

of the extent and degree of poverty; equally important, the poor are aware of the extent and degree of wealth. This awareness is a recent development in our history, and provides the main basis for the uniqueness of today's development problem. As communications become even more efficient, the awareness will generate even more acute and imperative pressures.

A third and related factor is the increasing public concern about poverty, among both the affluent and the poor, and the growing reluctance to accept this condition as inevitable. Not until the twentieth century has there been a demand for comprehensive public policies, both national and international, to eliminate general poverty. There has been a long history of private and religious philanthropies devoted to the alleviation of misery. Examples can also be found in the history of most countries of public welfare directed to the relief of some of the worst cases of hardship. But until this century, and particularly since 1945, there has been no assumption by society in general, acting through governments, of a responsibility for the elimination of the widespread *conditions* of poverty.

A fourth factor is that, for the first time in the history of the world, the accumulated wealth and technology of the affluent societies is sufficient to make possible the eradication of widespread endemic poverty in the world. The Report of the Commission on International Development reveals quite clearly that, on any historical comparison, the progress of the last two decades has been remarkable. The Report asks: "... can the majority of the developing countries achieve self-sustaining growth by the end of the century? For us, the answer is clearly yes." The affluent can no longer say that it is futile or even self-defeating to try to eliminate poverty. It will still be difficult; it may take several decades; and there is no guarantee of success or of the consequences of success; but the eradication of poverty now seems clearly attainable.

Development assistance can provide only a relatively small proportion of the total resources required by the developing countries. The people of these countries have accepted the primary responsibility for their own development and provide most of the resources required. They must set their own economic and social objectives, chart the main direction and dynamics of their growth, and accept the economic sacrifices, changes in their society, and self-discipline that will be required. Development assistance can provide the extra margin of support that will enable their sacrifices to be tolerable, and that will supplement their own resources with the particular skills, experience, equipment and materials that are limited within their own economies but that are essential to the continuation of their development progress.