

In reference to his own experience in Tanzania, President Nyerere has also said, "to plan is to choose". Here, within UNCTAD, and in our discussions on development in all institutions, choice is required, not only in terms of priorities but in the instruments, trade, financial or administrative, chosen to deal with change. Choice is required in the way we combine these instruments and in the manner in which we deal with their intended consequences and with the sometimes serious side-effects they may produce on growth or distribution.

Given the inevitability of change and the possibility of choice, should we be encouraged or discouraged by our record to date? There are grounds for being both, without question there has been progress. The past 25 years has, in historical terms, been a period of unprecedented growth for the developing countries, measured by both their gross domestic products and their per capita incomes. Standards of housing, education, health, nutrition, life expectancy have all climbed. It would be as foolish to ignore these signs of change as it would be to describe them as adequate. The challenges remain all the greater because we are moving.

That rates of change and economic progress vary significantly from country to country should come as no surprise to any of us. Each nation of our world has different natural resources, population sizes, geographic locations, territorial areas, productive capacities, structures of society and national ideals. We recognize at least some of these distinctions in the battery of names which has become part of the international jargon -- the least-developed, the island developing, the land-locked, the MSA's, the MDC's, the NIC's\*, 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 increases in real GNP 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.

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\*The most seriously affected, the middle-income developing, the newly industrialized country. .../3