

*Agenda Item 174: Role of the United Nations in promoting a New Global Human Order*

*Statement by Hon'ble Mr. Swadesh Chakraborty, MP on October 25, 2000*

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Mr. President,

All of us want to create a better world for all of us, for our children and our children's children, a world free of animosity, devoid of hatred, unfettered by deprivation of any, whether physical, social or mental, and devoted to the perpetual quest for human happiness. This is the vision that has been offered to us by the late President Cheddi Jagan of Guyana. We commend Guyana for focussing the attention of the international community on a New Global Human Order.

There is a popular belief that rapid change is something which has come upon the global society of late. In some senses, this is obviously true. We have today technologies that can shrink the world, for many purposes, virtually into a village. There are, for example, the revolutions in the area of air transport and telecommunication in all its aspects - the transmission of texts, images and the spoken word. This revolution in turn connects with the revolution in satellite technology in outer space. It is a remarkable fact, indicative of the compression which has taken place in scientific and technological developments in the course of this century, that the Wright brothers were experimenting with aerial flight earlier in this century itself, that the internal combustion engine was made not long before that and the radio was invented thereafter and that it seems to us that the television was invented just the other day. While there are people alive today who were born before the first motor car was seen on the road, today we already have the INTERNET through which one can instantly source data the world over and in effect carry on a global conversation. It also seems just the other day that calculating machines were introduced in offices, while we already have both personal and professional computers with phenomenal capacities and speed. India itself has developed a gigaflop PARAM supercomputer which can do a trillion calculations per second. New sciences of bio-technology, genetic engineering, robotics, optical fibre, new materials, laser applications and many others have emerged, which are having a profound impact on economic life, professional and personal lives and medical sciences.

There is a second aspect of change in the contemporary world which relates to globalisation of economic forces. Today, capital markets, investment flows and increasingly even trade flows, are progressively less amenable to national control. We have recognised that economic strength and, therefore, national strength, cannot be preserved by pursuing autarchic policies or total reliance on generating capital investments internally. Developing countries need to use these forces to their advantage, while at the same time ensuring that unacceptable or negative consequences do not flow from the unacceptable intrusiveness of others. In the immediate post-colonial era the developing world were the 'demandeurs', or the countries which set the agenda of demands. The South claimed from the North favourable regimes of trade, development assistance and financial instruments to advance its social and economic development. Certain positive results were achieved, such as the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) in trade and agreement that 0.7 percentage of the GDP of the countries of the North would be earmarked as development assistance. There

was an acknowledgement, that to redress the severe and chronic imbalance in economic capacities, special and preferential treatment to developing countries was necessary. However, the earlier climate appears to have been greatly influenced by compulsions of the cold war, as the roles have now been reversed and it is the North which has taken on the role of demandeurs vis-a-vis the South. The GSP regime is shrinking and development assistance has yielded to the new orthodoxy of the market place. The aggressive agenda which is appearing before the South in terms of labour standards or social clause, intellectual property rights, competition policy, global investment regimes seeking right of investment and national treatment, open public procurement policy, business ethics - not to speak of 'prescriptive good governance' and human rights - is an agenda developed and articulated by the North, in their self interest, and the developing countries are being forced to respond to this agenda. This role-reversal is one of the key characteristics of the changing world before us, towards which a calibrated but firm response is required that takes advantage of the possibilities to promote economic and social growth and advancement of capabilities, but does not threaten or destabilise essential economic, political and national interests, social and cultural identity and essential independence of action. In today's world, give and take is essential and a web of mutual dependencies is developing. We have to ensure through enlightened international actions that this inter-dependence is to mutual benefit and not weighted against the developing nations.

I have touched so far on aspects of economic and technological change as these are the most visible areas of transformation and would now like to refer to some of the deeper aspects of change. To preserve the values, insights, riches of our cultures, while moving into the future, is what gives continuity within transformation. Without our own inheritance, we would come to the world empty-handed. Our inner world must be stable while the outer world changes around us. In a historical perspective, the Indian society has been in the throes of profound transformation since the beginning of the century. In a fundamental way, the freedom movement and the liberation of India which it brought about, transformed the world itself by unleashing anti-colonial forces everywhere and setting an example of peaceful political independence of colonial societies. Thereafter, India has been an active agent of change, giving meaning to values of participative democracy, respect for individual faiths and freedoms and a deep commitment to preserve variety and richness in society. These are the guiding principles of a sane and humanistic world order as a whole and have been resoundingly endorsed in the Millennium Declaration. We believe that the principles of freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibility are the foundations on which human society should be organised and would continue to labour for their full application on the world stage.