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Rights-Based Approaches to Development: United Nations Development Programme

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United Nations Development Programme

by Jason Keeler

The central goal of Development has and will be the promotion of human well-being. Given that human rights define and defend human well-being, a rights-based approach to development provides both the conceptual and practical framework for the realization of human rights through the development process (United Nations Development Programme: Regional Bureau for Asia & Pacific).

A recent trend in development has been the implementation of rights-based approaches to development, as opposed to development as a human right, or human rights encompassed within the aim of development. A rights-based approach to development is unique and distinct from previous concepts of connectivity because it brings specificity and obligation to bear in the language of development. Since a rights-based approach is a recent phenomenon, international development organizations have varied in their adherence to the approach. Some still support the idea that human rights and development are separate fields, best approached independently from one another. Others have, conceptually, created practical tools for rights-based programs to advancing its meaning.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has mainly taken a conceptual approach to incorporating a human-rights based approach into development. Practical programming—through which the UNDP has established a human-rights based approach to development—is evident in some of the organizations' projects and reports. The UNDP has historically been quite limited in its human rights reporting within their development work. In general, it appears that the UNDP's work on rights has leaned heavily toward governance institutions. With the focus limited to governance, a plethora of literature has surfaced on the UNDP's role in promoting human rights through governance projects in development. Other vehicles through which the UNDP promotes human rights in development are: energy/environment, poverty, and gender projects. Those areas, along with a stress on governance, constitute the bulk of the UNDP's work in development along a human rights approach. The UNDP's national and regional development reports, articles authored and co-authored by the UNDP, and books and journals covering the development projects undertaken by the UNDP are all important sources for analyzing the UNDP's involvement in the recent attempts at incorporating a rights-based approach to development.

Background Resources

Brooke Ackerly. 2003. "Fields of Protest: Women's Movements in India / Feminists Doing Development: A Practical Critique / Human Development Report 2000: Human Rights and Development / Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach (Book)." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society*. 29(1): 248.

Abstract: *Reviews several books on political activists. "Fields of Protest: Women's Movements in India," by Raka Ray; "Feminists Doing Development: A Practical Critique," edited by Marilyn Porter and Ellen Judd; "Human Development Report 2000: Human Rights and Development by United Nations Development Programme," and "Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach," by Martha Nussbaum.*

Chandra Muzaffar. 1993. "Double Standards in the West." *World Press Review*. 40 (9): 17.

Abstract: *States that the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), in its "Human Development Report: 1992" observes that "for the first time in human history, the world is close to creating a single, unified global system." Questions impact of this global system upon nations and communities and upon human beings and human rights; Control of global economy; Direct link between poverty and political rights; Reported from the Third World Network Features agency of Penang, Malaysia.*

National Council of Applied Economic Research. "In Collaboration with the Planning Commission, the United Nations Development Programme and other United Nations Agencies."

Abstract: *Sequel to the India HDR, the South India HDR and the West and Central India HDR. Includes statistical tables.*

U. Nations. 2003. "Human Development Report." *New York: UNDP.*

Abstract: *The Human Development Report 2003 discusses the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)--the targets set for reductions in poverty, improvements in health and education, and protection of the environment around the world by the year 2015. In September 2000, world leaders pledged to achieve the MDGs, including the overarching goal of cutting poverty in half by 2015. This report examines the progress made towards reaching these goals on a country-by-country basis. The Human Development Report 2003 also features a wide variety of national development indicators for 174 countries including demographic trends, educational levels, gender disparities, and macroeconomic indicators. It is an important tool in the formulation of government policy.*

Edelberto Torres-Rivas. 2005. "UNDERSTANDING POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND POLITICAL CHANGE IN GUATEMALA." *Journal of Third World Studies*. 22 (1): 319.

Abstract: *Reviews three books on political violence in Guatemala. "Buried Secrets, Truth and Human Rights in Guatemala," by Victoria Sanford; "Terror in the Countryside: Campesino Responses to Political Violence in Guatemala, 1954-1985," by Rachel May; "Dictating Democracy: Guatemala and the End of Violent Revolution," by Rachel M. McCleary.*

UNDP. 2004. Democracy in Latin America: Towards a Citizens Democracy (Report and Annex). 987-0085-X.

Abstract: *By combining quantitative indicators and detailed interviews with in-depth surveys and an on-going dialogue with a cross-section of prominent leaders and opinion formers across the region, the report provides a comprehensive analysis of the state of democracy in Latin America.*

Human Rights Initiatives

1992. "Honesty International' proposed." *Futurist*. 26 (5): 8.

Abstract: *Comments on the proposed formation of an "Honesty International" organization, as well as how such an organization could monitor corruption just as Amnesty International monitors and publicizes human-rights abuses. Includes an overview of the proposal as detailed by the United Nations Development Programme in its "Human Development Report 1992."*

1991. "Measuring human freedom." *Futurist*. 25 (6): 46.

Abstract: *Observes that more of the world's people are enjoying more freedoms now than was the case five years ago. Includes statistics from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) which has devised a Human Freedom Index and provides evidence of a high correlation between a country's development and freedom. INSET: The Human Freedom Index.*

2002. "No Development Without Human Rights." U.N. Chronicle. 39 (3): 56.

Abstract: *Examines the relationships between human rights and development. Analysis of the content of the Declaration on the Right to Development, the role of human rights in development especially within the context of rapid economic globalization, and the adoption of a policy on integrating human rights with sustainable human development by the United Nations Development Program.*

1996. "The Other Human Rights." *New Internationalist*. 27 (5): 18.

Abstract: *Presents the Human Development Index (HDI) compiled by the United Nations Development Program.*

Brooke Ackerly. 2003. "Fields of Protest: Women's Movements in India / Feminists Doing Development: A Practical Critique / Human Development Report 2000: Human Rights and Development / Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach (Book)." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society*. 29 (1): 248.

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Khabir Ahmad. 2000. "United Nations Calls for More Effort into Equal Human Rights." *Lancet*. 356 (9224): 145.

Abstract: *Focuses on the Human Development Report 2000 released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) that asserts that human rights must include economic, social, and cultural rights. Opinion as to why this reflects a shift in the way the UNDP looks at human development and consideration of poverty as a major human-rights challenge.*

J. Dias Clarence and Leckie Scott. HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND SHELTER: A HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE. http://hdr.undp.org/docs/publications/ocational_papers/oc21a.htm.

Abstract: *Gives general background on the relationship between human rights and development. Argues that an "International Law of Development" is expressed by various covenants and treaties. Discusses how international law relates to housing rights in the context of development, and common misperceptions about the right to housing.*

Chandra Muzaffar. 1993. "Double Standards in the West." *World Press Review*. 40 (9): 17.

Abstract: *States that the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), in its "Human Development Report: 1992" observes that "for the first time in human history, the world is close to creating a single, unified*

global system. "Questions impact of this global system upon nations and communities and upon human beings and human rights, control of global economy, direct link between poverty and political rights, and reported from the Third World Network Features agency of Penang, Malaysia.

- H. O. Sano. 2000. "Development and Human Rights: The Necessary but Partial Integration of Human Rights and Development." *Human Rights Quarterly*. 22 (3): 734-752.

Abstract: The article focuses on the need for integrating human rights and economic development. This article attempts to explain the character of this convergence and to make proposals as to how it can be achieved. First, a brief explanation is given as to why convergence is happening just now. Second, the history and background of human rights and development are discussed more fully in order to identify the essential points and possibilities that they share. Finally, the roles that the two disciplines have played in Danish aid policy are examined, providing a concrete background for discussion of the obstacles and opportunities for further integration. It is appropriate to think of human rights and development research as connected because of two predominant tendencies of the 1990s. The first tendency is that the demands of developing countries for social provisions increasingly won support as internationally accepted norms or entitlements.

- James Gustave Speth. 1998. "Poverty: A Denial of Human Rights." *Journal of International Affairs*. 52 (1): 277.

Abstract: Focuses on the approach of the United Nations Development Programme on the eradication of poverty. Concept of poverty; Measures of deprivation to reach the Human Poverty Index; Implications of poverty as a denial of human rights.

- Nicholas Tate. 2004. "Life Lessons and Multicultural Liberty." *Times Educational Supplement*. 460 (3): 23.

Abstract: Presents insight on the recently published annual global report on cultural liberty of the United Nations Development Programme. Relevance of the report in the issues of national identity and cultural diversity in school systems; Promotion of human rights; Discussion on the benefits that arise from cultural liberty and the recognition of multiple identities.

- UNDP. 2006. Human Development Report - TIMOR LESTE 2006 The Path out of Poverty.

Abstract: A regional look at poverty and human development in Timor-Leste. The report looks at the area's development as judged according to the MDGs.

Gender Initiatives

- Brooke Ackerly. 2003. "Fields of Protest: Women's Movements in India / Feminists Doing Development: A Practical Critique / Human Development Report 2000: Human Rights and Development / Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach (Book)." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society*. 29 (1): 248.

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Anne Hellum. 2001. “Towards a Human Rights Based Development Approach: The Case of Women in the Water Reform Process in Zimbabwe.” *Law, Social Justice & Global Development*. http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/law/elj/lgd/2001_1/hellum/.

Abstract: Water reform illustrates the conflicts and tensions between individualist and welfarist policies at the international, national and local levels. Two goals of the water reform are to broaden women’s access to water and to enhance their participation in water management. With the shift from welfarist to market driven policies in relation to land, water, health and education I suggest employing the human rights of women as enunciated in CEDAW as an important counterbalance. Thus in this article the impact of international and national water reform policies are analyzed in light of Zimbabwean women farmers’ rights to non-discrimination and an adequate standard of living.

UNDP. 2005. *En Route to Equality: A Gender Review of National MDG Reports*.

Abstract: This is an update to the earlier report “Millennium Development Goals: National Reports A Look Through A Gender Lens” (2003). The report is a gender review of 78 MDGRs assessing the extent to which gender has been included or mainstreamed into the reporting of each goal.

UNDP. 1995. *Human Development Report 1995 Gender and Human Development*. Oxford University Press. 0-19-521836-1. <http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/1995/en/>.

Abstract: Report argues that human development cannot succeed without gender mainstreaming. Integrating women into development is a process that requires political creativity, not just technocratic adjustments. A serious commitment to equal access to planning and resources requires a rights-based approach.

UNDP. 2003. *Transforming the Mainstream: Gender in UNDP*. Available at <http://topics.developmentgateway.org/gender/rc/ItemDetail.do?itemId=379765>.

Abstract: Contemplates the importance of governance, the environment, and armed conflict in light of the UNDP’s two-pronged approach to gender: mainstreaming and promoting women’s empowerment.

UNDP. 2005. *Women’s issues now part of legal training in Nepal*. <http://content.undp.org/go/newsroom/april-2006/womens-legal-training-nepal-20060405.en?g11n.enc=ISO-8859-1>.

Abstract: New item noting the recent incorporation of women’s issues into legal training in Nepal. Training is meant to inform legal official on the international human rights instruments that Nepal is party to, and which pertain to the treatment of women there.

Poverty Initiatives

Ronald Paul Hill and Kanwalroop Kathy Dhanda. 2003. “Technological Achievement and Human Development: A View from the United Nations Development Program.” *Human Rights Quarterly*. 25(4): 1020.

Abstract: The article examines the relationship between technological achievement and human development so that the human rights community may better understand the impact of the digital divide worldwide. Using data collected by a variety of international organizations and in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme, this article explores the creation, diffusion, and utilization of technology within the context of vast socio-economic inequalities among nations. The article begins with a brief introduction to the technology revolution, followed by a discussion of the digital divide. Data descriptions are also presented in the article, along with findings that show comparisons across technology achievement categories. The paper concludes with suggestions for abridging the digital divide and policy implications for the global community. Connected to one another in complex and reciprocal ways, the creation, diffusion and utilization of technology and the quality of life of the citizenry will be closely aligned in the 21st century. Unfortunately, most nations and their people lack resources, educational levels, and infrastructure necessary to partake in this global revolution.

A. C. Kelley. 1991. "The Human Development Index: Handle with Care." *Population and Development Review*. 17(2): 315.

Abstract: Critique of the HDI concept and its application by the UNDP.

UNDP. 2006. Human Development Report - TIMOR LESTE 2006 The Path out of Poverty.

Abstract: A regional look at poverty and human development in Timor-Leste. The report looks at the area's development as judged according to the MDGs.

Environment Initiatives

Tim Forsyth. 2002. "In the Eyes of the State: Negotiating a "Rights-Based Approach" to Forest Conservation in Thailand." *World Development*. 30 (9): 1591-1605.

Abstract: Recent debates about governance, poverty, and environmental sustainability have emphasized a "rights-based" approach, in which equitable development is strongly associated with individual and communal rights. This paper reviews this approach and explores its practical application to Thailand's Community Forestry Bill, which seeks to establish communal rights of access and conservation in forest reserve areas. The paper examines conflicts concerning watershed forests and mangroves in Thailand, and argues that efforts to support rural livelihoods through community rights have been undermined by a state that has frequently supported commercial interests or opposed decentralization. The paper documents how civil society organizations may negotiate rights within the wider public spheres in which rules, rights, and "community" are established and defended.

Sean O. Siochru and Bruce Girard. 2005. Community-based Networks and Innovative Technologies: New Models to Serve and Empower the Poor. <http://www.undp.org/poverty/docs/ICTD-Community-Nets.pdf>.

Abstract: Considers community development approaches in the context of recent developments in information communication technology. Especially concerned with the question of equal access.

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. 2003. Guidelines on the Integration of Energy and Rural Development Policies and Programmes. New York: United Nations.

Abstract: The Guidelines are intended to assist national energy, rural development planners, and policy-makers in introducing an integrated approach to energy and rural development policies and programs. Particular emphasis has been given to stakeholders' involvement, gender mainstreaming of processes and results, and institutional arrangements. Attempts have also been made to devise a practical way to put the ideas presented in the Guidelines into action at the national level. Training materials, which will be developed at national levels as a later stage of the project, will supplement the Guidelines.

Sudir Anand and Amartya Sen. 1996. Sustainable Human Development: Concepts and Priorities. United Nations Development Programme, Office of Development Studies. http://hdr.undp.org/docs/publications/ocational_papers/Oc8a.htm.

Abstract: Occasional UNDP paper details the theoretical and conceptual aspects of human development. States the importance of intergenerational justice, and relates the human development concept to economic orthodoxy.

United Nations Environment Programme Economics and Trade Unit. 2004. Training Module: Introduction to Capacity Building for Environment, Trade and Sustainable Development. Geneva, Switzerland: UNEP. <http://www.unep.ch/etu/publications/Capacity%20Building/Training%20Module1-48.pdf>.

Abstract: Accompanying CD-ROM contains a PDF copy of the manual, including a powerpoint presentation of the overhead projection transparencies (OHPs) included with the manual.

Regional Initiatives

Brooke Ackerly. 2003. "Fields of Protest: Women's Movements in India / Feminists Doing Development: A Practical Critique / Human Development Report 2000: Human Rights and Development / Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach (Book)." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society*. 29(1): 248.

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Kate Dyer. 2005. The Cost of Poverty: Transaction Costs and the Struggle to Make Aid Work in the Education Sector in Tanzania. http://hdr.undp.org/docs/publications/background_papers/2005/HDR2005_Kate_Dyer_9.pdf.

Abstract: Analysis of transaction costs in development assistance to the education sector in Tanzania.

Anne Hellum. 2001. "Towards a Human Rights Based Development Approach: The Case of Women in the Water Reform Process in Zimbabwe." *Law, Social Justice & Global Development*. 2. (http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/law/elj/lgd/2001_1/hellum/).

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relation to land, water, health and education employing the human rights of women as enunciated in CEDAW is an important counterbalance. Thus in this article the impact of international and national water reform policies are analyzed in light of Zimbabwean women farmers' rights to non-discrimination and an adequate standard of living.

Union Inter-parliamentary and Programme United Nations Development. 2003. Ten Years of Strengthening Parliaments in Africa, 1991-2000: Lessons Learnt and the Way Forward: Report of a Joint IPU/UNDP Survey. Inter-parliamentary Union. 9291421413. http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/africa2000_en.pdf.

Abstract: Describes how the UNDP has strengthened Parliaments in several key Sub-Saharan African cases. Notes that the international community has been key in promoting ombudsmen, national human rights institutions, and human rights conferences. Contains data on project funding.

Chandra Muzaffar. 1993. "Double Standards in the West." *World Press Review*. 40 (9): 17. <http://search.epnet.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&an=9308240079>.

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UNDP. 2004. Democracy in Latin America: Towards a Citizens' Democracy. 987-0085-X.
<http://democracia.undp.org/Informe/Default.asp?Menu=15&Idioma=2>.

Abstract: By combining quantitative indicators and detailed interviews with in-depth surveys and an on-going dialogue with a cross-section of prominent leaders and opinion formers across the region, the report provides a comprehensive analysis of the state of democracy in Latin America.

UNDP. 2004. Human Development Report 2004 Cultural Liberty in Today's Diverse World.
<http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2004/?CFID=1118624&CFTOKEN=98374345>

Abstract: Accommodating people's growing demands for inclusion in society and respect for their ethnicity, religion, and language, takes more than democracy and equitable growth. Also needed are multicultural policies that recognize differences and champion diversity while promoting cultural freedoms, so that all people can choose to speak their language, practice their religion, and participate in shaping their culture—in essence all people can choose to be who they are.