



STATEMENT BY

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President of the

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION FOR

POPULATION AND QUALITY OF LIFE

at the

World Summit for Social Development

Copenhagen, March 1995

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INTRODUCTION

If there were no other event to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the UN, the World Summit for Social Development would be meaningful enough. The whole history of the Organization could be described in terms of its movement towards 'asserting the possibility of social development'.

For 4 decades, the International Development Strategies based their measures on the firm belief that steady economic growth was the most sound pillar of development. So strong was the belief that we arrived in the 90's to the paradox of "jobless growth".

Though expressions such as 'human development' and 'social development' were mentioned in the IInd and IIIrd International Development Strategies, they remained abstract notions until UNDP gave precise content to the concept of 'Human Development' and the present Summit assumed the concept of 'Social Development' as the cornerstone of all the efforts towards development.

In such a context, the Summit is a landmark. Geared towards the commitment "to a political, economic, ethical, and spiritual vision for social development" (#22), it affirms its unequivocal goals:

- 'to place people at the center of development',
- to recognize that empowering people and to strengthen their own capacities is a main objective of development and its principal resource'



- and 'to ensure equity among generations' and 'to protect the integrity of the environment'.

If these goals are put into practice, a major shift in human security and world peace will take place.

AT THE HEART OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, A NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT

Deeply aware of the bold steps needed to face the population growth in the coming decades - from 2,25 billion (low estimate) to 4.1 billion (medium estimate) - the *Independent Commission on Population and Quality of Life* shares this vision for social development.

Moreover its vantage point in the interface population/development/environment - reinforced by many interventions at Cairo - leads the Independent Commission to consider that the factors that create threats to human life on the planet, now and in the future, are the result of **combined population growth/ wasteful patterns of consumption/ damaging technologies**. It is its conviction that, in this context, the only way to face the problems in all their dimensions is **to propose a sustainable quality of life for all** as the ultimate goal of social development.

In order to reach such a goal a **new social contract** is needed. It will provide the frame within which poverty/ unemployment/ exclusion can be effectively overcome. **Commitment and political will** are decisive for its formulation and implementation. The Independent Commission considers that **care** constitutes the ethical ground for public policies which will gradually give shape to the new social contract.

Life everywhere takes shape around the acknowledged or implicit principles of organization defined by the prevalent social contract. It covers that accepted relationships between different groups in society and the system at work in the realm of production.

The crucial social problems dealt with at this Summit show that the social contract that is underlying the relationships between different groups and the system of production in modern societies is not capable anymore of answering those situations.

It is the conviction of the Independent Commission that steps have to be made **towards a new social contract capable to integrate in a realistic way the new relationships between men and women, society and nature.**

As to the relationship between men and women, the gender contract prevailing in the social contract is still the inheritance of a rigid distribution of roles between men and women - women carry the greatest part of the activities of care for children, adults and elderly relatives while men are confined to the world of production.

If the international community **is consistent with its decision to put people at the center of development**, a new stage of the will to end the discrimination against women will be reached. The gender contract will then be basically reshaped. One particular aspect of the updating of the **gender contract has as its cornerstone the compatibilization between family responsibilities and professional responsibilities.** This process leads to the flexibility in work, the creation of new jobs and the practice of job-sharing.

The production relations included in the social contract are also changing. New factors are present: the access to knowledge through well-protected patents, the Western-established prices of basic commodities, the transnational character of capital and its mobility, the vulnerability of a locally bound labour, the life-expectancy of technologies, the still external costs of wastes and by-products, the over-determination of offer and demand by marketing.

It is the conviction of the Independent Commission that all these factors have to be scrutinized, so that **the human factor may be singled out in a new perspective.** The increased costs of the production scheme should never be borne exclusively by labour. A new equilibrium has to be found. New conditions for work will be found.

Within the production scheme, technology has gone unchallenged. But today the choice of technologies, the type of energy used and its efficiency as well as the treatment and disposal of wastes have such an impact on the environment that their place in the social contract has to be focussed in a new way. Underlying all production schemes and the consequent consumption patterns, there should be **an active respect for the natural contract.**

A social contract thus redefined will have an important implication: it will change the place of the economic factors. Economy itself will have to redirect its goals. This will come about by the consistency with the ethical foundation with all societal processes so explicitly assumed by this Conference: **people come first.**

It is against this background that **public policies** should be drawn. Though being basically managerial tools for the allocation of resources they **ought to express an updated and culturally rooted social contract.** In order to do so, governments should be requested to listen to institutes of research, NGOs, individual creators, who all, each in a particular way, **give form and substance to the main elements of the social contract.**

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FOR A POLITICS OF CARE

The destitution of the poor, the hopelessness of the unemployed, the paralysis of the excluded, need more than the means of technocratic management. **Mobilisation of society is the first step of the 'enabling environment'.** No public policy can be successful without the acceptance and the involvement of those concerned.

The Independent Commission is convinced that at this stage in history we need **an all-encompassing concept to translate commitment into action.** We borrow from the women's movement **the concept of care as a basis for social action and for political decision-making.**



Care is a basic category that can be considered as the value and attitude which respond adequately to the fact that human beings are interdependent and connected to each other. Care is not only the attention to but also the responsibility and the active concern for the other in all structures of society.

The Commission considers that focussing on caring will enlarge the human capacities in two ways: in creating a reinforced attentiveness in a time of scattered and uncommittal information; in going beyond words by a commitment that necessarily implies action.

Moreover care bridges the boundaries between public and private, thus creating a healthy circulation of practical commitment to the needs of people wherever they may be.

Care is the attitude by which life is sustained, nourished, strengthened, rehabilitated, promoted, enhanced. Care is the central ethical principle needed at this juncture of history.

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