

Globalisation, civil society, and the multilateral system

José Antonio Alonso

Introduction: the scope of globalisation

At times, words seem to obscure rather than clarify ideas. As Goethe had one of his characters say: 'When the concept is lacking, a word always comes up to save the day'. In economic parlance, some words have acquired such symbolic power that they work as talismans: their mere mention seems to rule out the need for any further analysis. This occurs to a certain extent with *globalisation*, which has become a generic and universal term, used to refer to any factors of change in contemporary society. The word then loses any precise meaning. We therefore need to ask ourselves what the concept really means and implies.

Indeed, the root of the problem lies, at least among romance languages, with the word itself. Does the anglicism *globalisation* mean anything more than *internationalisation*? It would seem that *globalisation* seeks to refer to relations that are more intense and homogeneous among countries and social actors than *internationalisation* would imply. These connect not only across national boundaries, but also above and beyond the institutions – both State and cultural – upon which such boundaries were previously built. *Globalisation* clearly highlights the sense of the world as a system, as an 'entity to be organised', as Mattelart (1997) rightly pointed out. From this perspective, globalisation is more than the simple increase in the flows of trade, finance, or communication between countries. Rather, globalisation represents a new era in the world system, one that is characterised by the dislocation of national economies and nation-states, and their re-composition on the basis of global relations, in accordance with what the market demands.

From this perspective, it is clear that reality diverges from the idea that globalisation is already completed, which is how it is often presented. There is a sort of fetishism, to which some international organisations have contributed when they refer to global tendencies as though these implied the dismantling of the nation-state in the face of inexorable and irreversible market trends, as if globalisation was a *fait accompli*. A detailed analysis shows that globalisation is in fact a process that is asymmetrical, unequal, and certainly incomplete. It is *asymmetrical* because it does not affect all areas in the same way: while certain relationships (such as capital transactions) are highly integrated, others (for example, movement of people or access to technology) are governed by decidedly restrictive regulations. It is *unequal* because it does not affect all countries in the same way: while the degree of integration is high among industrialised countries, whole areas of the developing world – like most of sub-Saharan Africa – remain on the periphery of these trends towards progress and economic dynamism. It is *incomplete* because it is more an on-going process than a thorough-going reality: we should not forget that only one-sixth of the world's production is involved in international trade, nor that most of the national savings of any country in the world are invested in its own domestic market, to take just two examples from the economic sphere.

In any event, we are not talking about an entirely new trend. Authors such as Rodrik (1997) remind us that the degree of openness in international economic relations at the beginning of the twentieth century was very similar to what we observe today, in real terms. It is also true that the coefficient of business openness (exports plus imports over GDP) of the group of rich European countries did not return to 1913 levels until the 1980s. These clarifications and caveats are not to deny, but rather to temper the inclination to view the current phase in the economy as being radically new and irreversible, or meaning that globalisation has been achieved in full.

Globalisation: process and ideology

Globalisation as a process

Like other change processes, globalisation fuels openly opposing positions. While for some it is the very expression of social and economic modernisation, for others it poses an obstacle to the governance of the planet and a threat to social cohesion.¹ While the former group demand that all countries fully adapt to the requirements imposed by

international markets, the latter seek to resist this trend, preferring to maintain the scope of national decision making – and State power – of an earlier era. Neither of these options is very convincing (Touraine 1999). There is no reason why recognising the growing presence of a global market should mean that we renounce the possibility of any co-ordinated social action – that is, public action – outside the market. Nevertheless, the scope for such action is much narrower today than it was 50 or 100 years ago.

Globalisation in any case cannot be ascribed in terms of simple value-judgements: it is a process that carries possibilities and threats alike. Possibilities, because it should not be forgotten that the broadening of international markets, which was one of the mainstays of the globalisation process, laid the foundations for one of the fastest periods of growth in the world economy, between 1950 and 1973. The increasing convergence among the developed economies over the last few decades is fuelled by the same trend, and has hinged crucially upon the spread of technology and the opening of borders fostered by moves towards globalisation. Its effects are not limited to the developed countries but have also reached some of the Pacific Rim and Latin American economies. Last in this list of positive factors associated with globalisation is the emergence of an increasingly widespread awareness of what is involved in good governance of the planet and of the rights upon which international action must rest. The series of international summits promoted by the UN, and the fact that a new more precise definition of human rights is beginning to take root, are evidence of this awareness.

At the same time, it must be acknowledged that globalisation also entails threats and risks. Globalisation broadens the bases for economic growth, while at the same time stimulating the polarising dynamic that is implicit in the market economy. The opening up of the economy stimulates processes of economic convergence, but it also fuels the various phenomena of exclusion of those areas or regions that lack the wherewithal to take advantage of the spread of technological changes which underpin such convergence. In addition, opening up to international markets gives a new base for economic dynamism, but this growth also implies greater instability, in that the economy becomes more vulnerable to international pressures, speculation, or market contagion. And in the end, globalisation reduces the scope for State-level decision making and forces governments to justify their interventions in the domestic economy, since these interventions may jeopardise social cohesion at the national level. Thus while on the one hand globalisation

raises expectations of income redistribution, on the other hand social spending is reduced, and societies become more unequal.

None of these perverse trends can be viewed as being historically predetermined or inevitable: they are simply risks that need to be countered by active policies to avoid or minimise these risks. There is room both for political decisions and for social policies, even though the weakening and streamlining of the State, and the reduction in its scope (which often go hand in hand with globalisation), diminish the chances of deliberate corrective action in this field.

There is one last aspect of globalisation worth highlighting: its tendency to promote excessively restrictive policies in terms of economic management (Todd 1999). In the context of the nationally regulated post-war economies, the dynamics of demand became a relevant factor in explaining growth. Public spending, through social policies derived from the 'Keynesian pact', implies regulating the economic cycle. The problem is that some of these regulatory possibilities have been lost as a result of globalisation. Two of the instruments of Keynesian intervention – income policy and State activism – have only limited effectiveness when an economy is totally open to international competition. Faced with permeable national boundaries, the tendency is to adopt economic policies with a restrictive bias: restricting demand, controlling costs, reducing public expenditures, and placing principal emphasis on the control of inflation. This search for stability is a process that finds its justification in the need to be as competitive as possible in the international market. But what might be considered a reasonable therapy for an individual country tends to have perverse effects for everyone when it is adopted universally. Economic management is thus imbued with a recessionary bias. Naturally, these restrictions affect the least-developed countries the worst, even though they are precisely the countries that most need a dynamic environment to stimulate growth.

The ideology of 'global'

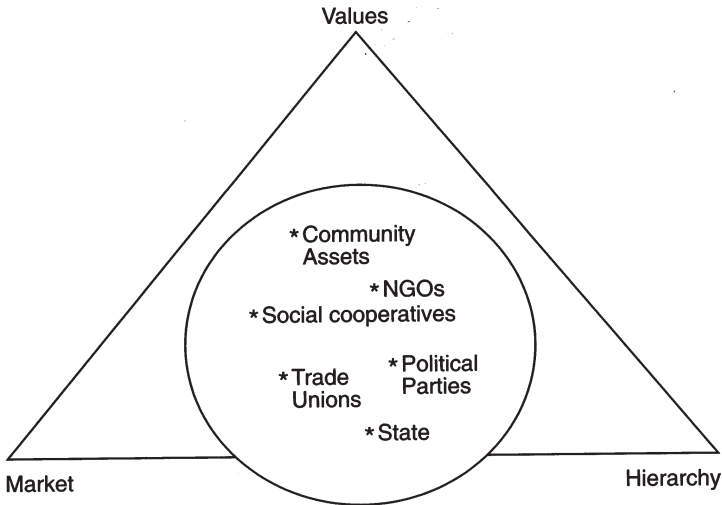
Even if the 'globalised world' cannot be said to be a fully fledged reality, we can argue that it has given rise to a particular form of ideological outlook which is widespread throughout the world today. It is an ideology that extols the market as the only efficient mechanism for economic distribution and social co-ordination. It thus also views the existence of a single market for the whole planet, without any interference in the free interaction of its constituent parts, as being the

height of modernisation and progress in an open and efficient world. The assumption that what is 'global' is also automatically efficient, as an apparently irrefutable argument, does not allow space for examination. This historic fatalism leads to the spiritual and political dislocation that are notable characteristics of modern societies: government and civil society appear impotent and perplexed when confronted with a process which is portrayed as irresistible and irreversible.

Nonetheless, it is worth noting that in every society the processes of distribution and social co-ordination are a combination of three complementary mechanisms and not one, as the globalisers claim. These are the *market*, i.e. distribution through competitive pricing; the *hierarchy*, i.e. distribution through organisational processes; and the *values*, i.e. distribution as a response to accepted ethical principles (Anisi 1992). In every society a combination of these three forms of social co-ordination and distribution exists, and no single form has the unique capacity to mould the social fabric. The greater efficiency of the hierarchy as compared with the market in realising certain transactions has been sufficiently studied by the institutional school (Williamson 1975 and 1985). To these must be added the relevance of values in uniting people, as reference-points for their decisions and for co-ordinated social action. The relative weightings of these three dimensions vary, depending upon the context (see Figure 1), but all three are present in every setting. Even in the business world, for instance, a company operates in the market by buying and selling products in competition with its rivals; it is organised internally in accordance with hierarchical principles – authority – to co-ordinate decisions; and it promotes corporate values among its employees to bring their work into line with the corporate objectives. The characteristic of global ideology – a version of neo-liberalism – is that it seeks to reduce or convert such mechanisms into just one – the market – which is held to be the very expression of efficiency.

In short, globalisation is presented to us both as a type of false consciousness and as an on-going historical process, as both illusion and reality. Today, it is more vital than ever to shatter this illusion, in order to preserve our capacity to act in the social sphere and influence the course of history.

Figure 1: Mechanisms of social allocation and coordination



A single policy?

One of the signs of the conversion of globalisation into ideology is the standardisation of the economic discourse. Whatever the circumstances of a given country, the economic-policy recommendations seem to respond to only one pattern: commercial openness and financial deregulation, internal economic liberalisation, streamlining of the State, and disciplined macro-economic management. The constant repetition of this same remedy suggests that this official discourse is irrefutable. Some of these recommendations may well be relevant to the reality of a specific economy. The problem is the imperious, uniform, and irrefutable manner with which such reforms are demanded.

International organisations have played a major role in standardising economic discourse. They did not refrain from mystifying the success of the Southeast Asian countries, converting this experience into a model for reforms elsewhere. The problem is that the reality of the Asian experience has little to do with the reforms advocated in the 1980s by these organisations. Rather, the factors which explain the region's success include an active State, strategic use of selective protectionism, the policy of promoting human resources, and the degree of social equality

achieved.² In fact, if we wanted to generalise, comparative case studies reveal the existence of four generic factors upon which most successful experiences of international development have depended, namely a high level of investment, a degree of macro-economic stability, human-resource development, and the establishment of sound and efficient institutions for the management of conflict (Rodrik 1999). All these factors were alien to World Bank and IMF policy recommendations, and in some cases even openly contradicted their policy advice.

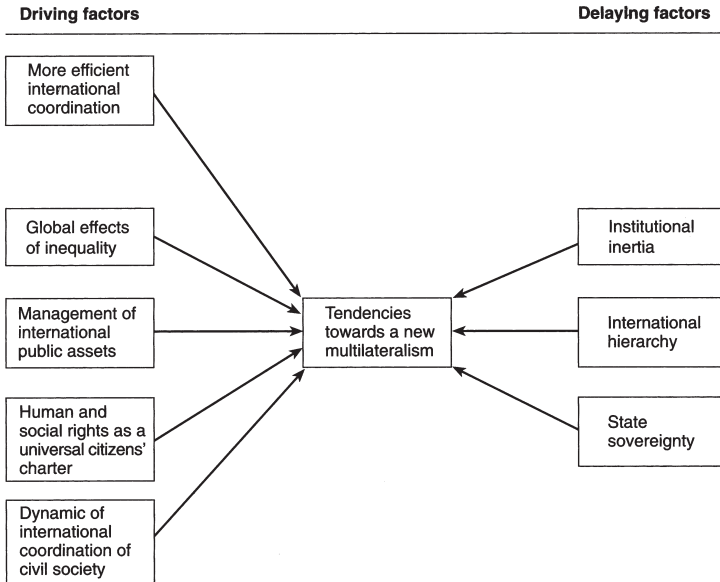
However, beyond this list of common factors, what the study of history shows us is that there is no single path to development. The paths towards progress followed by specific countries at various times have diverged greatly. There is no theoretical or empirical foundation for the argument that there is but one single and universally valid body of fixed prescriptions. Each country must seek its own route to progress, based on its own assets, taking into account its own history and particular circumstances. In other words, in spite of globalism, there is still scope for national decisions: areas of discretion which can be used in defining a national development strategy which takes particular circumstances into account but which also defines its specific priorities in an autonomous manner. To deny that this is possible is not to yield to the realism of the supposed demands of the market, but rather to accept the fictions put forward by the globalising ideologies.

Globalisation and multilateral action

The need for global management

There are many problems that require a major role for multilateral action in the promotion of development in an increasingly globalised world. First, there is a notable asymmetry in the levels of effective integration between markets and countries, and the possibilities that the multilateral institutions provide for *co-ordinated international action*. But this co-ordination is needed more than ever, given the *interrelated nature* of different economies. Decisions taken in terms of a national economy are very easily transmitted to the international community. Nobody is free from this contagious effect, as seen in the most recent financial crisis. From this springs the interest in developing more efficient co-ordination mechanisms between countries. This co-ordination requires a multilateral institutional system with the ability to engage in global dialogue and co-ordinated management; and this in turn means tackling the problems entailed in the governance of the current international system.

Figure 2: Driving and delaying factors for a new multilateralism



This multilateral system must also be entrusted with the production of those goods that, by virtue of the process of globalisation, can now be viewed as *international public goods*. That is to say, they are goods which are *non-excludable* (meaning there is no easy way to extract payment from the beneficiaries) and are characterised by the *non-competitive nature of benefits* (meaning that one user's consumption does not diminish the benefits available to others) (Kaul et al. 1999; Kanbur et al. 1999). The benefits of a pure public good are available to everyone – payers and non-payers alike – once the good is provided, and are thus susceptible to 'free riding'. Consequently, the management of international public goods cannot easily be left to the market. Nations tend to under-contribute to international public goods, unless there is some kind of organisational structure to co-ordinate their individual contributions. In this sphere, we might mention factors like political and

financial stability, environmental policies, and the handling of problems associated with global ecological deterioration or the promotion of primary health. For this reason, the provision of such goods should be entrusted to a multilateral institution which can co-ordinate social action.

Third, the protagonism of multilateral action is also supported by the treatment that should be applied to problems which used to be considered local but which today are *problems affecting the management of the entire international system*. This is the case with many of the indicators of the profound and persistent inequality between peoples. Today, poverty is no longer conceived as an evil affecting only those who suffer it directly, but as a problem concerning everyone, since all people are affected by its consequences. The global problems include phenomena such as environmental deterioration, the pressure exerted by population growth on certain scarce or vulnerable natural resources, tensions deriving from migration, the spread of illnesses that can be prevented or treated, international insecurity associated with drug-trafficking and terrorism, natural disasters and regional armed conflicts. Though not caused solely by poverty, all of these feed off the destitution in which much of the population of the developing world lives. All of these are problems which affect the international community as a whole and whose solution goes beyond what any one nation is capable of doing, however powerful. It requires concerted action on the part of the international community to address the underlying causes of many of these ills, which are rooted in underdevelopment and poverty.

A further expression of this sense of the globalising world can be found in the UN-sponsored series of *world conferences and international summits* which, in a concerted fashion, began to analyse the main issues posed by development itself. A rather imprecise, but nevertheless useful, set of doctrines emerged on how to approach the problems of development, which in turn led the way to a body of consensus-based commitments, some more precise than others, on a range of issues. Perhaps the clearest expression of this shared commitment was at the World Conference on Human Rights which took place in Vienna in 1993, where definitions were reached on the universality, indivisibility, and interdependence of the civil, cultural, economic, political, and social rights of all people (including the 'right to development') as inalienable and intrinsic to all human beings. This principle was later reaffirmed at the Social Summit in Copenhagen in 1995. Essentially, a set of rights that are intrinsic to all human beings was defined, a sort of citizens' charter

that transcends borders, nationalities, races, and religions. Hence, the promotion of these rights was no longer to be viewed as a generous and discretionary act on the part of States, but as an international obligation that is binding on all countries and peoples.

However, this new global framework for defining both the problems deriving from underdevelopment as well as people's rights clashes with the preferably bilateral – and discretionary – character of international action in this field. The development-aid system was born in a world of nations, as part of the bilateral policies of the industrialised States, who would freely decide upon the quantity, composition, and purpose of allocating such resources. This way of structuring the aid system runs up against the increasingly global nature of the problems that aid seeks to tackle, and the universality of the right to development held by citizens of the South. It is therefore necessary to give new impetus to multilateral action, if we want to be effective in achieving a more just and integrated world: an impetus that must be preceded by thorough reform of the multilateral system in force today (see Figure 2).

Three stages of multilateralism

The need for a such a programme of reforms is prompted by persistent calls, as much from inside as from outside, to address the mismatch between the real ability of the multilateral system and the demands and responsibilities facing this system in the real world. Over the last ten years there have been a number of particularly creative proposals for reform of the UN system. These include the reports of Urquhart and Childers (1990); the proposals of the UN Association in the USA (Fromuth 1988); the work of the 'Inter-governmental Group of High-Level Experts' – the group of 18 – created by the General Assembly in 1985 (Bertrand 1988); private initiatives, such as that carried out by Khan and Strong, which took shape in the 'Davidson Report' (Lyon 1989); and the ambitious work of the so-called Nordic Project, sponsored by Denmark, Norway, Finland, Iceland, and Sweden. To these largely thwarted proposals must be added the initiatives directly sponsored by UN Secretary-Generals, including Boutros-Ghali's *Agenda for Peace* and *A Programme for Development*, and the recent *Renewal of the United Nations: A programme for reform* proposed in 1997 by Kofi Annan.

Thus, the relevant question is not whether a change is necessary, but rather the magnitude of this change and its implications. In fact, the institutions belonging to the UN system have gone through genuine

restructuring and review of their functions over the last few years. The problem is, as Zoninsein (1999) notes, that the outside world has changed faster still. To understand the multilateral order that this changing reality requires, it is useful to refer to three categories based on those proposed by Robert Cox (1992), in setting out the different stages through which multilateralism has passed.

Hegemonic multilateralism

The basis for the multilateral system as we know it was forged in the period immediately following the Second World War, reflecting the conceptions and correlation of forces of the day. It thus gave rise to *hegemonic multilateralism*, which was profoundly shaped by the bipolar world of the post-war period. Within each of the two opposing blocs, a very defined international hierarchy was maintained, set up in a vertical manner and equipped with mechanisms to enable each of them to encourage other countries to join their camp and also to force their allies' compliance. The clash between the two blocs permeated every international confrontation, and so conditioned how each side would respond to every international issue.

The balance of forces between the two superpowers constituted a form of mutual deterrence and a way to contain conflicts; and was a major factor in ensuring cohesion among the countries making up each bloc. In fact, the dynamic of confrontation – the 'enemy without' – made it easier for each member to identify its interests with those of the bloc as a whole, and in turn with those of the hegemonic power. It should be said, however, that the co-ordinating role taken on by the USA within the West was a spontaneous and not a forced outcome of this bipolar structure of contained confrontation.

Such a world order seeks to promote greater economic integration in the North as a prerequisite for economic growth among the members of each respective grouping. Hence the system of fixed exchange rates was set up to facilitate monetary stability, the IMF was established to support this system, and GATT was created to encourage liberalisation and multilateralism of commerce. It is arguable how far these regulatory systems were coherent and rational, but there is no doubt that they contributed to bringing about the period that saw the most intense economic growth ever seen in the West, between 1950 and 1973.

At the time, the designers of the institutional framework were quite happy to allow the South to be cast as subordinate within the

international order. The developing world was thus not invited to take part in designing the newly emerging international order; and the South was not fully integrated into any of the most relevant international mechanisms. Rather, the developing countries joined the established order as subordinates, and depended on the discretion of the industrialised countries to concede them any involvement on the international scene. International development aid represents one such concessional mechanism. In fact, the system of development aid began as a function of the newly established order, an instrument to encourage internal cohesion within each bloc by reducing the tensions which might be generated by inequalities in the economic and social situation of the respective member States. This task was all the more necessary, bearing in mind the context in which aid began, which coincided with the great wave of decolonisation as many of the former colonies in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean gained independence. To ensure that this process would not encourage centrifugal forces within either bloc, it was necessary to introduce mechanisms – such as aid – that expressed the commitment of the countries of the North to the future destiny of a disadvantaged South.

Diffuse multilateralism

The world at the close of the 1980s was very different from that in which the international order was set up in the post-war period. Among the various changes, three seem particularly relevant.

- First, the world changed from being a bipolar world to one in which at least three major blocs can be discerned in terms of the concentration of economic and political power: North America, Europe, and the Pacific. Each of these is in turn made up of a constellation of countries, linked through very different mechanisms. The tension between these blocs is very different from that of days gone by. It is marked more by rivalry than by confrontation, the struggle being directed towards the business and technological spheres, much more than towards ideology or military strength.
- Second, there have been notable advances in the process of integration between markets and countries across national boundaries: a process which, though most evident in the business sphere, is most acutely expressed in the areas of finance and communications. Given that co-ordination mechanisms have not been developed alongside these

processes of change, economic instability today is much greater than in the past. This instability affects all countries, whatever their level of income, but has the severest impact on the developing world, which, with remarkable effort and all too understandable limitations, has succeeded in entering the international market.

- Third, the South has become visibly and increasingly heterogeneous, so that there are growing differences in the socio-economic conditions of different countries in what used to be called the Third World. It is no longer possible to think of developing countries as representing one single reality to which one single diagnosis and one single therapy can apply. On the contrary, they are a very heterogeneous set of countries, representing societies with a variety of needs and opportunities for future growth.

These changes were significant enough to affect the institutional and operational bases of the earlier form of multilateralism. The system itself was introducing changes in its structure, in order to adapt to these new circumstances. Some of these alterations were the result of a tacit process of change, such as the shift within the IMF's role towards stabilisation programmes for developing countries. Others derived from more explicit options, such as the collapse of the system of exchange agreed in Bretton Woods, or the search for more efficient co-ordination forums like those provided by the G7. Others emerged as a result of the response to unexpected crises, such as the redefinition of NATO's activity, following its military intervention in Kosovo.

There are two basic points to make about this phase of *diffuse multilateralism*: the first is that US hegemony is not guaranteed, since it is no longer the spontaneous outcome of the logic underpinning the international system. The second is the mismatch between the co-ordination that the new environmental conditions demand, and what the current multilateral system can offer. If the former point tends to encourage the USA – and its most immediate neighbours – to seek new mechanisms to preserve its leadership, the latter calls for international co-ordination that is as broad and inclusive as possible, given the growing interaction between countries in a globalising world. Clearly, these two objectives are somewhat contradictory: to preserve the hierarchy, exclusion is necessary, but to govern the world today depends on greater inclusion and co-ordination. This is why the tendency has been to opt for hybrid formulas of limited co-ordination, where this does not entail questioning the hierarchy. Regionalism is one such formula, though

perhaps the most obvious example of limited co-ordination is the G7. The problem is that, while these options may well be efficient in maintaining the hierarchy in international relations, they are clearly incapable of meeting the equally important objective of international co-ordination. To overcome these inadequacies, a *new multilateralism* is needed.

New multilateralism

New multilateralism is as yet only a proposal for the future, one that seeks to respond to the contradictions within the existing multilateral system, and also embody the autonomous initiatives to generate international co-ordination currently being forged by civil society. The contradictions of 'diffuse multilateralism' have been referred to throughout this paper. Three are particularly serious.

- First, as has been emphasised above, is the contradiction between the level of integration that has been achieved and the degree of inequality between countries and regions. This extreme inequality is the source of problems affecting the entire planet, which can be properly resolved only by addressing the root causes.
- Second is the contradiction between the level of integration that now exists and the capacity to institutionalise concerted international action. The formulas for limited co-ordination, such as the G7, may be useful for preserving the international hierarchy, but they are only marginally effective as mechanisms for global governance. The recent financial crisis showed that everyone – North and South – can be affected by what initially appeared to be highly localised problems.
- Third is the contradiction between the emergence of global problems and the lack of international mechanisms for integrated management of public assets. The environment is perhaps the area that has seen the greatest breakthrough, although this is not to suggest that the situation is remotely satisfactory.

If these contradictions define the limitations of what diffuse multilateralism has to offer, there are current trends which hint at the possibility of an alternative multilateralism that is not conditioned on the mediation of the State. This multilateralism is rooted in civil society itself, whose autonomous international co-ordination initiatives it encompasses. There are numerous examples: professional organisations,

interest groups, sports bodies, political and social forces, and development NGOs among others.

Because of these trends, 'new multilateralism' should keep four normative principles to the fore.

- First, instead of the hierarchical and exclusive multilateralism of the past, it must work towards a form of multilateralism that is both inclusive and democratic. Only the capacity to integrate the whole of the international community in a democratic way will enable it to distance itself from conflict-based solutions, and to find consensual ways to manage global problems.
- Second, this same democratic character brings with it the need to draw into the process of re-shaping the multilateral agencies both State and non-State forces and social sectors. The summits in Rio, Vienna, and Beijing saw the active participation – however imperfect – of civil-society organisations; and these experiences point the way towards a radical overhaul and renewal of the multilateral institutions.
- Third, the new multilateralism must build on a charter of human rights that transcends borders and social conditions of the individual person: a sort of universal citizens' charter. This will be a definition of human rights expressed not only in the sense of negative rights but also of positive ones,³ relating to the social conditions of different peoples and the possibilities for their development.
- Lastly, the new multilateralism must be capable of taking on a wide agenda in line with the multidimensional character of the problems of global governance. What is needed is an agenda that can allow the market to operate in those areas in which it has a proven ability to bring about an efficient distribution of resources, but which retains the scope for well thought-out collective – international – action in the protection of the most disadvantaged sectors, the provision of public goods, and the management of the right institutional and regulatory climate within which to promote international development.

Human rights and new multilateralism

This new multilateralism will take a long time to come into being. Of necessity it must be the product of a gradual process of reform, and the adaptation of the existing multilateral system and the creation of alternative spaces for international co-ordination on the part of organisations that represent civil society, providing a space for voicing

and defending their interests in an increasingly globalised world.⁴ Particularly relevant is this second process of autonomous action by civil society, at the margins of – or rather beyond – what States do. Indeed, it is in the international projection of civil society that we find the dynamic *locus* for the gestation of a new multilateralism.

This is a process which should be firmly rooted in the idea of a kind of universal citizens' charter which defines and defends human rights – understood not only in the negative sense, as political and civil rights are defined, but also in the positive sense, such as basic social rights. The need for this new multilateralism to centre on this view of human rights responds to two basic considerations. First, it responds to what Plant (1980:38) has suggested as a necessary condition 'to do anything, to carry out any action or achieve any objective'.⁵ Certainly, effectively guaranteeing those rights is a prerequisite for moral action; we need a definition of citizens' social rights which is binding upon the international community and not only on individual States.

Second, however, the new multilateralism has to build on this human-rights base in order to guarantee its fully inclusive and democratic character. In fact, in conceiving an international system of human rights, the old order might have generated some of the bases on which to found its own transformation. As An-Na'im (1999:209) argues, the rules and mechanisms of human rights can be conceived 'as a source of empowerment of civil society to articulate and promote its own demands and aspirations, at the same time as providing it with the means of the political struggle to make these effective in practice in order to reach a greater protection of their economic, social and cultural rights, just as of their civil and political ones'.

A final thought

This paper has argued for a programme of conscious action by civil society in the context of an increasingly globalised world. This is not to deny the advantages provided by such a world, but rather to underline the need for organised decisions and ethical values in ordering international relations. The programme that we envisage respects the capacity of the market to operate in those areas in which it has proved effective, but it rejects the idea that the market is the only legitimate institution through which to distribute resources and co-ordinate society. Our programme of action values the possibilities offered by the growing cross-border relations among a range of social actors, but also calls for the

establishment of democratic, effective, and inclusive international institutions, in line with the international-level co-ordination and public action that the new world stage demands. A programme, in short, that depends upon the dynamic potential that would be unleashed by the full recognition, in all its dimensions, of human rights, including the right to development.

Notes

1 One example of the debate between these positions can be found in the conversation between Thomas Friedman, author of *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, and Ignacio Ramonet, author of *Un mundo sin rumbo*, in the pages of *Le Monde Diplomatique*, October 1999.

2 This is one aspect in which, from different perspectives, the following, among others, agree: Amsden (1989), Wade (1990), Young (1995), Rodrik (1997), and Watkins (1998). It was also, finally, partly recognised by the World Bank (1993).

3 Human rights need to be understood, as Plant suggests, by the requirement for moral behaviour: 'The obligation to satisfy these particular needs has to be strict because it is impossible to understand that other obligations might be more important than the satisfaction of these needs, precisely because those who do not have their needs met are not able *ex-hypothesi* to carry out any other obligation, whatever that might be, or to achieve any other objective' (Plant 1980:93). (6)

4 For an alternative vision of the gestation process of this 'new multilateralism', see Zoninsein (1999) and An-Na'im (1999), both in Schechter (1999).

5 For an interesting discussion of the views held by social democracy and liberalism on this subject, represented by Plant and Hayek respectively, see Espada (1999).

(Translator's note: where a title or phrase has been translated from the Spanish which itself was translated from the original English, these translations are likely to differ from the original.)

References

- Amsden, A. H. (1989) *Asia's Next Giant: South Korea and Late Industrialization*, New York: Oxford University Press
- Anisi, D. (1992) *Jerarquía, Mercado Valores: Una Reflexión Económica sobre el Poder*, Madrid: Alianza Editorial
- An-Na'im, A. (1999) 'Expanding the limits of imagination: Human rights from a participatory approach to new multilateralism', in Schechter (ed.)
- Bertrand, M. (1988) *The Third Generation World Organisation*, Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff
- Cox, R. (1992) 'Multilateralism and the world order', *Review of International Studies* 18 (April): 161-80
- Espada, J.C. (1999) *Derechos Sociales del Ciudadano*, Madrid: Acento Editorial

- Fromuth, R.** (ed.) (1988) *A Successor Vision: The United Nations of Tomorrow*, United Nations Association of the USA, University Press of America
- Kanbur, R. et al.** (1999) *The Future of Development Assistance: Common Pools and International Public Goods*, Policy Essay, No. 25, Washington, ODC.
- Kaul, I. et al.** (1999) *Global Public Goods. International Cooperation in the 21st Century*, New York: Oxford University Press
- Mattelart, A.** (1997) 'La nouvelle idéologie globalitaire', in *Mondialisation: Au-delà des Mythes*, Paris: La Découverte
- Plant, R. et al.** (1980) *Political Philosophy and Social Welfare*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul
- Rodrik, D.** (1997) *Has Globalisation Gone Too Far?*, Washington DC: Institute for International Economics
- Rodrik, D.** (1999) *The New Global Economy and Developing Countries: Making Openness Work*, Washington: ODC
- Schechter, M. G.** (1999) *Innovation in Multilateralism*, New York: UN University Press
- Todd, E.** (1999) *La Ilusión Económica: Sobre el Estancamiento de las Sociedades Desarrolladas*, Madrid: De. Taurus
- Touraine, A.** (1999) *¿Cómo Salir del Liberalismo?*, Barcelona: Paidós
- Urquhart, B. and E. Childers** (1990) *A World in Need of Leadership: Tomorrow's United Nations*, New York and Uppsala: Ford Foundation and Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation
- Wade, R.** (1990) *Governing the Market: Economic Theory and the Role of Government in East Asia*, Princeton: Princeton University Press
- Watkins, K.** (1998) *Economic Growth With Equity*, Oxford: Oxfam
- Williamson, O.** (1975) *Markets and Hierarchies*, New York: Free Press
- Williamson, O.** (1985) *The Economic Institutions of Capitalism*, New York: Free Press
- World Bank** (1993) *The East Asian Miracle: Economic Growth and Public Policy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Young, A.** (1995) 'The tyranny of numbers: confronting the statistical realities of the East Asian growth experience', *Quarterly Journal of Economics* August: 641-80
- Zoninsein, J.** (1999) 'Implications of the evolving global structure for the UN system: a view from the South', in Schechter (ed.)