

The challenge of eradicating poverty for sustainable development

International community response

KOFI ANNAN

THE poor are seldom poor by choice. Very few people in this world enjoy living on hand-outs. Most poor people know that they are quite capable of earning their living by their own efforts, and are eager to do so. But they must be given a *fair chance* to compete.

That applies to individuals. It applies to companies. And it applies to countries. All countries today need to mobilise their own resources, and to attract investment from abroad.

Their ability to do that depends, in the first instance, on the quality of their governance. Countries can only compete in the global market if their people, women and men alike, enjoy the benefits of education and the rule of law, with effective state institutions, transparency and accountability in public affairs, respect for human rights, and a say in the decisions that affect their lives.

So there is much that even the least developed countries can do, and are doing, to help themselves. Many have made remarkable strides towards democracy and sound economic governance, even in the midst of poverty.

But they are caught in a vicious circle. Even more than others, they need to attract foreign investment, since they have so little capital of their own.

Yet they attract very *little* investment, because their people are poor, their politics are often unstable, and their domestic market is small. And their people remain poor because there is no investment.

So the poorer the country, and the smaller its domestic market, the greater its need to break out of this vicious circle through exports. And therefore, *more than any other*

group of countries, the Least Developed need open markets, in which their goods can compete.

More fortunate countries have every reason to open their markets to products from the LDCs. Their consumers would benefit from wider choice and lower prices. Their industries would benefit from the competition. And, by allowing poor people in poor countries to make an honest living, they would contribute to a fairer and more stable world order.

The European Union seem to have understood this. By adopting

certain way. And of course there are health and safety standards.

All of these are ostensibly designed to protect consumers, and ensure that they know what they are buying. I am not saying that is unnecessary. But the requirements are often absurdly complex.

Let me give one example: the European regulation on aflatoxins. A World Bank study has calculated that this regulation costs Africa 670 million dollars each year in exports of cereals, dried fruit and nuts. And what does it achieve? It may possibly save the life of one citizen of the

should review the progress made in implementing agreements reached in the last Round the Uruguay Round.

After the Uruguay Round, developing countries found they had benefited less than developed ones.

Many of them, as well as some non-governmental organisations, feel that there should not be a new Round, only a reassessment of the old. But, even if their grievance is well taken, surely it is not correct to argue against a new Round. For a new Round is precisely the forum where the necessary reassessment

rising population struggles to survive on a shrinking area of cultivable land. Many suffer from a chronic health crisis, which debilitates and decimates their population, and which has now acquired a new, even more frightening face: that of HIV/AIDS.

Indeed, in much of Africa, AIDS is now far more than a health crisis. It has become not only the primary cause of death, but the biggest development challenge and the same may soon be true in several Asian countries, too.

At present, I am making this

certainly be needed deeper, broader and faster than what has been given so far. And it must be truly additional, not subtracted from funds already earmarked for development aid.

Because and this is my final point, those funds are much too small as it is. The developed countries have long committed themselves, on paper, to giving 0.7 per cent of their gross national product in development aid. Very few have lived up to that pledge, and the developed world as a whole has reached only 0.2 per cent.

During the 1990s a decade of unprecedented prosperity for most industrialised countries official development aid declined, and LDCs suffered disproportionately.

Unless governments take their commitment to the 0.7 per cent target more seriously, they will have little chance of meeting the new commitments they made at last year's Millennium Summit. Let me remind you that those commitments included pledges to halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015; to halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS by the same date; and to address the special needs of the LDCs.

I urge all developed countries to meet the 0.7 per cent target and within that, to allocate at least 0.15 per cent of their gross national product to helping the LDCs, as they promised to do at the last LDC conference in Paris, ten years ago.

Why do we have these conferences, after all, if States do not follow up their fine words with action?

—UNIC, Dhaka

Kofi Annan is the Secretary General of the United Nations. The article is based on his speech at the Third UN Conference on LDCs, Brussels, 14 May, 2001.

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the "Everything But Arms" initiative, without waiting for reciprocal concessions from the LDCs, they have taken a step in the right direction, even if on certain products it is going to be implemented rather slowly.

I very much hope that other economic powers will take similar decisions, and act on them faster. Only last September, after all, they adopted the Millennium Declaration which calls on them to adopt a policy of duty- and quota-free access for essentially all exports from the LDCs.

As things stand, those exports still face formidable barriers. Agricultural tariffs still average over 40 percent, and on some products they rise above three hundred per cent. And then there are many non-tariff barriers: not only quotas, but also technical barriers, which regulate the size and quality of imports or require them to be labelled in a

European Union every two years.

Please do not misunderstand me. I am the last person to undervalue even one human life. But here many African lives are at stake the lives of those whom the chance to export those products might save from an early death, caused by malnutrition or endemic disease.

Surely these regulations need to be reviewed with a sense of proportion! Surely a more reasonable balance can be found.

I believe the best hope for LDCs, and indeed for the developing world in general, lies in a new round of global, multilateral trade negotiations. And this time it must be a true "Development Round".

The new Round must aim to eliminate all tariff and non-tariff barriers in the developed countries to trade in agricultural products, textiles and other products of special interest to the LDCs. And it

and adjustments can be undertaken. I urge therefore that all governments put their weight behind the launch of a new multilateral Round of trade negotiations, with all due dispatch.

So far I have focused on trade and market access, because I am convinced that without trade LDCs will not attract investment, and will not be able to grow.

But while market access is necessary, it is certainly not sufficient.

If they are going to export their way to prosperity, LDCs need many things they now lack. They need technology especially information technology. They need to develop their physical, social and institutional infrastructure. And they need help in overcoming some appalling handicaps.

Many of them face acute environmental constraints, as a rapidly

challenge my personal priority. I hope by the end of next month, when the General Assembly holds its Special Session on HIV/AIDS, we shall have an agreed global strategy, and a substantial global war chest, to confront this global scourge.

Many LDCs are also handicapped by destructive conflict. They need help in resolving their differences and rebuilding a peaceful economy.

And many are still crippled by debt. Everyone now agrees that they must be relieved of this burden.

But rich countries have not yet come forward with sufficient resources to do it. Even the poorest countries which qualify for debt cancellation under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries scheme still spend more on repaying debts than they do on healthcare.

Additional debt relief will almost



Dr. Rubaiul Murshed

All health information to keep you up to date

Facts about asthma

What is Asthma?

Asthma is a common condition which causes difficulty in breathing. During an asthma attack, the airways are narrowed. This is caused by muscles in the walls of the air passages tightening and the linings of the walls swelling up. The swollen walls in turn produce extra mucus which blocks the air passages even more. Less air reaches the lungs and you become breathless. The disorder usually begins in childhood. It can, however, start at any age and may first appear as a sudden attack of breathlessness or as a persistent cough at night.

Symptoms:

- 1. Tightness of chest.
- 2. Difficulty in breathing. Symptoms are worse at night.
- 3. Coughing with or without thick sputum.
- 4. During severe attacks, bluish colouration appears around the lips, there is sweating and the pulse rate is fast, this condition is called cyanosis.
- 5. In infants, it is fast breathing with the lower ribs drawn in.

Causes of attack and what to do about them:

Asthma is the result of extra-sensitive lungs over-reacting to certain factors or triggers. This leads to inflammation and constriction of air passages. It is a condition due to both hereditary and environmental factors. An attack may be triggered by:

Allergens such as certain foods and medications, dust, mould spores, pollen, mites, animal hairs or feathers, etc. Asthma attacks that are caused by allergies usually appear before the age 35. Find out what items you are allergic to. Your doctor can advise you. Avoid eating or coming into contact with these allergens. Many asthmatics are allergic to the waste material of house dust mites. Clean your furniture with a damp cloth, vacuum regularly and change your bedsheets regularly. Children should be kept away from animals and studded toys that collect dust.

Viral or bacterial infections such as bronchitis, flu and sinusitis: Viral infections are well-known asthma triggers and can make asthma worse. Build up your resistance to infection by keeping your body healthy and exercising regularly.

Environmental irritants such as hair sprays, exhaust fumes and cigarette smoke: Be cautious in using household items like furniture sprays, hair sprays and deodorants. Try using products that can be applied directly without spraying. Avoid smoky and polluted areas.

Emotional stress: When you express strong emotions by laughing, crying or yelling, the muscles in your air passages tighten. Fear can also make you breathe too hard and too fast. Such emotions may trigger off or worsen an asthma attack. When you feel excited, try breathing slowly and deeply. This will relax your airways. Learn to use relaxation techniques to control stress.

Over-exertion: Slow down pace or try a different sport. If your favourite sport triggers an asthma attack, ask your doctor about taking extra medicine before playing, to prevent attacks. Don't give up exercising as it improves lung fitness and is important to your overall health.

Weather: Blasts of cold air, like those from an air conditioner can be a trigger and also excessive humidity or extreme changes in temperature or humidity. Always dress according to the weather. Avoid going directly from an air-conditioned room into the blazing hot sun. And if you are going to be exposed to extreme weather conditions check with your doctor on appropriate medicines in advance.

Medication: There are two main types of asthma medicines. Relievers that help to relieve asthma attacks by opening up the narrowed air passages, allowing the air to flow more freely and preventers that help to prevent asthma attacks by making the air passages less sensitive to triggers. Asthma medicine can be taken as tablets or syrups or they can be breathed into the lungs using inhalers. Inhalers are preferred as they deliver a smaller amount of medicines where it's needed most (the airways). Inhalers work faster and may have less side-effects compared with tablets and syrup due to the small doses delivered. Many patients, especially the young, are unable to get the timing right when using an inhaler. For them a spacer works better. A spacer has a one way valve, which traps medicine sprayed into it. When patient inhales, the medicine flows into the lungs, eliminating the need for perfect timing.

Tomorrow: Always children first

Excerpts from the 'declassified' main report of Hamoodur Rahman Commission

MILITARY ASPECT-II

THE Directive further lays down, by its 9th paragraph, that "planning must cover such contingent operation as the bombing of non-military targets in enemy territory, and attack on hostile merchant shipping, service headquarters will obtain government clearance before launching any such operations involving the danger of reprisals and political repercussions".

The Directive then goes on to assign and describe the role of each of the three armed forces. It is not necessary, for our present purpose, to go into the details of this part of the Directive, except to say that it envisages a war lasting for at least three months without essential supplies from outside the country, and therefore, enjoins in the 18th paragraph that: "view of the uncertainty of continuous supply of materials from abroad, logistic planning must include the stockpiling of vital war like materials on the basis of three months requirements".

It will be seen that the main strategic concept underlying this

Directive is that the defence of East Pakistan lies in West Pakistan, and that major and decisive battles would be fought from West Pakistan even if the hostilities commenced in East Pakistan.

The Directive does not give any indication as to the time factor involved in reacting from West Pakistan to Indian aggression in

in the Directive. Paragraph 7 of the Directive lays down, as already stated, the Mission of the armed forces. The GHQ felt that in view of the increased capability of the Pakistan Army in East Pakistan, on account of the increase in the number of troops and the internal security operations having been brought to a successful conclusion, the Mission assigned to the Pakistan Army should include offensive operations in East Pakistan as well.

However, the Directive leaves no doubt that whether the war starts with an attack on West or on East Pakistan, in either case total war would have commenced for Pakistan. The Directive thus envisages the defence of Pakistan as a comprehensive and integrated operation irrespective of the territorial or geographical origin and commencement of Indian aggression.

On 27th July 1971, the chief of the joint secretariat invited proposals from the three services headquarters regarding the revision of the War Directive No 4 for the reason that since the Directive was issued in 1967, many changes had taken place in the geo-political and military environment of Pakistan which called for a review of the Directive. The service headquarters were further informed that the review was being taken in hand in accordance with the decision of the 12th pre-joint chiefs committee meeting held on 13th July, 1971.

We find that on 18th August, 1971 the general headquarters proposed a revision of paragraphs 6 and 7 of the Directive. Paragraph 6 deals with the role of China, and the GHQ felt that the present friendly attitude of China should be reflected

put to their maximum use by offensive deployment without loss of any time. The time factor is particularly important as Pak Navy does not have maritime reconnaissance, and enough warning of an attack may not be available".

The Navy, therefore, recommended that paragraph 9 of the Directive prescribing previous government clearance before launching such operations should be amended and the sinking of Indian merchant ships, so vitally important to PN war plans, should not be hampered for want of government approval, and the government should give clearance to the commander-in-chief of the Pakistan Navy to use his discretion in respect of attacks on hostile merchant ships.

As regards paragraph 13 of the Directive, the Naval headquarters suggested that in view of the growing disparity between the obsolescent equipment of the Pakistan Navy and the modern vessels and weapons of the Indian Navy it should be clearly envisaged in paragraph 13 that keeping in view the strategic location of Indian maritime and air forces, the Pakistan Navy will not be able to undertake the task of escorting any supplies between the two wings and therefore, dependence should not be placed on inter-wing transfer of stores by sea, even for critical items.

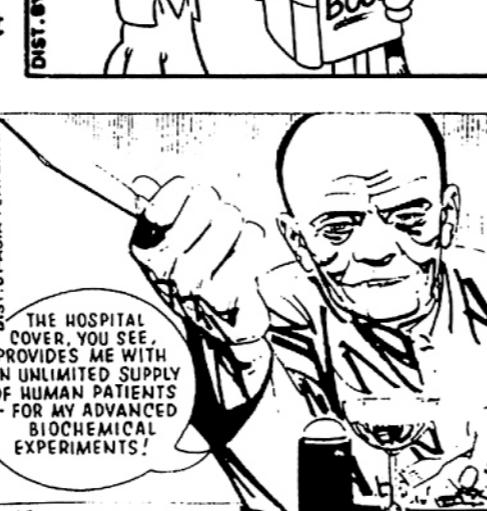
However, the pre-joint chiefs committee never got down to the task of examining the question, with the result that War Directive No 4 continued to remain in force, un-amended, until the outbreak of war in November 1971. The question is whether there was any real and substantial need to review this Directive and the basic assumptions on which it rested. And if so, whether the failure to do so had any effect on the conduct of the war both in East and West Pakistan.

From the amendments proposed by the GHQ in their letter of 18th August 1971, referred to above, it would appear that the army did not feel the need for any substantial revision of the Directive or the basic assumptions underlying the same. The change proposed by the GHQ in the Mission, as stipulated in paragraph 7 of the Directive, was merely the expression of a misconceived optimism regarding the military

Garfield ®



by Jim Davis



7x2

8x2

James Bond
BY IAN FLEMING
DRAWING BY HORAK

QUOTE A
COURT FOR THE
KGB AND YOUR
CHIEF BOSS,
DR. CAT...THIS JUNGLE
HOSPITAL GIVES THEM
A BACK-DOOR KEY
TO THE WHOLE
SOUTH AMERICAN
CONTINENT!

BY IAN FLEMING
DRAWING BY HORAK

YOU
UNDERESTIMATE
ME, 007. AS A
SCIENTIST, I FIND
MY LAB FACILITIES
HERE FAR MORE
ABSORBING THAN
MERE ESPIONAGE
OR SUBVERSION!

