

**A FAIR GLOBALIZATION:
CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL**

**World Commission on the Social
Dimension of Globalization**

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SYNOPSIS

Introduction

Our remit, the Social Dimension of Globalization, is a vast and complex one. As a Commission we were broadly representative of the diverse and contending actors and interests that exist in the real world. Co-chaired by two serving Heads of State, a woman and a man, from North and South, we came from countries in different parts of the world and at all stages of development. Our affiliations were equally diverse: government, politics, parliaments, business and multinational corporations, organized labour, academia and civil society.

Yet, through a spirit of common purpose, we arrived at the shared understandings that are before you. As a collective document it is quite different from alternative reports each one of us would have written individually. But our experience has demonstrated the value and power of dialogue as an instrument for change. Through listening patiently and respectfully to diverse views and interests we found common ground.

We were spurred on by the realization that action to build a fair and inclusive process of globalization was urgent. This could only happen in the future through forging agreements among a broad spectrum of actors on the course for action. We are convinced that our experience can and should be replicated on a larger and wider scale, expanding the space for dialogue aimed at building consensus for action.

A vision for change

Public debate on globalization is at an impasse. Opinion is frozen in the ideological certainties of entrenched positions and fragmented in a variety of special interests. The will for consensus is weak. Key international negotiations are deadlocked and international development commitments go largely unfulfilled.

The report before you offers no miraculous or simple solutions, for there are none. But it is an attempt to help break the current impasse by focusing on the concerns and aspirations of people and on the ways to better harness the potential of globalization itself.

Ours is a critical but positive message for changing the current path of globalization. We believe the benefits of globalization can be extended to more people and better shared between and within countries, with many more voices having an influence on its course. The resources and the means are at hand. Our proposals are ambitious but feasible. We are certain that a better world is possible.

We seek a process of globalization with a strong social dimension based on universally shared values, and respect for human rights and individual dignity; one that is fair, inclusive, democratically governed and provides opportunities and tangible benefits for all countries and people.

To this end we call for:

- *A focus on people.* The cornerstone of a fairer globalization lies in meeting the demands of all people for: respect for their rights, cultural identity and autonomy; decent work; and the empowerment of the local communities they live in. Gender equality is essential.
- *A democratic and effective State.* The State must have the capability to manage integration into the global economy, and provide social and economic opportunity and security.
- *Sustainable development.* The quest for a fair globalization must be underpinned by the interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars of economic development, social development and environmental protection at the local, national, regional and global levels.

- *Productive and equitable markets.* This requires sound institutions to promote opportunity and enterprise in a well-functioning market economy.
- *Fair rules.* The rules of the global economy must offer equitable opportunity and access for all countries and recognize the diversity in national capacities and developmental needs.
- *Globalization with solidarity.* There is a shared responsibility to assist countries and people excluded from or disadvantaged by globalization. Globalization must help to overcome inequality both within and between countries and contribute to the elimination of poverty.
- *Greater accountability to people.* Public and private actors at all levels with power to influence the outcomes of globalization must be democratically accountable for the policies they pursue and the actions they take. They must deliver on their commitments and use their power with respect for others.
- *Deeper partnerships.* Many actors are engaged in the realization of global social and economic goals – international organizations, governments and parliaments, business, labour, civil society and many others. Dialogue and partnership among them is an essential democratic instrument to create a better world.
- *An effective United Nations.* A stronger and more efficient multilateral system is the key instrument to create a democratic, legitimate and coherent framework for globalization.

Globalization and its impact

Globalization has set in motion a process of far-reaching change that is affecting everyone. New technology, supported by more open policies, has created a world more interconnected than ever before. This spans not only growing interdependence in economic relations – trade, investment, finance and the organization of production globally – but also social and political interaction among organizations and individuals across the world.

The potential for good is immense. The growing interconnectivity among people across the world is nurturing the realization that we are all part of a global community. This nascent sense of interdependence, commitment to shared universal values, and solidarity among peoples across the world can be channelled to build enlightened and democratic global governance in the interests of all. The global market economy has demonstrated great productive capacity. Wisely managed, it can deliver unprecedented material progress, generate more productive and better jobs for all, and contribute significantly to reducing world poverty.

But we also see how far short we still are from realizing this potential. The current process of globalization is generating unbalanced outcomes, both between and within countries. Wealth is being created, but too many countries and people are not sharing in its benefits. They also have little or no voice in shaping the process. Seen through the eyes of the vast majority of women and men, globalization has not met their simple and legitimate aspirations for decent jobs and a better future for their children. Many of them live in the limbo of the informal economy without formal rights and in a swathe of poor countries that subsist precariously on the margins of the global economy. Even in economically successful countries some workers and communities have been adversely affected by globalization. Meanwhile the revolution in global communications heightens awareness of these disparities.

A strategy for change

These global imbalances are morally unacceptable and politically unsustainable. What is required to change this is not the realization of a Utopian blueprint in one swoop. Rather