

I don't want to give the impression that I don't take seriously the global projections contained in the various major global studies which have been published over the last 10 years. There has been a general consistency in their findings. From Jay Forrester's Global Study on World Dynamics and the Limits to Growth Report for the Club of Rome in the early 70s to the recent Global 2000 Report to the President of the USA, the message has been clear. One can argue about techniques and methodology, but on questions related to population projections, pressure on the environment, food and energy supplies, these studies point to a number of very disturbing trends which must be taken seriously. Two points in particular can be drawn from these studies -- that the cumulative impact of economic, population and environmental pressures will hit the developing world the hardest and secondly, that the growing linkages and interdependencies between North and South mean that no country in the North can hope to isolate itself from these growing disturbances. North and South are firmly intertwined; our destiny and that of the South is interlinked.

I also don't want to give the impression that I entirely disagree with the optimist school. In parts of the North, we may be entering a new era as significant in its own way as the earlier industrial revolution. I would agree with the optimists that the new technologies which characterize this era have the potential to solve many of our problems, both in the North and in the South.

But the new technologies will, on the other hand, have a significant impact on the structure of employment and production in the North which will have a spill-over effect on the South. The impact on the use of the new information technologies and the so-called "smart machines" of tomorrow still remain an unknown quantity. Some estimates indicate that the "factory of the future" may require 65 to 75% less work-force by the year 2000. One important European car manufacturer believes that industrial robots will slash labour requirements by 90% over the next 10 years.

There's a risk that the international structural adjustment process which has favoured the movement of labour-intensive and other industries from the developed to the developing world may be reversed. For example, certain manufacturing processes may no longer be able to be performed more economically in developing countries. This promise of long-term structural adjustment has provided a