

QUESTION 1 (cont'd)

The Quality of Life

Many people in the world, perhaps even a majority, find the quality of their lives to be deteriorating. This is particularly true of certain groups - women, the elderly, children, the handicapped, rural inhabitants - who, for a variety of reasons, are more adversely affected than other groups by general conditions of decline.

Some of the factors that are contributing to the decline in the quality of many persons' lives are the following:

economy: disparities are increasing between people in rich and poor nations and between the rich and the poor in the same nation. Too many people are illiterate, unemployed or underemployed, alienated, and insecure.

poverty: the majority of people in developing nations are becoming poorer; even in industrialized nations, inflation impoverishes more and more people.

population: a rapidly growing population places stress on the nation and the individual; in some cases it is the older person, in others the young, for whom the society is unable to provide adequate services and opportunities.

environment: many people must cope with poor air, water, soil; others face scarcities of food, fuel, and materials - the price of a degraded ecosystem.

security: far too many people are victims or live in fear of violence, from individuals, from groups within their country, from other countries.

human rights: as tensions increase, the basic human rights of more and more people are undermined, constrained, and violated.

For too many men, women and children, their declining quality of life is an obstacle to their development as persons.