

---

try should come as no surprise to any of us. All nations of our world have different natural resources, population sizes, geographical locations, territorial areas, productive capacities, structures of society and national ideals. We recognize at least some of these distinctions in the battery of names that has become part of the international jargon — the "least-developed", the "island developing", the "landlocked", the "MSAs", the "MDCs", the "NICs", the "oil-exporting", and so on.

Of these, the middle- and upper-middle-income countries have in recent years enjoyed the greatest economic success. They have been experiencing increase in real gross national product and *per capita* GNP at considerably faster rates than the developed countries. Some have been highly industrialized, with a growing share of the international production and trade in manufactures as well as commodities. The income range of some developing countries now surpasses that of some so-called "developed" countries. The "futurists" and "think-tankers" like to project these trends into the future. It has been estimated that, over the next two decades, developing countries, with a population of some 500 million persons, will meet all the criteria for being classified as developed, and that many others will be moving along the same path. Whether or not we agree with such terminologies, the entire international community should take some satisfaction from the trends.

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, 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 interrelations are becoming so strong that

---