



General Assembly

Distr.: General
20 August 2004

Original: English

Fifty-ninth session

Item 42 of the provisional agenda*

The role of the United Nations in promoting a new global human order

Letter dated 18 August 2004 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Guyana to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon the instructions of my Government, I have the honour to submit herewith Guyana's response to operative paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 57/12 on the role of the United Nations in promoting a New Global Human Order (see annex). I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under item 42 of the provisional agenda of the fifty-ninth regular session.

(Signed) George Talbot
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* A/59/150.

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Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

Memorandum

**THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN PROMOTING
A NEW GLOBAL HUMAN ORDER**

I. Introduction

The international community faces new challenges in preventing conflict and eradicating poverty, as well as promoting economic stability, economic growth with equity and sustainable development. In response, it has been pursued a number of important initiatives aimed at addressing issues such as debt reduction, humanitarian relief and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. These efforts have served to underline the importance of multilateral approaches in addressing global problems.

Despite the importance of these efforts, there is a tendency for issues to be addressed in a somewhat disjointed manner. This has often led to a situation in which international organisations are assigned new roles and responsibilities without the requisite resources to carry out such responsibilities. In addition, these trends have in some cases contributed to the side-lining of the United Nations and have provoked contentious debates about ownership, democratic accountability, and the principle of universality. The situation is further compounded by the phenomenon of globalization which has been the driving force behind the structural transformation of the global economy and the movement away from the traditional conception of sovereignty to new forms of governance that have posed difficult challenges for nation states.

All of this emphasises the need for the adoption of an overarching philosophy of development designed to integrate within a common framework the various initiatives on which the international community has embarked in recent years.

II. The Context and Rationale of the New Global Human Order

The call for a New Global Human Order is intended to restore development to the centre of the international agenda and to promote multilateral approaches to the solution of global problems through the adoption of a holistic framework of development. This framework focuses on integrating the economic, environmental, social, cultural and political aspects of development and highlighting its multidimensional character in order to realise the goals enshrined in the United Nations Charter. It emphasises the importance of fairer global rules designed to expand the policy space assigned to developing countries in the implementation of development strategies that fully address the terms of their integration into the global economy. The adoption of a holistic framework of development could also effectively address the disruptions caused by the negative impact of the on-going structural transformation in the global economy.

The challenge for many developing countries is to strengthen their capacity to participate in the global economy on terms that safeguard their economic, social and cultural objectives and the development of democratic systems of governance. A number of studies generated by the UNDP Human Development Reports have emphasised the two-way relationship between human development and economic growth. These studies suggest that economic growth advances human development when such growth is sustainable. On the other hand, higher levels of human development generate higher rates of economic growth as healthier and more educated people contribute to sustainable economic performance through increased productivity. It is in this context that the call for a New Global Human Order is advocated based on the recognition that development is a multi-dimensional phenomenon which can only be truly realised in an integrated and holistic framework.

The degree to which societies can develop the capabilities to effectively manage far-reaching economic, social, technological and environmental transformations will depend upon the existence and acceptance of a strong commitment to global governance. The pursuit of bilateral, regional and other cooperative arrangements among States in some specific areas, while desirable, is not sufficient to tackle the challenges facing the international community. Multilateralism will need to be strengthened to respond to these challenges. In these circumstances, the United Nations remains the appropriate institution for dealing with these issues in a holistic and integrated manner.

III. Objectives of the Proposal for a New Global Human Order

The proposal for a New Global Human Order seeks to build a strong political consensus and a broad-based global partnership to combat poverty and promote economic security for all the world's peoples. These must be based on a long-term integrated approach to development that takes full account of how governments, markets and societies interact in order to provide optimum development results.

Political commitment on the part of the international community is an essential prerequisite to successfully address the challenges of global poverty, inequality and the promotion of genuine human development. The forging of an enlightened international partnership involving all relevant actors, including individual member states, the international community, the private sector and non-governmental organisations, is critical to this process. Such a partnership should seek to build on the important work done by the United Nations in the field of development, including the Millennium Development Goals and the outcomes emanating from the series of UN Conferences held during and after the 1990s, and, more importantly, to provide new impetus for the implementation of the many developmental initiatives undertaken under the auspices of the United Nations. To this end, the proposal for a New Global Human Order envisages the co-ordination by the United Nations of the efforts leading to a new global partnership for effective action. This effort must be people-centred, and should aim to promote the social and economic welfare of the peoples of the world. It should also sensitize the international community to the compelling need to focus not merely on financial and economic factors but also on moral and social imperatives that place people's livelihood at the centre of the development effort.

A broad international consensus for development and a co-ordinated international effort are key to the global endeavour to eradicate poverty and hunger in our lifetime. The proposal of a New Global

Human Order aims to provide an over-arching holistic framework that encompasses all the pillars upon which development must be founded. It seeks to link issues of vital importance to the developing world with the concerns in the developed countries and to advance creative solutions to common problems. It emphasises the pursuit of collective self-interest in dealing with the key economic and social issues faced by all peoples. It calls for a focus on changing structures both at the national and global levels to make them compatible with the goal of promoting growth with equity, with an increased emphasis on the empowerment of people so that they can make informed choices and participate effectively in the decision-making process.

IV. Elements of a Framework for the New Global Human Order

The framework focuses on strengthening multilateral development cooperation, particularly the role of the United Nations, which is driven by the principles set out in the United Nations Charter and the international instruments and treaties that have been promulgated since 1945. The framework advocates fulfilling the mandate laid out in the United Nations Charter of promoting social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. In this endeavour, greater emphasis will need to be placed on the forging of a new consensus premised on the adoption of a holistic approach to socio-economic development. This should be based on a number of fundamental elements, namely:

- A commitment to the promotion of a holistic approach to development based on the principle of equity.
- The development of equitable north-south representation in inter-governmental fora.
- The establishment of a balanced relationship between the role of the state and markets with the objective of ensuring optimum development outcomes.
- The development of suitable arrangements for the effective participation of governments, the private sector and civil society in multilateral development cooperation.
- Equity and justice should be the hallmark of international relations. In pursuit of this goal, special emphasis should be placed on accelerated development of the developing countries in order to reduce the growing inequality between developed and developing countries. In this context, programmes for the eradication of poverty should be supported by the international community through provision of adequate resources. The policy and institutional framework sanctioned by the international community should also accommodate the autonomy of national governments to determine their own development path.
- Debt reduction and poverty alleviation programmes should not be viewed as 'trade-offs' with investment and growth. A high rate of economic growth should be a principal goal for all developing countries based on the development of the requisite human resources. This should be balanced by taking full account of the structural differences between and

within sectors, and the various social segments of the population, and the need to preserve the ecological base of the economy.

- Reform of the international financial architecture should address the need for new resources for development and for greater transparency and collaboration between borrowers and lenders. This should include the development of a closer working relationship between the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organisation and the United Nations General Assembly and ECOSOC.
- Urgent steps should be taken to increase the level of Official Development Assistance to fulfil the United Nations target of 0.7 percent of the GNP of the developed countries which should be complemented by innovative approaches to financing.
- Urgent attention should be given to the need for a rapid and definitive resolution of the debt problem facing many developing countries.
- Labour should not be treated as if it were a commodity. The special character of human resources must be recognised in the process of production, and adequate attention should be given to the protection of vulnerable groups from discrimination and poverty; reduction in wage differentials; and the provision of job security and productivity-enhancing motivation to the labour force.
- The opening of markets and the provision improved access of developed countries' markets to the exports of developing countries should be emphasised.
- Negotiations on trade and development should take account of the need to promote equity, social welfare and human development.
- Strengthening the role of the State as the principal arbiter in the process of development and guaranteeing access of its citizens to social services, including health and education. A number of studies have demonstrated that the provision of basic health and education constitutes the most decisive factor in generating equity and improved livelihood.

The promotion of the New Global Human Order is premised on the assumption that, given the universal character of the United Nations, its capabilities in the field of economic and social development must be strengthened. This includes:

- Strengthening of capacity of the United Nations in the development field which will require that the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organisation be brought into a closer working relationship with the United Nations General Assembly and ECOSOC. The United Nations should be the main forum for global policy-making. The existing institutional framework and arrangements for economic cooperation are neither adaptive to the new forms of global economic interdependence, nor to the effective

integration of the developing countries into the international economy. A strengthening of the multilateral process is not only essential for the sharing of the benefits of global prosperity but also of economic, financial, and political responsibilities. Experience has clearly demonstrated that multilateralism is a better guarantee of global prosperity than bilateralism.

- The development of a “deprivational index” as advocated by Anand and Sen (1997) that concentrates exclusively on the deprived and impoverished to complement the UNDP Human Development Index should be pursued and operationalised. Similarly, the notion of a ‘Commitment to Development Index (CDI) espoused in the 2003 UNDP Human Development Report should also be adopted by the international community.
- Financial rules and regulations for the global economy should be formulated in a manner that fully addresses the needs of developing countries in an economic environment that establishes an appropriate balance between rights, equity and efficiency.
- Greater support for the protection of the environment and enhancement of ecological conditions in developing countries should be promoted through capacity building and the implementation of effective environmental management strategies at the national, regional and global levels.

Implicit in the call for the New Global Human Order is the view that the approach taken so far in discussions on reshaping the world economy has not only neglected a number of fundamental issues as outlined above, but has also become somewhat disjointed and could therefore benefit from a more integrated focus. The principal benefit of the New Global Human Order is that it offers policy makers from developed and developing countries a philosophical basis for reshaping the international economic system in a manner that emphasises development and human welfare as a central imperative.

August 2004
