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## THE DRAFT DECLARATION OF SOCIAL SUMMIT 1995

### SUBVERSION OF THE UN SYSTEM

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It is strange that public at large in the country have been kept fairly unaware of a document which is going to be adopted in Social Summit of Heads of States and Governments in Copenhagen in March 1995. This document when accepted will guide the social and economic policies of the accepting nations for years to come. The Council for Social Development, New Delhi, organised a National Seminar on this issue on January 11, 1995, where the document was discussed by social activists, academics, civil servants and other concerned individuals.

Generally, any UN document, particularly, which is in the nature of a Universal declaration reaffirms and reiterates the basic principles earlier adopted in similar UN instruments and then puts forward anything new that the document desires to emphasize or bring forth for the acceptance of the World Community. Strangely, this document scrupulously avoids mentioning any of the earlier instruments, declarations, covenants which have direct bearing on the issue being dealt with here. Hence, if such important declarations and conventions like Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), Declaration on Social Progress and Development (1969), Employment Policy Convention (Convention No. 122, ILO, 1988), Universal Declaration on Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition (1973), The Peasants' Charter (FAO, 1979), Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979), The Declaration on Rights to Development (1986), Convention on Rights of the Child (1990), were not referred to, it was not because that the Summit Secretariat officials were collectively suffering from Alzheimer's disease, but because in the unipolar realpolitik of today all traces of "dirty" liberalism and humanism were to be eradicated and obliterated. And this message has to go loud and clear to all. No hesitation or doubt would be accepted or tolerated.

The entire post war UN system ran on the high principle of "equity, sovereign equality, interdependence, common interest and cooperation among all states irrespective of their economic and social systems." (Preamble to UN Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States, 1974; emphasis ours). All UN instruments/declarations emphasised that economic as well as political and other relations between the UN and the member states and among the member States should be governed, inter alia, by the following principles (i) Sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States; (ii) Sovereign equality of all States; (iii) Non-aggression; (iv) Non-intervention (v) Peaceful coexistence; (vi) No attempt to seek hegemony and spheres of



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influence; (vii) Promotion of International social justice and (viii) International cooperation for development.

Article 1 of the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States clearly laid down "Every State has the Sovereign and inalienable right to choose its economic system as well as its political, social and cultural systems in accordance with the will of its people, without outside interference, coercion or threat in any form whatsoever."

This charter of the UN like other instruments already referred to above has not been abrogated, reneged or repealed by the UN so far. Hence, these are valid instruments which the UN system cannot ignore, overlook or disregard in anything it does today. Since these cannot be repealed easily, simple way out to avoid them would be to get the "wilful" consent of all nations to a complete set of new principles and values in a fresh UN document without any reference to earlier ones which would have practically the effect of substantially altering them. This path may not have many hurdles. This is exactly this document intends to do.

The document that is referred to here is the product of Second PREPCOM on Social Summit in which Indian Government delegation took part. Obviously, either they acquiesced in the contents of the document, or, they were totally ignored. The second possibility is more likely because when the central political leadership and the grey shirts of all the Bhavans and Blocks of New Delhi are hoarsely singing pean in praise of Structural Adjustment Programme and the very old "new economic policies", no one in the North will faintly listen to anything even remotely contrary to the contents of this document.

In Part I of the document there are some familiar muted noises like "We are witnessing unprecedented progress but also unspeakable misery", "more than 1 billion people in the world live in abject poverty and more than half go hungry every day", "over 120 million people world wide are officially unemployed and many more remain underemployed", "far too many people, particularly, women increasingly face vulnerability, isolation, marginalization, violence and insecurity." etc. etc. So far so good. But what about the causes of these rising disparities among and within nations and of pervasive poverty, unemployment and social disintegration. There are no references to historical or contemporary reasons for these ugly blights of human society anywhere in the document. These are taken as natural phenomena which have nothing to do with exploitative character of the world's political and economic systems. Not even this. There is no mention that over 35 million persons are unemployed in the USA and West Europe and many more will be victims of the scourge as these developed nations through their totally market oriented economic policies are heading towards "jobless growth".

The first objection to this document is its open assertion and its underlying assumption that there has been a universal acceptance

of "free market" economy as the only form of economic system available to humankind today. Therefore, it seeks to secure commitment of all nations to "promote dynamic, open competitive markets together with expanded equitable access to markets by all people, particularly, the poorest and most disadvantaged". The authors of this sentence must be either too naive or have a high perverse sense of humour. How can the "poor and the most disadvantaged" participate in the open competitive market when they are already outside the market. It is the market that marginalised them and threw them outside the system. It does not require much of economic theory or econometric models to appreciate that in a market dominated and often controlled by giant national and/or transnational Corporations the poor and the disadvantaged would be more disadvantaged without any positive social intervention on their behalf. If the market were so efficient and humane economic system, why could not it provide employment to 35 million unemployed men and women in the USA and West Europe, whose ranks would increase further due to natural accretion to labour market and job displacement by robotic technology. There is no point in labouring the issue further. Rationality has a little disadvantage against blind mind set.

The point is what would happen to be basic UN principles of peaceful co-existence of plurality of economic and political systems and the inalienable right of every State to choose its own economic, political and social systems. With the imposition of the market economy as the sole economic system of the world as the Summit document would like to have it, the fundamental principles of the UN referred to above would become a nullity. It might well be the hidden agenda of the document,

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The next issue of concern is the attempted acceptance of the concept of globalization without any demur or hesitation by all the States, notwithstanding its well known adverse effect on many developing and least developed countries. In this document 'globalisation' has been treated as a "consequence of enhanced communication". In fact the present thrust towards globalisation is not merely a result of explosion of informatics as has been made out. As a part of the grand design to destroy the "evil empire" and to bring in the wavering non-aligned countries of the third world to the main stream of world capitalist system, it was consciously fostered, promoted and imposed by the IMF and IBRD through their Stabilisation and Structural Adjustment Programmes and by GATT to expand the market for the recession hit developed market economies. The collapse of the centrally planned economics of Soviet Union and Eastern Europe helped in globalising the concept of globalisation through systematic dismantling of other partially regulated economics.

In fairness, the document did refer, on pascant, to come of the evil consequence of globalisation aggravating "inequality and marginalisation both within and among the countries" and their "sharp impact of an developing countries". But the cure it suggests is the more of the same staff. It seeks commitment to

the implementation of "Uruguay Round of Multilateral trade negotiations as scheduled including the Complementary provisions specified in Marrakesh agreement". But what have the Uruguay Round of negotiations to do with the Social Summit objectives of eradication of poverty, reduction in unemployment and prevention of social disintegration in the third world countries. In many of the developing countries an open trade regime would accentuate in the foreseeable future all these phenomena. Logic is simple : "if you suffer from indigestion, have more of the same non-digestible food which I can sell more to you." During his recent visit to India US Commerce Secretary Ron Brown was very honest and candid in his reply to a question about benefits of trade liberalisation. (Interviewed by Ashish Roy, New Delhi, on CNN). He said that it would promote US export which would increase US employment. That is why even in a Social Summit document one has to have direct commitment to implement fully Uruguay Round and Marrakesh agreements.

Today's globalisation is reincarnation of an old concept. World has seen the ugly effects globalisation earlier. World was never more globalised than during the hey days of the British Empire when sun never set on the British Colonies and territories spread round the earth. Among four imperial powers the whole world was globalised. We all know what that globalisation is meant for the colonies. There cannot be any fair globalisation, with countries and economies of unequal strength. It would lead to domination of the strong over the weak and would seriously threaten national sovereignty and national unity of many weaker nations. Our Finance Minister may not be afraid of the Hon'ble John Company. But history bears witness to what happened earlier and it might repeat itself in a greater tragedy through the new process of globalisation.

The Draft Declaration underlines the "importance of good governance". There is no universally accepted definition of "good governance" It means many things to many people. It is a vague notion which is liable to be misinterpreted and misused. It gives an undue leverage to the multilateral agencies and bilateral donors. It would negate the fundamental UN principles of Sovereign equality of all States and non-intervention in the internal affairs of a Sovereign state., Insertion of this clause would give legitimacy to intervene in the affairs of a Sovereign nation by any self appointed policeman of the world to protect and defend the "victims" of bad governance. It is in effect a reiteration, in more comprehensive manner, of the Regan doctrine that Americans had a right of express solidarity with the victims of totalitarianism.

Though the "evil empire" has been destroyed, it is time to devise some UN instrument for direct intervention to set right any "aberration" in the New World Order. This can only be done by subverting the longstanding UN doctrines of inviolability of Sovereignty of nation states and non-intervention in the internal affairs of sovereign state by a new UN doctrine. This is what the "good governance" Clause intends to do.



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The Declaration tends to foster obscurantism and in a way social fundamentalism. No one denies the importance of family in human society. But the clause on family [para 20(h)] as it is formulated may promote patriarchal autocracy and attendant religious and social fundamentalism. Reinforcing and strengthening of families in many traditional societies might encourage female infanticide, child marriage, dowry and dowry related atrocities on women and even "sati". The cure of disintegration of western nucleated families, perhaps, lies in reducing aggressive competitiveness, alcoholism, consumerism and the like. Revival of patriarchy—may not be the solution.

What is rather obnoxious is the clever attempt to secure a universal acceptance of the IMF/IBRD (Fund/Bank) Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). Commitment 7 states, inter alia, "We commit ourselves to ensuring that structural adjustment programme include social development goals of eradicating, generating employment and enhancing social integration."

One should strongly object to the totality of Commitment 7. There is no reason for us to have any Commitment whatsoever to SAP which is an instrument devised by Fund/Bank in the late seventies and early eighties to intervene effectively in the economic policies of developing countries to make them fall in line with the economic paradigm of the developed market economies. SAP never had and cannot have a "human face". SAP had been found to be adversely affecting the poor and the vulnerable in all the countries which had adopted it under Fund/Bank prescriptions.

A study conducted on the impact of SAP under the auspices of the World Institute of Development Economics and Research (WIDER) by Lance Taylor concludes, "Success and failure in stabilisation are relative notions, but a fair assessment would say that the outcomes of orthodox packages ranged from moderately successful to disastrous" Bretton Woods twins market fetishism is a matter of concern for the developing countries. They would not allow any such country to "choose its economic system in accordance with the will of the people" - a principle so basic to the UN system. It is a tragedy for the developing countries that multilateral institutions like IBRD IMF and recently established World Trade Organisation (WTO) are being used as instruments of global capital and they function now to promote the interests of major capitalist powers. In certain circumstances market might be a doubtful ally of individual freedom in some fields, but freedom to live without the fear of unemployment, fear of hunger, fear of succumbing to preventable morbidity and mortality calls for a broader class of social intervention. (Amartya Sen 1991). A system that idolises the baser instincts of greed and avarice as the sole determinant of human action is likely to result in creating a callous, insensitive and pitiless society making the life of the vulnerable and less resourceful individuals "solitary, nasty, brutish and short".

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As expected there is no mention in this document of the fact that the United Nations Commission of Human Right has recorded that the decade of eighties was a Decade of Disaster because of the impact of Structural Adjustment Programmes imposed on 70 countries.

Since SAP has attracted sharp criticism not only from the liberal and left intellectuals and politicians but also from nationalist elements of many countries, a universal commitment has been sought to be made clandestinely through the Social Summit to muffle such "noise pollution."

The document is silent on the activities of transnational corporations. We are not talking of shibboleths. Enormous economic and political power that these TNCs enjoy is beyond the comprehension of many. In 1992 a mere 200 TNC giants had sales of US \$ 5.5 trillion and 172 of them (from five countries) accounted for sales of US \$ 5.2 trillion. This figure exceeds the total volume of world trade of US \$ 4 trillion by over 30 percent. There is nothing about any code of conduct that these TNCs are expected to abide by. With their known history of destabilising national governments, disintegrating civil societies causing environmental disasters, one would have expected some recommendations regarding monitoring of activities of TNCs so that they do not adopt any unfair trade, labour industrial or other policies in furtherance of their own business interests to the detriment of the host countries. There is also no mention of anti-monopoly/anti trust measures to protect the consumers and small entrepreneurs against the activities of big corporations.

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A reading of the document makes it clear that development is no longer in UN agenda. Victors of the cold war are not in a mood to take any chance or to make any concession. Hence the entire world has to be irrevocably latched on to the capitalist market economy. No alternative is to be accepted, no aberration is to be tolerated. How insincere they are to development would be clear from the fact that after two decades of failure to reach the accepted UN target of 0.7 percent of GNP for official development assistance, the document cynically reaffirms the commitment to reach this target "as soon as possible" which is the polite way of saying not doing at all. If the first world were sincere, the document could have at least mentioned about flow of funds for development from the peace dividend of US \$ 500 billion accrued between 1989 and 1992 from the reduction of military expenditure.

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Even that old warrior Winston Churchill was gallant enough to say "In Victory Magnanimity". But the current victors are in no mood to be either generous or bountiful. They are exercising their right of conquest brazenly and remorselessly. Avoiding, evading, upsetting and subverting all the lofty, noble and cherished principles of the United Nations, the Social Summit (draft) Declaration loudly proclaims the hegemony of the Conquerors from the summit.

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