

Second, we must avoid impatience and the search for instant perfection. Democracies which are developing will not be perfect from day one. Human rights which are new will not be adhered to at the outset with the rigour we would all like. That does not mean we develop excuses or ignore abuses. It simply means we must be sensible in our expectations, and realistic in our demands.

Our own achievements were secured over centuries. We cannot ask others to do in days what we have done over decades. And we must always bear in mind that democracy is developing here too, that none of us is perfect and that all of us are prey to poverty, intolerance, propaganda and prejudice.

Third, we must move beyond rhetoric. It is easy to be a cheerleader or a critic. It is more difficult to be a companion or a friend. When countries choose to move towards options we have championed, we must offer them practical, potent help in practising what we have so long preached.

But there is another issue too, and that is the question of what assistance we should offer. I think it is now recognized that societies which are not democratic are unlikely to become developed. But the opposite is also true. Societies which are underdeveloped are unlikely to become democratic. We must act accordingly.

That means we cannot demand democracy and deny development. It means we cannot expect people to cherish ballots when their stomachs are empty. Effective development assistance is far more valuable in promoting democracy and human rights than any admonition from the West. Democracy is not secured by building parliament buildings or observing polling booths. Democracy and human rights require a foundation of belief and a foundation of development.

So the tools of development are also the tools of democracy and human rights. Teaching people to read helps them develop but it is also a step towards democracy. Making people productive fights poverty, but it is also a step towards other human rights. Helping women in development helps families become more prosperous and makes societies more just, but it also deflects prejudice and inequality.

Fourth, we must recognize the wide variety of factors required to make democratic systems work. Democracies are based on the rule of law -- fairly and justly applied. The establishment of legal institutions and processes is crucial to democratic development and the West can assist.