






PHOTOS: AFP

of other powers. It's certainly a watershed and the transition from G-7 to G-20 is probably more indicative of this change as the world resources, or 85% of it, is now shared amongst 20 countries rather than the previous 7.

That will certainly make the emerging economies feel very happy and proud but it also means that the LDCs, more than hundred countries in all, have seen their own economies continue to suffer and they remain left out of the global prosperity caravan.

In essence, the decline of US power doesn't mean in any way the end of global inequity. It could mean a solidification of the same ideology that has powered the wealth concentration process across the world from one to several. That may have ramifications for the countries now having an opportunity to share global leadership, but for the poorer countries of the world, the challenges remain as before.

**Three Main Issues: Economics, Environment and Security**

Three issues dominate the global scene. They are economics, security and the environmental crisis. Given that 85% of the resources are in the hands of these 20 countries, the world is more unbalanced than ever before. There is very little support for a fairer international economic regime where extreme poverty can at least be eradicated. The result has been rising poverty, inequity, and unrest globally.

The situation in Africa, where most of the countries if not all have been bypassed by global progress, is extremely difficult. This may be because of the perception that Africa is far away from everywhere and will not affect the world. However, the immigration problem especially of the "illegal" type often forced by desperation and poverty both is already causing problems for Europe. These migrants who are coming from North Africa continue to arrive despite many steps to stop them from doing so. With climate change, the number of refugees from Africa to Europe will increase.

Impoverishment of people living in the LDCs is not a global priority and the rise of India, Brazil and China has actually blunted the criticism of a global economic model which rewards the rich only. The poor have been hidden by the wealth-making of the emerging countries even in their own land. The newly-emerging countries have not followed any different path to prosperity in their own economy and within their borders it's the rich who have benefited most from official policies to focus on wealth creation. The poor have remained poor, and there is low concern about that from everywhere.

The models that operate in the emerging economies do so in political systems that vary widely. In China, the wealth creation is the most innovative and radical because the capitalist system operates under the Communist Party which claims capitalism as its greatest enemy. The party is all-pervasive in China and there is no multi-party or participatory democracy. Lack of access to civil society organising, a judicial system that provides relief to indigents, non-existent human rights scenario, and lack of internal debate about policies within the country makes China a strange practitioner of governance for all. The principal freedom is that to make money without much consideration to either environmental or social costs.

Perhaps the most striking fact is the lack of sharing of this new wealth amongst all and its concentration in very few hands. Government seems to have adopted the policy that as long as money is made nothing can go wrong. This lack of supervision has not been good, as a result of which Chinese products have faced troubles in external