

The progress achieved by these countries should not, however, lead us to complacency about the development process; poverty and human misery remain at intolerable levels in our global village and must be the focus of concerted and concentrated attention. Those countries with lower growth rates must be helped to catch up. Major issues related to financial resources, food and agricultural development, industrialization, energy, market access, transport and technology transfer remain unresolved particularly in respect of the poorer countries. But the successes achieved demonstrate clearly, we believe, that our international system, in spite of its need for reform, is evolving and can accommodate change. Many of the issues to be addressed in this Conference are in fact by-products of success. We should be encouraged that we are dealing, in these cases, not with problems of stagnation but with the adjustments required because of a dynamic process of change and the shifting structural base of the international economy.

In short, Mr./Madam Chairman, I believe we should view the essential task before this Conference not as one of attempting futilely to turn back the tides of history, not as one of attempting vainly to preserve privilege or advantage, but rather in the positive spirit of how we can work better together for mutual benefit. We are not engaged in a zero-sum game, where someone's gain represents another's loss. Rather, we should all see ourselves as members of an interdependent family of nations where each of us has a growing capacity to help each other, or to harm each other. Both aspects have been demonstrated in recent years, with inflation, unemployment, industrial slack, exchange rate fluctuations and financial crises besetting many of our economies, there has been a natural tendency for governments in both developed and developing countries to seek short-term national answers to immediate serious problems. We sometimes forget that in our world where interdependence is an increasing fact of life, and not just a slogan, the economic interrelationships are becoming so strong that one country cannot solve its basic problems in isolation from the international community. Let us, through this Conference, attempt to restore the longer-term perspective of an interdependent community of nations based on enlightened self-interest.

UNCTAD meets appropriately for the second time in Asia; when this Conference met in Delhi, just over a decade ago, the process of articulating development issues had just begun. Today, we meet in Manila when the process of substantive negotiation has, in reality, just begun. UNCTAD's I, II and III were instrumental in leading the world community to a definition of goals and objectives for the international development process. The proposals for