international corporations and trade unions, members of parliament, and various other representatives of civil society, also need to participate if the United Nations is to deal with such interlinked problems as peace, culture, poverty, environment, gender issues, media and technological development. We also need to reinvent the United Nations for the twenty-first century as a visionary beacon for younger generations.

9.2 Fifty years ago, the United Nations was created in the name of “We, the People”. But people did not have too direct a say in the operations of the United Nations as governmental representatives took over all its organs, including the General Assembly and the Security Council. As we enter the twenty-first century, it is time to restore the supremacy of the people in international organizations on the same lines as it is at present being restored within nations all over the world.

9.3 The global community should start with a fresh vision that inspires many new generations in the twenty-first century. One bold step could be a General Assembly directly elected by the people of all nations, learning some lessons from the experience of the European Parliament. As a start, however, a two-chamber General Assembly could be considered, one with government representatives as at present, and the other representing national civil society organizations. Such a two-chamber system could ensure that the voice of the people is heard all the time, rich in its cultural diversity and fearless in its advocacy of new changes. People are the prime movers of change. Not only development strategies should become people-centred: so should all institutions of global governance.

9.4 The Commission recognizes that the proposal for a World People’s Assembly is only a vision for the future at this stage. But the Commission is deeply concerned that the diversity of cultures should be given its full expression in international fora and so should the voice of marginalized groups, ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples. The United Nations should take some concrete measures to reflect both the diversity of these voices as well as to seek a consensus based on the genuine aspirations of the people.

9.5 As a first step in this direction, the Commission recommends that the representatives of non-governmental bodies accredited to the General Assembly as Civil Society organizations be grouped into a World Forum and invited to meet regularly to offer their views on key issues on the global

agenda — from environment to population, from ethnic conflicts to disarmament, and from poverty issues to gender issues. At the same time, the criteria for accreditation should also be reviewed to ensure that all relevant members of civil society do get a representation in the UN's World Forum. The global community has already accepted the presence of parallel NGO Forums at all important international conferences and summits. It is only a logical and necessary step to go on from these ad hoc NGO forums to a permanent World Forum working at United Nations Headquarters. Similar steps can also be taken by United Nations specialized agencies, including UNESCO. ILO already offers a prototype of tripartite representation of three concerned groups: governments, management and labour – though it is recognized that further steps are needed to strengthen the representation of smaller industrial concerns and non-unionized labour.

## **Action 10: Towards a Global Summit on Culture and Development**

10.1 We stand on the threshold of the twenty-first century when a new and exciting era of human progress can begin. It is a century when:

- development can be built around people rather than people around development;
- development strategies can enrich cultural heritage, not destroy it;
- equality of opportunity can be ensured for present generations as well as for future generations;
- a new global ethics can emerge which respects the universalist of life claims of every new-born person everywhere and which establishes a common morality for both the powerful and the weak.

10.2 This is not a utopia. This is a pre-requisite for human survival and human progress on this planet. But such a framework of our creative diversity is not going to emerge through automatic processes. It will require a good deal of sustained effort.

10.3 A number of activities would advance the prospects of such a human world to emerge. There would be a series of annual Reports on Culture and Development, which would complement and enlarge the messages of the *Human Development Reports* and which would lead to new people-centred, culturally-sensitive development strategies. There would be experience with the work of the International Court on the Violation of Cultural Rights, the new International Code of Conduct on Culture, and the International Office of the Ombudsperson for Cultural Rights. There would be greater progress on gender equality. And there would be experience with the

international debate on access, competition and diversity in the international media system as well as on violence and pornography in the media.

10.4 It is essential that all these efforts be put in a wider perspective and given full support at the highest level. For this reason, the Commission recommends that a World Summit on Culture and Development be convened within the next five years to usher in the twenty-first century on a positive, humanist note. But such a Summit should make a departure from past practices. It should bring together not only all heads of state and government but also the most eminent thinkers, intellectuals, artists and opinion makers in the global community so that there is a rich interaction between all sections of society.

10.5 The Summit would have to be carefully prepared. It could be preceded by international conferences of artists and thinkers as well as global caucuses of concerned national ministers (particularly ministers of culture, education, planning, and finance), including a preparatory meeting of artists in 1997 and a meeting on cultural policies in 1998. Once the proposal for the Global Summit is accepted and a timing determined, the various stages of the preparatory process can be identified by UNESCO, which should serve as its secretariat.

10.6 The Commission urges the global community to rediscover its human vision for the twenty-first century. The Global Summit on Culture and Development is only one step in this direction. A good deal of concerted effort will be needed in the next few decades to set all of humanity on the road to harmonious progress. In the final analysis, human destiny is a choice, not a chance.

## Appendix

### The Commission and its work

The World Commission on Culture and Development (WCCD) was constituted jointly in December 1992 by the Director-General of UNESCO and the Secretary-General of the United Nations. They appointed Mr Javier Pérez de Cuéllar as President and invited twelve other eminent persons to be members of the Commission. In addition, five distinguished individuals were invited to become Honorary Members. It was also decided that the Chairperson of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee of the World Decade for Cultural Development would be invited to attend meetings of the WCCD as an observer.

These decisions were taken in pursuance of a resolution adopted in November 1991 by the General Conference of UNESCO, which requested the Director-General, in co-operation with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, to establish "an independent World Commission on Culture and Development (WCCD) comprising women and men drawn from all regions and eminent in diverse disciplines, to prepare a World Report on Culture and Development and proposals for both urgent and long-term action to meet cultural needs in the context of development". In December 1991 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a resolution which took note of the UNESCO General Conference resolution and requested the Secretary-General to co-operate with the Director-General of UNESCO in establishing the Commission.

Upon establishing the WCCD, the Director-General also instructed the Secretariat of UNESCO as a whole to provide all the administrative and technical support required for the smooth functioning of the Commission. To ensure that it would benefit fully from the intellectual resources of the Secretariat, he established an interdisciplinary task force to contribute to the substance of its deliberations. The WCCD is most grateful for the support it has received from many members of the UNESCO Secretariat at Headquarters as well as in the field, from a number of National Commissions for UNESCO and from National Committees for the World Decade for Cultural Development. It has co-operated with the Intergovernmental Committee of the World Decade for Cultural Development and has greatly appreciated the contributions to its deliberations of two Chairpersons of this Committee.

#### The Commissioners

##### *President*

JAVIER PEREZ DE CUELLAR. former Secretary-General of the United Nations (1982-91), Member of the Institut de France (Academy of Moral and Political Sciences), former Ambassador of Peru to Switzerland, USSR and Venezuela.

##### *Honorary Members*

H.R.H. PRINCE TALAL IBN ABDUL AZIZ AL SAUD. President of AGFUND, former

Minister of Economy and Finance and former Minister of Communication of Saudi Arabia (*served until 1994*).

H.R.H. CROWN PRINCE EL HASSAN BIN TALAL OF JORDAN (*appointed in June 1994*).

AUNG SAN SUU KYI Nobel Prize for Peace 1991, UNESCO International Simón Bolívar Prize 1992, economist and political scientist, founder in Myanmar (ex-Burma) of the National League for Democracy.

CLAUDE LEVI-STRAUSS. Anthropologist and writer, Member of the Académie française, Honorary Professor at the Collège de France.

ILYA PRIGOGINE Nobel Prize for Chemistry 1977, scientist and philosopher, Member of the Royal Academy of Belgium.

DEREK WALCOTT. Nobel Prize for Literature 1992, poet and dramatist born in Saint-Lucia, Professor of English Literature at Boston University.

ELIE WIESEL Nobel Prize for Peace 1986, Romanian-born American novelist and essayist, President of the Universal Academy of Cultures, Professor of Humanities at Boston University, Member of the Honorary Committee of the League against Racism and Anti-Semitism (*originally appointed a Member of the Commission; subsequently appointed an Honorary Member in June 1994 at his request*).

#### Members

CLAUDE AKE, Nigerian development economist, Director of the Centre for Advanced Social Science at the University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria (*resigned for personal reasons in June 1994*).

LOURDES ARIZPE, Mexican anthropologist, Director of the Institute for An-

thropological Research at the National University of Mexico, former President of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (*resigned in July 1994 on her appointment as Assistant Director-General for Culture. Designated by the Director-General to represent him on the Commission and to supervise the work of the secretariat of the WCCD*).

YORO K. FALL, Senegalese historian, Professor and Head of the Department of History at the University Cheikh Anta Diop (Dakar), Inspector-General of National Education.

KURT FURLER, lawyer and economist, Vice-President of the Club of Rome, former President of the Swiss Confederation, former Member of the Swiss Government (Federal Council).

CELSO FURTADO, Brazilian economist, former Minister of Planning and former Minister of Culture of Brazil, Honorary Professor in Development Economics at the University of Paris, Sorbonne.

NIKI GOULANDRIS, Vice-President of the Goulandris Museum, expert in ecology and cultural issues, former Deputy Minister for Social Services of Greece, Honorary Deputy President of the Hellenic Radio and Television.

KEITH GRIFFIN, Professor of Economics at the University of California at Riverside, Chairman of the Board, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, Consultant to UNDP on the *Human Development Report*.

MAHBUB UL HAQ Pakistani economist, Special Adviser to the Administrator of UNDP, responsible for the UNDP *Human Development Report*, former Minister of Finance, of Planning and Development, of Commerce and Economic Affairs of Pakistan.

ELISABETH JELIN, Argentinean sociologist, Senior Researcher at the University of Buenos Aires and at the National Council of Scientific and Technical Research, Buenos Aires.

ANGELINE KAMBA, Public Service Commissioner, Government of Zimbabwe, former Director of the National Archive.

OLE-HENRIK MAGGA, linguist, President of the Sami Parliament in Norway, expert in Sami culture, former Professor in Finno-Ugrian languages at the University of Oslo.

NIKITA MIKHALKOV, film director, "Gold Lion" Prize at the Venice Biennale 1991, 1995 "Oscar" Academy Award for Best Foreign Film, President of the Cultural Foundation of the Russian Federation.

CHIE NAKANE, social anthropologist, orientalist, Professor Emeritus of the University of Tokyo, President of the Shibusawa Foundation for Ethnological Studies, President of the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO.

LEILA TAKLA, Egyptian lawyer, Member of the Higher Councils for Culture and for Universities, member of the National Academy of Science and Technology, University Professor, former President of the Committee of Foreign Affairs of the Egyptian Parliament.

*Ex-officio Observers (Chairmen of the Intergovernmental Committee of the World Decade for Cultural Development)*

LUIS BERNARDO HONWANA, 1992-93. A journalist and writer, he took part in the liberation struggle in Mozambique before occupying positions of high responsibility in his country, including that of Minister of Culture; has also been a Member of the Executive Board of UNESCO.

SITAKANT MAHMATRA, 1994-95. Secretary, Department of Culture, Government of India; an award-winning poet and writer, he is also a specialist in the development of India's tribal communities.

## The terms of reference

The terms of reference for the Commission were provided by the General Conference of UNESCO in the resolution it adopted in November 1991. This resolution suggested that the World Commission focus mainly on identifying, describing and analyzing basic questions, concerns and new challenges related to:

- (a) the cultural and socio-cultural factors that affect development;
- (b) the impact of social and economic development on culture;
- (c) the interrelatedness of culture and models of development;
- (d) the ways in which cultural development, and not only economic conditions, influence individual and collective well-being;
- (e) the cultural sector as such and as an important area for development and for international co-operation;

The resolution also identified a number of areas that the Commission considered very carefully when it established its own mandate at its first meeting.

These areas were the following:

Cultural continuity, cultural diversity and identity, and the problem of the progressive loss of indigenous knowledge, traditions and languages, and of entire cultures threatened with extinction;

Positive results of growing indigenous and regional self-esteem;

Potential benefits of more widespread use of local languages in literature and newspapers;

Enrichment derived from the growing interchange between different cultures and the creative impetus to the international community gained from the rich diversity of different traditions;

Aspirations to an improved quality of life and the way in which cultural development, and not only economic conditions, affects individual and collective well-being and the cohesiveness of societies;

Participation in cultural life of various segments of the population, taking into account their cultural specificities as well as their access to contemporary global society;

Contribution of women and men to culture and development, both in their everyday activities and as artists and artisans;

Current, and diverse, conditions for creativity and productivity in the cultural sector (the visual arts, music, dance, literature, theatre, film, architecture and crafts), and the sector as a generator of income;

Relationships between culture and governance, exploring the concepts of tolerance, pluralism and a "culture of democracy";

Links between environment and culture and the parallels between the safeguarding of the natural and the cultural heritage;

Importance of cultural factors as key variables in overall development planning and implementation, taking into account the ethical challenges to scientific advancement and economic growth.

ment, based on the collection and analysis of information from all regions and from diverse sources. It asked the Commission to arrange for the publication of particularly noteworthy studies and other materials submitted to it and to design its report so that it would engage the general public and assist those responsible for formulating and implementing cultural and development policies at both national and international levels, including the different multilateral banks and United Nations organizations and programmes.

While it has carried out its work in total independence, the WCCD has been guided by these terms of reference. It has co-operated with intergovernmental bodies within and outside the United Nations system, a wide variety of national agencies, a number of private foundations and independent sector organizations, research institutes and universities. It has benefited from consultations with the International Commission on Global Governance. Regular exchanges of information have also taken place between the WCCD and the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century.

The WCCD has pursued its reflections through a combination of literature reviews on its main themes, public hearings with specialists in each of the world regions, and consultations with selected experts and institutions. It has discussed the findings of research papers and essays it has commissioned, and analyzed the results of meetings and task forces organized in the context of its activities and the working meetings it has held.

The UNESCO General Conference also expressed the wish that the Commission prepare a policy-oriented World Report on Culture and Develop-

## Commission meetings

The WCCD has held nine working meetings.

The Commission's *regional consultations* have consisted of public hearings at which leading figures - social scientists, policy-makers, artists and cultural leaders, cultural policy and development experts, and NGO activists - have shared their concerns and visions with the WCCD.

The Commission's inaugural meeting took place at UNESCO Headquarters in March 1993. At this meeting, the WCCD adopted its mandate and working methods, decided on its rules of procedure and on a provisional budget. It also identified eleven major lines of inquiry along which its reflections would proceed: culture, creation and creativity, innovation and development: the cultural sector as such and its various contributions to development; culture, education, human resources and development; information, culture, the communication society, cultural industries and development; the influence of cultural development on individual and collective well-being; links between culture and development models; science and technology, economics, culture and development; development, culture, environment; development, culture, population; universality, specificity, culture and development; cultural exchanges, inter-cultural relations and development; development and the culture of democracy, human rights and peace. On this occasion the WCCD also heard from more than twenty leading figures - ministers, decision-makers, intellectuals, economists, creative artists and development experts - on the broad outlines of the culture and development relationship.

The Commission's second meeting was held in Stockholm in June 1993 at the invitation of the Swedish Ministry of Culture with support from the Swedish Arts Council and organized by the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO. Public hearings for the European region, to which over twenty experts and officials made contributions, were followed by a working meeting of the WCCD. At this meeting the Commission launched an appeal to the authorities of Myanmar to free Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991, of the UNESCO International Simón Bolívar Prize in 1992, and an honorary member of the WCCD, who had been under house arrest since 1989.

The Commission's third meeting, held in February 1994 in San José, Costa Rica, was opened by that country's President and President-elect and was preceded by a Regional Consultation for Latin America and the Caribbean. All expenses relating to the gathering were covered by the Government of Costa Rica. Some thirty leading figures and experts from throughout the region provided valuable insights to the WCCD on the theme "Preparing for the Twenty-first century". The working meeting focused on two of the Commission's lines of inquiry, namely: (i) the interrelationships between culture and development; and (ii) cultural development.

The fourth meeting of the Commission, planned to take place in Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire, in June 1994, had to be relocated for technical reasons to UNESCO Headquarters. This working meeting benefited greatly from the papers which had been prepared by the African experts and officials who had been invited to take part

in the Regional Consultation for Africa planned at the same time. The Commission considered, a revised preliminary draft outline for its Report.

The Commission's fifth meeting in Manila, financed by the Government of the Philippines, was held in November 1994 and began with a Regional Consultation for Asia and the Pacific. An important statement by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Honorary Member of the Commission, was read at her request and on her behalf at the opening session by Corazon Aquino, former President of the Philippines. The discussion was organized around themes of specific relevance to this vast region, including interactions between political processes, social change, economic growth and cultural values; the diverging pressures of globalization and indigenization; the challenges of cultural pluralism; cultural expression as a force for development; ways towards integrating culture and development. The meeting benefited from a pre-conference organized by the Department of Education, Culture and Sport of the Philippines which yielded valuable information on the culture and development relationship in the host country. During the consultation, Commissioners, experts and observers divided into working groups to put forward concrete policy and action recommendations. During its working meeting the Commission considered a simplified outline for its Report built around a selected number of key messages and ethical principles.

The sixth meeting of the Commission was held in the Sultanate of Oman in January 1995 with the support of the Government of Oman. Organized by the National Ministry of Heritage and Culture, the meeting began with a public hearing of views from the Arab States

that focused on the region's specific values, and also discussed the political process and the arts in Arab societies. Again, Commissioners, experts and observers formed working groups to discuss specific issues and formulate desiderata pertinent to the needs of the region. In its private working meeting, Commissioners reviewed and commented on a new annotated table of contents for their Report as it emerged from the fresh thinking that had taken place at the previous meeting.

The seventh meeting of the Commission was held at United Nations Headquarters in March 1995, beginning with a Regional Consultation for North America and attended by experts and observers from Canada and the United States. The Commission was honoured by the presence of Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who underlined his keen interest in its work. Organized with the help of the United Nations Secretariat, the meeting received financial support from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and intellectual contributions from the Canadian Commission for UNESCO and a national steering committee created by the Department of Canadian Heritage. These included a report based on briefs prepared by a number of Canadian specialists which was distributed at the meeting. In the discussions, the issues of cultural change and pluralism and the challenges of communication technologies were highlighted, taking advantage of contrasting North American experiences. During their private working meeting, Commissioners divided themselves into three working groups to sketch out and/or actually draft different sections of the Report, whose nature and outline began to emerge much more clearly at this meet-

ing. They decided to work towards a concise, policy-oriented document that would concentrate on a manageable number of key policy areas leading up to an "International Agenda".

The Commission's eighth meeting took place at Chiba City, Japan, in June 1995 at the invitation of the Government of Japan. It was hosted by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, and the authorities of Chiba Prefecture with the assistance of the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO. At this meeting the Commission reviewed a first draft of its Report, prepared with the help of Michael Gibson, a professional writer and specialist on cultural issues. Commissioners again broke into working groups to further develop sections on global ethics, policy areas, recommendations and international action. Two members of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century (Messrs Amagi and Karan Singh) attended the meeting as observers. Members were also joined by the distinguished development specialist Professor Paul Streeten, who had kindly agreed to serve as Editorial Consultant and pursue the drafting of the Report. This meeting was followed by a public symposium attended by over 400 people, including many students, at which Japanese experts discussed aspects of culture and development in Japan and elsewhere and at which Lourdes Arizpe also presented UNESCO's cultural programmes in Asia and the Pacific.

The ninth and final meeting of the Commission was held in Pretoria, South Africa, from 12 to 15 September 1995 with the support of the Government of South Africa as well as the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). In addition to the rescheduled

Regional Consultation for Africa, the meeting allowed Commissioners to meet for a last time to review in depth the final draft of their Report.

The regional consultation process allowed Commissioners to interact closely with experts from all regions in exploring issues of cultural and development. These meetings resulted in a wealth of briefs, papers and essays of immeasurable benefit to the WCCD. The Commissioners are deeply indebted to all those whose efforts contributed to their success, in particular the governments of the Member States concerned, their National Commissions and their Permanent Delegations to UNESCO.

## **A dynamic of international reflection**

In the course of its work, the WCCD set in motion a dynamic of international reflection on the issues it faced. In 1993, at the Regional Consultation for Europe held in Stockholm, the Council of Europe decided to prepare a report reflecting key issues of culture and development in Europe. A task force for this purpose was established at the initiative of the Council of Europe with additional support from the WCCD, the European Commission and several governments. This group shared a number of useful background papers with the WCCD, and the Council of Europe will arrange for the printing and distribution of its report. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) also prepared a report on issues pertaining to culture and development in Africa, which was reviewed by the WCCD at its subsequent meeting in South Africa.

A number of special meetings have been held in support of the Commission's work. Following the June 1993 Stockholm meeting, the WCCD participated in a seminar on "Majority-Minority Relations – The Case of the Sami in Scandinavia" organized by the Norwegian Government at Kautokeino, in the Arctic region of Finnmark, Norway. In June 1995, Commissioner Elizabeth Jelin attended a workshop on cultural diversity in South Asia organized by the International Centre for Ethnic Studies in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Later that month, with the support of the WCCD, the Russian Institute for Cultural Research organized in Moscow an international conference on "Culture and Development in the Countries in Transition" which was attended by President Javier Pérez de Cuéllar and Commissioner Yoro Fall.

Some sixty-two specially commissioned papers and studies have helped Commissioners explore areas which had been insufficiently illuminated so far. Various UNESCO staff members have contributed a substantial number of studies, briefs and research papers to the WCCD, whose usefulness it has greatly appreciated. Together with the wealth of information and opinions received at the Regional Consultations and special meetings, these contributions number over one hundred papers, reports and studies. A number of these papers are to be published separately as one or more companion volumes following the presentation of the Report.

## Financial and other contributions

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The United Nations contributed to the work of the WCCD by seconding a media relations specialist, Mr Pierre Fabian, from the Department of Public Information to serve with the secretariat of the WCCD from June 1993 through

December 1995. The United Nations also graciously provided facilities for the holding of the Commission's meeting at United Nations Headquarters in March 1995.

## Working for the Commission

In November 1992, the Director-General established the Office of the World Commission on Culture and Development within the UNESCO Secretariat in Paris. The following have worked on this small team:

### *Executive Secretary*

Yudhishthir Raj Isar (India)

Jérôme Bindé (France) - through July 1994

### *Professional Staff*

Pierre Fabian (USA), Media Relations, on secondment from the United Nations

Ika Kaminka (Norway), Associate Expert in 1993

Jean-Yves Le Saux (France), Programme Specialist

Malick M'Baye (Senegal), Programme Specialist

Vladimir Skok (Canada), Programme Specialist

Guiomar Alonso Cano (Spain), Research Assistant

Selma Mutal (The Netherlands), Research Assistant

Isabelle Schwarz (France), Research Assistant

### General Services

Suzanne Martin-Siegfried (Switzerland) Secretary to the President

Win Tennakoonge (Sri Lanka), Secretary o the Executive Secretary

Françoise Girard (France), Secretarial Assistant through July 1994

Temporary staff with the secretariat have included Vittoria Fresco, Victor Nuñez and Aimée Ravonison.

Sophie Bonfigli, Fatoumata Sirandou and Bertrand Boichot were student interns at the secretariat.

While many people contributed in many different ways to the drafting of the Report, Michael Gibson helped shape a first draft and Paul Streeten was Editorial Consultant for the two last drafts. Susanne Almeida-Klein was responsible for layout and Robert Ziegler for graphs and charts. Monique Couratier and Malachy Quinn edited the final typescript.

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Paul Schafer, Canada; Bertrand Schneider, France; Edy Sedyawati, Indonesia; Amartya Sen, Harvard University, United States; Geeta Sen, Indian Institute of Management, India; Michel Serres, France; Benon V. Sevan, United Nations; Helena Severe, Brazil; Olga Sevan, Russian Institute for Cultural Research, Russian Federation; Kirill Shakharov, Russian Institute for Cultural Research, Russian Federation; Dariush Shayegan, France; Colin Shaw, Broadcasting Standards Council, United Kingdom; Mikhail Shvydkoi, Russian Federation; Anna-Leena Siikala, Joensuu University; Finland; Estela Singh, United Nations Volunteers; Karan Singh, India; Sipho Sipamla, South Africa; John Sletbak, Norway; Edith Sizoo, South-North Network Cultures and Development, Belgium; Joost Smiers, Utrecht School of the Arts, The Netherlands; Chua Soo Pong, Singapore; Amat Al-Aleem Al-Soswa, Yemen; Alpha Ibrahim Sow, France; Wole Soyinka, Nigeria; Keith Spicer, Canadian Radio Television and Telecommunications Commission, Canada; Adrian Van der Staay, The Netherlands; Sharon Stephens, The Norwegian Centre for Child Research, Norway; Chuck Sutyla, Canada; Janusz Symonides, UNESCO; June Taboroff, The World Bank; Stanley V. Tambiah, Harvard University, United States; Ali Al-Tamimi, Sultanate of Oman; Wassila Tamzali, UNESCO; Mohsen Tawfik, Egypt; Carl G.W. Tham, Minister of Education, Sweden; Juan Carlos Tedesco, International Bureau of Education, Switzerland; Louise Terillon-Mackay, Department of Canadian Heritage, Canada; Anita Theorell, Swedish International Development Authority, Sweden; Bernard Theurillat, Switzerland; David Throsby, Macquarie University, Australia; Neelan Tiruchelvam, International Centre for Ethnic Studies, Sri Lanka; Alain Touraine, France; Abdou Touré, ORSTOM, Côte d'Ivoire; Louise Trahan, Canada; Harold Troper, The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Canada; Shaje Tshiluila, Zaire; Janette D. Tuason, Philippines; Jerry Michael Turner, Hunter College, United States; United Nations Economic Commission for Africa; Charles Vallerand, TV5, France; P. Vasarhelyi, UNESCO; Kapila Vatsyayan, India; Gianni Vattimo, University of Turin, Italy; Marta Vega, The Caribbean Cultural Center, United States; Indrasen Vencatachellum, UNESCO; Thierry Verhelst, Belgium; Bernardo Villegas, Philippines; Jean-Pierre Wallet, Canada; Gungwu Wang, The University of Hong-Kong; Raymond Weber, Council of Europe; Franceso Weffort, Brazil; Jorge Werthein, UNESCO; Unni Wikan, Norway; Hakan Wilkens, Sweden; Jean-Claude William, France; Kris Wilski, United Nations; Salwa Woloch, Sultanate of Oman; Christopher Wondji, UNESCO; Stephen Wurm, The Australian National University, Canberra; Layashi Yaker, Algeria; Stephen Yeh, University of Hawai'i at Manoa, Honolulu, United States; Lourdes Yero, Universidad Central de Venezuela; Mohammed Bin Musa Al-Yousof, Sultanate of Oman; Khalid Bin Talib Al-Zakawani, Sultanate of Oman; Aly Zaker, Bangladesh; Alice Zindzingre, Centre national de la recherche scientifique, France; Ben Zulu, Zimbabwe.

*(The Commission apologizes for any oversight or inaccuracy in this list.)*

*The independent World Commission on Culture and Development is responsible for the choice and the presentation of the facts contained in this Report and for the opinions expressed therein, which are not necessarily those of either UNESCO or the United Nations and do not commit either Organization.*

# I THE COMMISSION Its Inception

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After three “Development Decades” how far have we got? This question was very much in the air in the late 1980s. People saw a world still divided in two. Far from being filled, the gap between the wealthiest and the most destitute nations was widening. Furthermore, within countries themselves, both in the North and in the South, the gulf was expanding between the privileged few with access to knowledge and well-being and the large majority of those excluded. Models of development based exclusively on economic growth and material gain appeared to have failed.

People also observed that the failures and frustrated expectations of development had given rise to cultural tensions in many societies. Sometimes these failures were taking the form of development disasters, ranging from civil wars to authoritarian regimes, and disrupted the development process itself. In the industrial world, disillusionment with material progress, high levels of consumption for the privileged amid widespread deprivation, and persistently high rates of permanent unemployment were also pushing culture and cultural identity to the forefront of the public agenda.

Clearly, there was a need to transcend economics, without abandoning it, as people realized that economic criteria alone could not achieve human dignity and well-being. The search for other criteria that measures development in a broad array of capabilities, ranging from political, economic and social freedom to individual opportunities for being healthy, educated, productive, creative and enjoying self-respect and human rights, was under way. In many instances, however, culture was implied but not explicitly introduced. Thus, building cultural insights into the broader development strategies, as well as more effective practical agenda, had to be the next step in rethinking development.

With that in view, at the end of 1992, UNESCO established in conjunction with the United Nations, the World Commission on Culture and Development. Composed of 12 leading figures from various backgrounds, including four Nobel Prize winners, and chaired by Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, former U.N Secretary-General, this independent Commission was entrusted with preparing the first ever action-oriented World Report on the close ties between culture and development. The main objective of the document is to shape the national cultural and development strategies of the twenty-first century.

## II THE COMMISSION **Its Work**

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The World Commission has worked through a combination of literature reviews on its main themes, public hearings of specialists worldwide and consultations with selected individual experts and institutions. It has commissioned many essays and studies.

a) Working meetings and Regional Consultations:

The WCCD has met nine times: upon the inauguration of its work in Paris (March 1993), in Stockholm, Sweden (June 1993), in San José, Costa Rica (February 1994), at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris (July 1994), in Manila, Philippines (November 1994), in Muscat, Oman, (January 1995), at the United Nations Headquarters in New York (March 1995), at Chiba City, Japan (June 1995) and in Pretoria, South Africa (September 1995). Six of these working meetings were preceded by regional consultations for Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific, Arab States, North America and Africa respectively.

b) Other events:

In addition, a number of special events were held in support of the Commission's work, such as a seminar on "Majority-Minority Relations" -The Case of the Sami in Scandinavia" (Kautokeino, Norway, June 1993), a public symposium on culture and development (Chiba, Japan, June 1995) and an international conference on "Culture and Development in the Countries in Transition" (Moscow, June 1995). Additional international meetings and seminars on these issues were attended by WCCD members.

c) Financial and other contributions:

Major funding for the WCCD's work was received from governments of Canada (through CIDA), Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland. Financial contributions were also made by the governments of Ecuador, Greece, Indonesia, the Sultanate of Oman and the Philippines. Institutions and foundations such as the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), the Alexander S. Onassis Benefit Foundation (Greece), the Organization for Co-operation and Development (OIKOS), (Portugal), and the Inter-American Development Bank, also granted financial assistance to the WCCD's work.

Moreover, the governments of Sweden, Costa Rica, Philippines, the Sultanate of Oman, Japan and South Africa contributed to the work of the Commission by covering the costs of the regional consultations and working meetings hosted in their respective countries. The United Nations also provided facilities for the Commission's meeting at its New York Headquarters in March 1995.

d) Intellectual contributions:

In addition to the wealth of information and opinions received at the Commission's regional consultations and special meetings, some 62 specially commissioned papers and studies helped it explore areas which had only been partially covered by their work. In addition, various UNESCO department offices have contributed a substantial number of studies, briefs and research papers.

### III THE COMMISSION **Its Members**

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*President:*

Javier PEREZ DE CUELLAR (Peru), former Secretary-General of the United Nations.

*Honorary Members:*

Crown Prince El Hassan Bin TALAL (Jordan).

AUNG SAN Suu Kyi (Myanmar), Nobel Prize for Peace 1991.

Claude LEVI-STRAUSS (France), Anthropologist and writer, Member of the Académie Française.

Ilya PRIGOGINE (Belgium), Nobel Prize for Chemistry 1977.

Derek WALCOTT (United States), Nobel Prize for Literature 1992.

Elie WIESEL (United States), Novelist and Essayist, Nobel Prize for Peace 1986.

*Members:*

Lourdes ARIZPE (Mexico), Anthropologist, former President of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (*resigned in July 1994 on her appointment as Assistant Director-General for Culture at UNESCO*).

Yoro K FALL (Senegal), Historian, Professor and Head of the Department of History at the University Cheikh Anta Diop (Dakar).

Kurt FURGLER (Switzerland), Lawyer and Economist, former President of the Swiss Confederation, former Member of the Government (Federal Council).

Celso FURTADO (Brazil), Economist, former Minister of Planning, former Minister of Culture.

Niki GOULANDRIS (Greece), Expert in ecology and cultural issues, Vice-President of the Goulandris Museum, former Deputy Minister for Social Services.

Keith GRIFFIN (United Kingdom), Professor of Economics at the University of California at Riverside, Consultant to UNDP on the *Human Development Report*.

Mahbub ul HAQ (Pakistan), former Minister of Finance, of Planning and Development, of Commerce and Economic Affairs, Special Adviser to the Administrator of the UNDP.

Elizabeth JELIN (Argentina), Sociologist, Senior Researcher at the University of Buenos Aires.

Angeline KAMBA (Zimbabwe), Public Service Commissioner, former Director of the National Archive.

Ole-Henrik MAGGA (Norway), Linguist, President of the Sami Parliament, Expert in Sami culture.

Nikita MIKHALKOV (Russian Federation), film director, "Gold Lion" Prize at the Venice Biennale 1991; 1995 Oscar Academy Award for best foreign film, President of the Cultural Foundation of the Russian Federation.

Chic NAKANE (Japan), Social anthropologist, President of the Shibusawa Foundation for Ethnological Studies, President of the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO.

Leila TAKLA (Egypt), Lawyer, former President of the Committee of Foreign Affairs of the Egyptian Parliament.

*Ex-officio Observers:*

Luis Bernardo HONWANA (Mozambique), former Minister of Culture.

Mr Sitakant MAHAPATRA (India), Secretary, Department of Culture, Government of India, Chairman of the Intergovernmental Committee of the World Decade for Cultural Development.

## IV THE COMMISSION'S INTERNATIONAL AGENDA **Its Recommendations**

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The International Agenda includes the major recommendations that the World Commission has adopted at the end of its three-year work.

The aims of the International Agenda are threefold: provide a permanent vehicle through which issues of culture and development are analysed at the international level; initiate a process in which national principles and procedures can be extended to the global arena; and create a forum where an international consensus on central issues related to culture and development can be achieved.

The WCCD's recommendations are the following:

- **Publication** of an independent annual report on culture and development as a vehicle for exploring, clarifying and updating key world issues. The report would among other things:

- survey recent trends in culture and development;
- highlight good practices at local, national and international levels, as well as expose bad practices and unacceptable behaviour;
- monitor events affecting the state of cultures worldwide.

- **Preparation of new culturally-sensitive development strategies** to fully take into account the human factor of development.

The nature of conflicts is changing. Of the 82 conflicts over the last three years, 79 were within nations. The underlying cause of many such conflicts is the lack of development that results in human despair and anger. In some countries, it is the wrong models of development that favour some income or ethnic groups at the expense of others.

The Commission therefore recommends, in particular:

- that an early warning system be developed to alert the United Nations of impending crisis situations within nations so that preventive diplomacy and preventive action can be undertaken in time;
- that the U.N agencies take the lead in assisting countries in formulating new human development strategies that preserve and enrich their cultural values and ethnic heritage, rather than destroy them.

- **International Mobilization of Cultural Heritage Volunteers.**

The Commission, observing the discrepancy between the ends and means of heritage conservation throughout the world, recommends that international efforts be made to mobilize the goodwill of volunteers of all ages to work as "Cultural Heritage Volunteers" under professional guidance and alongside professional staff. The task of organizing this new effort should be entrusted to the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) and should start if possible during 1996.

This effort should give priority to the preservation of the most threatened forms of human heritage: deteriorating monuments, artifacts, books, disappearing languages and tradition know-how in a variety of disciplines, to name just a few.

● **An International Plan for Gender Equality.**

While the Commission strongly endorses the Platform of Action for Women's empowerment adopted recently at the Beijing UN Conference on Women, it feels that political advocacy for women should be carried out constantly, not only periodically at international gatherings.

With that in view, the Commission recommends in particular:

- the establishment of a permanent high-level United Nations agency for Women's Advancement to ensure the swift implementation of gender-equality policies;
- the setting of a concrete timetable for the countries that have not yet signed or ratify without reservations the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) to do so before the year 2000;
- the preparation by specialized United Nations agencies of an international plan to strengthen women's strategies for participation in the cultural, economic and political fields.

● **Implementation of policies designed to enhance access, diversity and competition of the international media system.**

The Commission recommends an active policy to promote competition, access and diversity of expression amongst the media globally, analogous to policies that exist at the national level. Independent, appropriately funded public service as well as community broadcasting institutions are essential to the functioning of the media in a democratic society.

With that in mind, the Commission recommends:  
the undertaking by U.N. agencies of two feasibility studies:

- *the first* would focus on the possibility of establishing alternative services, operating at the international level, that would cater for the needs of all peoples and audiences. An examination of the range of viable financing approaches would be central to this study;
- the second would consider the best ways to favour a competitive and equitable media environment internationally. To foster international co-operation in this regard, the need for a worldwide clearing house on national media and broadcasting laws should be considered. The two studies should be completed within one year of being commissioned.

● **Media rights and self-regulation.**

Standards of decency, respect for others and self-restraint vary from country to country, and from one period to another. While all forms of censorship must be avoided, nowhere is freedom unqualified or allowed to operate regardless of consequences. What is true nationally should be true internationally as well.

The Commission therefore recommends that:

- a global debate be promoted to create a better understanding and coordination of national efforts. This may eventually lead to some form of self-regulation by media professionals, that protects in particular young audiences from images of gratuitous

violence, human degradation and sexual exploitation, while respecting freedom of expression.

- an international forum be created to reflect on media violence and pornography, whether in TV programs, videos, or interactive games or services. International co-operation would draw on a range of national initiatives.

### ● **Protection of cultural rights as human rights,**

Even though massive breaches of human rights have often been motivated by cultural considerations, culturally persecuted individuals and groups have not found adequate recourse in the existing framework of human rights protection.

With that in mind, the Commission recommends that :

- an inventory of cultural rights that are not protected by existing international instruments be drawn up. This would enable the world community to enumerate and clarify existing standards of international law concerning the protection of cultural rights;
- an International Code of Conduct on Culture be subsequently drafted so as to provide the basis for consideration and action in cases of blatant violations of cultural rights. The Code or its provisions could be made part of the "Draft Code of Crimes against the Peace and Security of Mankind" now under consideration;
- the possibility of the establishment of an independent International Office of an Ombudsperson for Cultural Rights be ultimately considered to negotiate the peaceful settlement of cultural rights - related disputes.

### ● **The implementation of global ethics in global governance.**

The Commission believes that the real basis of a global ethics is a common morality. The principles of democracy, transparency, accountability and human rights should be universal, not selective.

It is in this spirit that the Commission urges in particular that:

- greater democracy in global governance be considered - including the decision-making process of G-7. This is an inevitable development since democracy is rarely so obliging as to stop at national borders. At the same time, demands for democracy in international institutions are not very convincing if the country concerned does not practice democracy at home.
- respect for human rights not be expected only from poor nations; rich nations must set an example, particularly by respecting the rights of their own minorities and immigrant population.
- the rich nations be prepared to open their economies and to undertake structural adjustments as they are eager to press poor countries to do so.

### ● **A people-centered United Nations.**

Fifty years ago, the United Nations was created in the name of "We, the People". Today, however, it is primarily the Member States' governments that run the world body.

The Commission feels that the time has come for representatives of the civil society - NGOs, private foundations, indigenous peoples and cultural minorities - to name a

few - to have a stronger voice in the United Nations dealing with such global interlinked issues as peace, culture, poverty, environment and/or gender equality.

That is why the Commission recommends that:

- the criteria for NGOs accreditation to the United Nations be reviewed as to ensure the widest possible participation of civil society or organizations;
- a permanent World Forum composed of all accredited NGOs to the United Nations be setup to offer its views on global key issues. The international community has already accepted the presence of parallel NGO fora at all major United Nations conferences and summits. It is only logical that this *ad hoc* presence become a permanent one;
- a United Nations World People's Assembly be established. Composed of representatives of the national civil society organisations, this body would run in parallel with the existing UN General Assembly. Such a two-chamber system would ensure that the voice of the people is heard at all times.

- **A Global Summit on Culture and Development to finalize preparatory reflection** on major issues relating to culture and development.

Such a Summit should make a departure from past practices in that it would bring together not only Heads of State and governments, but also the most eminent thinkers, intellectuals, artists and opinion-makers in the global community, so that there is a rich interaction between all sections of society.