

and early 1980s. Their attempts in the United Nations, through an essentially political process, to obtain changes in that system have not had the desired results, as shown by the failure to launch global negotiations. It is in a way comprehensible that some developed countries, whose influence in those institutions has been paramount, should find this shift difficult to accept and should tend to favour retaining the existing institutional structures and decision-making machinery as they are.

It is easy to criticize United Nations economic institutions because such institutions often fall short of their high aims. Conflicting national interests in a time of flux and change make such a falling short virtually inevitable. Nevertheless, multilateral co-operation has already achieved much, most of it taken for granted as soon as it is achieved. In an economically interdependent world where the growth and stability of the North is intertwined with accelerated development of the South, it is hard to see how international economic problems can be solved, except through intensified multilateral co-operation. Despite the difficulties involved in such co-operation, it is short-sighted to turn away from the concept of multilateralism and the institutions which embody it.

There is a distinction to be made between United Nations operational activities in the field of development at the national level where much is being achieved, and activities at the *global* level, in trade, money and finance, for example, where there is a high degree of frustration.

The support provided by the United Nations system for development, excluding the World Bank, now amounts to over \$2 billion a year. High priority is given to the low-income countries with particular attention to the problems of the poorest of the poor. In a period of restricted resources, continuous efforts are being made to ensure more effective operational co-operation within the United Nations system.

It should be mentioned that in the domain of "global" issues, the "achievements" of the Organization cannot be measured simply in terms of the number of treaties and agreements negotiated and signed. Of course, there have been many of these. But many of the contributions of the United Nations are in less tangible forms: for example, the extent to which the United Nations has succeeded in raising global consciousness on key issues, the critical situation in Africa being a case in point, or in shaping the framework of international debates on major problems. For instance, I have consistently stressed the importance of finding solutions to the acute debt problem that go beyond the short term and that take into account the need to ensure growth in the export earnings of developing countries. It is, similarly, in no small measure due to the discussions on the International Development Strategy that the world community today gives a high priority to the cause of development which, in its simplest form, must be understood to mean the raising of the living standards of the vast majority of mankind in this interdependent world, and in a manner that benefits the global economy as a whole.

This aspect of the work of the United Nations has recently met with some doubts and criticisms. These need to be faced. Where substantive issues are raised, they need to be adequately debated, and misunderstandings dispelled. Otherwise, the normal functioning of important organs of the United Nations will be impaired. One of these, for example, relates to the complex issue of the relative roles accorded in United Nations discussions to Governments and to the private sector.

Another matter frequently raised is the extent to which issues that are essentially economic and technical are politicized in the United Nations. I have mentioned one aspect of

this problem earlier in this report. There is another aspect. In the present world few issues in human affairs can be regarded as completely unpolitical. Nevertheless, the extent to which economic issues are politicized in the United Nations should also be understood as a reflection of the frustrations which developing countries feel in their long attempt to reshape their economic destiny. The absence of global policy-makers—i.e., politics in the best sense—to meet this need is also a factor in this frustration. There is an additional factor: many Governments feel that only when economic issues are politicized will they attract the attention of the highest level of decision makers. And many economic issues are so complex that only decisions at the highest levels can make any significant impact in the current situation.

The difficulties which the community of nations experiences in strengthening economic co-operation in the United Nations stem from a number of causes. A new consensus on economic issues in the light of world economic and political realities has not yet emerged. There is disagreement on the cause of the trouble as well as on what to do about it. Ideological differences on economic problems further complicate the issue. But the absence of a consensus, which will take time to emerge, need not prevent progress in critical areas.

These are not difficulties which can be ignored or willed away. The world is not just one country or one point of view. If we are serious about the future, this is the context in which we need to seek practical solutions to both short-term and long-term problems. Patience, perception and persistence are more relevant to this search than relentless criticism whether from one side or another. Human solidarity demands these qualities. If we do not address current economic problems seriously and urgently, we will not be able to confine them to the economic sphere alone. In our world of growing economic interdependence, impoverished people faced perpetually with a variety of overwhelming economic and social crises constitute not only a challenge to international conscience, but a threat to international stability as well.

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Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is one of the basic principles of the United Nations. A human rights philosophy based on the concept of an international rule of law pervades the Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the codifying instruments adopted by the United Nations since its establishment. These instruments are the yardstick for measuring regard or disregard for human rights.

In this area, too, we constantly encounter trenchant criticism. I welcome such criticism in the hope that it will spur everyone, including the critics, on to a more serious assessment of the importance—and the difficulty—of reducing injustice in an unjust world, of promoting development in a world divided between rich and poor, and of instilling the virtues of mercy and compassion into people many of whom are fighting—or believe they are fighting—for their lives.

I spend much of my time, sometimes with encouraging results, on human rights and humanitarian problems, which I regard as uniquely important. Despite the existence of definitive norms developed within the United Nations, perceptions differ greatly. One person's freedom fighter is another person's terrorist; one's champion of human rights is another's subversive; one's plaintiff is another's criminal. The reality is that many are dispossessed, many confined, many tortured and many starve. This is the world we have to deal with.

In the field of human rights, gross violations, such as the system of *apartheid*, are obviously the first priority for the