

Issues for the Consideration of the Expert Group: A Summary

This paper has attempted to outline issues related to the challenges confronting poor country democracies in combating poverty; the links between conflict, democracy, good governance and poverty; and how poor country democracies might best be supported in combating poverty. In this section, we summarise what we see as some of the main issues that the Expert Group may wish to address, drawing on the previous discussion.

A Poverty and Challenges Confronting Democracies

1. Does the Expert Group agree that poverty should be viewed as more than income poverty, as advocated by Amartya Sen? If so, what should be the scope of its definition?
2. How widespread is deep poverty? Is it increasing or decreasing? Is the Group satisfied with the assessment of the *Human Development Report 2002* regarding its trends?
3. Does the Group agree that the spread of conflict, problems of transition to democratic and market freedoms, globalisation, HIV/AIDS and the degradation of the environment constitute particular new challenges to poor country democracies in contemporary times, in the context of combating deep poverty?

B Support for Democracies for Combating Poverty

4. Given that violent conflicts lead to deep poverty, why do conflicts occur? How can one help resolve conflicts, help rehabilitate failed states and combat terrorism? Are the present international arrangements adequate in dealing with these issues? If not, what more can be done? Is there scope for an enhanced role for peer pressure or for a strengthened UN role? Is it worthwhile to revive the concept of UN trusteeship in respect of failed states?
5. Are there links between democracy, good governance and poverty reduction? Why does there seem to be such widespread disappointment with the performance of democracies in the 1990s when more and more nations have accepted the democratic ideal? What steps can be taken by individual countries and the international community to deepen democracy and good governance? How can corruption be effectively eliminated?

6. Is it valid to think in terms of pro-poor economic growth? Can one achieve different poverty outcomes for the same level of economic growth? If so, what particular policies will help pro-poor growth?
7. Do participatory growth and empowerment of the poor matter in reducing poverty? Or are they just false trails which get in the way of focusing on the central task of maximising economic growth as a means of poverty reduction?
8. Is the Washington Consensus the best guide to policy in the context of achieving sustainable poverty reduction? If not, in what way should it be fine-tuned or modified? Or should it be replaced by a new development paradigm?
9. Is the current world trade regime hurting the poor? In what way can the global community help poor countries in this context?
10. Are present aid levels adequate to achieve the Millennium Development Goals? Are there any other avenues through which financial support for poverty reduction could be enhanced? Is HIPC delivering? Can its scope be broadened?
11. Do the current attempts at reforming the international financial architecture go far enough, in the context of the objective of poverty reduction? If not, in what further ways should it be reformed?
12. What should be the nature of pro-poor health and education policies, given their central role in reducing poverty and promoting democracy? In what ways could current international efforts be strengthened?
13. What role can the new technologies play in combating poverty? How can poor country democracies be helped to take advantage of new technologies?
14. In the context of democracy and poverty reduction, are current global governance arrangements keeping pace with new needs? Is there a democratic deficit at the global level? Can the global institutions be made more accountable and transparent in their workings?

C Strategies for Action

15. Despite the recognition of the common interest that rich and poor countries have in reducing poverty, why does action fall short of commitment? Are there any strategies that could help build stronger action? Can NGOs and business play an enhanced role? If so, how can action by them be promoted?
16. What role can the Commonwealth play in helping poor country democracies combat poverty?