Measuring human development



CHAKLADER MAHBOOB-UL ALAM writes from Madrid

HIS year's report on human development (Human Development Report 2002) has just been published by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) While one of the salient features of last year's report was its emphasis on technology and genetically modified food crops, this year's report highlights some facts about the alarming trend towards greater concentration of wealth in fewer hands. World's richest 1 percent possesses as much as 57 percent of the rest of the world's population put together. The gap between the richest and the poorest is widening (the richest 5 percent enjoys an income which is 114 times more than that of the poorest 5 percent) and 60 -odd countries have, in real terms, become poorer in the last decade. If the current trend continues, at least 33 countries, with 26% of world's total population will not be able to attain even half of the eight objectives--such as reducing extreme poverty to one half, providing primary education to the whole population, all by 2015---universally agreed upon at the UN Millennium Summit. 2000.

BRIG. GEN. GYASUDDIN CHOWDHURY BB, PSC (RETD)

T seems almost decided that

President Bush will go for a

massive military operation in

Iraq to dislodge President Saddam

Hussein. Emerged from a highly

confidential military plan leaked in

the New York Times, it reveals that

tens of thousands of US marines

and infantry would invade from

Kuwait to the south, Turkey to the

North and from the sea. The bases

at Bahrain and Qatar will be used for

air operations.

The UNDP, which is headquartered in New York, was set up by the United Nations General Assembly in 1965 " to provide technical assistance, to improve living standards and promote economic growth" in countries which are economically underdeveloped

Social scientists have, for decades, been trying to agree upon a common definition of standard of living and to devise reliable methods for the purpose of obtaining comparable statistics for the most industions of enormous magnitude, there was also the problem of translating figures quoted in dozens of different currencies in one generally accepted standard currency, i.e., the US dollar.

The dollar figures often gave a distorted view of the relative positions of the countries in the ranking because they did not take into consideration the differences in existing price levels of same or similar goods in different counties. The PPP (Purchasing Power step in the right direction, the social scientists were not entirely happy with the outcome. Several other questions still kept nagging them: Was it (the measurement of economic growth) enough to enable one to assess the real standard of living of a group, a community or a country? Wasn't there something missing? What about the quality of

It is in this field that the UNDP has made and is still making important contributions. According to the Although the US occupies the sixth position, 16.9% of its population lives below the poverty line. Spain comes 21st but only 10.1 % of its population lies below the poverty line. While Japan (where the longevity is 81 years, which happens to be the highest in the world), comes ninth in world ranking (and first in Asia), 28 sub-Saharan countries lie at the bottom. Hong Kong and Singapore occupy the 23rd and 25th positions respectively. In the index. India comes out at 124. Pakistan at

with them. The study cites three reasons for the current stagnant situation in the Arab World. - lack of freedom, knowledge and womanpower Although there is an ill-

intentioned tendency (particularly so after September eleventh) in the West to equate Islam with backwardness, in my opinion, this is not true. (Why don't they blame Christianity for the lack of progress in Central and South America and much of sub-Saharan Africa?) Excessive greed, neo-colonialism in the form of skewed globalisation, endemic corruption and other socioeconomic reasons are more to blame than religion itself. This is, however, true that narrow and selfmotivated interpretations of Islam (which is actually a misuse or even an abuse of the religion) in certain countries by interested parties is hindering progress

Although economically,

Bangladesh is a poor country, some of the conclusions of the Arab Human Development Report 2002 are, in my opinion, applicable to Bangladesh as well. Given the country's current socio-economic constraints, democratic achievements, including freedom of expression in Bangladesh can, on the whole, be considered as quite significant. Knowledge and womanpower are the fields where although we have made some advances, we need to make greater progress. A significant rise in the level of education (not only for a few members of the elite but also for the population at large) and more aggressive gender empowerment measures will certainly quicken the pace of human development in Bangladesh.

International **Left-handers' Day**

O-ONE has come up with a definitive reason for WHY some people are lefthanded, but about 10 per cent of the population around the world are. No gene for left-handedness has been identified, but it does seem to run strongly in families.

The brain is "cross-wired" so that the left hemisphere controls the right handed side of the body and viceversa and hand dominance is connected with brain dominance on the opposite side -- which is why we say that only left-handers are in their

The left hemisphere (RIGHT HAND CONTROL) controls Speech, Language, Writing, Logic, Mathematics, Science, this is the LINEAR THINKING MODE. The right hemisphere (LEFT HAND CONTROL) controls Music, Art, Creativity, Perception. Emotions. Genius, this is the HOLISTIC THINKING MODE.

This brain dominance makes lefthanders more likely than right handers to be creative geniuses This is supported by higher percentages of left-handers than normal in certain jobs and professions -- music and the arts, media in general. Lefthanders are also generally better at 3-dimensional perception and thinking, leading to more left-handed architects than normal. Left-handers are also usually pretty good at most ball sports and things involving hand-to-eye co-ordination.

The view that left-handers are clumsy and awkward is not due to their natural abilities, but being forced to use right-handed tools and machinery which is completely backto-front for them

So, around the world Left-

Handers celebrate 13 August as their day and through many demonstrations they show the many day-today difficulties that they face.

This year members are holding Lefty Zones in locations from Croatia to California, at which the public can eniov trving out everyday tasks with proper left-handed equipment, and try out some of the quizzes. Other events our members are holding include a painting workshop for lefthanders at a Belfast Art Gallery, a baseball throwing contest at a baseball match in San Francisco, and a lecture on the subject in Pune,

You may be interested to know that the Sheraton Hotel in Ankara, Turkey is launching five left-handed rooms for lefty guests on the 13th. These rooms will have changes to the opening direction of the doors and windows i.e. main entrance, minibar, in-room safe, placement of the electrical outlets, make up mirror and hairdryer. They have also provided left-handed amenities like ruler, cork screwer/bottle opener, and special lefty wall clock... even a reversed logo on guest pens.

Well done to the Sheraton and lets hope more hotels follow their example! I have put this piece together with the help of the Left Handers' Club to educate and to amuse the readers As nobody in my office is looking. I will now eat my lunch with my spoon held firmly in my left hand. I feel quite 'clicky', Cornish for left-handed, as I

Julian Francis has worked and typed left-handed for many years in Bangladesh, and is currently European Co-Director of the European Commission supported project, Adarsha Gram, a poverty alleviation project of the Ministry of Land

look forward to the 13th of August.

LETTER FROM EUROPE

Given the country's current socio-economic constraints, democratic achievements, including freedom of expression in Bangladesh can, on the whole, be considered as quite significant. Knowledge and womanpower are the fields where although we have made some advances, we need to make greater progress. A significant rise in the level of education (not only for a few members of the elite but also for the population at large) and more aggressive gender empowerment measures will certainly quicken the pace of human development in Bangladesh.

trialised, less industrialised, developing and the least developed nations of the world. It has not been an easy task. First of all, the social scientists had to agree upon a set of quantitative indicators to measure the relative level of living of the participating countries. Until recently only material items such as per capita income, ownership of various consumer goods, contribution of manufacturing to the GNP were taken into consideration while preparing the index. Leaving aside the problems inherent in collecting reliable data from such diverse sources to calculate average figures for a group or a country which often disguise individual or group varia-

Parities) method was invented to address the problem. The use of this method in adjusting the price levels in different countries gave a fairer relative picture of the economies of the 173 participating countries. (This year, lack of reliable data from a number of other countries forced the UNDP to exclude them from the Human Development Index-otherwise known as the HDI.) Needless to say, it sometimes produced results, which were quite different to the ones produced using the conventional method.

Even though this new quantitative measurement (the PPP) of the use or ownership of material goods,

vehicles, the Predator and Global

Hawk that proved their worth in

Afghanistan cutting the time

between target detection and

destruction to 10 minutes, have

augmented Awacs and Jstars

Southern Iraq can be easily

attacked from the air bases in the

Mideast. Attacks on northern Iraq

will be mounted from Incirlik in

Turkey possible augmented by US

Navy FA/18 Super Hornets flying

The need to keep aircraft in the air

from carriers in the Red Sea.

Battle plan

Secret plan to dislodge Saddam Hussein?

UNDP, human development is a process of expanding choices. In an attempt to reflect the quality of life in different parts of the world, the Human Development Index (first published in 1990), not only takes into account the per capita income and ownership of certain goods and services but also a number of other items such as literacy, longevity, calorie intake, housing, healthcare, access to safe water supply, infant

According to the Human Development Index 2002 (HDI), Norway continues to be the best country in the world to live in. Sweden and Canada occupy second and third positions respectively.

controlled northeast and the rest are

in the South, around Basra, and on

The most likely scenario would

involve the occupation of the

Kurdish controlled areas from

Turkey, allowing tanks and mecha-

nised infantry to be brought in for an

attack on the strategically important

town of Mosul, which has a good air

teams and members of the SAS are

thought to be in northern Iraq

already, liaising with the Kurdish

forces and carrying out reconnais-

sance of Iraqi positions and poten-

The attack in the south could

The CIA's Special Activities

the Iranian border

138 and Bangladesh at 145. Bangladesh has made slow but steady progress in overall human development and has done remarkably well in improving health and sanitation and in reducing fertility, which is a good pointer on gender equality.

In an attempt to identify the reasons for little progress, stagnation or even decline in human development in a specific geographical area, the UNDP has recently published a research paper called the ' Arab Human Development Report 2002 ", which covers the 22 countries of the Arab League. As far as the financial resources are concerned, the region is well endowed

three-day meeting in London on 12th

of July 2002 to discuss his over-

throw and the role of the military in a

post Saddam Iraq. Two days back

also this group had a US sponsored

meeting in USA. Following are the

funded INC is nominally the

umbrella organisation of Iraqi

groups opposed to Saddam's rule.

Formed in 1992 by 300 exiled Iraqi

politicians, officers and Muslim

clerics, it combines more than 30

political groups that include demo-

crats, liberals, secularists, Islamists

and Kurds. In 1996, Saddam sent

his forces into Kurdish-held north-

ern Irag, forcing the INC, which was

Iraq National Forces: The US

portraits of opposition groups.

Arab World. Open support of Israeli government by Mr. Bush has become counter productive not only in the Middle East and Muslim world but also I case of the US allies. It failed to gain the confidence of Arab leaders as well as their people. They lost faith in US leadership particularly for failing to attend to long drawn war between Palestine and Israel and bring a solution, which every one feels is within capability of

US being today militarily world's

have not reacted as vet. Handling of the Middle East crisis by President Bush has lost total support of the

most powerful and economically

It is felt that there may be turmoil in many Arab countries after the next invasion in Iraq. Some rulers may

enemies in general than friends... The attack on Iraq is going to affect the present fragile world economy.

American president George W. Bush is hoping to topple Saddam Hussein early next year, a job his father left only half-done in Gulf war in 1991 A plan called 'CentCom Courses of Action' would see hundreds of warplanes based in eight countries unleashing a huge air assault against thousands of targets including air-fields, roads and communication sites. Special forces will strike at bases for Irag's weapons of mass destruction -- chemical. biological, possibly nuclear and the missiles launch sites. Up to 250,000 troops will thrust into Iraq from Kuwait and the sea. Thousands of US marines from the First Marine Expeditionary Force at Camp Pendleton, California, have stepped up their mock assault drills.

The huge new US air base at Al-Udeid in Qatar will mean that there is no need for Saudi backing for the invasion. Despite a huge effort, not a single link between Irag and the September 11 attack has ever been found. But Washington still sees Saddam as a hugely destabilizing force in the Middle East and a key backer of terrorists.

The military offensive against Iraq is likely to begin with a phased operation to enforce the no flyzones in Northern and Southern There are already several hun-

escalation of RAF and US Air force

dred coalition combat aircraft in the region including more then 80 US Air Force F-16 Falcons, plus large amounts of pre-positioned USAF ammunition in the Middle East.

The number of aircraft could be tripled within days allowing General Tommy Franks, the US commander to increase current patrol to a full scale round the clock air war.

The only resistant is likely to come from air defence on the ground, which will be attacked, by US E6B Prowler and RAF Tornado GR4s firing missiles that home-in on the radars on which the air defence missiles would rely.

During the Gulf war, Iraqi air force pilots rarely took off. To day with aircraft numbers cut by a fifth and serviceability levels thought to be as low as 30 per cent, the Iragi air force is unlikely to cause any major prob-

B52 Strato Fortress Bombers, B1 Lancer bombers flying from the British air base at Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean and B2 Spirit stealth bombers flying directly from their base in Missouri, USA The weapons that ripped apart

Iraqi positions during the Gulf war in 1991 have changed almost beyond recognition. Satellite systems have significantly improved the accuracy of the reconnaissance aircraft that find the bombers' targets and the weapons they fire. The efficiency and accuracy of

smart bombs have enhanced to a greater extend from the position of Gulf War, operation "Desert Fox." Unmanned aerial reconnaissance continuously over Iraq will mean that a large number of air refueling tankers will be required. During the loose their credibility. On the contrary this will bring the Arab population together. US will make more

Gulf war some 300-tanker aircraft

were deployed to the region, at

times flying stacked five deep. The

air war is likely to go on for some

time degrading Iragi capabilities

before General Franks feels ready

A battle plan for the ground

attack, reported by the New York

Times the week before, was said to

involve 250,000 men in a three-

pronged attack. With around

100,000 members of the Republi-

can Guard clustered around Bagh-

dad, the allies' aim will be to draw

them out into battle. That will involve

disposing of the rest of the army, up

to 200,000 men, who are roughly

split into two groups. Just over 100,000 are facing the Kurdish

to mount any major ground assault

in with an amphibious attack by US Marines, possibly supported by Britain's 3rd Commando Brigade, to capture the southern port of Basra. It would give US forces a firm base from which to operate towards Baghdad. Logistic supplies could be off loaded in the port and the two nearby airfields could be used by land based US aircraft.

Reinforcements could be brought in by air and sea and the US would not have to rely on allies for basing rights in neighboring countries.

Organising anti-Saddam forces

Meanwhile, about 70 former Iraqi military officers opposed to President Saddam Hussein carried out a

said to be plotting a US backed coup, to shut its offices in the enclave. A seven member central committee led the INC. Londonbased Ahmad Chalabi, a controversial former banker said to have powerful friends in the Pentagon and Congress.

Kurdistan Democratic Party: Founded by Mustafa Barzani ii 1946, the KDP is one of Irag's oldest opposition groups seeking more freedom for Iraq's four million Kurds; it has battled Baghdad for decades. Barzani's son Masoud, now 55, took over the party when his father died in 1979. Recently the KDP unveiled a draft constitution for a federal Iraq with autonomy for Kurds. The KDP has shared control of northern Iraq with the rival Patriotic Union of

Patriotic Union of Kurdistan: The PUK was founded in 1975 under the leadership of Jalal Talabani soon after the 1974-75 Kurdish rebellion collapsed. Talabani, 69 enjoy good relations with Iran and Saudi Arabia. The PUK and KDP are thought to have at least 40,000 fighters in northern Iraq, protected by a US-British no fly

Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq: Iran-based Ayatollah Mohammed Baqir Al Hakim whose father, the late Grand Avatollah Muhsin Al Hakim, was the spiritual leader of the world's Shi'ite Muslims from 1955-1970 leads SCIRI. It has six Islamist groups and scholars from Iraq's majority Shiite community. The group has a few thousand fighters, known as the Badr Corps, deployed on the Iranian side of the border with southern

Iragi National Accord: Avad Allawi, a British educated neurologist who defected from the ruling Iraqi Baath Party in the late 1970's formed INA in 1990 with the reported support of Kuwait and

Iraqi National Coalition: The Iraqi National Coalition groups several small factions headed by former officers. Its leader is Major General Tawfig Yassiri, a main organiser of the meeting. Yassiri led mutinous units in the mainly Shi'ite uprising against Saddam in southern Iraq after the Gulf War over

Kuwait. He later fled to West. Reaction of the Arab neighbours

Mood of almost all the Arab neighbours is much different this time. The support for invasion from their soil is almost nil with the exception of one or two smaller countries like Qatar and Bahrain and Oman who robust country lost the face of neutrality. All the Arab leaders viewing the imminent invasion of Iraq with utmost suspicion "the purpose to

dislodge of Saddam? The Arab world feel that is sidelining the most important and dangerous issue in Middle East --Israel and Palestinian conflict, Bush is forcing a war in the soil of Arab lands, which will not only destabilise the region but also will create more crises for the Arab rulers. Most of the Arab rulers and the people feel that is a total diversion from the main

Reaction of Kuwait: Kuwait being the archenemy of Iraq who suffered in the hands of Iran has denied involvement in any plans for a future US attack on its former occupier Iraq. It would not become a staging area for it, a newspaper reported. It also reported that Kuwait would not accept any attack on Iraq launched from its territory. Kuwaiti Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed Al Sabah told Al Rai Al Aam daily

Reaction of Jordan: Jordan has denied involvement in any plans for such an attack. Iraq's Arab neighbours have often publicly opposed any US led attack on Irag. Recently King Abdullah of Jordan while meeting US President Bush has clearly said that attacking Iraq will open the Pandora's box. He also emphasised that without clear solution of Middle East problems, attacking Iraq will bring disaster for Middle East.

Reaction of Saudi Arabia and Iran: The foreign minister of the United States' key Gulf ally Saudi Arabia and long time foe Iran expressed joint opposition to any US military action against common neighbour Iraq. "We have always opposed any attack against an Arab or Muslim country and that also means Iraq". Saudi foreign minister Saud Al Faisal told reporters on 3rd Aug 2002, as he was welcomed at the airport by his Iranian counterpart Kamal Kharazi. "That is Iran's position too", Kharazi said. "We too have the same position. As we have said on various occasions, we are opposed to any attack launched against any Muslim country. The Saudi Foreign Minister said that he was bringing a message from crown prince Abdullah for an Iranian leadership as part of the "continuing political consultation between the regional powers. This message deals with the Middle East situations and in general term with the whole

region' Reaction of European countries: US allies are divided on this issue of invading Iraq for the sake of ousting Saddam Hussein. The approval from the British people for committing British forces is not as high as used to be in 1991 in opera tion "Desert Storm." Debate still continues at various levels on this issue. However Britain may go along as it has done earlier being the closest ally. Other close allies both Russia. France and Germany have clearly opposed to this operation in Iraq. Otherwise also most of the European countries are not in favour of launching such a massive military operations in Iraq, because of the suffering the innocent people rill have to incur

UN reaction: Kofi Annan the Secretary General of the United Nations has not supported for such an operations in Iraq but insisted on Iraq to open all the suspected instal lations to the UN inspection team. In a sudden development Iraqi government has invited Inspection Team from UN to go to Iraq for carrying out Weapon Inspection. However, secretary of State Mr. Colin Powell has emphatically rejected an Iraqi offer to discuss a return of UN weapon inspectors who fled in December 1998 on the eye of the last massive US-British air strike in Baghdad.

President Bush's approval rate at home: After the bombing of World Trade Center in September 11[™] 2001, the tough measures taken by Bush, has raised the approval rate of the president at a highest of 88 per cent. Today it has come down to 70 per cent, which is still sliding as the American's are now worried about the rattled economy than the possibility of terrorist attack. Long time Washington Post political analyst David Broder, spent weeks interviewing such voters around the country and concluded "what I heard convinces me that the nine months moratorium on dissent from Bush's war of terrorism is coming to an end." Americans are getting louder about their concerns over Washington's expanded police powers -- the right to detain US citizens as "enemy combatants", the right to search through private library records, the right to try suspected terrorist in military tribunal the right to spy on Americans and so

UCLA law professor Ugene Volokh, who supported some of the government's post September 11 law enforcement proposals said, there are never the less some legitimate reasons to be concerned. It is easy enough to imagine a future administration, which is acting out of much less noble motive going after domestic enemies, and supposed ocal revolutionaries and using military justice and indefinite deten tion in order to go after them. "That's the sort of thing is very dangerous power to put in the hands of govern-

What political analysts think: After the end of cold war the world is hearing of and seeing most horrified self-destroying bomb blast to kill most hatred enemy. A soldier in a battlefield never carries such hatred or is motivated to do such a job against its enemy. This political crisis in Middle East between Israeli and Palestine becomes bad to worst. While world community understands that it is only USA who could solve the crisis in Middle East -- being financial supporter and arms supplier of over 10 billion dollars a year to Israel it could use its influence on its leaders.

Previously from the inception of the crisis all the presidents of the US had made very careful move to solve this issue by not showing any bi-partisan attitude. Even W. Bush's father's policy was evenhanded. President W. George Bush exposed to the world his leaning towards the Israeli. Because of this he has lost credibility to many countries as an

honest broker. Saudi Arabia. Jordan, who were always closest allies to US, have shown their total lack of confidence for present US government. There is a feeling that the external policy of US at this stage is being dictated by Israel. Three decades ago when Israel went for bombing and destroying Iraq's nuclear power plant, many Arab countries allowed it to fly over their territory with the insistence of USA. Why the attitude has changed so drastically it needs in-depth analysis and soul searching. Historically world's greatest power had a greatest debacle when it failed to understand the mood of people. Military and economic power may not

always bring success in action. Geo-political interest of superpower and its effect on countries: After the end of cold war USA the only superpower is now trying to have firm foothold in Asian continent. Earlier Soviet Union had a foothold in Arab world and some countries of the region, although US ruled the Indian Ocean by having presence of huge nava fleet/amphibious forces. Physical presence is being recognised as criterion these days to have economic influence particularly in oil and gas fields, as against protecting

sea-lanes earlier for passage. Some of the observers are of the opinion that the US is trying to have a foothold all over Asia. This is primarily to influence economy although countering terrorism is also an issue. Iraq has the world's second biggest reserve of oil after Saudi Arabia. Oil may be used as weapon in the future conflict, which Saddam used for a short while last year. Unless and until US removes Saddam from the power and put a man of its choosing in power in Iraq stability in future oil price will keep swinging. Of late in a forum at Pentagon allegation has been made against Saudi Arabia for financing terrorists although US government has not supported such allegations. This is a very serious issue to damage existing relationship between

the two countries. US has already consolidated its position by bringing couple of East European countries under NATO and also Russia, and few CIS countries under its umbrella by carrying out huge investments particularly in the Asian part of erstwhile Soviet Union.

By taking control of Afghanistan and placing troops at Uzbekistan/Kazakhstan and having firm foothold in Baghdad the position of only superpower USA be most secured.

Last of all China the new economic giant having one third of world population to be kept in check In the present world military and economic power will go hand to hand to dominate. China's influence in Asia is being monitored by USA with utmost concern.

It is felt that there may be turmoil in many Arab countries after the next invasion in Iraq. Some rulers may loose their credibility. On the contrary this will bring the Arab population together. US will make more enemies in general than friends. More voice may be heard from the subdued Arab population in the near future, which the rulers hate to hear.

The attack on Iraq is going to affect the present fragile world economy. The prices of food and essentia commodities will escalate and the oil price will rise further, which is at this moment already high. The poor countries will be poorer.

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Youth action for sustainable development

MOHAMMED AKEFUR RAHMAN

ESTERDAY, August 12, was International Youth Day (IYD). The theme of the year 2002 observance of International Youth Day "Now and for the Future: Youth Action for Sustainable Development" focuses on the World Summit on Sustainable Development to be held in Johannesburg from 26 August to 4 September 2002. The theme of this year is very timely and appreciable in context of current socio-economic and environmental situation.

The United Nations has been celebrating 12 August as International Youth Day since 2000 projecting actions in 10 priority areas to create awareness among youth community of the world. The areas of actions are Education, Hunger and Poverty, Health, Environment, Drug Abuse, Juvenile Delinquency, Leisure Activity. Girls and Young Women and full and effective Participation of Youth in the life of society and the decision making. In 1998, a resolution proclaiming August 12 as the International Youth Day was adopted by the first session of the World Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth, which was hosted by the government of Portugal in Lisbon August 8-12 in cooperation with the United Nations. The recommendation for the Day was subsequently endorsed by the 54th session of the General Assembly in December 1999.

As a result, 12 August has been observed all over the globe including Bangladesh with great enthusiasm. Ministry of governments responsible for youth and local and international youth organizations all around the world also observe this day through various programmes to mark the occasion.

Kofi Annan, the secretary general of the UN gave a message on the eve of IYD 2002. In his message he said, "As we celebrate this third International Youth Day, the global community is engaged in the final preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development to be held in Johannesburg. In these preparations, in the summit itself, and in the follow up work, the engagement of young people is crucial." He also called on the world community to make the best possible use of young people's imagination, energy and indomitable spirit, in the cause of sustaining the future

for succeeding generations. The statement made by the secretary general is really encouraging. This is also a significant achievement of the world youth community that youth issues will be given priority in the forthcoming earth summit in Johannesburg. But still there is a misconception in our society that young people are the future leaders of the nation and their main job is to study and getting prepared for a better career. And they should not get involved in present social activities. So keep them away from the mainstream of development activities. But now-adays this misconception is being removed from our society and everyone is convinced that young people should have a say in the development process. They should come forward and get involved in their own development as well as in

the development of the society.

Young people should be at the forefront of global change and innovation. Participation of youth in all development agenda should be ensured for the betterment of the world. Empowerment of youth should be through their active participation in decision-making process. And through these process

> peace. But in spite of being very potential human resources, young people in the world especially in the developing countries are facing lots of problems. Hunger, poverty, illiteracv. lack of adequate health facilities, subsequent addiction to drugs and involvement in crimes and terrorism are some of the many problems that the most potential segment of our population is facing. The other big challenge in front of the today's youth is unemployment. Unemployment has always been the cause of many social problems. Presently there are more than one billion youth (15-24 age group) in the world, and by the year 2010 an additional 700 million in developing

youth can be the key agents for

sustainable development and

the existing supply. In many countries, especially in the developing world, half of those people are under the age of 24. In Bangladesh the total scenario of present youth situation is not very encouraging as well. Though Bangladesh government has a ministry of youth and sports but we still don't have a proper and timely national

nations alone will enter the labour

market. One of the major causes of

poverty is insufficient opportunity for

people to earn a living- the global

demand for employment exceeds

youth policy. But hopefully the prime minister has recently told in a youth gatherings in Dhaka that her government is going to announce a National Policy for the Youth to better utilise the youth force in attaining progress and prosperity Which is really appreciable. A national youth policy is essential instrument for promoting full and effective participation and empowerment of youth in the life of society now and in the future. A youth policy represents the philosophy, vision, formula, framework, priority areas and approaches, complete with a plan of action and guidelines for implementation. Finally I would like to say that to

ensure sustainable development of the country as well as peace and progress in the society, active involvement of the youth force is a must. We also have to remember that problems of youth are not only their own problems; these are the problems of our society as well. But first of all young people should speak out about their problems and try to find the best solution to their existing problems. Side by side all concerned in the society should come forward to solve their problems. If society does not care about young people, they will do the same Someone rightly said. "What society does to young people; young people do the same thing to the society.

Mohammed Akefur Rahman is a youth activist and coordinator of YPSA Centre for Youth and