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Globalisation, the Common Good and Catholic Social Thought

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“It is necessary to state once more the characteristic principle of Christian social doctrine: the goods of this world are originally meant for all. The right to private property is valid and necessary, but it does not nullify the value of this principle. Private property, in fact, is under a ‘social mortgage,’ which means that it has an intrinsically social function, based upon and justified precisely by the principle of the universal destination of material goods.”

Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, n. 42

3.1. Introduction

Ireland has reaped the benefits of rapid economic development in recent years, earning itself the title of ‘the most globalised economy in the world’. In terms of income, Ireland now ranks ninth in the global economy, with an average income of \$45,580¹⁴ per head of population. In 2005, The Economist magazine ranked Ireland as the ‘best place to live’ in the world.¹⁵ For the first time in recent history, the country has

¹⁴ The measurement of Ireland’s national wealth is subject to debate due to the large number of foreign businesses operating within the country. GNI (Atlas method) is accepted as the best measure of actual wealth at a given time. In terms of GNP per capita, measured in \$US PPP, Ireland ranked 14th globally at \$35,540 in 2006 (World Development Indicators, 2006). In terms of the more holistic Human Development Index, Ireland ranks 4th overall. These and other economic indicators are available at www.finfacts.ie/biz10/globalworldincomepercapita.htm

¹⁵ See <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/4020523.stm> for report on Economist survey.

¹⁶ Using constant prices [Atlas Method]. It is possible to get higher rates if you use PPP but this is the widely accepted method and is consistent with your use of the Atlas method earlier. [Source World Development Indicators]

become a destination of immigration rather than the point of departure, with economic growth rates averaging 5.2% per annum between 1990 and 2005.¹⁶

But while Ireland has become a largely prosperous country, such prospects remain elusive for most of the world's population. Huge inequalities still exist, whether measured in terms of basic income or access to critical services, such as health care and education. Moreover, as economic development accelerates in some regions of the world, the environmental impacts are becoming increasingly apparent, particularly in terms of climate change. The challenge of climate change threatens to undo even the small gains that the poorest countries have made, particularly in Africa, and could set back any real chances for lasting progress.

The persistence of such inequalities in an interconnected world raises difficult questions that go to the heart of our sense of shared humanity and justice, a problem highlighted by Pope Benedict XI in his first Encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*.¹⁷ That Encyclical poses the question of our responsibility towards the needs of others as part of the one human family, be they nearby or on the other side of the world. Governments and individuals alike have to face the question of how best to address these issues with a 'new readiness' and sense of urgency. His words echo those of the first Papal Encyclical on development issues *Populorum Progressio*, which was published exactly 40 years ago. How can we use our position as a wealthy nation, within the European Union and United Nations to serve the needs of the poor?

Irish culture is steeped in a sense of the importance of justice, equality and solidarity. Throughout history, Irish people have experienced injustice and inequality, both at home and abroad. In particular, our deep missionary tradition has sought and still strives to bring the values of justice, peace and solidarity throughout the whole world. Ireland's cultural memory of this experience provides an important backdrop to

¹⁷ Pope Benedict XI, *Deus Caritas Est* www.vatican.va

the values and commitments we hold today, both in national and international arenas. It is a challenge to be agents of justice and to act in solidarity with those who live in the shadow of poverty and violence. Moreover, Ireland's transition from decades of violence to a negotiated political settlement is an experience that can provide inspiration for those attempting to find ways out of the cycle of political violence. Ireland's history is one of ambivalence. It has been one of poverty and deprivation as well as one of affluence. It has been one of violence as well as one of peace-making. And it is this rich, but ambivalent tradition, this experience of being both the beneficiaries of, as well as the contributors to, the structures of co-operative power that we need to draw on as we play our role in building a just world.

This paper sets out a number of critical challenges associated with the process of globalisation. It proposes a renewed commitment to the 'global common good', founded on the values of Catholic Social Teaching, as a way to address these issues. It outlines a number of concrete ways in which Ireland, as a small nation, can make a difference, and help to build a more just and sustainable world through its policy choices in the coming years.

3.2. Globalisation: The Critical Challenges

In order to set the context, it is important to take stock of the scale and gravity of the development challenges that need to be addressed within the context of a globalised economy. Globalisation is characterised by huge inequalities. The contrast in human development statistics between Ireland and Sub-Saharan Africa illustrates these stark inequalities: in Ireland, for instance, average life expectancy is 77 years and rising; in Zambia, it is 37 years and falling. In Ireland, six in a thousand children die before their fifth birthday; in Zambia it is nearer 2 in every 10 children.

Table 3.1 Economic and Social Inequalities

	Ireland	Zambia	High Income (OECD)	Sub- Saharan Africa
Income				
(GNI per capita \$) ¹⁸	41,140 ^b	500 ^b	36,720 ^b	746 ^b
Education¹⁹				
(Adult Literacy) (%)	99 ^c	68 ^a	99 ^c	61.1 ^a
Access to health				
(Infant Mortality per 1000 children)	6 ^b	182 ^b	5.75 ^b	162.6 ^b
Average life expectancy				
(years)	79.4 ^b	38.4 ^b	79.3 ^b	46.7 ^b

Sources: *World Development Indicators (World Bank) 2006*^a, *2005*^b / *UNDP Development Report 2005*^c

While some countries, such as China and India, have enjoyed rapid development, in many others the past decade has marked a reversal in development gains made in the 1960s, '70s and '80s. This worrying trend was illustrated in the Human Development Report 2003, which analysed progress towards the UN's Millennium Development Goals. Those eight goals outlined in the box below, represent a concrete commitment by governments worldwide to end poverty and injustice.

¹⁸ Statistics for GNI based on the most recent available -2006 (calculated using \$ US Atlas Method) <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DATASTATISTICS/Resources/GNIPC.pdf>

¹⁹ Statistics for education, health and life expectancy based on the UNDP Human Development Report 2005. Available at <http://hdr.undp.org/statistics/data/indicators.cfm?x=3&y=3&z=2>

Table 3.2 Millennium Development Goals

1	Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. Reduce by half the proportion of people in extreme poverty and hunger; Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger
2	Achieve universal primary education: Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling
3	Promote gender equality and empower women: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015.
4	Reduce child mortality: Reduce by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five
5	Improve maternal health: Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality rate
6	Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases: Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/Aids; Halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases
7	Ensure environmental sustainability: Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes; Reverse loss of environmental resources; Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water; Achieve significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020.
8	Develop a global partnership for development: Develop further an open trading and financial system that is rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory. This includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction, nationally and internationally; Address the least developed countries' special needs. This includes tariff and quota-free access for their exports; enhanced debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries; and more generous official development assistance for countries committed to poverty reduction; Address the special needs of landlocked and small island developing states; Deal comprehensively with developing countries debt problems through national and international measures to make debt sustainable in the long term; In

cooperation with developing countries, develop decent and productive work for youth; In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries; In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications technologies.

Another striking statistic was demonstrated in the Human Development Report 2005: in certain African countries average life expectancy has been declining since the mid-1990s, meaning that a child born today in these countries will most likely be outlived by his or her parents, and possibly grandparents. Moreover, while the number of people trying to survive on less than \$1 a day has fallen globally,²⁰ the gap between those in absolute poverty and those who live in relative luxury has widened substantially.²¹ In 2005, the wealth of the richest 20 people in the world was greater than the income of the entire population of Sub-Saharan Africa.²² Table 3 below illustrates the enduring income and spending gap that exists between those living in developing countries and northern countries. Such inequalities call us to question the values underpinning the global economy. It must also lead us to question the morality – and indeed the efficiency – of a system that is so inequitable.

²⁰ See Dollar, D and Kraay, A, 2000, *Growth is Good for the Poor*, World Bank Research paper <http://www.worldbank.org/research/growth/pdffiles/growthgoodforpoor.pdf>

²¹ See Milanovic, B, *Decomposing world income distribution. Does the world have a middle class?* <http://econ.worldbank.org/view.php?type=18&id=3442>

²² According to the World Bank, the GNI of 719 million people living in Sub-Saharan Africa is \$432 billion US. This is roughly equal to the combined worth of Bill Gates, Warren Buffett, Lackshmi Mittal, Carlos Slim Helu, Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Alsaud, Ingvar Kamprad, Paul Allen, the Albrecht family, Lawrence Ellison, the Walton family, Kenneth Thompson, Liliane Bettencourt Bernard Arnault , Michael Dell and Sheldon Adelson at \$432.2 billion. <http://devdata.worldbank.org/external/CPProfile.asp?PTYPE=CP&CCODE=SSA> and www.forbes.com.

Table 3.3 The Scale of Global Inequality

- In 2005, the wealth of the richest 20 people in the world was \$432.2 billion. This is more than the income of 719 million people living in Sub-Saharan Africa.²³
- The cost of meeting the Millennium Development Goals, an estimated \$50 billion, is roughly equal to 0.11% of the global income²⁴
- Europeans and Americans spend over \$1 billion a month on pet food while 852 million people experience chronic hunger²⁵
- Europeans spend \$1 billion a week on cosmetics and toiletries, while nearly 3 billion people in the world lack access to basic sanitation²⁶

Such poverty has become part and parcel of the processes of globalisation. On the one hand, there are those who, through geographical location, privilege or hard work, can grasp the opportunities of a market-based global economy. On the other hand, there is the majority, who, as a result of unjust social and economic structures, cannot avail of the benefits. In many instances, such exclusion is created by lack of access to basic assets such as land or water. In others, it is the result of instability and conflict, which is often the result of mismanaged development, fuelled by a culture of impunity and corruption. In other countries, the denial of access to basic health and education effectively ‘traps’ people, making their participation in the market economy practically impossible. In situations such as these, the market failure is compounded by the inability of governments to intervene effectively.²⁷

²³ *Ibid*

²⁴ World Bank estimated cost of meeting the MDGs is \$50 billion; Global GNI in 2005 was \$45.1 trillion
<http://devdata.worldbank.org/external/CPPProfile.asp?SelectedCountry=WLD&CCODE=WLD&CNAME=World&PTYPE=CP>

²⁵ Based on WHO SOFI Statistics

http://www.fao.org/newsroom/en/focus/2004/51786/article_51791en.html and

²⁶ Based on Euromonitor statistics <http://www.in-cosmetics.com/files/Euromonitor.pdf> and Human Development Report 2004.

²⁷ *Market failure* occurs when free markets do not lead to an allocation of resources that is best for society, as when decisions lead to a situation in which marginal social cost is not equated to marginal social benefit.

The scale of the poverty trap on the African continent merits particular concern. In 2006, African countries occupied 34 of the bottom 36 places in the 177-country UN Human Development Index, which tracks access to the basics of human survival, such as water, health, education and housing.²⁸ While countries in other continents have seen benefits from globalisation to a greater or lesser extent, on balance Africa has not benefited. One could argue instead that the current form of globalisation may have exacerbated problems on the continent. Large flows of unethical investment and illegal trade in minerals, other natural resources and arms have gone unrecorded and unregulated.²⁹ This trade in arms has deepened the level of insecurity across many regions of the continent. The continent's abundant natural resource base is sometimes more of a 'curse' than a blessing.³⁰ Private investment and trade in extractive industries in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Angola and Sudan have contributed to the creation of war economies rather than inclusive development. Such war economies serve the needs of armed political elites within these countries, but undermine governance, stability and economic growth.³¹

²⁸ UNDP's Human Development Report, published annually, ranks the world's nation states in a Human Development Index
<http://hdr.undp.org/statistics/data/indicators.cfm?x=1&y=1&z=1> .

²⁹ See Oxfam, 2004, *Guns or Growth* "In 2002, arms deliveries to Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, and Africa constituted 66.7 % of the value of all arms deliveries worldwide, with a monetary value of nearly US\$17bn; the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council accounted for 90 % of those deliveries.
http://www.oxfam.org.uk/what_we_do/issues/conflict_disasters/downloads/guns_or_growth.pdf

³⁰ The theory of resource curse is based on economic analysis of economic performance of resource rich poor countries. It concludes that "An *abundant* natural resource endowment provides more scope than resource-paucity does for cumulative policy error. Resource-abundant countries are more likely to engender political states in which vested interests vie to capture resource surpluses (rents) at the expense of policy coherence. The economy is increasingly distorted and manufacturing is protected so that development depends upon commodities with declining competitiveness." Richard Auty, WIDER University
<http://www.wider.unu.edu/research/pr9899d2/pr9899d2s.htm>

³¹ Studdard, K (2004) *War Economies in a Regional Context: Overcoming the Challenges of Transformation* International Peace Academy Publication
http://www.ipacademy.org/PDF_Reports/WARECONOMIES.pdf

International structural inequalities in the trading and financial systems have also worked against economic development, particularly, though not exclusively within Africa. Poor terms of trade for agricultural products, coupled with protectionism in industrialised countries, have meant that years of promoting export-oriented growth in primary commodities has not delivered the anticipated dividends for many Sub-Saharan African countries. Sub-Saharan Africa's share of world exports dropped from more than 3.5 % in 1970 to about 1.4% by the end of 2002, representing an income loss of \$160 billion annually – a decline equivalent to more than twice the GDP of Sub-Saharan Africa and to more than 12 times the \$13 billion in aid flows to Africa in 2004.³²

In addition, the debt to GDP ratio of Sub-Saharan Africa is twice as high as any other region in the world. Of the countries classified as 'Heavily Indebted Poor Countries' (HIPC), 80% are in Africa. While recent debt cancellation initiatives will relieve the burden of unpayable debt somewhat, debt continues to absorb a considerable proportion of the national incomes of the poorest countries. As a result of lack of access to adequate grant finance, poor countries are in danger of building up high levels of debt once again as they attempt to meet spending needs for essential services such as schools, hospitals, and basic infrastructure such as roads and sanitation

Internal governance issues within many countries, moreover, continue to seriously hamper development in many parts of the world. While external factors are important, historical and political analysis points to the role of state corruption, in its many forms, in compounding economic stagnation and poverty. Clientelist politics over many years has had a corrosive effect particularly on African states, leading to a downward spiral of corruption.³³ Such problems have often been compounded by donor country actions, which have tended to undermine the capacity of local governments and institutions.

³² Africa Development Indicators 2005 www.worldbank.org/annualreport/2004/africa.html

³³ Lockwood, M (2005) *The State They're In: Poverty and Politics in Africa and the Agenda for International Action*.

Militarisation and violence

Side by side with this lack of access to basic human needs, levels of militarisation and violence have been rising in many parts of the world. While aid levels to the developing world have been increasing relatively slowly,³⁴ military spending has grown substantially. Annual global military spending has now reached over \$1 trillion (US) or 2.6% of global GDP.³⁵ The defence industries of the USA, EU, China and India, in particular, have benefited hugely from the growing readiness on the part of the international community to respond to humanitarian crises with military solutions. The Institute of Policy Studies has estimated that spending on the Iraq war between 2003 and 2005 amounted to \$204.4 billion (US).³⁶ This is four times the \$50 billion of increases in official aid needed to meet the Millennium Development Goals. There is a large gap between what countries are prepared to allocate for military means to provide security and maintain their global and regional power status, on the one hand, and to alleviate poverty and promote economic development, on the other.³⁷

Since 2001, moreover, there has been growing evidence of a shifting axis between security and development within the international community. This is particularly the case within the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy. The EU Security Strategy, a core document in outlining the EU's overall approach to foreign policy,

³⁴ Aid rose sharply in 2005 in due to one-of debt cancellation agreements with Nigeria and Iraq. The general trend, however, has been steady growth. <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/0/41/35842562.pdf>

³⁵ SIPRI estimates that annual expenditure in 2005 was \$1035 billion US at current rates. http://www.sipri.org/contents/milap/milex/mex_trends.html

³⁶ The US sunshine report to congress estimates \$500bn costs until 2010 in an optimistic scenario, \$900bn in the next 5 years in a less optimistic scenario. 10 and 18 times the MDG requirement respectively. Stiglitz and Bilmes, 2006 estimate a cost of more than \$2 trillion when costs associated with lifetime disability and health care for injured soldiers and the overall effect on the economy are taken into account. [40 times MDG requirements] http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/IH04Ak04.html Statistics from <http://www.ips-dc.org/iraq/cow10-25-05.pdf>

³⁷ SIPRI Yearbook 2004, Oxford University Press, Section 10 <http://www.globalissues.org/Geopolitics/ArmsTrade/Spending.asp>

examines global threats emerging in the post-Cold War environment.³⁸ The strategy has paved the way for development to be seen as a tool in the perceived ‘war on terror’. It states: “Diplomatic efforts, development, trade and environmental policies, should follow the same agenda. In a crisis situation there is no substitute for unity of command.”³⁹ In other words, money for poverty eradication should from now on be granted subject to the political strategy.

The volatile global security situation, particularly since September 11 2001, has also placed severe pressure on the humanitarian agencies entrusted with responding to emergencies. Humanitarian activities are founded on the principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality.⁴⁰ Yet these principles have come under threat, especially as a consequence to the rising anti-Western feeling within the Islamic world. In many instances, such agencies have found themselves deeply embroiled in these tensions, often been seen as complicit with the West and become the target of high-profile attacks. This blurring of roles has challenged the humanitarian community to engage in a more rigorous debate on the future of humanitarianism, and especially aid agencies’ relationship with military intervention. Many of the lessons from the genocide that took place in Rwanda in 1994 have yet to be learned. Regrettably those same conditions that ‘allowed’ the genocide to happen still exist today, making it evident that the humanitarian community is only as ‘good’ as those who control their operating environment allow it to be. In spite of cries of ‘never again’, human catastrophes of this nature continue to occur, for example, the current crisis in Sudan.

³⁸ *A Secure Europe for a Better World*, European Security Strategy, 12 December 2003. Amongst the key threats it lists are terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts, state failure and organised crime. It importantly recognises that “security is the first condition for development”. It also cites the importance of the multilateral system as the central priority of EU external policy, which sees itself as rooted in international law.

³⁹ *Ibid*, page 13/EN

⁴⁰ These principles, moreover, are enshrined within International Humanitarian Law. See the International Council of the Red Cross factsheet [http://www.icrc.org/web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/57JNXM/\\$FILE/What_is_IHL.pdf?OpenElement](http://www.icrc.org/web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/57JNXM/$FILE/What_is_IHL.pdf?OpenElement)

Crisis of environmental sustainability

Global inequalities are being compounded by the on-set of climate change, which is creating a new vulnerability within the poorest countries. The evidence that this is being caused largely by human interference with the climate, particularly through the burning of fossil fuels, is now stronger than ever.⁴¹ Warmer temperatures are leading to greater evaporation, and a warmer atmosphere is able to hold more moisture, hence there is more water aloft that can fall as rain. Similarly, dry regions are apt to lose still more moisture if the weather is hotter; this exacerbates droughts and desertification. In Africa's large catchment basins of Niger, Lake Chad, and Senegal, total available water has decreased by 40 to 60 %, and desertification has been worsened by lower average annual rainfall, runoff, and soil moisture.

The minimum predicted shifts in climate for the 21st century are likely to be 'significant and disruptive'. Estimates of upcoming changes are wide-ranging: global temperature may climb from 1.4°C to 5.8°C; the sea level may rise from 9cm to 88 cm. This range of predicted effects reflects the complexity, interrelatedness and sensitivity of the natural systems that make up the climate. But while predictions of future climate impacts may be fuzzy, they are not meaningless: what they show is that the consequences could vary from disruptive to catastrophic. The *minimum* warming forecast for the next century is more than twice the 0.6°C increase that has occurred since 1900 - and that earlier increase is already having marked consequences. Sea levels have already risen by 10-20cm over pre-industrial averages and are certain to climb farther.

Although regional and local effects may differ widely, a general reduction is expected in potential crop yields in most tropical and sub-tropical regions. Mid-continental areas, such as the United States' 'grain belt' and vast areas of Asia, are likely to dry. Where dry land

⁴¹ Unless otherwise stated, statistics in this section are taken from the Report of IPCC available at <http://www.ipcc.ch/>

agriculture relies solely on rain, as in Sub-Saharan Africa, yields would decrease dramatically, even with minimal increases in temperature. Such changes are already causing disruptions in food supply in regions already afflicted by food shortages and famines, such as Malawi and Niger. In the future, this effect will become more acute.

Salt-water intrusion from rising sea levels will also reduce the quality and quantity of freshwater supplies.⁴² This is a major concern, since billions of people already lack access to freshwater. Higher ocean levels are already contaminating underground water sources in Israel and Thailand, in various small island states in the Pacific and Indian Oceans and the Caribbean Sea, and in some of the world's most productive deltas, such as China's Yangtze Delta and Vietnam's Mekong Delta. Higher temperatures are also expected to expand the range of some 'vector-borne' diseases, such as malaria.

What those living in the rich world do not always see is that climate change is happening within a world that is already under stress from poverty, injustice and environmental mismanagement. The critical challenge in terms of climate change in Africa, in particular, is the "way in which multiple stressors – such as the spread of HIV/AIDS, the effects of economic globalisation, the privatisation of resources and conflict – converge with climate change."⁴³

The consequences of overgrazed land, deforested mountainsides and denuded agricultural soils means that nature will be more vulnerable than before to changes in climate. The people most vulnerable are those who lack the resources and, increasingly, the mobility to adapt through migration. Millions live in dangerous places such as floodplains or in shantytowns on exposed hillsides around the enormous cities of the

⁴² See UK joint NGO group on development and climate change *Up in Smoke? Africa and Climate Change*
<http://www.neweconomics.org/gen/uploads/4jgqh545jc4sk055soffcq4519062005184642.pdf>

⁴³ Siri Eriksen, reported in Fields, S (2005) *Continental Divide – Why Africa's Climate Change Burden is Greater* *Environmental Health Perspectives* Vol.113 (8) pp. A533-537

developing world. Often they are literally ‘trapped’ in poverty - there is nowhere else for them to go. Climate change is likely to ‘accelerate social stratification’ in Africa, meaning that ‘those who don’t have sufficient wealth to buffer the effects of climate vulnerability will plunge deeper into poverty.’⁴⁴ In reality, for many vulnerable people, such climatic changes will mean the difference between life and death.

The social and economic injustice of climate change is striking. Industrialized countries and corporations, together with each one of us living in the North, are responsible for the vast bulk of past and current greenhouse gas emissions. Arguably, these emissions are a debt unwittingly incurred for the high standards of living enjoyed by a minority of the world’s population. The wealthy are by and large shielded from the largest impacts through abundant resources and opportunities to adapt. Those who are already suffering most from climate change are in the developing world. They have fewer resources for coping with storms, floods, droughts, outbreaks of disease and disruptions to food and water supplies. They are often eager for economic development themselves, but find that this already difficult process is becoming even more difficult because of climate change. For example, the mounting costs of dealing with the health problems associated with changing disease patterns could eat up any additional aid, thus preventing essential investments in economic development.

Almost 10 years ago, a majority of the world’s governments signed up to the Kyoto Protocol on reducing greenhouse gases, the principal cause of climate change. In December 2005, new evidence showed that only two out of 15 EU countries will meet their targets by 2007. Some countries, such as Ireland, due to its continuing rapid economic growth, will miss the target completely. This failure presents a major challenge for the new round of negotiations agreed to in Montreal in December 2005.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*

HIV/AIDS

The spread of HIV/AIDS is a further major challenge to human development across the world. The 2004 UNAIDS Report on the Global AIDS epidemic estimated that since the disease was first detected in 1981, more than 20 million people have died from AIDS. More than 39.5 million people globally are living with HIV. In 2006 alone, more than 4.3 million people became infected with the virus.⁴⁵ While most new cases of the disease are still in Africa, this report pointed to the sharp increase in prevalence rates in Eastern and Central Europe – a fact that raises profound challenges in the face of an enlarged European Union.⁴⁶

Africa continues to suffer disproportionately from the spread of the disease. Around 25 million Africans now live with HIV. In 2006, AIDS killed an estimated 2.1 million African people. The devastation brought by HIV/AIDS can be grasped if one sees the impact it has on children, in particular. According to UNICEF, in Swaziland, as many as one in 10 households are run by orphans, whilst many more orphans are ending up on the street. By 2010, one in seven children will be orphans in twelve African countries.⁴⁷

The rapid spread of HIV/AIDS has led to a spiral of poverty in many African countries, undermining years of development efforts.⁴⁸ It is recognised that poverty and malnutrition leads to increased vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, but the reverse is also true: HIV aggravates poverty. It does so through limiting the capacity of families to make a

⁴⁵ UNAIDS Report on the Global Aids Epidemic, 2004
http://www.unaids.org/bangkok2004/GAR2004_html/ExecSummary_en/Execsumm_en.pdf

⁴⁶ This issue was highlighted during the Conference *Breaking the Barriers- Partnership to fight HIV/AIDS in Europe and Central Asia* held in Dublin in 2004 during Irish Presidency of the EU. The final Declaration of the Conference can be found at:
http://www.eu2004.ie/templates/meeting.asp?sNavlocator=5,13&list_id=25

⁴⁷ UNICEF Ireland, *Growing up Alone*
https://www.unicef.ie/unicef.php?content=ovc_report.php

⁴⁸ Barnett, T, and Whiteside, A, (2002) *Aids in the Twenty-First Century: Disease and Globalisation*, Palgrave Macmillan

livelihood and through channelling earnings into expensive medical treatments. It also leads to a reduction of employment opportunities as industries experience a downturn. There is a decline in economic growth due to the loss of skilled labour and, increasingly, the resources that do exist are used for consumption rather than investment.⁴⁹ Moreover, the widespread social stigmatisation of people suffering from the disease compounds these economic impacts.⁵⁰

As a consequence, many vulnerable people, in order to survive, are often forced into high-risk behaviour, which can further exacerbate their exposure to the disease. In 2005, the G8 governments made a promise that all people should have access to essential HIV/AIDS medicines free of charge. This is a positive move, but it remains to be translated into action.

Fragile progress

On the ground, some advances have been made in terms of eradicating poverty in recent decades. As mentioned above, estimates from the World Bank suggest that the average proportion of people in the world surviving on less than \$1 a day dropped from around a third in 1990 to a quarter in 1999. Taken on face value, this trend would suggest that by 2015 the first Millennium Development Goal of ‘halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty’ will be met. The situation is more complex, however. Almost all of the progress towards this goal has been made in Asia, and especially in China.⁵¹ Other countries have had much more patchy progress, and nearly all of the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have seen income levels drop.

⁴⁹ See also Kelly, J M (2000) *Planning for Education in the Context of HIV/AIDS*. Fundamentals of Educational Planning Series, International Institute for Educational Planning, Paris.

⁵⁰ Smith, A, E McDonagh and M Leen (2004) *The Reality of HIV/AIDS* Veritas, Dublin

⁵¹ The scale of the reported decrease in poverty in China in recent years is widely contested. NGOs and academics have questioned the reliability of statistics and the methodology used to calculate the decline in poverty. See, for example, the article by RAGHAVAN, C (2000) *Juggling Data to Claim Poverty Decline* Third World Network, <http://www.twinside.org.sg/title/juggling.htm>.

Large parts of Asia have managed to overcome a history of poverty and begun to build democratic nations. The processes of globalisation – involving opening up economies and markets to harness international trade – have brought benefits to certain parts of the world. India, for example, has seen economic growth averaging 5% per year over the past decade. Some benefits of this growth have been passed on to the poor. In the early 1950s, nearly half of India’s population was living in income poverty. The 1990s witnessed high levels of poverty reduction and important achievements in literacy with enrolment of primary school-aged children. India today has 136 million children aged 6 to 10 attending primary school.⁵² Rapid economic growth has also led to a substantial reduction in income-poverty in China.⁵³ Despite these achievements, much more remains to be done if the benefits of economic growth are to be gained by those living in poverty.

In Latin America the picture is very mixed. While poverty rates as a proportion of the population fell between 1990 and 2004, the actual number of people living in poverty rose.⁵⁴ Many countries in the region have made substantial progress towards reducing poverty, but the financial crises in Argentina, Paraguay and Venezuela, in particular, have reversed gains in those countries. Even where there has been substantial progress, such as in Brazil, income inequality remains among the highest in the world. The trend towards a polarisation of wealth in the hands of the richest 10% of the population has been increasing, earning the region the dubious title of the “most backward region on the planet in terms of income distribution.”⁵⁵

⁵² World Bank Country Brief, <http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/SAR/sa.nsf/Countries/India/4F3233D642E4BB3985256B4A00706AA7?OpenDocument>

⁵³ The scale of the reported decrease in poverty in China in recent years is widely contested. NGOs and academics have questioned the reliability of statistics and the methodology used to calculate the decline in poverty. See, for example, the article by RAGHAVAN, C (2000) *Juggling Data to Claim Poverty Decline* Third World Network, <http://www.twinside.org.sg/title/juggling.htm>.

⁵⁴ The rate of poverty (indigent and non-indigent poor) fell from 48.3% in 1990 to 43.2% in 2004. The actual numbers of poor people rose from 200 millions in 1990 to 224 millions in 2004. UN ECLAC (2004) *Social Panorama of Latin America* p.7 http://www.eclac.cl/publicaciones/DesarrolloSocial/0/LCL2220PI/PSI2004_Summary_Web.pdf

⁵⁵ *ibid.* p. 11

The 1990s saw many other success stories in the developing world. Primary education improved in Guinea and Malawi. HIV/AIDS prevalence rates in Senegal were controlled, and came down in both Thailand and Uganda. Child mortality dropped in Bangladesh and The Gambia. Nutrition levels improved in Indonesia, Mexico and Tunisia. But for each region of the world, and for each area improved, there have also been setbacks. Under-5 mortality rates increased in Cambodia, Kenya, Malawi and Zambia, reversing decades of steady decline. Primary school enrolment fell in Cameroon, Lesotho, Mozambique and Tanzania. Malnutrition increased in Burkina Faso and Yemen. In the 1990s, HIV prevalence in many countries doubled, trebled or even quadrupled, severely affecting the development prospects not only of individuals but also of an entire generation.⁵⁶

A global commitment to end poverty

Despite the overwhelming nature of the problems faced by many developing countries, there are some signs of hope. 2005 saw a renewed global commitment to address the underlying poverty, particularly in Africa. Perhaps the greatest sign of hope is the mobilisation of civil society across the world. Civil society organisations, including trade unions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the Church, have become increasingly organised and vocal in holding governments to account.

In 2005, millions of people became part of the largest global movement in history, under the banner of the ‘Global Call to Action Against Poverty’,⁵⁷ mobilising communities and movements across the world. Civil society groups, including many faith-based organisations, have played an important role in national Poverty Strategy Reduction Processes in developing countries. This active participation in policy

⁵⁶ Vandemoortele, J. (2002) ‘Are the MDGs feasible?’ UNDP Bureau for Development Policy, New York <http://www.undp.org/mdg/areMDGsfeasible.pdf>.

⁵⁷ See www.whiteband.org

processes has increased the ability of local communities to assess their own needs, understand their rights and bring them to the attention of the local and national governments.⁵⁸

As a consequence of this participation, some important breakthroughs have been made in recent years. Some debt cancellation for the poorest countries has been achieved. Where this has happened, it has already had a positive impact. Governments in the 28 countries that qualified under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) scheme have been using savings from debt relief to increase spending on basic services, with about 40% of the savings directed to education and 25% to health.⁵⁹ In Mozambique, a free immunisation programme for children has been funded as a result of resources freed up by debt relief. School fees for primary education have been abolished in Uganda, Zambia and Tanzania. Uganda and Mozambique, among the early beneficiaries of debt cancellation, have sustained economic growth of over 5%. In some periods, that has reached 7%.

At the same time, many Northern governments are addressing the levels and quality of aid, or official development assistance (ODA) they give to the developing world. The EU member states made a joint commitment to reach the UN goal of 0.7% of Gross National Income going to ODA by 2015. In 2000, the Irish government was among the first governments to re-commit to meeting the UN target of 0.7% of GNI to ODA. In 2005, the government reiterated this solemn promise, committing to a new timeframe of meeting the target by 2012. This is a positive step towards beginning to address the massive inequalities illustrated above.

⁵⁸ See De Barra, C (2004) *PRSP as Theatre – backstage policy-making and the future of the PRSP approach* CIDSE/CI Background paper.
<http://www.cidse.org/docs/200409271723027101.pdf>

⁵⁹ UNDP (2003) *The Millennium Development Goals: A Compact among Nations to End Human Poverty, Human Development Report 2003*
<http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2003/> p. 153

Despite these positive signs, the international response to the problems facing the poorest regions of the developing world is still woefully inadequate. Many of the target dates for raising ODA have been set almost a decade from now – the date by which the Millennium Development Goals were to have been met.

According to the UNDP, despite rhetorical commitments, aid to Africa, in particular, has continued to fall.⁶⁰ Despite the cancellation of multilateral debt to the World Bank and IMF in 2005, debt remains a critical issue that impedes the development of many countries. Negotiations on world trade, which are meant to put development concerns at the centre of negotiations, have yet to deliver concrete results. There is still an urgent need for concerted action to address the underlying inequalities within the global economic system.

3.3. Development Challenges in the light of Catholic Social Thought

At this juncture in human history, a deep debate is emerging within academic and policy circles regarding the global project of “development” and its apparent failure to address the many and complex challenges facing humanity. There are calls for a new development agenda to be adopted, but a lack of clarity over what constitutes this new agenda.⁶¹ To some, this failure is a direct result of the lack of commitment of Western governments to take the issues of development seriously – something that can be addressed by a new consensus on international development based around the Millennium Development Goals and other international commitments. For a

⁶⁰ Official Development Assistance declined throughout the 1990s and into the 2000s. Aid to the people of sub-Saharan Africa fell by 38% between 1990 and 2001, or from \$34 per capita to \$21. This represents a fall from over 6% of GDP in sub-Saharan African countries to 4.5%. See UNDP Human Development Report 2003, p147.

⁶¹ See, for example, Maxwell, S (2007) *10 Steps towards a new development Agenda, ODI briefing paper*

number of analysts, however, the current situation is actually symptomatic of the dominant models of economic development that have been exported from the West to the developing world. In which case, it is time for a radical rethink of the basic assumptions on which international development rests. The complexity and urgency of the challenges facing the world today certainly calls for profound reflection on the part of us all. In particular, it urges us to reflect on what it means to be a ‘developed country’ in the fullest sense of the word. CATHOLIC SOCIAL THOUGHT can offer some crucial pointers that can assist in reviewing the basic assumptions of international development in the light of these challenges.

Development of the Whole Human Person

Perhaps the most urgent challenge today, is that of re-evaluating what is meant by development itself and re-orienting it towards the common good – the good of society and humanity as a whole. Such a task is not so much a technical policy exercise as a cultural one, which means reflecting on our past, our present and our future. It involves looking beyond the common sense social and economic indicators of material development to consider the ethical and spiritual dimensions of progress. Such a philosophical and spiritual reflection is an essential step if we are to distinguish between the means of development, including economic growth, and the ends – human flourishing and happiness.

Making such a distinction means asking ourselves to what extent greater wealth is improving us as individuals and as society? Human progress is multi-faceted, and also has ethical and spiritual dimensions. Growing as people means increasing our capacity to be moved by the suffering of others, to address inequalities, and to protect the natural environment for future generations. Can we call ourselves truly ‘developed’, for example, if the model of development we espouse systematically deepens divisions between people? Can we say we are progressing if our progress systematically wastes or destroys the natural environment? This

dimension of development is a constant theme within the Church's teaching, and is outlined extensively in the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* published in 2004.⁶² Pope Paul VI spoke of the 'moral underdevelopment' of a society that can sit back in comfort and watch others suffer. Pope John Paul II cites the co-existence of poverty existing side-by-side with inadmissible 'super-development', as the greatest challenge to authentic human development today.⁶³ His words are all too relevant in today's 24/7 information society where we can all too easily become numb to the grinding images of relentless violence, hunger and injustice on our TV screens and the internet.

Distinguishing between self-interest and selfishness

Development, in the fullest sense of the word, is only possible in a society where human values are lived and encouraged at every level of society. Such values, however, can be undermined by the economic, political and social context in which we find ourselves. The dominant market model of economic growth fostered by Northern countries, however, does not pay overt attention to the ethical dimensions of development.⁶⁴ It is widely accepted that markets have a key role to play in development, and this is not being disputed here. A free market allows individuals to exercise their flexibility, efficiency and dynamism in meeting their objectives. By strengthening human freedom and initiative, the market supports the freedom and dignity of the human person. Individual responsibility, entrepreneurship and risk taking have an important place within development and should be supported.

⁶² Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace (2004) *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* Vatican Publications, Rome.

⁶³ Pope John Paul II (1987) *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* Papal Encyclical No.28

⁶⁴ One of the fundamental assumptions of orthodox economic theory is the separation of economic rationale and ethical considerations in economic decision-making. The usefulness or otherwise of an economic decision is assumed to be its utility to the individual and not the common good. There is, however, a growing disquiet around this analytical distinction, and growing evidence on the relationship between ethics, trust and social capital on economic life. See Woolcock, M and D Narayan (2000) *Social Capital: Implications for Development Theory, Research and Policy* for an overview of the relationship between social capital and economic development. [http://www.worldbank.org/research/journals/wbro/obsaug00/pdf/\(5\)Woolcock%20%20Narayan.pdf](http://www.worldbank.org/research/journals/wbro/obsaug00/pdf/(5)Woolcock%20%20Narayan.pdf)

But a distinction has to be drawn between legitimate self-interest and unfettered markets, which can become a license for abandoning responsibilities to the common good. The dominant market model has unfortunately given rise to an erroneous understanding of freedom - as a licence to do whatever one wants regardless of the consequences. In this way, the model has tended to reward selfish behaviour, excessive consumption and greed. Such selfishness can be transformed into economic and financial structures which promote the manipulation of markets for one's own benefit, regardless of the costs to the wider community.⁶⁵ As such, it can foster widespread social attitudes that undermine traditional values of family, solidarity and respect for others and for the environment.⁶⁶

The lesson that is slowly being learnt in the first decade of the 21st century is that the liberal market economy has limitations. Liberty, the principal value underpinning the market is subject to the reality of the human condition, and hence to the existence or absence of other values such as honesty, integrity and respect for others. The creation of an environment that enables the expression of freedom for the majority of the world's population and not just the few, requires strong institutions and regulatory frameworks. It also requires recognition of the values of mutual collaboration, solidarity, and equality. Facing up to this reality and moving beyond the simplistic logic of self-interest is no small task, particularly in an era of globalisation. It requires a sea change in the basic understanding of what motivates people, how choices should be governed and regulated, and what the respective roles of individuals and governments are in ensuring that the benefits of progress are shared more evenly.

⁶⁵ This was highlighted in the 1990s when currency speculation led to financial crises across the world. See Hayward, H (2001) *Costing the Casino: the real cost of currency speculation in the 1990s*.
<http://www.globalsolidarity.org/tobintax/casino.pdf>.

⁶⁶ Putnam, R D (2000) *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* Simon and Schuster, New York.

It is only if individuals and communities care deeply for their brothers and sisters in need that they will be prepared to make sacrifices that may be required to help them. The former Secretary General of the UN, Perez de Cuellar, in the conclusions of the UN Commission on Culture and Diversity, underscored this need: “Trust, loyalty, solidarity, altruism and even love, though readily dismissed by currently fashionable economists, no doubt do play a part in human relationships. Unlike material goods, they grow on what they feed on. No society is capable of surviving without them.”⁶⁷ The higher values of service, self-sacrifice and compassion cannot be imposed from the ‘top-down’, but need to be fostered throughout society, in order to build a true culture of solidarity. It calls on us all, regardless of our religious beliefs, to make these values a positive lifestyle choice which can be proposed through families, churches, schools, institutions, media and workplaces.

Aspiring not to have more, but to be more

In order to bring about such a cultural change, it is necessary to acknowledge that human development in the fullest sense also has a spiritual dimension. The spiritual dimension of development could be easily dismissed within the dominant model of economic development which gives more emphasis to the material dimensions of well-being. One must ask seriously how these can be fostered and developed in society at all levels? Shifting from the dominant model of development centred on self-interest to one that embraces higher values of solidarity and love, entails a deep rooted aspiration towards the good of the other. It involves an ability to make sacrifices, without counting the cost. It involves an ability to forgive ones enemies. It involves caring for others, even though we may never come to know their name. It involves a shift from social values centred on ‘having’ – to a culture centred on ‘being’.

⁶⁷ De Cuéllar, J P (1996) *Our Creative Diversity: Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development* UNESCO Publishing, New York, p.50.

Bishop Kevin Dowling of South Africa expressed this eloquently: “When one looks into the eyes of a dying mother with a little child next to her who is also infected [with HIV/AIDS], the statistics become even more frightening in their poignancy and impact. Can we even begin to imagine what is going on inside of these ‘little ones’, this little girl who watches as her mother gets more emaciated each day, struggles with uncontrollable diarrhoea, and fears that she is going to die from a disease that people tell her is called HIV/AIDS? But that is precisely what is required from the international level to the remotest village community – as people we need to enter the heart and spirit of these ‘little ones’ and try to imagine what is happening inside, what they may be feeling as they struggle with poverty, hunger, fear of the future and even basics like ‘will I have place to stay?’ ‘Will they take away our home when my mother dies?’”

Our faith teaches us that behind each statistic lies a real person who, like us, is infinitely loved by God. Their cares and dreams as mothers and fathers, friends, children, grandparents and cousins are not so distant from our own. They too strive for a safe home and clean environment, a secure income to provide for their family, a healthy and long life for them and a better life for their children. However, they often face dire circumstances which make these most basic human needs impossible to reach: they have a meagre income, but no state safety net to keep them going in times of need; they face terminal and chronic illnesses in the family, but have no access to hospitals or medicines; they manage to build a small home, but have to flee due to armed conflict or natural disasters. Their daily experience of poverty is often expressed as a lack of control over ones’ life, a sense of powerlessness, injustice, exclusion and a denial of rights.

Such concern for and solidarity with those in need is reflected beautifully in the words of many scholars and saints from the Christian tradition. In the 4th century, the great scholar and Father of the Church, St. Basil the Great wrote: “The bread which you do not use is the bread of the hungry. The garment hanging in your wardrobe is the garment of the one who is naked. The shoes that you do not wear are the shoes of

the one who is barefoot. The money you keep locked away is the money of the poor. The acts of charity you do not perform are so many injustices you commit.” He goes on to exhort the Christian community: “by a thousand paths make your riches reach the homes of the poor.”⁶⁸ They also form a common bond with other religious traditions, which recognise the need to build just human relations. Mahattma Ghandi, shortly before dying, spoke of the ‘talisman’ as the benchmark that should guide human development: “I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man [woman] whom you may have seen, and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him [her]. Will he [she] gain anything by it? Will it restore him [her] to a control over his [her] own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to swaraj [freedom] for the hungry and spiritually starving millions? Then you will find your doubts and your self melt away.”

Such high human aspirations reflect the inner depth of the human heart, which longs to break free from confines of selfishness and to be open to the love of God, and others. The gift of free will means that as human beings we are constantly faced with the choice: to retreat into our selfishness or to serve others. Serving others and building solidarity is not an automatic process even though, as we have seen, an essential one for full human development. It entails self-sacrifice, to the point of losing one’s life for the sake of others, through sharing in the mystery of redemption brought about by Christ’s death and resurrection. It is only through spiritual development that we can learn to make space for others and begin to understand their needs and aspirations and find grace, peace, forgiveness and the courage to start again.

⁶⁸ Saint Basil the Great, *Homilia in Illud Lucae, Destruam Horrea Mea*, 5: PG 31, 271. Quoted in *The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, p. 187.

The Church's mission – universal fraternity

In the 21st Century, the Church's mission is, above all, one characterised by witnessing to God's Love through its presence in the world, building up the unity of the one human family.⁶⁹ Jesus called on his disciples to become one in him, through mutual and continual love, in the knowledge that it is through such love that he is present "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there"⁷⁰. It is this love, which brings many into one, which reveals the very essence of the mystery of the Church, to make us "one heart and one soul"⁷¹. It is in building this communion of love that the Church appears as the "sign and instrument of intimate union with God and of the unity of the human race"⁷²

The world is crying out for such witnesses of love, but what does this mean in practice? Here too, our thoughts could turn immediately to the many activities that consume our lives. Becoming witnesses of love means learning to contemplate the mystery of the Trinity dwelling within us and seeing that light reflected in our brothers and sisters. It means reflecting on the profound unity of the Mystical Body, which links each of us together as one human family under God, making us share their joys and sufferings, to sense their desires and attend to their needs, to offer them deep and genuine friendship. It implies the ability to see what is positive in others and welcome it as a gift from God. It means knowing how to make space for others and learning how to "share each other's burdens".⁷³

This kind of love, by its very nature opens out to a service that is universal and to a commitment to practical and concrete love for every human being. It opens our eyes to see the face of Christ in the faces of those with whom he identifies himself most: "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you

⁶⁹ Pope John Paul II (2000) *Novo Millennio Inuente*

⁷⁰ Matthew 12:24

⁷¹ Acts 4:32

⁷² Pope John Paul II (2000) *Novo Millennio Inuente*

⁷³ Galatians 6:2

visited me, I was in prison and you came to me” (Mt 25:35-37). This Gospel text is not simply an invitation to love and solidarity, but a page which sheds light on where we can encounter Christ: “Whatever you did to the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me” (Mt 25:40). This love is universal in nature and cannot exclude anyone. Yet, at the same time, it must recognise the special presence of Christ in the poor, and to make a preferential option for them – both near and far. As Christians, who proclaim faith in a loving God, we therefore have a particular responsibility to witness to that love in our daily lives through practical solidarity especially with those in need. Such practical support is never static, but constantly moving and finding new and creative ways to reach out to those in need. □

Faced with such a troubled world, in which the presence of evil is so evident, moreover, the Christian message stands out as a message of hope. The Gospel teaches us, and experience demonstrates, that good will prevail. Jesus has ‘paid the price’ of redemption and with his help everyone will be saved. It is the responsibility of Christians to nourish this hope which sustains their efforts to promote justice and peace. It is this belief that gives us the certainty that despite the personal and social sins which mark all human activity, it is possible to build a better world in which love and justice will reign.

A shared commitment to human dignity

Regardless of religious belief, in a pluralistic society, the overwhelming majority of human beings share a certain basic set of human characteristics, regardless of geographical location, cultural background or circumstances.⁷⁴ These include an innate empathy with those who suffer, an instinct for self-preservation, a desire for autonomous action, and a desire to live a long, happy, and secure life, free from violence and illness. At the heart of these is a shared human need to express love and be loved. These same basic human characteristics are expressed in different ways in a wide range of faith and cultural traditions across the world, and throughout history.

⁷⁴ De Cuellar, P, (1996) *Report of the World Commission on Culture and Diversity ‘Our Creative Diversity’*, UNESCO Publishing, New York.

Each tradition, moreover, in its own way, provides an insight into the so-called ‘golden rule’ at the heart of global ethics: “Do unto others as you would like them to do to you.” And “Do not do to others as you would not like them to do to you.” In each of the Holy Books of the great world religions, including the Bible, this same assertion is found. Whilst expressed in many different ways, and practiced to varying degrees of perfection, this basic teaching offers an important starting point for understanding the nature of values that are necessary to establish a more just world in a multi-cultural society.⁷⁵ It also challenges us to greater inter-faith dialogue on issues of common concern.

Such shared values are already expressed in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, and the results of various UN conferences culminating in the Millennium Declaration, signed in 2000. This body of documents, negotiated over many years, represents the nearest thing that exists to a ‘world constitution’. If we look at the Declaration on Human Rights,⁷⁶ for example, it sets out a core set of universal standards and values that ought to govern national and international action. The first article of that Declaration states that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.” The second article backs this up by asserting that “Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.” The subsequent 28 articles constitute a comprehensive list of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights to which everyone is entitled.

In the course of the past 50 years, the idea of human rights has become the cornerstone of the international system, based around the United Nations. International law is in large part governed by these principles, and the subsequent UN conventions that have arisen from it. In this respect, they are universally recognised as the touchstone of

⁷⁵ The academic debate on the nature of a ‘global ethics’ has been growing since the 1990s. For a good overview, see Runzo, J, et al (2003) *Human Rights and Responsibilities in the World Religions* The Library of Global Ethics & Religion, Oneworld press, London

⁷⁶ See *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>

international ethics and the common language of international relations. Whilst we may often lament the fact that human rights are not enforced or respected, the mere fact that we recognise their existence as a standard is a remarkable advance in human history. Indeed, it is perhaps worth reflecting on the fact that it was out of the painful experience of the 2nd World War that such a diverse group of world leaders, representing all the major faith traditions, were able to assert with such clarity the aspirations of their generation.⁷⁷

Human rights have a profound meaning within the Christian tradition as they flow from the nature of the human person made in God's image and likeness.⁷⁸ Within such a vision, every human being, regardless of their wealth or poverty, race or religion, is looked on as a brother or sister within the one human family. As such, they share the same fundamental rights and unique gifts. The Church has contributed in a particular way to this debate through highlighting the corresponding responsibilities that sit alongside rights and the way that rights are achieved through human actions.

⁷⁷ The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was drawn up immediately following the Second World War by a Commission chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt. The declaration was endorsed in December 1948, the two covenants (the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) that emerged to define the obligations of each state were ratified in 1966. For more on the history of human rights see <http://www.universalrights.net/main/world.htm>

⁷⁸ Hogan, L (2002) *Human Rights* Christian Perspectives on Development Issues, Veritas, Dublin. Further reference documents on Christianity and Human Rights can be found on the Samford University website http://www.samford.edu/lillyhumanrights/papers_by_author.html.

Table 3.5: Human Rights and Responsibilities

Rights

- Rights to life and worthy standard of living, including rights to proper development of life and to basic security
- Right to cultural moral values, including freedom to search for and express options, freedom of information and right to education
- Rights to religious and conscience
- Rights to choose one's state in life, including rights to establish a family and pursue a religious vocation
- Economic rights, including right to work, to a just and sufficient wage, and to hold private property
- Political rights, including right to participate in public affairs and juridical protection of rights

Responsibilities

- To acknowledge and respect the rights of others
- To collaborate mutually – in solidarity
- To act for others responsibly
- To preserve life and live it becomingly

Source: Catholic Social Teaching, Our Best Kept Secret⁷⁹

Underpinning these rights, and sustaining them, however, must be a shared value system that reflects certain basic principles of equality, justice, truth, honesty, fairness, non-violence, tolerance, participation and solidarity. Without these values, which affirm the centrality of the human person, the idea of human rights soon become meaningless. Development, in the fullest sense, from a Catholic Social Thought perspective, embraces an overarching commitment to human dignity and human rights. Our responsibility to fulfil those rights and responsibilities must be borne out on a political level in a strong commitment directed building the global common good. This means ensuring that the benefits of economic and social progress are shared

⁷⁹ Henriot, P et al (1992) *Catholic Social Teaching: Our Best Kept Secret* Orbis Books, USA.

out amongst everyone in the community, and in particular, with those who are most in need. It means effectively committing to the values of equality and justice. The experience of the past few decades demonstrates that responsibility for this cannot be left to the market alone. But rather, it must be part of the informed choices made at every level of social action, whether personal, community, business or political. □

The primary responsibility for ensuring equality and social justice lies within the domestic sphere. In the Pastoral Letter *Prosperity with a Purpose*, the Bishops of Ireland highlighted some of the critical issues that need to be addressed at a domestic level. These include housing and homelessness, stewardship of the environment, income poverty, long-term unemployment, and early school leavers, to mention a few. They underscored the need to ensure that the benefits of prosperity are distributed evenly, particularly to those in vulnerable groups.⁸⁰ This primary responsibility, however, has to be matched against the needs of others – regardless of geographical location. Our recognition that we are part of one human family, with universal human rights, brings with it the responsibility to ensure – at a bare minimum - that our actions both as individuals and as a nation, are not harming others. This, however, is not enough if we recognise we are one human family. It calls on use to take positive steps towards upholding and fulfilling those rights internationally.

⁸⁰ The domestic questions which arise from Ireland's experience of rapid economic development are discussed at length in the pastoral letter issued in 1999. *Prosperity with a purpose: Christian faith and values in a time of rapid economic growth* (1999), followed in the tradition of *The Work of Justice* (1977), *Christian Faith in a Time of Economic Depression* (1983) and *Work is the Key* (1992), and examined the numerous and complex problems that arise in times of rapid economic development. In that letter we touched on some of the responsibilities of Ireland in the wider world. In those letters, the Bishops acknowledged that 'the success of the 1990s and the good outlook for the Irish economy to the year 2010 constitute a huge opportunity to make solidarity with the poorer nations an even stronger dimensions of Irish life'.

3.4. Ireland's role in building the global common good

How should this theological reflection translate into development policy? Whilst there is no one formula for making that leap, one can begin by saying that Catholic Social Thought provides a clear and unequivocal rationale for development cooperation. Whilst there may be a many motivations for development cooperation, the critical and deep-rooted sense of responsibility towards the well-being of others as part of the same human family. The analysis above highlighted the fact that many millions of people are still without the basic necessities of life on a daily basis and are living in fear of violence whilst Ireland has enjoyed remarkable economic success in recent years. One may ask what responsibility Ireland has towards addressing this situation. Are their ways in which we, as individuals, communities and as a nation, can work towards the common good, not only of people living in this country but globally?

This section sets out five concrete ways in which we can make a real difference in working for the global common good: through strengthening our commitment to interdependence, sharing our wealth, working to reform the international system, ensuring that our markets are socially responsible, and addressing our own contribution to environmental sustainability.

Challenge 1: Strengthening our commitment to interdependence

As a nation, our well-being and, increasingly our security, are dependent on choices and actions taken beyond our borders. Likewise, the lives of others are dependent on the choices we make. In an interdependent world, the problems of one very soon become the problems of all. Global problems, whether related to poverty, disease, the environment or international terrorism, sooner or later affect everyone - though to a greater or less degree, as seen above. This new reality of

human existence calls for a new approach to international politics, with renewed and reformed structures designed to uphold the global common good.

Reaching solutions to global problems requires a commitment to collaborative action and the peaceful resolution of disputes through multilateral processes. Nations that embrace interdependence soon recognise that responding to it requires a change of mindset that goes beyond a traditional model of international relations in which sovereign nation states seek their advantage often at the expense of others. In an interdependent world, finding common solutions to common problems requires a spirit of cooperation and a willingness to sacrifice short-term national gains for the common good.

Such a vision is somewhat distant from the current reality of international politics, which places increasing emphasis on military solutions to global problems. The UN has suffered many setbacks in recent years are a result of its failure to reform and to prevent international conflicts, such as the US/UK led invasion of Iraq in 2004. Despite this, the UN remains the principal authority through which international law is upheld and pursued. The principles of human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the covenants that derive from it, must continue to form the international standard against which the actions of individual countries and the international community are measured. The UN and its subsidiary bodies need to be fully supported to ensure that human rights are monitored and enjoyed by all people.

One of the biggest challenges is that of strengthening the multilateral system to ensure that all states honour the commitments they have made in international treaties and conventions. Throughout the 1990s, global conferences set out a comprehensive vision of fair globalisation in which the rights of individuals are respected. Practical mechanisms need to be put in place at national and international level to improve the accountability of governments on the promises they have made.

As well as invigorating the institutions that exist internationally, reforms are essential to allow the international structures to respond adequately to the new problems and changing political context. Systemic structural imbalances in decision-making processes in international economic policy have played a key role in creating the current problems faced by many developing countries. Those countries with the greatest development problems have the least representation at the institutions making key decisions. They lack effective representation on the boards of the World Bank and the IMF, as well as the capacity to engage effectively in negotiations at the WTO, as outlined earlier. Ireland, as a member of the EU, can play an important role in pressing other governments for changes to the international system that would give those living in poverty a greater voice in their future.

Being peace-makers

Ireland, with its history as a neutral country and experience of being colonised, can also play an important role as an honest broker in many complex and sensitive international situations. Ireland has played a key role in UN peacekeeping forces in Lebanon and is currently doing so in Liberia. Ordinary citizens too have shown extraordinary leadership when the international community has been slow to act. Timor-Leste (East Timor) is a case in point here: it was an international campaign started by Irish citizens that eventually led to a UN-sponsored referendum on East Timor's independence in 1999.⁸¹

Ireland's neutrality has been an important feature of our international relations. However, the meaning and significance of this neutrality has changed in recent years, especially in light of Ireland's membership of the EU and its evolving Common Foreign and Security Policy. Moreover, the trajectory of EU integration means that the ambiguities of our position of neutrality will become ever more accentuated.

⁸¹ For more information on the East Timor Irish Campaign, see http://indigo.ie/~etisc/normal_index.html

There is no doubt that the values of neutrality, impartiality and genuine non-alignment are increasingly difficult to live by, given the changed political climate. Indeed the distinctive role of the ‘non-aligned’ nations in the UN is itself under pressure, though a non-aligned bloc is absolutely vital for international peace and security. The international political landscape is changing. The changes bring challenges for every country, not least for a small, independent and neutral nation like Ireland.

Our history and experience challenge us to continue to develop a principled approach to our international relations: one that supports the principles of international law; is robust in its defence of multilateral institutions, is committed to the resolution of conflict through non-violent means, and that works for the implementation of just and equitable economic practices.

Challenge 2: Option for the poor - Sharing our wealth

Within this commitment to interdependence, another important strategy in building the global common good is to provide financial support for development. *Sharing* is a value that is deeply rooted in a Christian understanding of economic life, and one that could offer a new perspective on building a more equal and just world. The Church upholds the right of individuals to own private property, but underlines the universal destination of goods: that God created goods for all to share in. According to the teaching of the Church, material wealth gives its owners a greater chance to show their inner wealth and reveal who they really are. It is not so much that a large personal fortune, of itself, either brings happiness or causes misery, but that the person who uses it in one way – metaphorically speaking, to build ‘bridges’ with others – is blessed or happy, while the person who uses it differently – to build ‘walls’ against others – is not. With wealth, therefore, comes a grave responsibility. This responsibility is both towards those in need, and towards ourselves. For the Gospel tells us that it is only through opening our hearts to others and giving freely that we will find true

happiness. Such financial assistance, both through official channels and voluntary donations, continues to play an indispensable role in building the social and economic fabric of poor countries.

Irish Aid

Ireland has a long-standing commitment to the developing world through its official aid programme, Irish Aid.⁸² The continued growth of this aid programme represents a major contribution towards building the global common good, of which Ireland can be proud. In 2000, Ireland was the first country to re-commit to meeting the UN goal of 0.7 % within a specific timeframe. In committing to this goal, the government recognised the deep-rooted commitment of the Irish public to those living in poverty in the developing world.

The repercussions of that commitment were felt internationally. Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan praised the decision and asked other countries to follow Ireland's lead. Within two years, four other EU nations had also committed to raising their aid levels to meet the UN's Millennium Development Goals and set timetables for reaching the 0.7 % ODA target.⁸³ When, in 2005, it became clear that Ireland did not intend to honour this commitment, the public outcry brought 20,000 people to the streets. As a consequence, in September 2005, ahead of the UN World Summit, the government re-instated Ireland's commitment to meeting 0.7 %, revising the target date to 2012, setting in place interim targets.

⁸² Formerly known as Development Cooperation Ireland (DCI).

⁸³ Since the Irish decision to reach 0.7% by 2007, Belgium, Finland, France, Spain and the UK have set deadlines for reaching this target. See Joint NGO Briefing Paper (2005) *Heroes and Villains: Which Countries are Living up to their Promises on Aid, Trade and Debt?*

<http://www.eurodad.org/uploadstore/cms/docs/EUHeroesandVillainsMASTER11205.pdf>

The quality of the Irish aid programme has been widely praised.⁸⁴ The focus of the programme is on the poorest countries and the poorest people. One important dimension of the programme is its continued links with missionary organisations, with a substantial proportion of government funding directly supporting the work of missionaries in development. In July 2004, the government and the Irish Missionary Resource Service signed a memorandum of understanding, opening the way for greater long-term collaboration between the two.⁸⁵ It represents a growing recognition of the important development work carried out by missionary associations, particularly with the poorest and most vulnerable communities across the world.

Another key dimension of Irish Aid has been the growing collaboration between the government and the NGO community. As the aid budget has grown, funding from the official programme has been directed to Irish NGOs with a proven track record in delivering aid. This ongoing partnership between the NGO community and Irish Aid has offered NGOs the possibility of expanding their best programmes through supplementing the money they receive from the public with money from government.

While much has been achieved through the aid programme, there is no room for complacency. First and foremost, it will be a challenge to ensure that the commitment to meeting the growth targets are actually met and sustained. Another challenge is that of ensuring that the quality of the programme is maintained. In particular, it will be important to ensure that decisions as to which countries receive aid continue to be made on the basis of their need. Greater efforts also need to be made to improve transparency and accountability within the aid system.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, they do not constitute an excuse for doing nothing. From a moral viewpoint, the certainties of not providing help are far worse than facing the risks of providing assistance.

⁸⁴ OECD DAC Peer Review, Main Conclusions and Recommendations
http://www.oecd.org/document/27/0,2340,en_2649_34603_20366555_1_1_1_1,00.html

⁸⁵ http://www.dci.gov.ie/latest_news.asp?article=436

⁸⁶ See *Rome Declaration on Harmonization of Aid*.

Voluntary giving

Whilst official aid represents one channel of giving, voluntary or charitable giving also plays an important role in building the global common good. Voluntary giving, in particular, represents an expression of solidarity with those suffering from poverty and injustice. Ireland has one of the highest levels of public support for the developing world in the western world.⁸⁷ A government report on the attitudes towards the developing world carried out in 2002 revealed “a strong degree of goodwill towards developing countries”.⁸⁸ In that study, which represents the most comprehensive survey of public opinion on development issues, 90% of those interviewed said that they were in favour of helping people in the developing world, with 51% recognising this as a priority, and 87% recognised that we have a responsibility towards those in poor countries. The vast majority of people said that they had personally helped developing countries in some way, with over 95% saying that they responded positively to appeals. A great part of this high level of public awareness and engagement in development issues is due to the work of Irish development NGOs and tradition of volunteering. Irish NGOs have gained an international reputation for the quality of their work, enabled by the high levels of public support.

Challenges exist around voluntary giving. There is always the danger of becoming complacent, especially once humanitarian disasters have left the television screens. Development is a process that requires commitment not only for emergency aid, but also over the long-term. Silent emergencies, such as the HIV/AIDs pandemic, require our long-term commitment and support. Development NGOs, on the other hand, have the ongoing responsibility to ensure that they become more efficient and effective in providing help to those most in need. This means constantly updating their skills to ensure professionalism, as well as building stronger accountability structures. Within Ireland, there is a pressing need for better independent regulation of the charities sector.

⁸⁷ Together with Holland, according to Weafer, J, 2002, *Attitudes towards Development Co-operation in Ireland*, p. 34.

⁸⁸ *Ibid* p.9

Challenge 3: Address structural injustice - Making international systems fairer

Sharing wealth through redistribution is only one way for people to express their commitment to the global common good. In an ideal world, all people should have the opportunities to earn their own livelihood without relying on charity. Making those opportunities available to all requires change to the international structures that govern globalisation, as outlined in the first part of this report. Deep structural inequalities exist within the global economic and financial systems, which have a decisively negative impact on the poorest countries, keeping them in poverty.

Trade and development

One area where inequality is evident is in the international trading system. International trade plays a key role in the global economy and particularly in determining the chances of those in poverty to earn a just livelihood. Poor countries generally rely on the foreign revenue from international trade to finance other aspects of their development, as well as to pay off external debts. However, the international trading system is unjust. International structures operate strictly on ‘equality before the law’, but such structures often ignore the stark inequalities existing between different countries.

The evolution of the world trading system over the past 200 years has meant that Northern industrialised countries have a disproportionate advantage over their Southern counterparts in terms of trade. Not only do they trade principally in manufactured high value goods, but their economies are highly diversified and relatively well protected from external shocks, such as price fluctuations. On the other hand, the poorest countries in the world are highly dependent on exporting one or two basic commodities. The prices of such commodities are generally low and subject to international price fluctuations. This makes those economies highly vulnerable to even small changes in price, over which they have no control. Moreover, high dependency on agricultural produce and low levels of technology makes the poorest

countries vulnerable to extreme weather, a problem that is increasing through climate change.

Currently, the international trading system exacerbates existing inequalities. This inequality is evident in the double standards of industrialised countries in trade talks, such as the current EU Economic Partnership Agreements, at which they continue to protect their own markets while at the same time, demanding rapid economic liberalisation in the developing world. This inequality is compounded by the subsidy regimes of industrialised countries, particularly in agriculture. The result of such subsidies is the sale of surplus produce at below the cost of production. Critiques of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), for example, have documented its impact on the livelihoods of poor farmers in developing countries. Within Europe there is virtual unanimity on the damage caused by export subsidies to farmers' livelihoods in the poorest countries. It is within this context that the Hong Kong Ministerial Meeting agreed the elimination of all export subsidies by 2013.

What is needed is a model of agriculture that supports rural livelihoods, animal welfare and environmental protection in the North, yet does not discriminate against the interests of southern farmers. The Doha Declaration of the WTO, which seeks to promote trade and development, encourages members "to establish a fair and market-oriented trading system through a programme of fundamental reform, encompassing strengthened rules and specific commitments on support and protection in order to correct and prevent restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets".⁸⁹

⁸⁹ Doha Declaration
http://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/minist_e/min01_e/mindecl_e.htm.

Strong regulations are required to protect the fundamental interests of the poorest countries, particularly to enable them protect their food security.⁹⁰ More technical help needs to be given to poor countries to enable them to participate fully in negotiations. Procedures and decision-making needs to be more transparent, enabling the public to fully appreciate and judge the actions of their governments. In negotiations, the rich countries need to ensure that their own policies take into account the needs of the poor countries in terms of their access to markets. Above all, a spirit of true cooperation needs to be revived within the system in order to ensure that it works for the majority of the world's population and not just the few. As a first step, the WTO should endorse the Millennium Development Goals.

International debt

A similar pattern of injustice exists within the international financial system. The ongoing indebtedness of the poorest countries in the world, despite the concessions granted by the G8 in 2005, remains a major stumbling block towards building the global common good.

The debt crisis goes to the heart of the principles of the free-market economy. Honouring contracts and paying one's debts is a critical governing principle of the market economy, without which the financial system would collapse. The value of orderly payment of debts is ultimately about respecting the property of others, and the terms of a relationship one has entered into with another human being. Failure to pay one's debts can result in suffering both for those who have lent, through lost investments, as well as those who fail to pay. It can also undermine trust in the financial system as a whole, making it more difficult for people to access credit in the future. It is for this reason that those international institutions that govern debt repayments and access to credit, such as the International Monetary Fund, have such power within the international system. Failure to pay one's debts is taken as a

⁹⁰ The key issues around food security are outlined in the paper by Van Dillon, B and Leen, M (2000) *Bio patenting and the Threat to Food Security* CIDSE Policy Paper http://www.cidse.org/pubs/tg1ppcon.htm?&username=guest@cidse.org&password=9999&workgroup=&pub_niv=&lang=en

signal of credit unworthiness leading to knock-on effects, such as a freezing of assets and preventing debtors from accessing new loans.

Such norms, in order to be justly applied, need to be located within the wider context of how the debts of poor countries were incurred and the impact repayment is having. In many instances, the debt was ‘odious’ or ‘illegitimate’ - incurred by dictatorial leaders often backed by western governments and institutions as part of Cold War politics.⁹¹ It was compounded, moreover, by a global economic downturn over which the countries in question had no control. The people who are now effectively repaying the debt in developing countries often had no control over the way the debt was incurred or how money was spent, since democratic processes did not exist.

The impact of debt repayment on the countries in question is compounded by the challenges of unfair trade regulations and of widespread poverty and disease. The burden of debt repayments creates severe limitations on the capacity of developing country governments to provide basic services to its people, including access to health, education and sanitation - in other words, those basic services that would ensure the minimum of human dignity and human rights. Lack of these basic provisions is, in many cases, directly responsible for millions of premature deaths from disease and hunger throughout the world.

Ireland played an important role in moving the debate on international debt forward several years ago. As a consequence of strong public support, it adopted a policy that 100% debt cancellation is a legitimate objective, given the human development needs of the poorest countries. Such a policy has encouraged other countries to assess their own debt cancellation policies and played a part in the cancellation of World Bank debt in 2005. Since 2005, however, there is little evidence of the international financial system moving towards a more sustainable debt framework.

⁹¹ <http://www.odiousdebts.org/odiousdebts/index.cfm>

In order to achieve additional cancellation of debts, and to prevent crises in the future, further reform is essential. Greater support needs to be given to the measures poor countries themselves are taking to manage their own debts and to strengthen their capacity to negotiate better loans and increased grant finance. Such support would enhance their capacity to participate in the international system and to meet their long-term development needs.

Finally, given the inherent volatility in the international financial architecture, and the vulnerability of the countries in question to external shocks, it could promote the creation of an independent debt arbitration process through which poor countries can resolve their debt crises in an ordered way.⁹² Just as there are provisions within business law for bankruptcy, with responsibilities on both sides (lender and borrower), analogous provisions need to be put in place for national governments.

Challenge 4: Respecting human dignity - building socially responsible markets

A fourth challenge in building the global common good is that of ensuring that international markets become more socially responsible. The corporate sector has a critical role to play in ensuring that the benefits of globalisation are shared more equally. Often, however, the pursuit of business interests in the developing world has resulted in skewed development which benefits the corporations and political elites, while offering little to those who are in poverty. This is particularly true in the areas of mineral extraction, petroleum, and pharmaceutical development. Corporations have often pressed for lax

⁹² CIDSE/CI (2004) *Sustainability and Justice: A Comprehensive Debt Work out for Poor Countries with an International Fair and Transparent Arbitration Process (FTAP)*
http://www.cidse.org/docs/200410291009437888.pdf?&username=guest@cidse.org&password=9999&workgroup=&pub_niv=&lang=&username=guest@cidse.org&password=9999

regulation in terms of taxation and labour laws, which leads to a 'race to the bottom' as poor countries are put in the position of competing for mobile international investment.⁹³

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) conservatively estimated that Sub-Saharan African governments would receive over \$200 billion in oil revenues over the next decade.⁹⁴ Such revenues should lead to investments in health, education and other vital necessities. The dramatic development failures that have characterised many oil-rich countries around the world, demonstrate that petrodollars do not necessarily lead to poverty reduction. In many cases, poverty has actually been exacerbated by rapid oil exploitation. In the end, such negative competition tends to lead to questionable standards in public office, weakens institutions and even results in conflict. In some cases, such as in resource rich countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, mineral extraction has become known as the 'resource curse'.

Public concern with the activities of large multinational corporations has led to a shift in corporate awareness of the social consequences of their activities. Corporate Social Responsibility has become a major area of concern, and voluntary codes of conduct, such as the Global Compact – a voluntary, international corporate citizenship network - have been developed to guide corporate action in this area.⁹⁵ While these codes have been extremely useful in opening up the debate over corporate responsibility, they have proved weak in content and extremely hard to implement in any meaningful way. In terms of the content, many company codes fail to reflect international standards and set their responsibilities at a lower level.

⁹³ Tonelson, A (2000) *Race to the Bottom* Westview Press

⁹⁴ Gary, I ed al (2004) *Bottom of the Barrel: Africa's Oil Boom and the Poor* Catholic Relief Services, http://www.catholicrelief.org/get_involved/advocacy/policy_and_strategic_issues/oil_report_full.pdf

⁹⁵ So far around 1800 companies have signed up for the voluntary UN Global Compact which highlights issues of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption <http://www.unglobalcompact.org/Portal/Default.asp>

Trócaire research into the conditions in toy factories of Asia, carried out in partnership with Irish Congress of Trade Unions, points to a tension within corporations between the good intentions of corporate social responsibility departments and the harsh reality faced by purchasing departments, looking for speedy delivery of products for a voracious market. In the absence of strong global regulatory frameworks designed to support and provide incentives for codes of corporate responsibility, they are unenforceable.

The corporate sector has a central role in generating economic prosperity, and hence in enabling people to fulfil their economic, social and cultural rights. In doing so, it has a responsibility to ensure that the values of human rights, equality and justice are reflected in the different dimensions of their operations, both directly and indirectly. In direct terms, companies have a responsibility to ensure that these values permeate all levels of corporate action, including respect for people's fundamental rights at work.⁹⁶ This means building up organisations that foster and reward a corporate culture of mutual respect, cooperation, honesty, openness, trust and fairness.

Indirectly, the social or community extension programmes of corporations, such as community schools and health facilities, can often provide a valued source of welfare in situations where it is otherwise absent. The private sector is playing a key role in community development programmes through various initiatives that involve the free transfer of technology, as well as the support of voluntary initiatives. These offer hope that free enterprise can play a crucial role in reshaping the excesses of the market economy.

Ireland's remarkable economic transformation has seen massive inward investment from the private sector, especially in large multinational companies in IT, telecommunications and pharmaceuticals. The growth of these sectors demonstrates in a powerful way how private investment can provide a catalyst for prosperity and have

⁹⁶ ILO Declaration http://training.itcilo.org/ils/foa/library/declaration/decl_en.html

knock-on effects within local economies. Many lessons can be learnt from the experience of social partnership in Ireland, which facilitated this economic transformation. Sharing these lessons is one way in which the social partners can build stronger links with the developing world.

Lessons can also be learnt from the new forms of economic association that have evolved in recent years, which seek to reconcile the profit motive with shared ethical values. The growth of ‘ethical investment’ and ‘fair trade’ movements offer positive signs that the global business community is responding to the challenges of fully human development through re-thinking the role of profit in relation to a broader commitment to the global common good.⁹⁷ Business movements inspired by Christian principles of sharing and communion, such as the ‘Economy of Communion’, have emerged over the past decade and are demonstrating the possibility of harnessing the freedom of the market to work for the common good.⁹⁸

Much is happening in the business world in order to promote greater corporate social responsibility. Many companies operating in Ireland are playing an active role in the UN’s Global Compact, which seeks to promote good corporate citizenship.⁹⁹ The government launched the Private Sector Forum in 2004 in order to promote stronger linkages between Irish companies and the African market. The aim is to provide a bridge between companies interested in investing and their counterparts in African countries.¹⁰⁰ Whilst this is a start, much more needs to be done, to ensure that the benefits of free enterprise reach those living in poverty.

⁹⁷ These two sectors have grown substantially in recent years. For more information on fair trade standards see <http://www.fairtrade.ie/>. For reliable information on ethical finance and investment see <http://www.eiris.org/>

⁹⁸ The Economy of Communion is an initiative involving around 800 businesses in building a corporate and economic culture centred on the values of sharing, solidarity and brotherhood. Through the initiative, which is inspired by the spirituality of unity of the Focolare movement, the businesses also commit to sharing a proportion of their profits for those in need and for building a culture of giving. Gold, L (2004) *The Sharing Economy* <http://www.edc-online.org/testi/sharing-economy-e.pdf>

⁹⁹ Global Compact <http://www.unglobalcompact.org/>

¹⁰⁰ http://www.dci.gov.ie/volunteer_21.asp

Responsible consumer choices

Responsibility for socially responsible markets does not rest with corporations alone. Corporations, by their very nature, respond to demand. As people who regularly make choices about what to consume and how to invest our savings, each of us has a responsibility to become informed. Behind each product or service is a long chain of decisions and actions, all of which involve relationships between people. The qualitative nature of these relationships determines to a great extent the way in which the costs and benefits of production are distributed. Several years ago it would have been impossible for consumers to make informed judgements about the products being produced. Now, through advances in communications, it is considerably easier to make well-informed choices.¹⁰¹

Many people in Ireland have become investors, as economic prosperity has enabled them to save for the future or to become shareholders in companies. Each investment has an ethical dimension. In many cases, however, such investment may be used for purposes such as military expenditure or environmentally destructive practices. This has begun to change through the growth of ethical investment funds, which present a transparent way for potential investors to be given a choice in how the money they invest will be employed. Many companies now opt for ethical investment policies as a matter of course, but much more could be done to reinforce the link between investment and development.

While not everyone is an investor, nobody can avoid being a consumer. Every aspect of our consumption is bound up in relationships that stretch far beyond Ireland's borders. There are substantial differences in the prices producers are paid for their produce and this can make a huge difference to their quality of life. In most instances, these relationships are hidden from us. Until recently, we could only look at

¹⁰¹ There are now a range of websites providing gateways to information on ethical consumption and investments. See, for example, www.ethicalconsumer.org, www.getethical.com. See also, Clark, D (2004) *The Rough Guide to Ethical Shopping* Rough Guide Publications.

the branding on the package and had very little way of knowing how the product reached us. It is only when NGOs and trade unions have highlighted such issues as the plight of child workers in toy factories¹⁰² that we have taken on these issues.¹⁰³ This has changed to some extent with the development of the ‘fair trade’ movement. Through the fair trade movement, those products that reach a certain high standard in the relationship with producers, including paying them a fair wage, are now identifiable through a trademark. This trademark makes it easier to judge which products have been manufactured and sourced in ways that respect workers’ rights.

Challenge 5: Care for creation - Becoming environmentally sustainable

Many of the problems of globalisation are intrinsically linked to the way in which we interact with our natural environment. As outlined in the first section, those living in poverty suffer disproportionately from the impacts of environmental degradation. Such degradation, including climate change, could seriously undermine any of the positive development efforts being made through rising aid, fair trade or debt cancellation.¹⁰⁴ The dominant model of economic development, which is heavily reliant on the burning of fossil fuels and deforestation, exacerbates climate change. Similarly, other environmental problems such as the disposal of waste, depletion of fish stocks, and pollution, are by-products of an economic model that pays little regard to the environmental consequences of development. As more people are able to access the economic and social benefits of industrialisation, this problem is going to deepen.

¹⁰² See Trócaire’s website for more information
<http://www.trocaire.org/newsandinformation/toys03/toys03.htm>

¹⁰³ www.fairtrade.ie

¹⁰⁴ UK Working Group on Climate Change and Development (2004) *Up in Smoke? Threats from, and responses to, the impact of global warming on human development* Policy Paper,
http://www.neweconomics.org/gen/z_sys_PublicationDetail.aspx?pid=196

Lasting change in this area will only come about through behaviour and attitude change. The problem of environmental sustainability is deeply entrenched within the dominant model of development and cannot be resolved without concerted political will, both in the North and South. The late Pope John Paul II, speaking on the environment in 2001, called for an ‘ecological conversion’ to avert a major global ecological disaster.¹⁰⁵ He pointed to the gross injustice of expecting poor countries working their way out of poverty to shoulder the cost of environmental problems to which rich countries have contributed disproportionately. Moreover, there is a responsibility on governments and private corporations alike to ensure that everything possible is done to ensure that the mistakes of the past are not repeated through technological transfers.

The landmark Report, *Our Common Future*, published almost 20 years ago in 1987, reached the chilling conclusion that if all people in the world were to sustain a lifestyle like that in the West, it would require the resources of no less than 10 planet earths.¹⁰⁶ Almost 20 years later, there is growing evidence that the impact of climate change is threatening the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. Those countries most affected by the early signs of climate change are least able to absorb those changes without catastrophic consequences. Developing countries may require much more money to adapt to the climate change that is already happening.

Environmental footprint

A further critical challenge in building the global common good, therefore, is to minimise our impact on the global environment through making our own domestic development more environmentally sustainable. Much more needs to be done to cut Ireland’s greenhouse gas emissions. As a nation, we are legally bound to fulfil our obligations under the Kyoto Protocol, which came into force on 16 February 2005. This accord, now ratified by 147 countries accounting for 61% of greenhouse gas emissions, legally obliges nations to cut

¹⁰⁵ Pope John Paul II message 17 January 2001.

¹⁰⁶ Bruntland Commission (1987) *Our Common Future* UN

emissions by 5% by 2012.¹⁰⁷ In addition, the EU has set itself the further target of reducing greenhouse gases by 8% (of 1990 levels) by 2012. According to the most recent review of the government's National Climate Change Strategy projections, Ireland will not reach its targets set under the Kyoto Protocol.¹⁰⁸ Ireland's emissions of greenhouse gases in 2005 were 25.7% above 1990 levels and, without full implementation of the measures set out in the strategy, this figure could rise to 37% over 1990 levels by 2010.¹⁰⁹

The measures set out in the National Climate Change Strategy in 2000 need to be implemented with greater speed. The strategy, launched as a departure from "business as usual", called for "early action" to address Ireland's international obligations to reduce greenhouse gases. The strategy recognised that "delay would require more painful action at a later date to address both Kyoto compliance and stronger future commitments."¹¹⁰

The first biennial review of the implementation of the national strategy, published in 2003, underlined the slow pace of change.¹¹¹ Over four years since that review, key measures proposed in the Strategy have yet to be implemented. Of particular importance are the proposed tax changes to address CO₂ emissions, measures to reduce the reliance of the Irish economy on fossil fuels, and measures to address transport emissions. Such failures are storing up economic and environmental problems for the future.

¹⁰⁷ <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/kpeng.html>

¹⁰⁸ Plain Guide to the National Climate Change Strategy
[http://www.environ.ie/DOEI/DOEIPol.nsf/0/2f96644fae717d7d80256f0f003bc7ec/\\$FILE/pccguideinside.pdf](http://www.environ.ie/DOEI/DOEIPol.nsf/0/2f96644fae717d7d80256f0f003bc7ec/$FILE/pccguideinside.pdf)

¹⁰⁹ A full list of government measures underway to curb climate change can be found on the Department of the Environment website at
[http://www.environ.ie/DOEI/DOEIPol.nsf/0/2f96644fae717d7d80256f0f003bc7ec/\\$FILE/cc2002.doc](http://www.environ.ie/DOEI/DOEIPol.nsf/0/2f96644fae717d7d80256f0f003bc7ec/$FILE/cc2002.doc)

¹¹⁰ National Climate Change Strategy...

¹¹¹ The Review document can be found at
[http://www.environ.ie/DOEI/doepub.nsf/0/7d411c497cb4fbd80256f88003b0961/\\$FILE/ccrpt2%5B1%5D.pdf](http://www.environ.ie/DOEI/doepub.nsf/0/7d411c497cb4fbd80256f88003b0961/$FILE/ccrpt2%5B1%5D.pdf). The Comhar submission to the document can be found at http://www.comhar-nsdp.ie/comharDocs/Recommend1_2002.doc.

Positive change requires strong political leadership, as well as educational campaigns. The wastefulness of over-consumption in Northern countries places a huge burden on the environment and calls for a change of attitudes within society. New ways need to be found to foster an attitude of *stewardship* towards the environment and use of resources. Such stewardship involves treating what we use and consume with respect. The Common Declaration on Environmental Ethics,¹¹² signed by Christian leaders in 2002 ahead of the Johannesburg Summit on Sustainable Development, points to some practical ways in which churches can work together to change attitudes and behaviours.

Conclusion

This paper has outlined the principles that should underpin a “Catholic Social Teaching” approach to international development cooperation. There is no single formula for translating the principles of Catholic Social Thought into development policy. These principles, however, can help guide policy both in terms of the underlying rationale and the nature of the policies required to address the needs of the wider world. The question of rationale and motivation is often overlooked, but is one that is key to the continued principled engagement with the developing world.

The cornerstone of this approach to development cooperation is one that is centred on the *global common good*, a recurring theme throughout Catholic Social Thought. It is an approach that not only addresses the symptoms of poverty, but also underlying structural injustices that perpetuate inequality. Given the complex and urgent challenges facing the developing and the developed world alike, this approach is one that provides a timely response. From an Irish perspective, the paper highlighted a number of priorities that need to be addressed to effectively implement such an approach. One striking

¹¹² http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/2002/june/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20020610_venice-declaration_en.html

feature is that many of these policy priorities are their inter-departmental nature. It touches on EU, trade, energy, migration, agriculture, enterprise – amongst others. Virtually no area of policy is now isolated from having an impact beyond Ireland’s shores and increasingly in the developing world. Whilst Irish Aid has an important role to play in these relationships – and this should not be underestimated – a whole of government approach is needed to face the multiple challenges of development and ensure that other policies contribute to the global common good.