

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2000

**Human rights and
human development**

**Any society committed
to improving the lives
of its people must also
be committed to full
and equal rights for all.**

FREEDOM FROM DISCRIMINATION

FREEDOM FROM FEAR

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

FREEDOM FROM WANT

FREEDOM TO DEVELOP AND REALIZE ONE'S HUMAN POTENTIAL

FREEDOM FROM INJUSTICE AND VIOLATIONS OF THE RULE OF LAW

FREEDOM FOR DECENT WORK - WITHOUT EXPLOITATION

Foreword

Support for human rights has always been integral to the mission of the United Nations, embodied in both the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. But throughout the cold war serious discussion of the concept as it relates to development was too often distorted by political rhetoric. Civil and political rights on the one hand and economic and social rights on the other were regarded not as two sides of the same coin but as competing visions for the world's future.

We have now moved beyond that confrontational discussion to a wider recognition that both sets of rights are inextricably linked. As Mary Robinson, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, often reminds us, the goal is to achieve all human rights—civil, cultural, economic, political and social—for all people. Access to basic education, health care, shelter and employment is as critical to human freedom as political and civil rights are. That is why the time is right for a report aimed at drawing out the complex relationship between human development and human rights.

As always, the result is a *Human Development Report* that is unapologetically independent and provocative. But it clearly underlines the fact that human rights are not, as has sometimes been argued, a reward of development. Rather, they are critical to achieving it. Only with political freedoms—the right for all men and women to participate equally in society—can people genuinely take advantage of economic freedoms. And the most important step towards generating the kind of economic growth needed to do that is the establishment of transparent, accountable and effective systems of institutions and laws.

Only when people feel they have a stake and a voice will they throw themselves wholeheartedly into development. Rights make human beings better economic actors.

And it is clearly not enough for countries simply to grant economic and social rights in theory alone. You cannot legislate good health and jobs. You need an economy strong enough to provide them—and for that you need people economically engaged. People will work because they enjoy the fruits of their labour: fair pay, education and health care for their families and so forth. They will build the wealth that allows them to be compensated. But if the rewards of their labour are denied them again, they will lose their motivation. So economic and social rights are both the incentive for, and the reward of, a strong economy.

That is why a broad vision of human rights must be entrenched to achieve sustainable human development. When adhered to in practice as well as in principle, the two concepts make up a self-reinforcing virtuous circle. Many countries have made enormous strides in human rights in recent years. Most have now ratified the core covenants and conventions on political, economic, social and cultural rights, and are struggling to implement them.

Yet the legal advance does not tell the whole truth: to be poor is still to be powerless and vulnerable. Life remains a torment for children in the teeming barrio of a developing country city, for refugees caught up in a conflict, for women in a society that still denies them equality and freedom—every day bringing physical and psychological threats. And still too many of the 1.2 billion people living on less than a dollar a day lack even the most basic

human security. So while the progress on human rights allowed by the end of the cold war marks a great breakthrough, for these people it is still just the thin end of the wedge. It has not yet affected the quality of their lives.

While the Report cites and examines many examples of egregious human rights violations across the world, it is not aimed at producing legalistic rankings of the worst offenders.

Instead, it is intended primarily to help promote practical action that puts a human rights-based approach to human development and poverty eradication firmly on the global agenda. I believe it has done so admirably, and I warmly congratulate its authors, particularly Richard Jolly, who has completed his last *Human Development Report*.

Mark Malloch Brown

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