

Remarks by the U.S. Ambassador

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Let me begin by commending Dr. Kristiina Hellsten-Blais for her leadership and effort in organizing this conference on development ethics. In addition, I must commend all of those involved in planning and participating in a conference on such an important subject. The poignance of the theme is driven home by virtue of the fact that you're meeting here in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; certainly a discussion about development and ethics is relevant in this context. Beyond this, dealing with a matter like development ethics is important for a couple of other reasons.

First of all, under any circumstances looking at the link between development and ethics would be timely. By definition, the process of development reflects the nature of the relationship between developed countries and developing countries, those who have more and those who need more, the affluent and the poor. In this era of prosperity the distance between the world's most affluent and poorest nations has never been more pronounced. Thus, in one sense, the question of the relationship between the affluent and poor has never been in more urgent need of attention. For those of us from nations wallowing in plenty, development in an age of prosperity raises a number of ethical concerns, two of which might be stated as follows: On the one hand, if you are from one of the world's affluent nations the question (to use biblical language) is: What does it profit someone to gain the world and lose his soul? Implicit in this question is another question. That is: Are not there some things *in* life that matter more than material things *of* life? Or, to frame the question somewhat differently: How much affluence is enough? And on the other hand, the flip side of the question is: What do we do with what we have? Or, to frame the question differently: What responsibility do the blessed of us have for the least of us? These concerns require us to consider both the matter of our personal character and the quality of our common life, both of which are implied in if (and how) we do development. In a world divided by plenty and poverty, the relationship between development and ethics is an essential issue to address.

Secondly, the focus of this conference is all the more timely given the recently concluded World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting (or the "Battle in Seattle," as some called it). In the aftermath of protest and posturing surrounding the WTO meeting it would seem impossible to talk about *development* without talking about *ethics*. After all, development, which implies growth, and ethics, which implies fairness, seem to me to be intrinsic to a discussion on trade, particularly when part of the focus is the role of trade in moving countries on the economic margin into the global economic

mainstream. Again, discussion of the relationship between development and ethics is particularly relevant within the context of Africa.

Inarguably, Africa is presently on the margins of the globe's marketplace. Its nations and its people are among the world's poorest. Also clear is the fact that trade is critical to global prosperity and can do much to relieve the plight of the poor. Since the establishment of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT, as it's most commonly called) some fifty years ago, world economic production has risen 600 percent, per capita income has tripled, life expectancy has increased by twenty years, and infant mortality has decreased by two-thirds. That is the good news. The bad news is that whereas world trade is expected to increase by between \$200 and \$500 billion by 2004, *Africa is expected to become \$1.2 billion a year worse off, if the present trends continue.* The crux of the problem is that although rich countries are insisting that poor countries open up their markets, rich countries are not doing enough to bring down the barriers to their markets. Under the Uruguay Round Agreement the world's developed countries agreed to remove tariffs from a third of textile imports from developing countries over seven years. So far, with about three-quarters of the time having passed for the introduction of those reductions, only a paltry 5 percent of the developing countries' export totals have been freed. In the area of agriculture the picture is even worse. Farmers in Europe, Japan, and the United States receive on average of \$20,000 a year in government subsidies, which is almost ten times the per capita income in the world's poorest countries. Given the potential approach to dealing with labor and environmental issues the effects could be the same for poor countries—zilch.

I am proud to say that I think the United States will be judged to have been on the right side of history in this historic debate about trade. American policy on trade reflects the stance articulated by President Clinton in his address to the South African Parliament in 1997. He said our policy vis à vis Africa should not be framed by "What can we do *for* Africa or what we can do *about* Africa?" Those, he said are the "wrong questions, the right question is what can we do *with* Africa!" During the WTO meeting U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky introduced policies that would have met Africa's priorities as well as our own. What she introduced was as follows:

- The first proposal was an agenda that opens world markets more fully to African products. This entails a commitment to remove tariffs on products from the least-developed countries. A priority for us will be the reform of agricultural trade, which will entail the elimination of export subsidies that will open new opportunities for African farmers.
- Second was insisting that the negotiating agenda in the future be focused and manageable enough so that all WTO members' top priorities are addressed.
- Third was a call for strengthening and improving the WTO's technical assistance and capacity-building functions. This should enable more substantive participation in all WTO agreements, more skillful

use of dispute settlement mechanisms, and greater participation in the formation of the trading system's agenda for the future by developing nations.

In addition to our initiatives, there is an emerging consensus among the world's wealthier countries for a similar package of proposals including unilateral tariff preferences for least-developed countries, technical assistance, and assistance for capacity building. But after all is said and done, either in future WTO deliberations or some other setting, the question remains: What will it take to fully integrate (for the sake of our discussion Africa) into the global economic community?

The point of my raising the issues of the WTO and trade is not to suggest that "trade versus aid" is the way to go in helping to facilitate development in regions of the world like Africa. Nor is the intent to say that aid must be directed to facilitate the capacity and infrastructure to engage in trade (which, by the way, I do believe). Rather, I put these remarks relative to development ethics in this context because I believe it brings into focus more clearly another ethical principle fundamental to (re)defining the relationship between developed and developing nations. That principle is the importance of *doing unto others as we would have them do unto us*. The outcome of operating from such a premise is policies that are ethical, because the policies would be fair. And because the policies would be fair, they would produce sustainable development.

I hope a conversation about development, framed in this way, will be at the heart of your deliberations.

What I've attempted to say, in what may have been a long way to say it, is that the issues you are addressing during this week of deliberations are cutting-edge issues that ought to have an impact on our global common life and the national characters of the countries from which we come.

Let me conclude by saying thank you, yet again, for taking up so weighty a challenge.