

ADDRESS BY H.E. MR. DAUDI N. MWAKAWAGO, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77, AT THE CENTER FOR THE GLOBAL SOUTH'S CONFERENCE, *U.N. CONFERENCES: FROM PROMISES TO PERFORMANCE* (PANEL ON STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION)

American University, Washington, D.C., 3-4 March 1997

This Conference is convening four months before the Special Session of the General Assembly that will review performance of the implementation of the Rio decisions of 1992 by the International Community. The date is significant in that for us the deliberations here may have a bearing on what will transpire in New York in spring. I refer here to the Commission on Sustainable Development popularly known as CSD scheduled to convene next month as Prep Com to the Special Session. It is with that background in mind that we have offered to share with you our perceptions of some of the problems in implementation.

This presentation will focus on five key areas namely the rationale of the conferences, the development paradigm, the demands and ramifications of globalisation, the case for new ethos of economic development cooperation and what institutional framework for sound global partnership that will not only be conducive to rapid growth but also will be equitable especially in relations to the South.

Let me start by reminding ourselves of the key statement made by Heads of State and Government when they met in New York to commemorate the Fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. And here I quote:

"...the United Nations has convened a number of specifically focussed global conferences in the last five years. From these conferences, a consensus has emerged, inter alia, that economic development, social development and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development, which is the framework of our efforts to achieve a higher quality of life for all people..."

The message is quite clear. The conferences addressed the critical issue of the development of humankind on the one hand and on the other the centrality of liberating the person from all the shackles of underdevelopment. All the conferences adopted Programmes of Action in which a detailed division of labor was underwritten for all the players. Therefore, in analyzing the implementation of the decisions it is important to bear in mind the different roles played by governments, agencies and civil society. Such recognition will provide clarity in apportioning praise or blame. On balance, however, it can be stated without contradiction that the majority of the member countries in the Group of 77 and China were faithful implementers of the major decisions of the conferences. To some this assessment may be controversial. But the plain truth is that all the studies by leading authorities are in agreement that the South fulfilled its side of the bargain. It is the north that has yet to deliver. The crux of the matter is the lack of political will. For global partnership to be meaningful there must be a new attitude and commitment to cooperate both in words and action. And more in action.

DEVELOPMENT

There is a growing debate as to the meaning of development. Indeed it is important to have clarity on its efficacy. But to the people who cannot read and write, and do not know where the next meal will come from, let alone worrying about their shelter, put simply development to them is the banishment of those inequities.

Therefore, academics and intellectuals can argue about the finer points of definition, and indeed they should, however, there need to be a reasonable balance. The Declaration by the Heads of State and Government underscored the imperative of development that is the raising of the quality of life of all people.

The world has seen an implosion of knowledge in the last thirty years or so. The revolution in technology and informatics have raised the expectations of humankind to new levels. However, it is important to bear in mind that over one billion people live in poverty. That is, one-fifth of humankind is not enjoying the fruits of the revolution in technology. They cannot be wished away. Their plight has to be addressed seriously along with the requirements of the vast majority of humankind residing in the countries of the South.

Economic and social development are thus key elements. Economic growth is a prerequisite for any meaningful change in the pattern of life. Humankind has begun to realize with a sense of realism that poverty is not an inevitable part of human condition. All the conferences were unanimous in deprecating poverty. Poverty negates all notions of development and equity. In fact it is a menace which has to be eradicated. Given that a very substantial segment of humankind is afflicted by poverty, it is incumbent upon the international community to work out concrete programmes with a reasonable timeframe for its eradication. The world has enough resources and the organizational capability to achieve that goal. What is lacking is the political will. No legislation can propel the political will of the powers that be. It is a question of conscience.

The main message of the conferences which was: reorganize and restructure to join the global economy. Many developing countries have undertaken structural adjustments and the process is very much underway. The undertaking has been very costly in human and material terms. But there will be no turning back. Globalization is here to stay and conditions the way we do business. The support of the international community is vital to the efforts of the developing countries especially the negative impact on the least developed countries of Asia and Africa.

In short an enabling external environment is crucial to the sustainability of development efforts of the developing countries. Studies have shown that every year between thirteen and eighteen million people mainly women and children perish from hunger and poverty related causes. That development is unacceptable. There is a need to take urgent measures to improve the external economic environment which will allow the developing countries to restore economic growth in a sustained basis. Economic policy coordination at the global level is also essential in order to promote macroeconomic stability. The focus there is particularly monetary and financial stability.

The pace of development can never be achieved without the provision of adequate financial resources. We are aware of the need to mobilize domestic resources a factor that had not been given much prominence in the past. The supporting role and in some cases the critical role of external resources cannot be overemphasized. Yet it is a fact that over the last few years the contribution of developing countries to the world economy has been significant and rising. Even developing countries of Africa have been registering net contribution although from a very low base. The implication of that phenomenon is that a more proactive international stance can make a difference to many of the economies of the developing countries.

A lot has been said about the role of the private sector. Indeed where sound macro-policies have been put in place significant achievements have and are being recorded. But it is also true that private sector involvement is selective and discriminatory. For poor countries, the governments have still a critical role to play especially in infrastructure development. To rule out governments in favour of the private sector is to commit millions of people to perpetual poverty. What is needed is a sound balance - between the free play of markets and the regulatory prerogative of the state that includes the putting in place of sound infrastructure and policies.

Economic cooperation in the new era of globalisation has to be on new terms and conditions. This realisation is widespread among the developing countries. When all is said and done the fact remains there must be a

flow of resources from the developed towards the developing countries. Recycling of existing resources is not the answer. The demands of development are such that there must be injection of new resources through such mechanism as ODA and soft window of the Bretton Woods Institutions. The scourge of poverty is real. To fight it requires resources.

The decline in resources for multilateral development makes it difficult to respond decisively to the massive challenge of poverty eradication. The continued cut-back in resources for development, therefore, threatens to undermine the efforts for meeting the targets and objectives of poverty eradication agreed upon at the major conferences.

INSTITUTION CHANGE

Given the primacy of development to addressing the needs of the developing countries, it is axiomatic that institutions need to be restructured to meet the challenge. Therefore, it is pertinent to ask ourselves the content and direction of reforms we are undertaking. The programmes and policies of the 50's and 70's, which focussed on import substitution did contribute to the laying down of an infrastructure for industrial development. But its very narrow scope has proved conclusively it could not be sustained. Hence the new demands of globalization and liberalization. The new climate opens the borders for technology and capital to move.

For developing countries an added push is a prerequisite. Governments have to create the necessary conditions for capital to flow in and to protect investments while safeguarding the interests of the most vulnerable in society.

In conclusion, therefore, one can assert that the major conferences set the tone for a new global partnership for development. Concretely the developing countries have responded positively although through forceful means. It is now up to the development partners to come up with solid answers to the challenge they undertook to fulfill.

The playing field has to be leveled so that all the players can participate in decency. That is the goal of the Group of 77. Enhanced collaboration between the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods Institutions is one of the most cost-effective means of translating the decision to eradicate poverty into reality. But these are not the only players. The world has seen significant rise of non-governmental organizations and the private sector as active partners in development. The United Nations being the only universal body, remains the one institution that can provide the coordinating role.

The case for multilateralism cannot be put too strongly. For many years to come governments and multilateral institutions will have a greater role in development in developing countries especially the least developed of Asia and particularly of Africa.

The quest for a new global partnership for development is real and requires all the support it must have. The time is now.

I thank you.