

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE

by Jan Pronk

Shortly after the fall of the Berlin wall the then UN Secretary General, Boutros Boutros Galil, drew the attention to the need for a new paradigm in international policy making: there is no peace without development and there is no development without peace. It may sound as a truism. However, it had been ignored during the Cold War between East and West as well as during many years of lukewarm peace between North and South in the aftermath of decolonisation.

Mutual interests

The neglect of this truism had already become clear during the discussions about the conclusions presented by the Brandt Commission in the two reports *North-South: A Programme for Survival* (1980) and *Common Crisis: Cooperation for World Recovery* (1983). These reports dealt with issues concerning development, poverty and new relations between North and South, a new international economic order. They reflected a new philosophy: interdependence between nations, mutual dependencies resulting in a common interest of all nations, not only in order to establish recovery, but also to manage development and even to guarantee survival. The reports claimed that all nations shared a global responsibility for world social and economic development. A world public sector was advocated, parallel to orderly international market operations, in particular in energy, food, trade in general as well as in finance. This was complemented by the statement that there was a need for world institutional reforms. Would all this be possible? Yes, as Willy Brandt said in the preface to the report: 'One should not give up the hope that problems created by men can also be solved by men'.

This programme has not been implemented. Why not? Maybe the minds were not yet ripe. The confrontation between East West during the Cold War did not create a climate in favour of global cooperation. There was not yet a feeling of global communality.

There was a second reason as well. The world economic recession of the second half of the seventies and the eighties was not conducive to new approaches. Instead countries followed a pattern of adjustment to what was felt as the economic reality. This adjustment took place through expenditure cuts, rather than investments resulting in growth and development. This led to an economic

philosophy consisting of elements which were not in accordance with those proposed by the Brandt Commission: market liberalisation, deregulation, a smaller public sector and more reliance on unbridled market mechanisms.

In the second half of the eighties and in the nineties the world has changed drastically. There was the end of the Cold War, followed by a new phase of globalisation. The new chances for world peace after the Cold War were a big boost to world economic growth, benefiting both the US, the countries of the former Soviet Union as well the countries in Eastern and Western Europe. The economies of these countries were benefiting from a fast and intense globalisation following the opening of national borders. There was a new mutuality of peace and economic progress. Could it be extended towards developing countries as well?

Conflict and disaster

The conflict between the East and the West had geopolitical consequences. Both the East and the West had wanted to contain a possible extension of each other's sphere of influence in the Southern part of the world. Both had been in favour of keeping the status quo and had tried to prevent change within countries that might result in alliance hopping. Both had given political, economic and military or intelligence support to friendly regimes, irrespective whether these regimes were representing the interests of their own population. Some of these regimes were oppressing their citizens, violating human rights and reaping the fruits of progress for their own benefit. The end of the Cold War put an end to this. Change within countries was no longer prevented or obstructed by powers from outside. However, such change very often took place in a violent manner. Conflicts which already existed in many societies of the so-called then Third World, but which had been contained with the help of outside powers, re-emerged. The new civil wars were a serious blow to the chances for economic development. However, many of these conflicts were not purely political. They had social and economic roots as well. For this reason Boutros Boutros Galil rightly pleaded linking peace and development not only internationally, but also within countries.

So, instead of international conflicts in particular in the developing world there were more domestic conflicts, within countries. They were quite complex, due to the fact that in many nations people were attaching greater importance to the cultural (religious or ethnic) dimension of their identity, next to a social and economic (class) dimension. These tendencies led to new poverties: more exclusion than exploitation, less reversible. Poverty was no longer a form of collateral damage on the way to general economic progress, but calculated neglect, a built-in default in the global system.

Since then the mutuality of peace and development has been confirmed in numerous resolutions of the General Assembly of the United Nations and in other international declarations. However, in the same period we can count more violent conflicts within countries than before. Many developing countries have gone through a period of higher economic growth than in the two decades directly following decolonisation, but this economic growth has not resulted in less poverty. Still two billion people live below the poverty line, with no more than two dollars a day.

A second important new paradigm endorsed in the ninety nineties is the precautionary principle. Environmental pollution, the imminent depletion of natural resources, the loss of biodiversity and, last but not least, climate change gave rise to an awareness that we had to change our attitude. Policies aiming at high economic growth could endanger the lifeline between the earth and the people living on it. There was no room anymore for careless frivolity. Maintaining the carrying capacity of the earth required precaution.

Politicians, signing the UN Convention on Climate change, promised their citizens: *“we will take precautionary measures to anticipate, prevent or minimize the causes of climate change and mitigate its adverse effects. Where there are threats of serious and irreversible damage, lack of full scientific insights should not be used as a reason for postponing such measures”*. This was wise and forward looking indeed. Politicians made the promise: even if and when there is no full scientific proof, not hundred percent certainty, even if some scientific doubt is still legitimate, we as politicians commit ourselves and promise our citizens that we will not delay, that we will act, that we will not seek a pretext for postponement and non-action.

The promise has not been kept. Despite the fact that scientific insights have improved, despite an increased likelihood about ongoing global warming, melting snow and ice, rising sea levels, temperature extremes, changing rainfall patterns, severe droughts and a greater intensity of cyclones, economic activities have gone on without restrictions. Governments committed themselves to reduce Greenhouse gas emissions, but the emissions have increased since then.

Why have we not been more seriously tried to live up to these commitments? Why didn't we really address questions concerning the destiny of the earth, the needs of poor people and the risks confronting future generations? Was it a lack of imagination? Was it due to old-fashioned impotent machinery and procedures within the UN system? Was it scepticism, a lack of political will, a lack of insight into changed world conditions or a lack of capacity to translate new insights into a new approach? Have we fooled ourselves by believing that both

political conflicts as well as natural disasters are exceptions to the rule? It seems as if policy-makers still base their policies on the assumption that conflicts and disasters are not structural, that neither of these two phenomena is man-made, that both are exogenous to human behaviour. This assumption is nonsensical, of course. However, our policies have yet to be guided by the opposite assumption: that conflict is not an exception, but that it is inherent to development and that the depletion of the earth's capacity is the result of human activities. Or do we know all this, but have we in the meantime become obsessed by other dangers: threats to national security and the war against terrorism?

A paradigm dispute

Maybe all these reasons and motives have played a role. But I would like to offer another explanation. Maybe there is still lack of clarity about the paradigms themselves. There always has been disagreement about paradigms. Throughout history dominant paradigms have been contested. It helped sharpening convictions beyond a justification of interests. The paradigms of those in power are always different from the paradigms of the non-elite. When paradigm disputes turn into an ideological confrontation, conditions in society may become stifled, because groups draw back into their bulwarks. However, a straight and genuine paradigm dispute can help putting a clash between interest groups at a higher political level. It can help disarming powerful elites, undermining their self-justification, unravelling the case in favour of the status quo, by focusing on the longer term interest of society as a whole.

That is true for paradigm disputes both within nations and world wide. In international relations such a major dispute had taken place earlier, after the decolonisation in the sixties. There was a risk that the newly won independence of the young nation states would not be followed by a reasonable degree of political and economic autonomy. At the time the answer was a threefold new paradigm: self-reliance plus the fulfilment of basic human needs plus a new international economic order. Neither of the three became reality. Instead the world went through a period of neo-colonialism, widening gaps between rich and poor and a return to the old order. In the eighties this led to complete stagnation. The South was told to adjust to new realities set by the North. There was no international cooperation to address world problems such as mounting debt burdens, a deteriorating environment and increasing world poverty. All possible efforts were paralysed by the last convulsions of the Cold War between East and West. However, after the fall of the Wall another new paradigm for development cooperation emerged, again defined with the help of three concepts: democracy, eradication of poverty and sustainable development.

The end of the Cold War had meant that there was room for change everywhere. Change to the good: freedom, democracy, human rights and disarmament. These perspectives, together with the themes of precaution and peace and development, were brought together under one roof: sustainability. Sustainability meant: progress for the present generation in all respects and everywhere, without discrimination, but on the understanding that any next generation would be entitled to at least the same opportunities. Any living generation was obliged to use the resources at its disposal in such a way that these would be fully sustained or renewed for the benefit of the next generation. Optimism prevailed, a belief that the future could be shaped within the framework of a new and more just order and that choices could be made in an atmosphere of harmony.

The optimism did not last long. The world lacked the capacity to translate the new dream into reality. Unbridled globalisation of markets, together with an economic spirit characterised by greed and by the-sky-is-the-limit notions resulting from rapid technological innovation, blurred the commitment to sustainability. Conflicts within nations seemed to be unmanageable. And the erosion of the international public system, in particular after the US invasion in Iraq, following its self declared right to strike pre-emptively, weakened the capacity to bring about democracy, poverty eradication and sustainable development in conflict ridden countries.

Brandt revisited

The philosophy of the Brandt Report is still relevant. The need to base policies on a sense of global communality is even greater than before. However, the programme proposed in the report is partly overtaken by events, partly not sufficient to deal with the new challenges.

The analysis of the Brandt report is still adequate. A quote from the introduction by Willy Brandt may serve to illustrate this: “We are confronted, whether we like it or not, with more and more problems which affect mankind as a whole, so that solutions to these problems are inevitably internationalized. The globalization of dangers and challenges – war, chaos, and self-destruction – calls for a domestic policy which goes much beyond parochial or even national items. Yet this is happening at a snail’s pace. A rather defensive pragmatism still prevails, when what we need are new perspectives and bold leadership for the real interests of people and mankind. The ‘international community’ is still too cut off from the experience of ordinary people, and vice versa”. It could have been written today.

Brandt presented the second report of his commission under the title *Common Crisis*. The character of that crisis has changed. Unlike at the time of the publication of the Brandt Commission reports there is presently no more general world economic stagnation or a deficient world economic growth, no more the traditional North South divide that followed the decolonisation, no more a major ideological confrontation between a communist East and a capitalist West, leading to an arms race between the two blocks, blocking each form of global cooperation. Each of these three major issues could have been addressed and attenuated through international cooperation. Each of them impeded such cooperation. As a matter of fact the three crises no longer persist. There are others, that block international cooperation and that themselves should be on the agenda of international institutions.

The present crisis is not due to stagnating world economic growth, but the result of unbridled growth leading to ever greater imbalances and inequalities. Structural world economic and social inequality has increased and this has social, cultural and political ramifications. Many developing countries have become emerging economies or even major players. China is a major player in world finance, Brazil in trade, West Asia and some new oil producers in energy, India in finance, trade and investment. All these countries have become major importers of consumption goods, because of an increased purchasing power of their expanding middle classes.

The international market mechanism is thriving. International trade is blossoming. International energy markets presently seem to function quite efficiently. International financial markets are functioning globally, with less and less restrictions. This results in increased and quick access of more and more companies, everywhere, to short and long term capital, which is originating from more and more sources, anywhere. The conglomerates and the multinational banks merge and take over economic activities everywhere where they consider this profitable, sometimes in the form of aggressive buy outs. They find new ways to operate, as hedge funds and private equity funds. They cross borders as if these do not exist. As a matter of fact, they don't anymore, at least in economic terms. In economic terms borders do indeed not exist anymore. It means that the capacity to control and to institutionalize checks and balances has been eroded tremendously.

The new challenges thus can be described not only as new phenomena, for instance in the field of information technology, creating vast new opportunities, but also as greater risks and uncertainties. These economic uncertainties are compounded by others. As shown by Stern, the costs of inaction and postponement of action to address climate change will be unexpectedly high. Aids and other poverty diseases lead to huge social deficits in many countries,

which presently still seem to be underestimated, with irreversible consequences. In many societies globalisation and exclusion are leading to persistent feelings of injustice, inequality, neglect and alienation. These feelings are a source of increased instability, insecurity, conflict and violence. Such violence may lead to terrorism, a phenomenon which nowadays does not stop at borders, but has been globalised as well. And, finally, as recently was spelled out by Richard Holbrooke, there is the risk of blundering into a new World War. That risk has always existed, but it has been reduced by the existence of the United Nations with strong values, widely shared, strong institutions and well accepted procedures to manage international conflicts. Both the values, and the procedures and institutions have been eroded since '9/11' and since the intervention in Iraq at the beginning of the new millennium. International cooperation in the spirit of mutuality and communality, as advocated by the Brandt Commission, has become weaker rather than stronger. However, in the light of the new and greater risks and uncertainties such global cooperation is even more needed than at the time of publication of the Brandt report.

Some reform of international institutions has taken place. However, it has been uneven, more related to facilitate and further economic globalisation, rather than checking and containing the negative fall out. In so far reform has taken place, it is stagnant now. Within the institutions the political will to use proper governance instruments is fading away. The IMF is not being granted an adequate institutional capacity to deal with global financial instabilities, for instance those related to the US deficit. The WTO Doha Trade Round is stagnating for years already. The World Bank cannot deal adequately with one of the most importing financing needs: resources for reconstruction after conflict – despite the fact that the Bank's original function, as International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, was exactly this. It is still focused on national development finance, for which many private commercial financial resources can be attracted at capital markets, and fails to address adequately priorities such as poverty eradication, the development of the global commons or adjustment to climate change. The European Union has been enlarged, but an agreement to reform its institutional structure in order to render the extended Union more effective has failed and a new Constitution has been rejected. The United Nations have endorsed the Millennium Development Goals but it is clear already that these laudable goals will again fail to be met. The talks about UN reform that were meant to give substance to its 50th anniversary failed as well. The Security Council is not up to its task, the reform of the Human Rights Council is only a token reform, the new Peace Building Commission has no powers and the Criminal Court is not effective. United Nations peace keeping has been stretched to the limits of its capacity and seems to be less effective the greater the need to keep the peace and to protect the victims of human rights violations in case of violent conflict. The UN system itself is still a hotchpotch

of agencies, without a unified approach. On the contrary, increasingly centrifugal tendencies can be noted. As far as climate change is concerned there is still no full endorsement of the Kyoto Protocol. The political will to adhere to what has been agreed seems to get weaker while an agreement about a follow up to the Protocol that would better reflect the need mitigate the emission of greenhouse gases is still out of reach. Finally, international policy making in other environmental domains, such as biodiversity, fisheries, pollution and the preservation of water systems is stagnant.

Four crises

In my view the paradigmatic crisis is fourfold. First, there is a crisis in policy making. In international policy making conclusions could not be reached because international interest diverged too much and international institutions were too weak to counter the imbalances. And in those cases where agreement was reached policies were not adequately put into practice or did not work out, because the implementation process was constrained by unequal power relations.

Second, there was a crisis in the world system itself. The deficiencies mentioned above in the international institutions render it alarmingly inadequate to address the global challenges of today. After World War II the new system of the United Nations had been created in order to contain the use and abuse of power by individual countries by establishing a power sharing system on the basis of consensus, meant to address common insecurities and other challenges to the world as a whole. That system has been eroded. Unchecked power inequalities are back on the international stage.

Third, underneath the crisis in global policy making and in the world system there is a crisis ridden process, characterized by more poverty, not as an unintended corollary of progress but as a result of intended exclusion, economically as well as politically. The global economy becomes more and more dualistic.

All this reflects a basic crisis in ideas and values, in political theory about the relation between man and society, in the economic theory about what constitutes welfare, in the thinking of people all around the world about the relation between man and nature and the earth's resources, in ideas about the legitimacy of violence in order to reach one's objectives. Throughout history such basic questions have been answered differently in different countries. Such differences have existed throughout history, but mostly in different societies. Presently paradigmatic differences have globalised themselves, due to world wide migration, more intense communication, mass information and fast economic as

well as technological modernisation. This is bound to lead to cultural and political conflicts, everywhere. This is the fourth crisis.

The basic questions have become quite pertinent: will growth foster development or inherently jeopardize the resource basis for future sustainable human development? Is it ever possible that those who are not in power will benefit from progress, or are they bound to remain victims?

If with regard to both questions the latter answer is the most probable, will there be any chance that conflicts can be managed, let alone prevented?

Conflict and globalization

As argued above, since the end of the Cold War conflicts rose mostly within nations, not between them. Some of those conflicts were not new at all. They did not emerge, but re-emerge, often after decades of silence. Most of these conflicts had both economic and cultural dimensions. Economic conflicts can be managed within a reasonable period of time, by a good combination of economic growth and (re)distribution of assets and income, creating a perspective of progress for everybody, both future and present generations. On the other hand, cultural, social, ethnic, religious or sub-national domestic conflicts last long. They are rooted deeply in society. Cultural conflicts, whether or not accompanied or sharpened by economic inequalities, outlive generations. They are less manageable than economic conflicts, because there is no way out by means of sharing or redistribution. In an economic conflict there is always a win-win solution feasible: the right path of investment, growth and distribution can make all parties gain. An economic increase of one party does not necessary have to result in a welfare loss for others. Cultural identity conflicts are different. People and their identity groups - be it a tribe, an ethnic group, a religious denomination, a social class, a sex, a tongue, a colour, a caste, an elite, a nationalistic clan, or any group defining its identity in other than purely economic terms - are inclined to define their identity not as a share of total potential welfare in a society, but as absolute positions, demonstrably different from other groups. From this perspective a stronger position of one group in a society always means that another group will lose. However, when individual people and the groups to which they belong consider their identity not threatened – and thus potentially diminished – but enriched through communication with other identity groups, conflicts can be avoided.

Welfare is a relative concept. It can be increased, also through intelligent distribution. Power is an absolute concept. Total power cannot be increased by means of redistributing it. Power is a zero sum game. Only when cultural

identity conflicts are not seen as power conflicts but as welfare conflicts, a solution is possible. Mutually enriching cultural communication can transform an identity, once a straightjacket, into a stepping stone towards value added, resulting from a process in which values are shared rather than used as a defence mechanism. This requires cultural confrontation to be transformed into mutual cultural exchange. Without an exchange on the basis mutual curiosity rather than a confrontation based on aversion and fear, cultural conflicts are longer lasting, less manageable and more violent than either economic conflicts or international disputes. That is what happened in the ninety-nineties, after the euphoria of the end of the Cold War had evaporated. Old conflicts re-emerged, weapons were wetted and violence struck many countries from within.

Violence was not contained to the original location of the conflict. It was brought to other countries by the same forces which brought about globalization. That was the second major new phenomenon in the ninety nineties. Of course, there had been internationalization throughout: intercontinental transport, foreign investment and trade, international finance, imperialism and colonisation, world wars, efforts to build international alliances, a League of Nations, the UN itself. Globalisation was not a new process, we had seen it for centuries, and had witnessed a stronger pace in the four decades since World War Two. But in the final decade of the last century it got a new shape. Internationalisation had been an economic and a political process, steered and fostered by means of concrete decisions of policymakers and entrepreneurs. It was man-made. But somewhere in the nineties internationalisation turned into globalisation. It got a momentum of its own, became less a consequence of demonstrable human decisions, more self-contained and self-supporting. The driving force was twofold. First: technological advance, enabling full and fast information and communication everywhere, physically and virtually. Second: economic, the global market, linking production, investment, transportation, trade, advertisement and consumption anywhere in the world to any other place. The result was a disregard for national frontiers, a strengthening of global corporations and an erosion of nation states.

Globalisation became a cultural affair as well. A reality in the mind of the people: time differences and long distances are no longer barriers for communication. Technology has solved this. What used to be far away has come close, what lays at walking distance is not being noticed or is even shut out of people's consciousness. The factual distance and the actual time difference are no longer relevant, only the distance within the human mind counts. When we travel, most of us feel through our air ticket, cell-phone, e-mail, credit card and CNN much closer connected with people in comparable conditions in metropolis abroad than with poor people around the corner, landless people in the

countryside or jobless people in the shantytowns nearby. And at home most of us will relate in our minds more with surfers on Internet on the other side of the globe than with poor people around the corner. For everybody in the world everything happening anywhere else is happening at the same moment and may affect everybody, wherever. It is a real time world with real time connections and we feel part of it.

Global Apartheid

That is to say: provided that we have access to modernity. Provided that we are not excluded. Many people are excluded. Globalisation was neither coherent nor complete. It was a globalisation of markets and of greed. In the ninety-nineties economic growth was higher than ever since World War Two. It got a boost from new technologies, rising expectations and a mounting demand at the global market. This unprecedented growth could have helped enlarging the capacity of the international community to address poverty and sustainability questions. It did not. Instead, globalisation led to an even more unbalanced development: not more, but less sustainable, at least in social and ecological terms. Globalisation also made international cooperation lopsided by directing political attention mainly towards facilitating the workings of the world market and neglecting other concerns. The intentions at the global market are a mix of a belief in the blessings of modern technology and a selfish, materialistic and commercial approach to notions of welfare and progress.

What did this mean for the poor? During long periods of capitalist expansion poor people were exploited. But they had an opportunity to fight back, because the system needed them: their labour and their purchasing power, the power to buy the goods produced by the system and thereby sustain the very system that exploited them. This common strength of the poor helped to modify exploitation. Development became potentially also beneficial to the poor. They got a perspective: to have a more liveable life than their parents and to give an even better life to their children. That is development: change for the better, even if small, but in the perspective that improvements will last. Everybody within the system was entitled to such a perspective. Everybody had the right to hope. That hope is no longer justified. Globalisation has changed the character of capitalism. There are more people excluded from the system than exploited in the system. Those who are excluded are being considered dispensable. Neither their labour nor their potential buying power seems to be needed. That is the reason why they cannot fight back anymore. They lost a perspective. If you know that your life is worse than that of your parents and if there is no hope that

your children will do better, but instead will be even worse of than yourself, than there is no perspective whatsoever.

For many people this is today's reality. Better than in the past they know how life could be. Modern communication tells them that. But deeper than before they realize that such a life is not within reach, because they have lost solid ground. They have no land to work on, no job, no credit, no education, no basic services, no security of income, no food security, but ever more squalor, an ever greater chance to be affected by HIV/AIDS, a house without electricity, water and sanitation. Despite unprecedented world economic progress during the last decade, for about two billion people there is only the experience of sinking further and further into quicksand. In the World Summit on Sustainable Development, in Johannesburg in 2002, President M'beki called this Global Apartheid. The gap between rich and poor in the world can no longer be explained in terms of a strikingly unequal distribution of income and wealth which could be modified through world economic growth and a better distribution of the fruits of growth. The gap appears to have become permanent. Rich and poor stand apart, separated from each other. Under the Apartheid regime people were either white or black. So, they were part of the system, or they were not. Today people belong to modernity, or not. The world of modernity is western of origin, but stretches towards islands and pockets of modernity in the east and in the south. The worlds of modernity are linked with each other by means of modern communication, physical or virtual communication. Through the culture of modern communication people feel that they belong to modernity, that they are part of it, part of the globalized uniform western neo-liberal culture of mass-consumption, materialism, greed, images and virtual reality. That modern world is separated from the world next door, physically sometimes just around the corner, but far away in terms of time, mentality, experience and consciousness: poverty, hunger, unemployment, lack of basic amenities in the shantytowns of a metropolis, at the countryside and in the periphery, where pollution is permanent, where the soil is no longer productive, water scarce, life unhealthy. Poor people have to live in the worst places of the earth. "A world society based upon poverty for many and richness for some, characterised by islands of welfare surrounded by a sea of poverty is not sustainable", President M'beki said. Indeed, that is Apartheid. On the one side security and luxury, on the other deprivation, hardship and suffering. At the beginning of the new Millennium for many people life has never been so good. At the same time for many people in our direct global neighbourhood life is not liveable.

Like in the past, under the South African Apartheid regime, security and luxury on the one side of the fence is being sustained and protected by continuing the

squalor, suffering and poverty elsewhere. Not by exploiting the poor. There still is exploitation - low commodity prices for instance and indecent wages for migrant labour - but the globalised Western culture has so much capital and purchasing power, that it can sustain itself without exploitation. However, poor people, instead of being exploited, are excluded. The Western world is afraid that they will cost more than they can contribute. They do not fit into western cost benefit calculations. People living in the slums of Calcutta, Nairobi and Rio de Janeiro, AIDS affected in Africa, landless people in Bangladesh, subsistence farmers in the Sahel, illegal migrants crossing the Mediterranean, all of them lack the capacities needed to contribute to the modern Western economy and the buying power for its products. That is why these people are considered dispensable. Well-to-do people are not interested in the ideas of the poor, let alone their feelings or their fate. The poor are a burden and should not try to come close. They are being kept away by connecting the islands of wealth with each other, using the means provided through globalisation. In doing so we deprive them of space and soil, in particular good soil: productive, fertile or commercially attractively located. We deprive them of water, forest and natural resources. We burden them with sky-high debts. We deny their enterprises fair access to the market by favouring foreign companies, providing them with more licenses, higher credits and tax holidays. We deny them basic provisions for survival, such as affordable medication against AIDS. President M'beki was right: globalisation is Apartheid. Globalisation takes away living space. Globalisation is appropriation. Globalisation means fencing off. Globalisation is occupation. Occupation of space - living space -, expropriation of resources, sealing off societies, subjecting cultures. The poor are told to stay in their homelands, in occupied territories, separated from each other by boundaries drawn by those who do have access to the resources, the capital and the technology which lay at the basis of the modern Western culture.

The revolution of globalisation has made winners and losers. Real losers and those who see themselves as losers. Globalisation is shaking established structures and cultures. Some have the skills to gain access to the modern world market and play up fully. Others adjust themselves. For again others, it is either sink or swim. Many of them, economic asylum seekers for instance, are struggling with the waves of modernity and sink into the undercurrent of the new dynamics. For other people, single females with children in Africa for instance, modernisation means entire uprooting. Their existence was fragile and gets shattered. Many of them are dragged away and go down.

Resistance.

Others resist. Such a resistance can take different forms: protest, economic action, migration, forming alliances, a political counteroffensive at high level. It can also imply the strengthening of a vulnerable culture or an effort to tie religion with politics. It can result in violence, first against those within that culture who choose in favour of modernity and assimilate themselves with the foreign, western culture. Later on violence may be directed at the foreign culture itself. That is a final stage. The more the centre of globalisation disregards the periphery, not only the economic and social needs of the periphery, but also its traditions, culture, religion and aspirations, the harsher the resistance. A Western attitude of self-sufficiency and self complacency is seen as arrogant, as an insult, a slap in the face. That breeds resentment. The excluded feel not only poor and dispossessed, but also defeated and humiliated.

In the 18th century such a haughty attitude of the elite brought about a revolution. Today revolt is in the air. “If you don’t visit your neighbourhood, it will visit you”, Thomas Friedman wrote. That visit can take different forms. One is migration to the towns. Another one is crime and violence in any metropolis with a dazzling city-centre next to favellas and shantytowns with breathtaking poverty. A third reaction can be terrorism. Migration does not lead to crime, and crime does not result in terrorism. But all of them are consequences of uprooting. Even when there is no direct link between poverty and violence, systematic neglect of aspirations and feelings of injustice creates conditions within which violence can flourish. People may acquiesce to violence when they feel humiliated, personally and as a group, once they feel not to be taken seriously, not respected or recognized as a culture or as a society, once they feel excluded by the new world system orchestrated by the West. Then they may give a willing ear to violence. Some approve silently, others give support or shelter. Others show themselves receptive to a message of violent action. Why not, they may think, if the world does not leave us an alternative?

Those who feel that the system does not care about them may try to seek access to the system, try to clear themselves a way into the system. That was the aspiration of migrants and of emancipation movements. Often they were successful. But if you experience that the system does not only ignore you, but brushes you aside, doesn’t want you, cuts you off, excludes you, then you may become inclined to consider it your turn: to turn away from the system. “If the system doesn’t want me, then I do not want the system” is a form of logic. People who come as far as this do not even seek access to the system any more. They turn their back upon the system, denounce that system. One step further is to resist and oppose it, to want it being undermined, to attack and undermine it themselves.

Poverty does not lead straight on to violence. Poverty without any perspective whatsoever, plus the experience of exclusion and neglect, the perception to be seen as lesser people with an inferior culture, to be treated as dispensable by those who do have access to modernity, to the market, to wealth and power, all that together will lead to aversion, resistance, hate, violence and terrorism. Resistance against globalisation which is perceived as perverse, as a curtailment of living space, as occupation. Aversion against Western dominant values, which steered that process of globalisation in the direction of Global Apartheid. Hate against leaders of that process and against those who hold power within the system. Violence against its symbols. Deadly violence against innocent people within that system. Unscrupulous violence, unsparing nothing and nobody, uncompromising also towards oneself, fanatically believing: 'this is the only way'.

Is it fully incomprehensible that people, who consider themselves desperate, without any perspective, become receptive for the idea that they have been made a desperado by a system beyond reach? One step further and they become receptive for the whisperings of fanatics that they have nothing to lose in a battle against a system that is blocking their future. One more step and they believe that they will gain by sacrificing themselves in that battle. It is hideous, beyond justification, but the notion exists. It should and can be fought, but the most effective way to do so is not by resorting to counter violence alone, but by taking away the motives and reasons people may have when surrendering to the temptations of fanatics.

Most people, however poor and desperate, dislike violence. They are disillusioned, but in doubt. Many people in the world have developed a hate/love relation towards the West and its culture. They do not want to make a choice for or against the West. Unless they are forced to do so, for instance by the West itself. Then resentment overtakes doubt.

After September 11, 2001, world leadership has the task to disarm the fanatics without alienating those who doubt. That requires, as was pleaded by Secretary General Kofi Annan when he received the Nobel Peace Prize, building a sustainable, democratic and peaceful world society, within which humanity is seen as indivisible. That concept of sustainability, Kofi Annan added, ought to be based upon the dignity and inviolability of all human life, irrespective of origin, race or creed.

Lifelines

That is what is really at stake in the political dispute about the sustainability paradigm: indiscriminate access for all people to basic conditions of life itself. These are health, water, biodiversity, agriculture and energy. Health means survival, crossway between life and death. Water provides people with a lifeline with the present environment. It is the lifeline between people, nature and resources. Biodiversity provides men, women and children with a lifeline with the past as well as the future. It is the ultimate guarantee of the continuity of life. Agriculture stands for life itself. Agriculture provides people with food, work, an income and a home. Energy is the lifeline with progress: a more efficient use of resources, more food, more work, a better home, a higher income and the preservation of life and the postponement of death. Water, energy, health, agriculture and biodiversity, they form a string of lifelines. Together they give human survival a meaning and life a sense of direction, by freeing people from the fight for mere survival, to overcome the constraints set by space and time, to enable them to prevent and conquer misery and to develop instead, to reflect on the sense and meaning of human existence, to divide labour and exchange the fruits of labour, to philosophize, write poetry, make love, create images, tell stories, collect knowledge, play games. A sustainable world society means that people are free to do all this together with other people, within the family and with partners in society, coming from different backgrounds, with different cultures: different experiences, different insights, different languages, different poems, stories, images and games, and to share all that with each other.

Water, energy, health, agriculture and biodiversity. Together they are the lifeline between people and the planet. They shape the essential conditions for a sustainable development of human life, provided of course that they themselves are being preserved, sustained and developed in equilibrium with each other. That is crucial if we are to cut poverty in half or eradicate it all together. But those conditions for sustainability can only be met if there is a common determination towards the goal, common values and a shared belief concerning the system within which the endeavour should take place, full agreement about rights and duties, a willingness to comply with the norms and to live up to the principles, being confident that all this will be adhered to by everybody else, whether rich and powerful or not. Not only the task itself is complex, to achieve sustainable development including poverty eradication, but so is the setting within which the task has to be accomplished. That can not be imposed by a government or a bureaucracy. It cannot be ordered from above. It can only be achieved together with all other partners in society, bottom up, in a participatory approach, so that each and every individual and all peoples groups can trust that

all will benefit more or less equally from a common endeavour to make life worth to be lived, now and in the future.

Inconvenient truths

In the last two decades we have seen globalisation resulting into ever-greater ecological distortions, a sharpening of inequalities, a greater conflict potential and a weakening of the capacity of the polity to deal with these concerns, rather than a strengthening of that capacity. One might call that stumbling into disaster. Economic conflicts have been complicated by religious and cultural conflicts, violence could not be contained but has spread around the globe and all this became further complicated by the violence of terrorism.

Al Gore, in his book *An Inconvenient Truth* has depicted the state of mind resulting from denial, doubt and disinformation, deliberate disinformation about climate change. These three D's have produced a fourth: Delay, the delay of action, precautionary as well as remedial action. Indeed, what should be done hasn't been done. It was this delay, this total lack of action, which brought people into a state of despair: they see that there is a lot of talking going on, many conferences, many UN resolutions, but no action. In turn this leads to a sixth D: Distrust.

The same six D's dominate the discussion about poverty. Denial that poverty exists; Doubt whether something can be done about it; Disinformation about the nature and causes of poverty; Delay of action; Despair amongst the victims; total Distrust in leaders.

The result is deeper conflict and less peace. In many countries the result is also political alienation: people who do not trust their leaders, leaders disregarding people's needs, people suspicious about values, models and doctrines propagated by leaders, leaders manipulating views and opinions of citizens, people's groups sharpening their identity, fencing themselves in, keeping others out, thereby creating a general climate of distrust. Uncertainty, disbelief, distrust, alienation and fear, which goes far beyond disagreement. People don't trust their leaders anymore when they speak about sustainability, precaution, peace, security, democracy and human rights.

Since the 11th of September 2001 the world stands at the crossroads. The choice is between two paradigms: security or sustainability. Security is exclusive: 'our' security, which we presume to be threatened by others - outsiders, foreigners, potential enemies - and which we try to protect through exclusion. The other paradigm, sustainability, is inclusive: a safe and secure place for all human beings, a safe habitat, a safe job, secure access to food, water and health care, secure entitlements to resources which are essential for a decent and meaningful life, worthy of human beings. Sustainability as an inclusive concept implies the mutual thrust that justice will be maintained and secured for all people, without any discrimination, the ultimate guarantee of mutual security.

In international policy security is all the go now. This implies a predominance of inward attitudes, more exclusion, pre-emptive strikes, retaliation, more violence, more terrorism, war. Going for absolute security kills. Embracing sustainability means sowing the seeds of life.

Jan Pronk