

Humanitarian Action and Development Cooperation: Trends, Challenges and Opportunities

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You have invited me to speak today, as the former head of Oxfam, a non-confessional NGO based in the UK, and now a board member of several such agencies. As you know I am also a member of the Russian Orthodox Church but unlike the former speakers I have been asked to speak not from that perspective or even from my rather positive experience of working at different times with the social arm of the Orthodox Church in Ethiopia, Lebanon, Albania, Armenia, Kenya and Egypt, but rather from the experience of a lifetime spent in humanitarian and development NGOs working internationally. And from that rather specific viewpoint I will try to lay out the context, largely but not entirely secular, with which the social arm of the Church has to relate, both in deciding the degree to which values and concerns are shared and where joint activity should take place. And my apologies in advance to those of you for whom much, or all, of this will be familiar.

First, we do well to remember that, despite what I say about the modern history of humanitarian action and development cooperation, both concepts are as old as the first coming together of men and women in communities. Almost every society and every creed has believed in stretching out a helping hand to others in distress - disagreement has been on whether or not there are boundaries beyond which the duty to help is absent. Equally almost every society has seen the sense in creating economic and social well-being for a wider group than those in power. The disagreement has again been on where that duty ends. I will start with humanitarian action.

In my world - the world of the UN, the bilateral and multilateral donor organisations and the NGOs - the dawn of modern humanitarian action has a very clear date; the 24th June 1859 when a young Swiss businessman, Henry Dunant, walked over the battlefield of Solferino in Northern Italy and saw the dead unburied, the dying and the wounded, uncared for, the responsibility of no one. He had never seen a battlefield before and his description still moves one a century and a half later; "When the sun came up on the day after the battle it disclosed the most dreadful sights imaginable. Bodies of men and horses covered the battlefield; corpses were strewn over road, ditches, ravines, thickets and fields; the approaches to Solferino were literally thick with dead.... The poor wounded men were ghostly pale and exhausted. Some, who had gaping wounds already beginning to show infection, were almost crazed with suffering." But Dunant was not just a witness to this scene. Two actions followed. First he immediately set about organising teams of local women to bring bandages, food and water, other helpers carried the wounded to a neighbouring village, the dead were buried, letters were written to the families of dying men; the practical care that is one side of humanitarian action; but secondly, and what made him different from so many other good Samaritans, was what he did next when he returned to Geneva.

A century earlier another Genevois citizen, Jean-Jacques Rousseau wrote in *The Social Contract*: "War is in no way a relationship of man with man but a relationship between states, in which individuals are only enemies by accident, not as men but as soldiers." Building on this, Dunant now proposed two practical measures: an international agreement on the neutral status of medical personnel in the field and the creation of a permanent organization for practical assistance for the wounded. The second became the Red Cross. The first led to the adoption of various humanitarian codes of conduct culminating in 1949 with the four Geneva Conventions, covering protection of the wounded and sick, the shipwrecked, prisoners of war and civilians under occupation, with two protocols in 1977 one of which also covered internal armed conflicts. This body of international humanitarian law, (taken together with international human rights law originating from the UN on, for example, crimes

against humanity, genocide, asylum and refugees), has been ratified by almost every state in the world and, in a sense, therefore is the agreed lowest common denominator by which states and what have come to be called "non state actors"-militias, rebel groups, freedom fighters, terrorists-can be judged as fulfilling their duties in humanitarian disasters, or not.

So what do the conventions our governments have signed up to tell us has to be done? The Red Cross summarises them as follows:

- 1) People hors de combat, or not taking part in direct hostilities, are entitled to respect for their lives and physical and moral integrity.
- 2) It is forbidden to kill or injure an enemy who surrenders or is hors de combat.
- 3) The wounded and the sick shall be cared for by the party that has taken them prisoner, while medical personnel and property is protected.
- 4) The emblem of the Red Cross/Red Crescent is a sign of protection
- 5) Prisoners of war and captured civilians are entitled to respect for their lives, dignity and beliefs. They shall have the right to receive relief and communicate with their families.
- 6) Everyone shall be entitled to a fair trial.
- 7) No one shall be subjected to physical or mental torture or cruel and degrading treatment.
- 8) It is prohibited to use weapons or methods of warfare of a nature to cause unnecessary losses or excessive suffering.
- 9) Neither civilians nor their property shall be the object of attack.

It is a simple enough list but all of us will be able to think of examples where the rules have been disregarded not only by non-state actors but also by states including most of our own governments. And as we are considering this morning trends and challenges; this blatant disregard of International Humanitarian Law would seem to me both a deeply worrying trend and a major challenge in the field of humanitarian action. For 145 years the system of IHL has been laboriously built up to mitigate the misery of war; governments have, often reluctantly, signed up to various restrictions on the way they wage war, liberation movements have, to a degree, accepted those restrictions with a view to their wish for international approval. But today IHL faces challenge from at least two quarters; the first is from states who believe that the need to solve specific problems, usually classed under the broad heading of terrorism, allows them to disregard law for the sake of a greater good and at the same time feel powerful enough to neglect the reciprocal advantages of rigorous adherence to the law. The second challenge is from the growing groups of non state actors who, far from seeking international approval as was the case with liberation organisations, find a continuing state of war extremely profitable, allowing them to make considerable profits from the exploitation of mineral and other resources, diamonds by the RUF in Sierra Leone, cocaine in Colombia, precious metals in the Congo and so on. Such groups, often active in strategically unimportant parts of the world, have often been left very much to their own devices by the so-called great powers and have perpetuated their control of swathes of country by the most appalling brutality to the civilian population with frequent use of mutilation, rape and abduction of children to swell their ranks. (It is one of the ironies of our times that it is much easier to move 130,000 soldiers to Iraq than 10,000 peacekeepers into Cote d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone or the Congo)

So here we have a world where war is still regarded by all but a few as a legitimate instrument of policy, where there is a code of law which seeks to set limits and to protect the vulnerable but which is constantly under threat. How should those who seek to assist and protect the vulnerable, the UN, the Red Cross and civil society organisations like the Churches and NGOs behave to maximise their effectiveness? What principles should they follow which will be most widely recognised and give them the greatest freedom to act? Here again the Red Cross has been in the vanguard of presenting principles, which to a greater or lesser extent have been taken on board by the wider humanitarian community. In 1965 the Red Cross movement adopted the proposals of Jean Pictet for seven fundamental principles to guide their work: Universality, independence,

impartiality, humanity, neutrality, voluntary status and unity. In the 1990s the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response, made up of the nine largest groups of agencies involved in humanitarian action -The ICRC, the IFRC, the World Council of Churches, Caritas Internationalis, the Save the Children Alliance, The Lutheran World Federation, Care, Medecins Sans Frontieres and Oxfam International-developed their own Code of Conduct, closely based on the Red Cross principles but with some interesting variants:

- 1) The humanitarian imperative comes first
- 2) Aid is given regardless of the race, creed or nationality of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind. Aid priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone.
- 3) Aid will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint
- 4) We shall endeavour not to act as instruments of government foreign policy.
- 5) We shall respect culture and custom.
- 6) We shall attempt to build disaster response on local capacities
- 7) Ways will be found to involve programme beneficiaries in the management of relief aid.
- 8) Relief aid must strive to reduce future vulnerabilities to disaster as well as meeting basic needs.
- 9) We hold ourselves accountable to both those we seek to assist and those from whom we accept resources.
- 10) In our information, publicity and advertising activities, we shall recognise disaster victims as dignified human beings, not objects of pity.

The first four of these follow very closely six of the seven Red Cross principles, albeit couched in different language. The missing one is neutrality, defined by the Red Cross as "never to take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or doctrinal nature." For the International Committee such neutrality has, on the whole, worked well and has given governments and, in more recent years, various rebel groups the confidence to allow the ICRC access to prisoners and permission to carry out its work in wartime. But even for the ICRC it has been on occasion controversial, most of all their decision not to speak out in 1942 when they received incontrovertible evidence of the plans for the extermination of the Jews.

For the rest of the NGO world, without the special status of the ICRC, a strict interpretation of neutrality which excludes any possibility of bearing witness and speaking out has been found more difficult and by a number of agencies impossible. Sometimes when we see gross violations of human rights the NGOs follow the ICRC and try to work behind the scenes. I remember in Ethiopia in 1985, when Save the Children, Oxfam and MSF witnessed an appallingly brutal attempt to move and resettle many thousands of Tigrean farmers. SCF and Oxfam made their concerns known to government via the UN and continued their relief work; MSF made a strong press statement and had to leave. Which achieved more for the victims it is hard to say and which was morally more justified I am also not sure. Clearer perhaps was our dilemma in Rwanda in 1994. In Britain, the Church agencies and Oxfam denounced the actions of the Rwandan government as genocide; a view which the permanent members of the Security Council were loath to accept for by the terms of the Genocide Convention they would have been forced to intervene if it was indeed genocide. Neutrality seemed to us an untenable position in the face of such evil, our ability to give practical assistance was minimal and our hope, sadly not realised, was for international support to the tiny beleaguered UN force. So neutrality remains a controversial principle, rejected by some, sporadically followed by others. But it is also worth noticing what is new in these 10 guidelines; a strong emphasis on respect for local culture, building on local capacity and involving the affected communities in the design, management and implementation of assistance programmes. The humanitarian community at all but the local level, unlike the development community of whom I will speak in the second half of my talk, is still hugely dominated by organisations based in North America and Western Europe with Geneva at its centre. And yet local humanitarian action, of government, the national Red Cross, faith and non-government groups, and indeed the affected communities themselves, will invariably be the first and sometimes the main humanitarian actors,

especially in dealing with natural disaster. Those bringing resources, cash, food equipment, expertise from outside need to be aided by that local presence and not to overwhelm it, as has all too often happened in the past. The ninth clause is also interesting; the attempt of agencies to hold themselves accountable not only to donors but also to beneficiaries. In recent years this wish by many agencies to make clearer what they believe their mandate to be, to state openly what they are trying to do and then to be held accountable has led to two further developments: Sphere and the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership.

Sphere was launched in 1997 by the Red Cross Movement and a group of humanitarian NGOs and has been developed by no less than 400 organisations including several represented here, working in 80 countries, an extraordinary feat of coordination. The initiative was based on two core beliefs: that all possible steps should be taken to alleviate human suffering arising out of calamity and conflict, and that those affected by disaster have a right to assistance. And to help that end they framed a Humanitarian Charter, based on International Humanitarian and Human Rights law. Refugee law and the Red Cross/NGO Code of Conduct, and identified minimum standards to be attained in disaster assistance in five main sectors; water supply and sanitation, nutrition, food aid, shelter and health services. The Charter describes the core principles that govern humanitarian action and reasserts the right of populations affected by disaster to protection and assistance and the right of disaster affected populations to life with dignity. It points out the legal responsibilities of states and warring parties to guarantee that right to protection and assistance and it reminds those authorities that if they are unable or unwilling to fulfil their responsibilities, they are obliged to allow humanitarian organisations to provide them instead. The standards not only summarise what are appropriate levels of food or water for such and such a size of refugee or displaced population but also looks at these from the viewpoints of gender and of particularly vulnerable groups: children, elderly, disabled, those with HIV/AIDS and so on. All this represents a new and remarkable agreement on the whys and whats of humanitarian action.

But the next step in self-regulation and collective accountability, the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership, has proved more controversial. For this has invited beneficiaries to make their own views known on the style and substance of assistance and to claim the rights that IHL and the codes and charters lay out. Here opposition has come from two angles, one from more independent NGOs that say such types of self regulation give hostile governments a stick to beat those who they may see as an irritating interference and the other, particularly from the USA, is concerned it will lead to damaging litigation.

So much then for the context and some of the trends in humanitarian action, what of the challenges and opportunities? The list could be very long but I will stick to five of each. First challenges:

1) I have spoken largely today about humanitarian action in conflict but much of what I have said would also apply to what we rather inaccurately call natural disaster; inaccurately for at least two reasons; the problems brought about by climate change and global warming clearly can be mitigated but for the moment some of the most powerful and polluting states refuse to take action and secondly even where the natural disaster may be unavoidable, for example an earthquake, preparedness can make the difference between thousands of deaths as recently in Bam or a handful as in California. The challenge for the Church, parts of which are already known to have clear views on environmental issues, is how to channel that voice when many governments, notably Russia and America, take a strong view that economic growth should take precedence over dealing with long term environmental damage.

2) The disregard of international law I have mentioned already; the Rule of Law is too precious, too hard won to let go without resistance. Without it the whole concept of humanitarian action to assist and protect innocent civilians is left to the whim of the strongest and the task of the UN, the Churches the NGOs and the rest becomes impossible. The more specific challenge for the Church is the degree it feels comfortable with supporting and speaking up for a normative system based on the UN charter and humanitarian and human rights law.

3) My other three challenges are more concerned with how we as humanitarian actors can work. First security. One of the prerequisites of humanitarian action, one of the reasons for the endless discussion about impartiality and neutrality, is the need to ensure the safety of the humanitarians themselves. Until the 1990s this was not a big issue. Even in the tensest situations we felt safe. I had two colleagues kidnapped by Abu Nidal in Lebanon in 1987 but they were held only briefly and they were soon released after a heart warming show of unity by Palestinian and Lebanese NGOs who went on the streets of Sidon to demand their release. But in the 1990s this changed. Red Cross workers were killed in Bosnia, Somalia and most savagely in 1996 in Chechnya; last August we lost some of the best people in the UN in Baghdad. No longer is the role of the humanitarian worker secure.

4) Protection and Assistance. I have mentioned before the dilemmas created by these twin sides of humanitarian action. Both are vital but it is often not easy to combine them. The provision of assistance needs access and that, except in the relatively rare cases where there is a well armed peacekeeping force or a particularly law-abiding protagonist, requires the building of trust with the warring parties but what to do when those you seek to assist are being murdered, raped, mutilated. If persuasion has no effect on the party concerned and you raise the matter more widely, the limited trust that may have been built up instantly disappears and the ability to provide assistance with it. Such dilemmas sadly seem to have become increasingly common; in Colombia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, the Congo, Sudan, Bosnia and Indonesia to name but some where I have consciously had to make difficult decisions in the last decade.

5) The Red Cross/NGO Code of Conduct emphasises the importance of humanitarian actors not acting or seeming to act as instruments of government foreign policy. When most conflict was internal this was more a problem for local organisations than for the big actors of Europe and North America; but in the latest phase of intervention in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq, the belligerents are also the donor governments. Should an independent charity accept money from such a government, should it accept logistical help? Different agencies are taking different decisions but it is no longer so nicely clear-cut. And what of Orthodox churches when the governments of their countries are the belligerents in a conflict? Can they maintain appropriate impartiality and neutrality? Certainly few things are more damaging to the credibility of church agencies than when this does not happen. So much for challenges, what of opportunities?

1) Well some are the other side of the challenges. The fact that we do have an agreed universal legal framework means we have a very different context in which to work and from which to encourage good practice than the one that confronted Henry Dunant in 1859 or indeed was in force in the Second World War. And when the Church speaks out in its defence, that is surely a prophetic act rather than a political one..

2) Again there is a wide acceptance that those suffering because of war and disaster have a right to protection to assistance and protection which others have a duty to provide. The tenth anniversary of the genocide in Rwanda has led to a number of those who did little then, to recognise their failure and to suggest ways of making the oft-repeated cry of "never again" more of a reality for the future.

3) Then there is the development of local capacity and not least church agencies to complement the work of governments and of international agencies. This may at first be mainly in the field of assistance but growing capacity is likely to lead to greater respect and trust and therefore to growing ability in the field of protection as well.

4) The extraordinary and continuing levels of good will in every society towards those who suffer. While I believe that social justice should be at the heart of diakonia the fact that you have a duty to the victim -who himself or herself has rights to such help - does not, of course, rule out charitable and philanthropic instincts. I liked Fr Emmanuel's quote from St Basil: "A favour done because you must is without grace." Even in a society apparently materialist and self-centred as my own is sometimes thought to be, I never cease to be amazed at the outpourings of cash and time for the victims of war and disaster and the willingness to take direct action, for example the unprecedented anti war marches last year, when people are convinced that unjust actions are being taken.

5) But finally the biggest opportunity is around better working together and a clearer, more consistent voice from all those involved in humanitarian action. To quote one major humanitarian: "The aim of humanitarian action is the protection of the civilian population and those hors de combat in war. The highest form of humanitarian victory relies upon a profound and powerful humanitarian influence. This is the ability to join with others to create a deep culture of respect for humanitarian values - universal, impartial, independent and based on our common humanity - so that every state, every armed group, has no choice but to observe their side of the bargain/* On the humanitarian side alone this would be a very strong argument to keep together and build on the network here today.

And now to Development Cooperation.

Alexis has already made use of that probably spurious Chinese proverb much quoted in development literature and now so will I: "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach him to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." That in a nutshell is the difference between the humanitarian and developmental point of view, though nowadays most people working in development cooperation would feel there was a third, more political, stage for the Chinese fisherman; help him, or her, to organise with other fisherfolk to stop the mercury poisoning pouring into the river from a foreign owned factory upstream! But while one may be about saving lives and the other about making lives liveable, there is, to my mind, a much bigger difference. In the world of humanitarian action I believe we know what needs to be done but to make that happen we need to widen the consensus and make our voice heard. With development cooperation, in contrast, I think there has been great disagreement about the way forward and the insights of the Orthodox churches could add crucial and essential new insights. But how did we get to where we are? "Countries, like people, have always interfered in each other's affairs. For the first 2000 or so years of recorded history, war and conquest were the driving force. Then came trade, commerce and control over the raw materials and sea routes that were essential to economic superiority. The idea that countries might benefit by cooperating surfaced periodically in the 19th century, but had little influence over politics and economics. It took two devastating world wars and the great depression of the 1930s to convince people that there had to be a better way."¹ And that is what led in the 1940s to the structures and to some extent the beliefs that have guided international development since then. Its roots are firmly based in a world view, arising directly from the Enlightenment but of course going back long before that, that nature placed no limits on human achievement, an abiding faith in the power of scientific knowledge and, by 1945, the assumption by the most economically successful states that their way was the way to be copied by all others. In a speech in 1949, President Truman called for the 'vigorous application of modern and scientific and technical knowledge to improve the underdeveloped part of the world'. And that combined with detailed economic planning and a rapid process of decolonisation was very much the way forward envisaged, albeit with different economic systems, by the two superpowers. To move the process forward the World Bank, the IMF, the different UN agencies like FAO, WHO and UNDP were created and most industrialised governments began to assign resources to economic development outside their immediate borders. The first and still to now the biggest and most generous aid plan was the most successful, the Marshall Plan, which helped to rebuild post war Western Europe. The massive economic boom of the 50s and 60s, the biggest in history, with a fourfold expansion in world trade all led the economic gurus in Washington and elsewhere to feel they were on the right road. In the 70s, however, doubts began to arise. Whole parts of the world and whole sections of the population in both industrialised North and the underdeveloped South were being bypassed; the theory that wealth would trickle down to the whole population seemed not to be working. And in the 80s the deflationary macroeconomic policies of the industrialised world triggered a global recession, accompanied by collapsing commodity prices and rising Third World debt. Foreign direct investment declined, aid flows reduced especially to the least developed countries and by 1985 poorer countries were transferring \$15 billion more to rich countries than they were receiving. The 1980s were indeed a lost

' Michael Edwards, Future Positive, Earthscan, 1999

decade for development and nowhere more than in Sub-Saharan Africa, a situation about to be still further worsened by the appearance of HIV/AIDS and a dramatic fall in life expectancy. Not surprisingly all this led to widely diverging views of where development cooperation should be going. The neoliberal view, the so-called Washington consensus, saw the only way forward as a linear progression to market economies, with minimalist government and a strong emphasis on liberalisation and privatisation and with economic growth as the main goal. Ironically this view in a fairly extreme form prevailed all too uncritically in much of Eastern Europe and with socially and economically damaging results post 1989. (I remember being at a UNDP round table in Bucharest in 1992 where elderly Nobel prize winning economists pleaded with bright young finance ministers not to move too fast to liberalise and privatise their economies - in vain).

But from the 1970s onwards there were increasing calls to look at distribution of wealth rather than growth for its own sake and to demand that the development agenda should be not just about macroeconomic changes from above but also about the poor themselves realising their potential to be full and equal human beings, the authors of their own development, albeit in partnership with others who could help with resources and skills. Such voices were particularly strong in Latin America with the growth of liberation theology and the idea of 'a preferential option for the poor.' But also in India, newly independent Bangladesh, the Philippines and elsewhere not dissimilar ideas, though coming from different religious and philosophical roots, were being voiced. Increasingly what we now call NGOs were coming into being in growing numbers and calling for a new sort of development that empowered people rather than just allowed them to be passive spectators. This, of course, also influenced the older NGOs in the North, founded like Save the Children after the First World War to work for children's rights or like Oxfam founded in 1942 to send relief supplies to occupied Greece. These organisations had been very largely humanitarian charities in their early years but by the sixties were moving into longer-term social and economic development, not at the governmental level but in partnership with communities at village and district level. Increasingly there was a view that development was neither just about economic growth, though most agreed that was still essential, but about people taking more control over their own lives, whether rich or poor, women or men, young people or elderly; and the work of development agencies be they religious or secular, governmental or non governmental should be there to help that agenda, not just drive their own. The idea that development aid and cooperation could be harmful was not, of course, new. Abba Paphnutius, an Egyptian hermit in the fourth century, put it well; "I have seen a man on the bank of a river buried up to his knees in mud, and some men came to give him a hand and help him out, but they pushed him further in up to his neck." But just as the churches and faith groups of other religions, NGOs and civil society were looking to move development decisions back to those most concerned by them, so the process of globalisation began to push decisions even further away. Information, ideas and money were moving around the globe at the touch of a button and at ever accelerating rate. To those who had a part in this revolution, ever more was being given but at an even faster rate inequality was growing between them and the rest of the world. In this process, the complex web of connections between people and societies, were increasingly, often uncomfortably, obvious. Decisions taken in one part of the world that have profound implications for people whether on the doorstep or thousands of miles away are transmitted instantaneously. But rapid information exchange can put people in touch with each other as never before, creating the possibility of new strategic alliances of concerned people. This facet of globalisation has, over the last twenty years, moulded many NGOs into intriguing new shapes. In many cases they came to the view that in such a world their traditional, and still crucial, activities of grassroots development and emergency relief work, were unlikely in themselves to produce sustained improvement in the lives of impoverished people. At first their advocacy was largely negative, criticising what they saw as wrong with bilateral and multilateral development policies but increasingly many are advocating positive

alternatives. This move towards new styles of advocacy has helped to widen the way NGOs look at their field of operations. They increasingly see it as essential to operate at several different levels and in several different ways, not only at the grassroots or in micro projects, but in helping people make their own voices heard at the national or international level. NGOs, in all parts of the world are also expanding their horizontal links, not only by increasingly working together but by seeking to work with other actors, be they from governments, business corporations, or multilateral bodies like the World and regional banks. The success of these new sorts of international alliance can be seen most clearly in the Jubilee Campaign, largely made up of Churches and NGOs. Jubilee made a real impact on thinking and created some (albeit insufficient) forgiveness of debt owed by the least developed countries to multilateral lenders. Another success was the International Campaign against Landmines which led in 1997 to the treaty banning landmines, now ratified by over 140 countries, though sadly not by three permanent members of the Security Council, the USA, Russia and China. And now we see the life enhancing, if somewhat chaotic, gatherings of the World Social Forum in Puerto AUegre and this year in Mumbai.

But I would now like to come up to the present and take a look at what has been achieved in this uneasy process of development cooperation over the last 50 years and what the trends now appear to be. I will then conclude with a few thoughts about challenges and opportunities.

On average people live longer and in better health. Some diseases like small pox have been eradicated. Child death rates in developing countries have dropped by more than half. Per capita food production has risen by 20 % refuting the more gloomy Malthusian forecasts. The percentage of people with access to clean water has doubled to more than 70%. Adult literacy has risen from less than half to around three quarters. In the 1990s there was a significant drop in the percentage of people living in extreme poverty (living on less than \$1 a day) and even a drop of 200 million in the number. But there is still a huge way to go. The drop in the numbers of very poor people is overwhelmingly the result of rapid growth and some redistribution in East Asia, notably China and Vietnam, and, to a lesser degree in India. In Sub Saharan Africa the numbers of the very poor have actually increased and in Latin America, although there has been economic growth, it has totally failed to reach the poorest. There are also parts of the former USSR and countries like Palestine and Iraq where previously relatively quite prosperous societies have seen dramatic falls in their living standards. And if the story of poverty is of very mixed success and failure, more depressing is the massive growth of inequality between countries and within them. The average income in the richest 20 countries is now 37 times that in the poorest 20, a doubling in ratio in 40 years. The one thing on which most people now agree is that the worst sort of abject poverty can be ended. The world has the means but does it have the will? In 2000 the entire membership of the United Nations signed up to the Millennium Development Goals-seven goals (and 32 more precise indicators) to be achieved by 2015:

- 1) Halve the numbers living on less than \$1 a day
- 2) Achieve universal primary education
- 3) Promote gender equality and empower women
- 4) Reduce child mortality by two thirds
- 5) Reduce maternal mortality by three quarters
- 6) Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- 7) Ensure environmental sustainability

When they were agreed, there was a general agreement they were doable but already by 2004 they are beginning to slip. Only last week the World Economic Forum, not a body known for being alarmist, said governments were only doing a third of what was needed to achieve the goals and identified what it calls some disturbing trends: the proportion of people who are hungry is likely to increase in the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. 96 countries are not on track to reach the objective of primary education for all children by 2015. There is little evidence of a serious effort to curb greenhouse gas emissions, which are thought to cause global warming. And on

present trends it will be 2147 before the poorest countries in Africa halve poverty and 2165 before child mortality falls by two thirds. Three years ago I was on an interesting panel set up by the UN Secretary General to look at what it would cost to fund the goals and where the money might come from. We came up with a figure of somewhere between \$50 and 100 billion per year in addition to present flows of aid, investment and debt relief. At a conference in Mexico some months later the same countries that had endorsed the goals only a year before found no way of finding this amount. And yet we now see a single country finding considerably more in extra costs to fight the war in Iraq. Even in the confines of how to achieve security for all, one wonders where the money might have been best spent.

So, for me, there are two global development challenges that underlie all others. The first is about what change needs to take place to ensure those goals do not remain pie in the sky. What are the specific actions that will reverse the negative trends? But the greater challenge is about will. Can we tolerate the inequalities globally that we would never tolerate locally, especially when the tools for change are available? As one great Nobel Prize winning economist, Amartya Sen, said: "If poverty were an infectious disease that could be caught by the rich as well as the poor, it would have been eradicated long ago." The Mahatma Gandhi said the test of a moral society was how it treated its poorest member. And if that is the test globally then we need to recognise the deep immorality of the present situation. And it is not just morally unacceptable; it is also surely clear that it makes good sense in practical terms in the attempt of governments to make the world a more secure place. Poverty does not produce terrorism but deep injustice and inequality certainly gives it a fertile breeding ground. So how do we help to produce a will that would regard abject poverty with the same revulsion as slavery and ensure its eradication? I would also mention one question more specific to the NGOs and which also applies to church organisations who wish to engage in advocacy. When do you challenge from outside, whether governments or private companies, and when engage from inside. In Britain there is a long tradition of the Chancellor of the Exchequer inviting the Faith groups and the NGOs on a regular basis to discuss development economic issues like debt or capital flows; not so much to get another socio economic blueprint but to get an ethical and human reaction based on real grassroots experience, and there is no doubt that such discussions have influenced government policy to the good. But how do you then react when you feel the government has gone seriously wrong, as almost universally both the Churches and NGOs did over Iraq? Quiet discussion behind closed doors may then be less effective.

But to return to the two big questions. On the first, what to do to make globalisation more equitable, the opportunities are considerable. Past failures are beginning to lead to new agreement on what a global new deal would look like or at least include. We would see a new deal on aid and debt relief with concessional flows doubling; new global and local partnerships to ensure minimum standards of health, education, clean water and so on; international institutions and rules would be reformed to allow real participation by all; there would be a fairer trading system which would stop dumping subsidised products from rich countries to poor while ensuring market access in return; corporate responsibility would look at the longer term social and environmental benefits as well as the shorter term benefit to shareholders; serious attention to building the rule of law would be rewarded and there would be renewed commitments to poverty reduction and redistribution. But there remains, the question of will and of leadership. How to bring this dream into reality.

In his paper written for this conference, Alex Belopopsky, asks: "In the context of a globalising economy, and a seemingly 'tired' debate on North South development cooperation, what can the Orthodox Church and her theology contribute to reflection on international solidarity? What can be authentic Orthodox forms of international aid and professional development? What new synergies with the modern world and with secular organisations can the Church offer?" He then quotes Patriarch Bartholomew reminding us "that love for Christ is shown through love for other people.

There is no other way". My own answer to Alex' question about what the Church can contribute, confirmed by our discussions over the last few days, is "A great deal". For what stops individuals and governments grasping the great opportunities for healing our planet and ensuring all of us can play our full part in life is surely because of an imperfect understanding of the nature of man. Once there is a real belief that man is truly an icon of God, made in his image, somehow the rest of the jigsaw falls into place. And it is this very full, in essence, optimistic view of man that could help to make that debate on development cooperation less tired and far more fruitful. An old friend, Michael Taylor, former head of Christian Aid and known to a number of you, in an excellent book, 'Not Angels but Agencies' wonders if the World Council of Churches and agencies like his own Christian Aid actually have anything different to say on the response to poverty than secular organisations. The chapter is called: "Are you Oxfam with Hymns"? He puzzles over this at some length and in doing so refers with particular approval to the WCC meeting at the Orthodox Academy in Crete in 1978 on the approach to diakonia, to which Alex also refers and which Michael believes shows clearly that the Church has indeed something crucial to say. Reading a summary of that meeting certainly confirms Michael's view: "The main emphasis of Diaconia is not on quantity but on quality and intention, it is an offering intended for the totality of human spiritual needs, it liberates humanity from poverty, oppression and penury which are obstacles to salvation and it requires a simpler lifestyle. asceticism and self sacrifice, it should be on a large, even worldwide scale, tackling such issues as racism, development and ecology because Christ's offering was for the redemption and unity of all mankind...". Just so. And if those sorts of attitude could influence the wider debates, the difference would be immense. Incidentally, the date of that meeting is particularly interesting for me for it was around that time that I enjoyed collaboration with four Orthodox bishops who seemed to me to make those words a reality in what they were trying to do in extremely difficult circumstances and all of whom played a part in my own thinking of what underlay the 'tired' debates; Bishop Samuel, playing a crucial part in the renewal of the Coptic Church and tragically assassinated alongside President Sadat in 1981, Bishop Georges Khodr and Archbishop, later Catholicos, Karekin struggling courageously for human rather than sectarian values as Lebanon descended into civil war; and Bishop Anastasios a few years later in Kenya as hugely involved then in what development cooperation should be about as he has been in more recent years in Albania. Certainly all this convinced me that Orthodoxy both in belief and practice has a great deal to contribute to humanitarian and development action both at the local level and far more widely. From what I have heard here I would suggest we need now to work on at least three tracks; the first is to increase cooperation and learning among Orthodox organisations to improve their effectiveness and to allow interaction internationally. Secondly, the dialogue needs to continue on whether diakonia can include not only charitable acts but a concept of social justice and human rights that will allow engagement with likeminded NGOs and other faith groups. And thirdly, how can the Church articulate its beliefs and use its voice not in a narrow political way but prophetically to warn and to influence the international debates on the future of mankind. Never has the world needed those insights more. The 18th century British statesman, Edmund Burke, once said: 'It is necessary only for the good man to do nothing for evil to triumph.' So for me the challenge that has to come from a meeting like this is not whether we engage but how.