

# A NEW GLOBAL HUMANITARIAN ORDER

## Excellency

This post-Cold War period has stimulated our hopes that a new world order can be established on the basis of mutual respect, equality opportunity for all peoples, the consolidation of democracy and human development.

A renewed opportunity is now afforded to place the welfare of our peoples at the centre of national and international effort. Our peoples have the right not only to political freedom but also to the full development of their attributes. To this end we should strive again, as expressed in Article 1, paragraph 3 of the "Charter of the United Nations". "To achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character." Only then can sturdy and lasting foundations for international peace and security be established.

We must resolve to reverse the gap which has been developing between the richest and poorest countries. The divisions between the rich and the poor in

the industrialised societies in the North and in the developing and underdeveloped societies in the South as well as the distance in attainment between the North and the South have been widening considerably since the early 1980s.

In the North the consequence of these disparities has been unemployment, homelessness, urban disorder, increase in crime especially among the youths, the rise of ultra-right movements, strident nationalism and fragmentation accompanied by racism and ethnic tensions.

In the South the consequence of these divisions has been the increase in crime and disease, hopelessness, emigration, environmental degradation, the illegal traffic and use of narcotic drugs.

Taken together there is a situation of despair, alienation and indifference.

More alarming, however, is the incidence of increasing poverty across the globe. Poverty atrophies the vigour and initiative of the individual and de-



**Cheddi Jagan** prives the society of incalculable human resources at a critical time. Its elimination will enrich our community and release a harvest of energy and skills. If left unattended the expansion of poverty, with hunger, will undermine the fabric and security of the democratic state.

In December 1992, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution entitled "New International Humanitarian Order." That resolution urges Governments as well as governmental and non-governmental organisations to provide comments and expertise for the Secretary-General regarding the humanitarian order and to develop international cooperation in the humanitarian field.

In October 1993, the Commonwealth Heads of Government at their meeting in Cyprus considered a memorandum on: "The Emergence of a New Global Humanitarian Order." That memorandum comprised a set of principles to govern the behaviour of states to underpin the new humanitarian order and to prevent conflicts. Accordingly, Commonwealth Heads agreed to establish a high-level inter-governmental group to examine specific ways in which the Commonwealth can make a contribution to the work of the international community.

With this in mind I introduced in March 1994 at the Inter-Sessional meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community at St. Vincent and the Grenadines an item: "The Emergence of a Global Humanitarian Order." CARICOM Heads discussed the item and agreed to work together at the regional level and in concert with the Commonwealth high-level group to advance the concept globally.

At the same meeting in St. Vincent, and the Grenadines, we also supported a proposal by Dr. Carlos Saul Menem, President of the Argentine Republic, to establish an International

Volunteer Corps for the Fight Against Hunger. The main objectives of this Corps of Volunteers, as you are aware, are to eradicate hunger and eliminate extreme poverty. Earlier in November 1993, Dr. Menem had transmitted the proposal to the United Nations Secretary-General in the intention that the Corps will operate within the framework of the United Nations.

These several efforts acknowledge a concern for the expanse of hunger and poverty in this new order. All societies, nationalities and systems of government are prey to their debilitating effects. However, individual states or societies cannot deal adequately with this problem. The evolving globalized system supports a global response.

As I stated in November 1993, a development strategy for the eradication of poverty must be global and positive, not the South against the North and the North against the South, but the North and South in interdependence, cooperation and partnership. It would be disastrous for humankind if the East/West conflict of the Cold war era were to be transformed into a North/South conflict.

Among other pertinent re-

sponses to the crises is the Human Development Report of 1992 published for the United Nations Development Programme. The Report calls for a new global compact on human development: in essence, an agreement to put people first in national policies and in international development cooperation. The UNDP Report lists a number of objectives to inform international effort.

#### THESE INCLUDE INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES LEADING TO:

- (1) The establishment of global institutions to respond to the global dimension of the existing human society. Global governance today is weak and is dispersed over a number of institutions. For example, the Group of Seven, The Group of Fifteen, the Group of Twenty-Four, the Group of Seventy-Seven. Those institutions which are the exclusive preserve of the industrialised and wealthy states exert tremendous power and influence on international activity;
- (ii) The United Nations system itself also has to play a more central role in global economic management and should have access to larger financial resources. Important global issues like debt, monetary stabil-

ity and international resource transfers have not been dealt with extensively in the UN system;

(iii) The Bretton Woods Institutions - the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank - have moved away from their original mandate and need now to concentrate on human development, as distinct from the means of development, positing human beings at the centre of their deliberations;

(iv) Democracy has been making promising gains in the nation states. This development is also imperative for the international institutions where reforms are necessary within the context of the evolving global system where the general welfare of the peoples of our globe is central. Thus the UN should assume greater responsibility for the formulation of development policy. This can be pursued through a new Development Security Council which would establish the broad policy framework for all global development issues;

(v) The IMF can then be adjusted to serve as global central bank, its original *raison d'être*, to create a common currency, maintain price and exchange rate stability, channel

global surpluses and deposits, rationalize access to credits, and provide the liquidity and credits which the poor countries need separately;

(vi) The World Bank would then return to its original mandate to mediate between the capital markets and the developing countries by assuming the role of an international investment trust, creating a new loan widow - an Intermediate Assistance Facility - that would help countries to graduate from the concessional International Development Association terms but not yet sturdy to meet the tougher terms of the World Bank;

(vii) A new Official Development Assistance (ODA) which can channel to the poorest countries two-thirds of ODA, instead of the present one-quarter, is also a priority;

(viii) Additionally, a system of progressive income tax should be collected from the rich nations to be distributed to the poor nations according to their income and development needs;

(ix) Merger of the current functions of the GATT and UNCTAD ensure free and equal access to all forms of global

trade, to manage commodity stabilization schemes and to research and offer recommendations for commodity prices; the current functions of GATT and UNCTAD can be merged;

(x) The UN Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED) offers an opportunity for both rich and poor countries to accept sustainable human development as an achievable goal. UNCED also seeks to ensure that the poor countries have access to technology to promote human development in a sustainable way. In this regard the Global Environment Facility is a valuable mechanism and we would need to expand its resource base, enlarge the participation of the developing countries, expand its mandate to cover national capacity building and the environmental priorities of developing countries: water, diversification, urban degradation and acid rain;

(xi) A greater role for non-governmental organisations in the reformed institutions without diminishing the vital interests and representation of the poorer south;

(xii) Urgent action to utilize the gains at the end of the Cold War by further reducing military expenditure which had reached a

peak of US\$838 billion in 1987. The UNDP Report proposed that all countries should agree to reduce military expenditures in the 1990s by at least 3% a year. This would yield by the year 2000 a "peace dividend" of US\$1.5 trillion. This "peace dividend" will give the wealthy countries a chance to direct more resources to a social agenda and to assist poor countries through debt relief. A new debt bargain can be reached to halt the current debt related transfer of \$50 billion a year from the developing countries to developed countries;

(xiii) Further liberalisation of global markets both in goods and services so as to accelerate global growth and allow a more equitable distribution of its benefits;

(xiv) Creating sufficient job opportunities to absorb the annual increase in the labour force and to contain immigration pressures. To this end I had suggested increased employment through reducing the number of days or the number of hours worked without loss of pay;

(xv) A Works Programme for physical and social infrastructure similar to that of President F.D. Roosevelt's New Deal;

(xvi) Tax and other incentives for more research and the use of science and technology to create jobs instead of eliminating them;

(xvii) Greater emphasis on increasing and improving basic services in health, education, housing and nutrition.

I have outlined some proposals for a fresh consideration; some countenance major institutional changes and sustained mutual understanding. Notwithstanding, I am assured that there exists the political goodwill to construct a new order where the primacy of human development is the guiding principle. Preparing a peaceful and orderly transition to the twenty-first century is compelling.

These proposals are not exhaustive; they are merely indicative of the challenging options available. I am convinced

that with coordinated international effort poverty and hunger can be eradicated in our lifetime. What is required is the international collaboration to define a framework for action buttressed by the resources from the "peace dividend."

The late President Felix Houphouet-Boigny reminded that:

**PEACE**

*in the true sense of the word is peace of hearts and minds, through justice, tolerance and happiness, for God is love.*

To this noble end I seek your support,

Yours sincerely,



**CHEDDI JAGAN**  
President

**May 1st, 1994.**