Reflections on 50 years of *Development*

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In preparation for this special issue, the Editor asked a number of people of diverse generations, viewpoints and locations who have contributed in important ways to the Society for International Development and the journal *Development* over the years to respond to a series of questions:

1. How did they respond to the power of ideas as the ‘line’ for the journal issue, in particular, the constant message of *Development* about the importance of human-focused development and the need to explore alternatives to mainstream development?

2. Which ideas or policies did they see SID or *Development* as the quarterly journal of SID bring to the fore as cutting edge that led to real change. Which ideas need to be voiced that are not yet heard or acted upon?

3. What are some of the tensions in the development discourse, such as the tensions between North and South, between advocacy groups and policy groups, etc.? Who are the key actors in development today? What are the pressing issues in development today?

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From the perspective of where I am based in Zanzibar, an island off the coast of East Africa, and as an activist in civil society on the Continent, I feel development is one of the most abused words in my region. Our development ‘partners’ who are in the development agencies claim to come here to make things better. Yet when one really analyses what is going on, one finds that it is the same slicing up of Africa that is happening and that has happened since 1884. Back then it was with gun and bible. Now it is with dollars and euros.

Civil society has been reduced to workshop agendas and activism has been reduced to institutionalized movements. Development agencies encourage young career-oriented ‘developers’ to come to this part of the world for the ‘experience’ and we are seeing again the strong emergence of large expatriate communities doing ‘development’. ‘Experts’ are engaged from the North to work with the locals in order to bring development ‘knowledge’ to our situations. Foundations are set up with local boards but when the local board refuses to rubber stamp the programmes desired by those who give the funding it is not respected. We have experienced good structures going down the drain with this new influx of developers from the developed countries who spend four years dismantling what have been mantled by their predecessors who believed in genuine development.

The power of ideas is to decolonize the developers minds both from the North and South. Such a decolonization is crucial if we are serious about justice. Civil society needs to engage in movements to build a viable course of justice and the tax payers in the North who are part of civil society need to be vigilant of how their moneys are being used to engage in what I can only call a second colonialism of the Continent. This colonialism is ruled by the euros and dollars that keep NGOs busy in offices rather than in the communities, running workshops, writing proposals and reports and maintaining the required bureaucratic structures.

The human rights issues that have been important in our part of the world have been gender issues, health, HIV/AIDS, education as well as disability and minority rights. In Tanzania, these issues have played a pivotal role at different historical moments in the evolution of civil society. What is not so well recognized and heard about far less are information policies and investigative journalism, both critical to the life of a healthy civil society. Citizens’ rights to information is a pressing issue still, even in this age of information technology (IT). For the majority of people in my part of the world, IT is far away from their lives and remains inaccessible.

The pressing debate for me today remains the issue of justice. But instead of justice, there is a culture of silence and fear. We need to talk more about this. The rule of law needs to be adhered to and the truth needs to be protected especially for those who choose to tell it. The energy of advocacy groups is being sapped by ‘ngoism’. To hold meetings has become the norm for social change. Grassroot initiatives are expected to become structured if they are to have access to funds. Trainings are held in capacity building. Local indigenous knowledge is not taken into account. The approach is defined and run by ‘experts’, but how many community leaders have become ‘experts’ from our part of the world?
The issue of justice remains, for communities, for the minorities, and for all the voices who are silenced.

Peggy Antrobus
Founding member and former general coordinator of Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), Barbados

SID and the journal *Development* have certainly emphasized the importance of human-focused development, even in articles that are in line with ‘mainstream’ thinking. It has also tried to emphasize the need to explore alternatives, but with less success, given its constituency of largely mainstream thinkers and practitioners.

The concept of ‘development’ is so controversial, especially in circles that see it as a way of perpetuating the domination of the South by the North. We first have to ask: what kind of ‘development’. Today, ‘development’ as expressed through the work of the IFIs and the aid agenda, is increasingly associated with global economic and social injustice. The frameworks of the IMF (structural adjustment), the World Bank (e.g. PRSPs), the WTO and the UN (the MDGs) are all predicated on the continuation of neo-liberalism; although different words are used, they all amount to the same conditionalities that constrain countries to work within a policy framework that prevents them (if indeed they wished to) from working in the interest of their citizens.

These conditionalities, the ‘retreat’ of the state from the provisioning of basic needs, privatization of public services, the exploitation of female labour as the basis of export-led growth, highlight the extent to which economic production is at the expense of social reproduction. In short, the conditionalities undermine the conditions necessary for social reproduction, placing the well being of society at large at risk.

The current focus on ‘poverty’ rings hollow when one looks at the prescriptions, but most of all because of the unwillingness of the international institutions and the leadership of the industrialized countries to acknowledge that their policy frameworks have increased inequality and exacerbated poverty. The vision of broad-based socio-economic development that was seen as an integral part of political independence has vanished. What replaces it is a focus on market-led growth at the expense of human development, human rights, human security and environmental sustainability.

I don’t have a sense of the complete range of ideas put forward by *Development* over the years, but *Development* has undoubtedly been on the cutting edge of the most important debates and progressive ideas in this field. However, the best ideas in the world are of no avail if the environment in which they emerge is hostile to the knowledge generated through the journal. The consolidation of power and capital today is such that even the best proposals for change cannot be translated into policies that can bring about social justice.

The policies that are key to bringing about change are those that emphasize the empowerment of women as decision-makers in the interest of social justice; sustain and enhance the livelihoods of the poor; respect the rights of indigenous people to the benefits of own knowledge; respect diversities of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and faith. These are precisely the ones that continue to be ignored.
Development stakeholders are clearly North and South, but also those who promote growth-oriented development and those marginalized by it. The North–South stakeholder divide then is complicated by a kind of development that creates new elites in the North and in the South and increases poverty in both spheres.

The contradictions in the dominant paradigm of development are now too glaring to be ignored and tensions between advocacy groups and policy groups reflect the struggle between those who hold on to the dominant worldview and those who challenge it: the dichotomy between people-friendly and market-friendly policies is real. In short, there was a less tension when the contradictions were less evident.

I would say that before the 1980s, certainly in the 1970s, there were shared assumptions about the benefits of a development model closely linked to modernization. Post-colonial states like those in the English-speaking Caribbean played a major role in creating the infrastructure for a development model that recognized the need to prioritize human development in any policy aimed at building the economy.

The policies of the Washington Consensus revealed the contradictions inherent in policies that on the one hand promoted economic growth, and on the other placed it in jeopardy by undermining the intellectual, physical and psychological capacities of the labour force. The very notion of a Washington ‘Consensus’, presupposing an open dialogue and agreement among stakeholders when there was none in fact, points to the kind of arrogance and disrespect that bedevils international relations today.

For me, the most pressing debate around development today must be the one that challenges the double-speak, double-standards, hypocrisy and sheer dishonesty that passes for policy debate and dialogue. Unless the contradictions are challenged, there can be no change that is meaningful to the dispossessed.

Development has made a critical contribution to disseminating the range of ideas around development. In special issues on Grassroots Initiatives (GRIS), the Politics of Place, women, indigenous people, alternative economics, the movement of movements, citizenship and sexual rights and reproductive rights it has challenged the dominant paradigm. However, something sharper is needed. Perhaps we need dialogues in the journal that expose the fraudulence of the underlying assumptions and the contradictions of today’s policy frameworks, including the patriarchal and racist underpinnings of power and privilege. I don’t know whether this would work. It would certainly require enormous courage to confront the truly damaging effects of the current policy frameworks. Moreover, if this effort were linked to the mobilizations by feminists and others around the World Social Forum, SID could play a unique role in advancing the search for global justice.

Robert J. Berg
Vice President SID International 1985–1988, consultant and director of the UNA Graduate Fellows Program, Washington, DC, USA

I was a college student in California when I learned of a new organization, the Society for International Development (SID). I joined and my first SID meeting was the 1959 SID conference. I found two values in SID that have generally endured and which I have found almost unique
in professional associations: the organization was open to anyone, even a lowly student like me; and anyone could participate, a form of intellectual democracy that is actually rare. I say ‘generally’, as in travelling around my country and around the world of SID chapters, I’ve seen that we have had our lapses. But, by and large, we remain open to members and ideas, and that is a heritage to value.

SID, just by organizing itself, contributed a big idea. It was that there is a profession called ‘development’. Those of us in development, in essence said SID, need life-long learning to understand our evolving and complex field.

We attempted for years to say that development is a global phenomena, but we are still split between those who say we are in a universe of change, and those who say that the world is in two halves. I believe it is increasingly unhealthy to believe that development for one living in the North is something that occurs elsewhere, and it is increasingly meaningless to see the South as a unity of economic inferiority. We somehow have not evolved intellectual complexity to match real-world complexity.

For years, SID produced a newsletter that gave us frequent updates on the news of our profession. Long ago that lapsed, which is too bad as no substitute source truly tells us of our profession, its dimensions, its qualitative changes, and the life histories of people in the profession. All this we have to glean from the two-line bios of our journal’s authors. The point is that we are not tending to our profession: assessing training for development, and fostering next generations of development thinkers systematically.

A huge coup for our Society was the 1969 world conference in New Delhi. By this time, I was married and we had a three-year-old child. The three of us could only attend the conference because of an amazingly cheap charter flight that SID arranged. The conference started with at least 2,000 people. But at the end, in a last session attended by no more than 200 of us, Dudley Seers announced the start of bottom up planning, a thought he had been kicking around with Mahbub ul Haq. I brought back Dudley’s text to Washington and practically sold it on street corners. And 4 years later, Jim Grant, I and a number of others helped make bottom up planning the intellectual and legislative platform for the US foreign aid programme, a major coup, because at that time USAID was a dominant factor in aid. Mahbub soon was directing the World Bank’s Policy Planning Department bringing bottom up development thinking to that place, but with less pervasive effect.

In 1974, I attended the SID world conference in Abidjan, surely the most lavish conference in our history. But I headed to the back room where the grace of our Executive Secretary, Andy Rice, allowed me to address the SID International Board. I proposed that SID have a plan to reinforce membership in the South in order to diminish the growing dominance of the North in SID’s membership and work; and I proposed we have a way of taking public positions as a Society, but without speaking for our membership. The results: Two task forces later SID created the North–South Roundtable to take positions, and SID moved its headquarters to Rome (I was hoping for Nairobi, Rio or New Delhi) to be further South. How wonderful that a simple member could make such proposals to a board made of quite distinguished people.

By the 1980s Thatcher and Reagan were turning development back over into top down policies. SID reacted by stressing the grassroots and participation. Many of us applauded the counter-stress, but we disagreed with the vehemence with which these positions were put forth. They had the effect of being less a stimulant to rich discussion than a take it or leave it dictum. A more open approach to discussion would have been more effective.

A cross-cutting source of major input to SID was the influence of key multilateral officials such as Mahbub ul Haq, Jim Grant, Richard Jolly, Louis Emmerij (and Barbara Ward…who influenced the others). SID was chosen to be a prime way to try out and propagate ideas like human development. We would do well to re-establish stronger links with UN and other multilateral policy leaders, but find a better balance to actually debate with them their key policy contributions.

For many years, we have seen our journal to be highly creative in a number of fields, particularly gender, health and a number of other human issues. That is wonderful. But we as a Society have not very well engaged some wider issues. Our field
has become ever so much more complex, but we have not reached out to the branches to be part of us and to become regular parts of our discussions. At the same time, the core fields of the Society (planning and policy) have also become far more decentralized in all kinds of local think tanks and research centres, and seemingly they also are beyond our reach, alas. If we had grown with our field, SID would be many times our current size. And we remain fearful about talking with policy people from the private sector, which denies us a lot of creativity and the ability to influence the most powerful dynamic in today’s development.

Now we face the first truly global crisis, caused by climate change. From now on humanity will need to manage the environment or be subject to even more severe damage than if we remain helpless to change our economies and our lifestyles. For SID, that’s an opportunity, as we will need tremendously creative development solutions and a lot of new thinking to get to those solutions. Our work is far from done.

Louis Emmerij

The journal Development, like the Society for International Development, particularly in its General Conferences, has been a supermarket for alternative ideas. It has kept the successive orthodoxies on their toes. SID and the journal have been frequently ahead of the curve. Hence, concrete influence was not immediate. But if you look over the last 27 years and observe the changes that have taken place in the orthodoxy of the 1980s, it is clear that the journal Development has played its role in these changes. Obviously, it wants to go much further, but that is the task of the next 50 years!

I have been impressed with the journal Development in its present format: choosing a theme and let many authors say their piece in three pages. This allows both an in-depth analysis of the selected themes and a variety of different views, thereby avoiding dogmatism and still remaining constantly on the look out for policies that benefit the great majority of humankind.

One cannot expect new or alternative ideas to have an immediate impact. Turning points do seem to come abruptly from a blue sky, but let me tell you that most of the time they have been long in the making. The monetarists were ridiculed for decades and then ‘suddenly’ around 1980 their moment came. This was not a blessing, but it is an illustration of my point. I follow with care and sympathy the trend toward an integration of development, human rights and human security. Such an integration would mean real progress to make development possible for everyone in all countries; ‘Development as freedom’, to borrow a phrase from Amartya Sen.

However, this still begs the question of the necessary changes to be introduced in economic and social development policies. I have come to believe that a global concept of development valid for all regions and all cultures – which is the way we are going – must be reassessed. I think we must give more attention to the necessity to break down development nationally, locally and culturally. In other words, there certainly must be common elements in development theory and practice, but around this common core there are many policies that must be adapted according to the culture and habits of a region and its people.

I have written something along those lines that has recently been published ("Turning
The question of the journal *Development* and SID giving priority to northern voices seems rather silly to me. There are northern voices that are more southern than southern voices and vice versa! Development and SID are supermarkets where all ideas find a place, with the goods that are beneficial to all humankind more visibly exposed than the others. I am happy that the number of voices that are now audible in the development debate and have a real influence has increased over the last 50 years. The journal *Development* in its present incarnation, as I see it, tries to introduce some order in the cacaphony of the many voices.

Arturo Escobar
Associate Editor of *Development*, Kenan Distinguished Professor of Anthropology, author of *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (1995), Colombia

I should start by saying that the question of ideas goes of course both ways. Since the late 1980s, critics of mainstream development started to emphasize the power of ideas (language, discourse, expert knowledge, labels, etc.) to create particular development understandings and, hence, modes of intervention. (There had been, of course, a few related critiques earlier, by authors such as Illich, Freire and Goulet.) But of course, *Development* took the challenge of responding to mainstream concepts (particularly, growth-focused discourses) with an alternative set of ideas. One thinks about Dudley Seers’ early questioning of ‘the meaning of development’, but there were many enlightened pieces over the years, including many voices from the South (e.g., Gustavo Esteva, Vandana Shiva, Orlando Fals Borda) and of course the North (Susan George, Wolfgang Sachs, Richard Jolly) which in various ways took on the challenge of both ‘unpacking’ the assumptions and perils of the seemingly natural mainstream ideas and presenting new ideas as credible and viable alternatives to the former. One also thinks about the early and important effort of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation’s 1975 project, *What Now?*, which launched the ‘Another development’ movement – ‘another development is possible’, we would say today, paraphrasing the slogan of the World Social Forum Process. I still believe the debate over ‘self-reliance’ that came out of that debate is very relevant today, with the pertinent adaptations. It is indeed a powerful idea in human-focused development.

A battle over ideas and over languages of development, as we now know, is a battle over cultural understandings of social life, over worldviews, and, ultimately, over ways of constructing the social and material worlds we inhabit. This is why I see the development movement as a whole – including *Development* – as crucial in this regard; it is a space for conducting this struggle. Has it contributed to global economic and social justice? The record is of course quite mixed in this regard. Human-centered approaches at least have the potential to contribute to these goals much more than the blueprints for growth and technological development. In the long run, as some recent ethnographies of development projects have shown, what counts is the extent to which local people and organizations are able to appropriate development interventions to their own ends, often by re-locating them in constructive ways within their local social and cultural terrains. Participatory approaches and human-centered approaches, again, are more likely to provide conditions suitable to the goal of local effective appropriations, be it because the experts are more likely to see
that this is what is going on and to accept it as a challenge for themselves, or be it because the locals find more auspicious spaces to inset their knowledge and aims in the negotiations over the projects. But one could say that there is always the need to apply more pressure on development discourses and institutions to see themselves as contributing to cultural-political articulations with popular groups, including project ‘beneficiaries’, from the perspective of how these groups see it. It seems to me that this is a role Development can continue to embrace and make even more explicit.

There is no simple answer to the question of how ideas get translated into effective policy, or, more theoretically, how discourses and entrenched ‘political economies of truth’ – to use Foucault’s term – become transformed into other knowledge-power constellations. I was recalling Seers’ 1964 article, ‘What are We Trying to Measure?’. In this piece, Seers argued that to ascertain a country’s development, one ought to look not at the growth of GNP, but at what has happened to the levels of poverty, unemployment and inequality; if these have decreased, then there has been a degree of development, and vice versa, regardless of what has happened to GNP. Seers, of course, was interested in the problem of indicators all along, but his call, together with ideas of the 1970s and 1980s and pressure by social movements, contributed to fostering a panoply of new practices; from alternative indicators, human development and poverty reduction frameworks to the HDI (Human Development Index), which, while by no means a radical departure, did offer a corrective to the more self-serving representations and measurements of the World Bank and the IMF.

With the World Social Forum, I believe the development debate has the potential to enter into a new phase. The journal has tackled this challenge with special issues on the emergent movements and ideas connected with the cultural-political ferment of the last 6–8 years in particular, linking this ferment with development issues per se. To translate into policy the thrust of the principle that ‘another world(s) is possible’ – ‘a world where many worlds can exist’, in the Zapatista formulation – is an even more difficult task – perhaps not even how the task should be envisioned. Another development is possible, for sure. What do we mean by this today? From the 1975 What Now? project, the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation launched last October (2006) the ‘What Next’ forum. The forum is already infused by the ideas of the World Social Forum and worldwide movements and, of course, by the most heated debates of the day, such as global climate change. Celebrating its 50th anniversary, Development is in an enviable position to contribute to lead this process of re-visioning and reconnecting novel ideas with transformed practices. It should do so by building on what has been one of its most distinctive features: establishing conversations between the academy, policy worlds and social movements and civil society more generally – only that the balance among these three actors in the economy of knowledge production has shifted, from being weighted completely towards the first two to having to pay increasing attention to the third one.

The problem is not so much with whom we are speaking in development but from which perspective such voice speaks – after all, there might be male feminists, white anti-racists, and so forth; more difficult and unlikely to happen, but certainly not impossible! Can northern actors understand and really share perspectives from the South? And of course we would have to disaggregate ‘the South’, to begin with. But let us take the South as a cultural-epistemological (‘epistemic’, as some philosophers and some activists say) space where critical perspectives on the world are being constructed. These perspectives have to do, in a fundamental way, with decolonizing the individual and collective imaginations from the dominant modern standards that emphasize individual, market, expert knowledge, so-called rational action, consumption, separation between nature and culture, and so forth. In theoretical terms, this means questioning the project of liberal modernity at a deeper level than ever before. Another world is possible also means other than modernity understood in this sense. It means bringing about not a
universe (such as that dreamt of by development) but a pluriverse of social, cultural, economic and environmental configurations. This is the project at its most radical as currently envisioned by some social movements, for instance, in Latin America. Can development be turned into a surface of engagement to move towards such a goal, while at the same time bringing about improvements in people’s livelihoods?

Thus it seems to me that while there are a number of very pressing topics of debate today within the space of development – for example, livelihoods, environmental changes, global health, etc. – we need to confer a new dimension to the decolonial question, that is, moving beyond the paradigm of liberal modernity. This is what the idea of ‘postdevelopment’ might mean at present. Neo-liberal globalization, to be sure, is the current attempt at deepening such paradigm; it is a massive project of reconstituting subjectivities along the axes of individual freedom, western-style democracy and market-based consumption. The South is been invited, or forced, into accepting this cultural-political at a more profound level than ever before. Hence the need to oppose it at the same cultural-political level, building on those projects of decoloniality that can be seen in various parts of the world. The challenge, as some people put it today in Latin American contexts, is to foster ‘worlds and knowledges otherwise’.

In his inaugural speech on 15 January 2007, President of Ecuador Rafael Correa spoke about the need for his country to embark upon a ‘change of epoch’, not an ‘epoch of changes’. One would hope that ‘development’ – and certainly Development – will take on the challenge of trying to understand what this means and how to contribute to it. Development will continue to be crucial to these decolonial projects, as means more than as ends. Of course, there is a tremendous unevenness worldwide in this respect. Is China really fully into the project of conventional development? Is Latin America, on the contrary, attempting to move into a significantly different direction? It is too early to tell, of course, but we should remain attentive to these regional specificities and what they might mean for the world as a whole.

The journal Development has taken seriously the apparent intention of development: global justice. When Truman inaugurated the current development era, his main promise was to close the gap between the ‘advanced countries’ and the areas he called underdeveloped. He offered to share with them all the American scientific and technological advances. Instead of old imperialism – exploitation for foreign profit – …we envisage a program of development based on the concept of democratic fair dealing’, he said. The success of his political coinage of the word underdevelopment, which reformulated the very idea of development, should partially be attributed to this commitment. Thanks to development, Truman promised, the gap between rich and poor countries will be first reduced and finally eliminated. The levelling of modern society, eliminating the chasm between the king and noblemen and the people, would happen at the scale of the world. The old promise of the French revolution will be finally fulfilled.

But the experiment miserably failed. In 1960, the rich countries were 20 times richer than the poor countries. In 1980, thanks to development, they were 46 times richer. The gap has been continually widening since then. We have now enough documentation. We know. Development is very good business for the rich countries and very bad business for the poor countries.
has clearly contributed to global economic and social injustice.

The journal Development has courageously looked for alternatives to mainstream development. But we now know: both mainstream and alternative development has failed in its explicit purpose of bringing global justice. Rarely has the journal explored alternatives to development and its timid incursion in that field has been quickly abandoned. It was assumed, perhaps, that such line of thinking and practice was suicidal for a journal called Development and a society created to promote it, whose constituency – the main audience of Development – is the community of developers, people affiliated with the idea or the practice of development.

Fifty years of development allow us to see a very peculiar phenomenon. Most of the great ideas exposed in the journal, which probably collected the best in the field, had been transformed into policy, one way or the other, in some countries or others, time and again. And the policies had produced changes. But these changes were not the changes expected or the desired changes were obtained at an unbearable price, making them counterproductive, that is, producing a negative balance. All the policies and strategies I have heard of in the last 10 or 15 years – as a proposal or as a practice –, now packaged as globalization, have the appearance of déjá vu. A new generation of policy makers is discovering the development wheel. What they proclaim as a radical novelty, a real innovation, was tested time and again, in a thousand different forms, many years ago.

In the same discourse in which Truman launched development as the new emblem for the American hegemonic power, after the Second World War, he declared what later was called the ‘cold war’. In the late 1980s, when such a war ended with the victory of the United States, development was already a frayed flag. No one dared to celebrate the next UN Development Decade. The US was forced to change the emblem and coined globalization as a substitute. What was promised in the name of development is now promised in the name of the global project. This time, however, instead of universal fascination, the globalizers – as developers are now called – get increasing rejection.

No matter how much documentation we collect about successful alternatives to development, experiments that are no longer marginal or confined to dissident vanguards but circulate profusely among the social majorities, they are not heard or seen. The lenses of development prevent any one using them to see anything outside their semantic constellation. This dramatic blindness is today one of the main sources of social tension and political violence.

The tension in SID between South and North was as illusory as the division itself. There has been a tension between the One Third World and the Two Thirds World and these two worlds are not concentrated geographically.

The stakeholder groups that I can identify today in the field of development are basically the same groups I observed 50 years ago. The debates around development include more than in the past some issues, like the environmental consequences of development or ethnicity – the cultural implications of development. In my view, most of these debates, perhaps all, are missing what is happening at the grassroots and in many social movements.

More and more people are slowly moving beyond the very idea of progress and its shape as development. As Wolfgang Sachs brilliantly explained almost 20 years ago, the idea of progress is now ripe for museum. Evolutionism or Social Darwinism is no longer accepted as a defined goal or path. It is increasingly difficult to believe that the coherence of the world can be achieved by pushing ahead along a common path, towards some distant promised future.

Or, as Teodor Shanin explained, we can no longer take for granted a unilinear evolution as ‘natural’, that is, as necessary. If we consider social transformations in their full richness, we need to take on board the possible multiplicity, multidirectionality and multi-quality of actual and potential social paths.

Around the world, different groups of people are following very different paths: Many people are enjoying what they consider their privileges with the dominant system. They are ready to do whatever is necessary to protect what they have, their possessions, their jobs, their way of life. Some other people are struggling to be incorporated – to
receive full satisfaction for what they consider their right to a piece of the cake. Still others are struggling for changes within the system – they see its flaws, its contradictions. They are concerned about the environment, social injustice, poverty, whatever. They want to improve the system. Some people are trying to go back. Lost in the current uncertainty, they look for a refuge in a reconstruction of the past. Some people are just resisting what they see as a mortal swell. They are entrenched in their old ways, trying to protect them from any change. Some others are transforming their resistance into liberation – trying to create a new social order in which their ways can be respected.

We thus see initiatives for or against ‘the system’, called with different names: globalization, development, capitalism, etc. We also see initiatives going beyond that system; they are neither for nor against, but following their own path. And all these different initiatives are often mixed and combined in the real world. It is difficult to find movements or initiatives that may claim ‘purity’ of intentions or practices.

How to deal with such confusion? One of the clues can be found in what is increasingly called the politics of No, movements and initiatives defined by a common No and many Yes’ès, acknowledging and respecting the plurality of the world. Increasingly, in political actions to implement collective ventures for the common good, to say ‘No’ may be the most complete and vigorous form of self-affirmation. The unifying ‘No’, which expresses a shared opposition, always contains many ‘Yes’ – radical affirmations of one’s own being, of what one wants. By keeping such affirmation at the level of the ‘No’, without condensing in a ‘Yes’ the multiple affirmations of all those sharing an opposition, it becomes an affirmation of the plurality that defines the world as it is. It also gives potential to the political strength of the rejection and its capacity to protect the initiative of those affirming their own places, mutually supported by the common ‘No’. Development, in all its forms, does not look compatible with this kind of politics. Development implies one ‘No’ and one ‘Yes’.

Politicians and parties, as all sorts of developers, assume that it is impossible or ineffective to concentrate political actions in negative proposals. They continually look for affirmative projects, expressing shared ideals of wide groups. Inevitably, they betray people’s real hopes, carpet bagging and give back to the people abstract promises that cannot be fulfilled.

The motives of those opposing a dam, a road, a McDonald’s or a development policy may be highly diverse. It is usually impossible to reach consensus among them about what they want, for themselves or the society. They don’t lack alternative proposals, but they accept their own diversity. To say no, with enough firmness and conviction, may be today the best form of saying yes.

All this, which can be seen and smelled at the grassroots and appears everywhere among the social majorities, seems to be entirely absent in the development debate. It is usually disqualified as irrelevant or thrown into the old bag of ‘resistance to change’.

More and more, we are coming back from the future. Well established in the present, we are abandoning all forms of expectations and rejecting the standard definition of the present as an always postponed future. We are reclaiming hope. And hope, as Vaclav Havel once said, is not the conviction that something will happen but the conviction that something makes sense, whatever happens.

Jessica Horn
Contributor to Development, feminist activist with roots in Uganda and the US currently works as a human rights funder in London
The methodology and goal of global economic and social justice is to transform radically power relations, and to redistribute resources, voice and possibility. The problem is that most mainstream development institutions conceive (naïvely or intentionally) of their work as somehow outside of power relations, and hence come nowhere near to engaging with questions of social and economic rights or equity. A case in point is much of the work done on ‘gender’ that tends to avoid fundamental issues shaping gender power relations including sexuality and violence. The Millennium Development Goals, for example, lay out universal targets for development – including gender equality – yet fail to take seriously measures to end violence against women as key factor in achieving either. This is despite the documented evidence that gender-based violence is a leading cause of death among adult women, and has a negative impact on women and girls’ participation in society and the economy.

Key to change: Throughout the 1990s, activists from the South and North collaborated to challenge the technocratic, industry-driven focus of government and UN development discourse and to introduce concepts of human rights and justice. Women’s rights activists made a powerful contribution throughout the UN conferences of the 1990s in shifting the focus of UN language from state-control of individuals to a focus on to questions of choice and rights and ‘human-centered’ development. This advocacy has been critical in validating the absolute centrality of human rights to development. For the mainstream it has at least exposed the tip of the iceberg; however, navigating what lies underneath requires immense political clarity.

Still to be heard: There is of course a lot more work to be done in transforming mainstream development practice to feed genuinely into the struggles and rights of marginalized communities. This is tremendously hard to do when agendas are set in the financial capitals of the world or indeed in the capital city of a country without meaningful participation and leadership from affected communities. To say that is not to advocate for a naïve embrace of all things ‘local’, but to recognize, as Wangaari Mathaai puts it, that ‘what is done for the people without involving them cannot be sustained’.

Stakeholders: When we talk about ‘stakeholders’ in development, we often think about the ‘poor’ of the global South. Yet when we answer the question – ‘who benefits from development?’ – we come up with a different range of stakeholders, and here the role of private industry comes into view. From the early days of Structural Adjustment Policies, Southern activists have been crying foul about the impact of privatization of basic social services and the role of private industry in pushing technological fixes and market-driven approaches to the detriment of the poor. However, over the past two decades, private industry has taken an increasingly prominent role as funder and policymaker. The privatization of water is the latest in a series of attempts at the commodification of basic human needs. The trouble is that both private industry and its corporate practices fall largely outside of the accountability mechanisms of the international human rights system, and do not have a formal accountability to the voting public.

On the other side of the spectrum, a set of significant yet ‘invisible’ stakeholders are Diaspora communities who are contributing to development from ‘below’. World Bank research shows that migrants sent home an estimated $225 billion in 2005 – most of which went into assisting in family and community development. This was more than all bilateral development assistance combined in that year, and shows that Southern people are in fact among the biggest investors in development and socio-economic change in the South. Donor agencies are intrigued by this and are looking at ways to harness this economic power to their own ends. I am interested in it as a phenomenon of autonomous development in which migrant individuals and communities decide development priorities for themselves.

Pressing debates: For my generation, development has firmly established itself as an industry. You can be trained at a university to work in the sector and you can make an increasingly comfortable living as a development practitioner. As a business person, you can engage with the industry by providing technical products and marketing services. In my view there is clearly a tension
between the ‘industry’ of development which people can participate in as a career choice rather than as an activist imperative, and the mass-based social justice movements where participation is generally unpaid and inspired by the need to defend the rights of one’s community (however that is conceived) and to change one’s material conditions. The ‘industry’ is less accountable to the local context, and yet can often wield greater power in terms of defining problems and solutions and in raising funds.

Secondly, the ability of the development policy and practice really to deliver on women’s rights remains a pressing debate. Women worldwide still earn on average less money than men, face physical and sexual violence which is often treated with impunity, and are poorly represented in decision-making at all levels, from the individual to the global. We are talking about half of the potential labour force of the world, half of the world’s citizens. So clearly, there can be no genuine ‘development’ without a transformation of gender power relations.

Joanna Kerr
SID International Governing Council
Member, feminist activist and writer, Canada

The power of ideas AND the power of debate and dissent: these are both central to the political project of making change happen. If there was a quick technical fix to ending poverty or expanding human rights we would have found it. If anything, the widening of the debate to explore silences, tensions and amplify marginalized voices only enriches our understanding of the complexity of social, political and economic transformation. And as to how development has contributed to economic and social justice worldwide, I am afraid I cannot separate development from the ‘development racket’ – an industry that has enabled if not contributed to widening gaps between the elite and marginalized. While indeed we can look to amazing achievements in terms of eradication of polio, major infrastructure projects or education outcomes, one cannot help but look at the failures of economic reforms, agricultural policies, or PRSPs with some dismay that hunger is on the rise, alongside conflict and climate crisis.

One of the many things that we need to change about mainstream development, which is an implicit agenda of the journal, is to have more recognize that ideas and policy cannot do anything without people acting at the right place, right time and across movements, sectors, issues and regions. Take for example, gender equality. Most development organizations, be they international NGOs, bilateral or multilateral agencies have adequate gender equality policies in order to address discrimination and exclusion throughout development work. Add to that, one day staff ‘gender training’ sessions and most managers would say their organizations and the work that they do are ‘engendered’. Sadly, they are wrong. Research shows us again and again that it takes policies, skills but mostly political will to change organizational cultures, and plenty of gender equality specialists with budgets to ensure gender is addressed. Women’s movements need funding to sustain their role of providing accountability to governments and development agencies.

Good policy is one thing, but surely we know by now that knowledge, plus political action, plus financial resources are needed to bring about change.

In 2007, ‘development’ needs to recognize that there are many new players working to address poverty, HIV/AIDS, global governance or human rights – and these new players will bring new
tensions. I’m referring to new philanthropy – the Bill Gates, the Jeff Skolls, the Oprah Winfreys, the Richard Bransons, film star do gooders Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie, and the many new foundations, either corporate or private that are coming onto the scene every week. They have a big stake in making a mark and building their legacy and using a range of different tools and approaches that not only circumvent public policy, but also dwarf the significance of ODA.

Smitu Kothari
Contributor to Development and SID programmes since the mid-1980s, activist and researcher, Director, Intercultural Resources, India

Development is dangerous precisely because it can be used by anyone to justify almost any economic, social or cultural activity. Given the present configuration of political, economic and cultural power in the world, to a very large extent, it has become a tool to legitimize the dominant patterns of economic development or it has been deployed to provide safety nets to those victimized by these dominant patterns. What have then been justified are superficial programmes and projects that do not seriously address the root causes of impoverishment and disempowerment. Its use can only nurture confusion. It is indeed unfortunate if understandable that the UN and other agencies have adopted it infusing it with values that reflect an advancement of the public good.

Most development is still top-down. Interventions designed in state capitals or remote offices are sought to be implemented with little or no recognition of the agency of those in whose name it is being done. In a situation of widespread disempowerment and economic distress, it is reprehensible that so much is justified with so little understanding of the context within which development is sought to be done. Surely, some humility must arise in the hearts and minds of those who do development around the fact that an overwhelming majority in whose name development is justified have little or no say in defining and shaping macro developmental policies and programmes. To some extent the ‘targets’, the ‘recipients’, the ‘objects’, the ‘stakeholders’ do have a role in impacting on the micro, and there are a wide range of activities that are inspiring, but most remain localized nurtured by dynamic individuals and groups.

We are very far from global economic and social justice precisely because we are not individually and collectively addressing the hard issues. Look at India where I come from.

How can we celebrate our economic resurgence when 25,000 farmers have been compelled to commit suicide in the past eight years because of economic distress caused by processes of economic globalization and the present thrust of agricultural development? How can we only keep touting a sustained 8 percent growth in a context where a recent Government of India survey backed by UNICEF states that India has a higher percentage (46 percent) of malnourished children than sub-Saharan Africa (35 percent). The survey found that levels of anaemia in children and women had worsened compared to seven years ago – around 56 percent of women and 79 percent of children below three years old were anaemic. Even a leading government consultant had to proclaim that this reality was ‘a matter of national priority and shame’ for the government, with less than 1 percent of the national budget going towards public health spending. This, of course, does not capture the fact that many of the very policies of economic development are themselves contributing to displacement and marginalization.
If development was working, why has the wealth gap increased? In the US, in China and in India as in most countries around the world, this gap has tripled in the last four decades. If development was working, why do the richest 10 percent own 85 percent of the world’s assets and the bottom 50 percent own less than 1 percent? (Or, if you take income distribution, the top 40 percent receive 95 percent of all income) Again, what this does not capture is that the consumption of the rich strips the planet of survival resources and devastates the livelihoods of millions, dumps pollutants that are killing life all over the planet and substantively contributes to global warming in the process threatening the very survival not just of our species but of countless others. These are tough realities that the development community has to confront if it wants to begin contributing to the process of creating a more secure and just world.

The journal *Development* has provided a dynamic space in which to engage these questions, to highlight the conceptual debates that diverse actors engage with as they seek to make sense of these troubled waters. What has also been refreshing is that it has provided a remarkable space for those engaged with the evolving mobilizations of women in different parts of the world. To that extent, the issues and voices of other historically discriminated and marginalized peoples – the indigenous, the tribal, the minorities, the culturally and socially victimized – need better representation. In numerous ways, while some of their aspirations and struggles raise profoundly troubling issues, many are providing us with immensely creative ways of rethinking democracy and sustainability on the planet – narratives and visions that the journal must give greater space to.

The most central issues that we need to engage with are political and economic power, culture/identity and ecology. Most development practice either turns a blind eye to prevalent power relations (globally, nationally and within the community and family) or works to incrementally reform it. Clearly, without addressing how economic, social and political power legitimize and perpetuate themselves, of how they sustain inequality, devastate livelihoods and life and cause large-scale environmental destruction, it will only be possible, at best, to skim the surface. There is so much evidence now to corroborate this and to reveal how these processes contribute to increasing economic, social and cultural vulnerability in turn contributing to widespread social and political conflict. Without addressing a fundamental fact that development itself causes disempowerment, conflict and violence, most interventions will, at best, be superficial.

Also, there continues to be a vast gap between theories of socio-political change and the realities on the ground; between the developments in international law and the realization of those rights where people live and work; between the formal institutions of democracy and the deeper realization of democratic rights; between the commitments and pronouncements of our political and developmental leaders and the achievement of dignity and justice.

The North–South dichotomy has become largely meaningless. As many of us have illuminated in our work over the past decade and a half, there is a growing North in the South and a South in the North with the dominant mindsets and lifestyles of those in the global North and the victimization, the social and cultural exclusion and vulnerability in the global South looking increasingly similar.

While I feel uncomfortable with the word stakeholders, we are all actors in this process – the bankers, the development professionals, the teachers, the workers, the peasants, the forest dwellers and the political activists. Change is already under way. I can see it. I can feel it. In the tens of thousands of efforts to take control of resources, institutions and systems of governance; in the struggles of the discriminated and oppressed; in the numerous challenges and resistance to predatory economic and political forces; in the resurgence of progressive political forces in Latin America and numerous other local spaces around the world – all seeking to bring forth a saner, more secure, humane, just and caring world.

There is therefore a wider need in the community that reads *Development* for fundamental introspection. The biggest change needs to come from those in power, those with privilege and wealth. As many have said before, the biggest problem in the world today is not poverty but wealth and privilege.
It is therefore not a question of incremental handouts, of sophisticated safety nets or of inclusive growth. Wisdom lies in fundamentally rethinking how to live on our fragile planet in ways that enhance dignity, justice and environmental security. It lies in taking radical steps to alter our lifestyles and our life ways to converge with that goal.

Afaf Mahfouz
Vice President of SID International Governing Council Member 1991 to 1994, feminist and psychoanalyst Egypt/USA

I first joined SID in Egypt through my Professor Ismail-Sabri Abdalla. I found SID a very compelling intellectual forum with interesting ideas that as a Pan Africanist and Arab I particularly welcomed. The exchange between first and third worlds I found very exciting, despite I must admit, the exclusivity of the Society, and I would add the ‘old boys club’ atmosphere. The dialogues, conferences and the journal were dominated by brilliant intellectuals. In some ways I felt just because SID was made up of some of the stars of the development world, it failed to go into depth to examine the roots and the causes of underdevelopment but it was nevertheless a very precious and important forum for me.

I can candidly say it was difficult as an Arab woman to enter into the decision-making arenas of SID. When we were rounding up support for Ismail-Sabri Abdalla for President, I remember having to appeal to Jim Grant to ensure we had space during the programme of meetings at the Baltimore Conference to caucus. I also recall during my first term of the SID International Governing Council in a regional meeting in Nairobi how I and other women members of the Governing Council were chided by the senior men of the Council for taking first row seats waiting for President Moi to address our meeting. There was a lot of tension in SID around accepting third-world leaders, let alone third-world women leaders. We kept our ground or rather our seats I am glad to say!

Above all, it was ideas, with the journal as one medium that SID gave the development community. It was incidentally also a network that gave professional support and no doubt some plum jobs were decided on the basis of what some saw as the SID ‘old boys club’. But for me, the most valuable part of my membership with SID has been the ideas. For example the work by Richard Jolly, Mahbub ul Haq and Jim Grant which then UNICEF took up on structural adjustment with a human face was path breaking. I recall Richard first presenting it at a SID Conference. I found that approach a turning point for my own work, and I respect and appreciate how SID was able to put forward such cutting edge ideas and take them through into policy.

Another area that SID pioneered was women in development. SID was the first network to promote and integrate women into development. Intellectually, this idea since the 1970s has been pushed by SID and this has had important impacts on development practice. There have been some very dynamic women leaders in SID, although I would not say women are completely integrated into the leadership among SID programmes and work in the South, particularly in Africa and Asia you see the impact. The gender projects in SID have been very strong, southern based, and have worked hard to disseminate ideas from the bottom up.

I think for SID there is always an uncomfortable dynamic around the centre versus the local Chapters. But this is not so much about where the Chapters are positioned but more about if chapters are linked into political power. For example, SID Washington membership is close to the real political power in Washington. and the Chapter has thrived through those professional connections and consulting jobs. SID was part of what I call the political tribe in Washington. Instead, SID in New York has not thrived as no one had time to make it work and no one was close to real political power.

Reflections
I think the journal has had a different trajectory from other SID activities. It has managed to bring in a North–South dimension with southern and women’s voices leading the debate which for me makes it a more meaningful dialogue than other SID programmes such as the very influential and highly visible North–South Roundtable. I do think the journal could improve with more case studies on the ground which could be presented as cases of success or failure of development. Possibly key people could be invited to comment on the cases and diagnose what worked and what did not, that could be a very helpful way to move the development debate forward, perhaps in the local–global encounters section.

Most of all I would recommend that the journal and SID try to bring the intellectual leadership of SID together with the on-the-ground networking of activists, to produce different levels of strategies that can move SID and the development project forward.

Stephen F. Moseley
Treasurer of the SID International Governing Council and President and CEO, Academy for Educational Development, Washington, DC, USA

The Society for International Development’s 50th Anniversary marks a time for celebration in development. We are now able to reflect on extraordinary progress in development made in the areas of social change – including education and health especially for children, young women and youth. In my 40 years devoted to these critical issues we can see dramatic changes in global adherence and commitment to goals which most affect people and, in turn, the opportunity for the long-term economic and stable development of nations and communities.

We know the landscape is not perfect, and the challenges ahead are enormous in many countries and for many particular populations. However, there is progress. From only 10 percent of girls enrolled in schools during the 1950s and 1960s in most developing countries, we now see many countries with 50 percent or more graduation rates for girls in urban and many rural areas. The continuing progress of children moving on to secondary school continues to be an opportunity for the next generation to participate in economic growth and global participation. Extraordinary gains in maternal and child care in the early years have also enhanced the lives of millions and built the base on which people can move forward in longer-term health developments leading to gains in education and access to new possibilities. The future generation, with educated mothers are far more likely to succeed in terms of education, health, and will be able to adopt new technologies needed to enhance their societies and economies. The opportunity to build on the 25-year march towards excellence in higher education around the world offers current and future generations the ability to participate in an ever-changing global economy which requires the highest level of skills on a lifelong continuing education basis to which all can aspire.

We are now in a new era where industry and commerce recognize how critical investment is in workforce development and in early, basic education. This will make possible long-term stability in countries which, in turn, encourages investment from within and without the country. Ultimately, the return on investment in education becomes an investment that is applauded by both the public and private sector.

Our interconnected world though comes with an important set of challenges particularly the increase of global contagion from infectious disease. We must strive to ensure that what is easily treatable in many societies is made available to the least advantaged populations. HIV/AIDS, avian influenza and the growth of chronic dis-
eases such as diabetes and obesity that stem from changing lifestyles all threaten the accomplishments we have made in basic life development.

Education and health have been important themes throughout SID’s 50-year history of holistic development. Human development, social interaction, gender equity and human rights result from recognition of the type of multi-disciplinary collaborative effort by all citizens of the globe. Members of SID from public and private organizations; private, non-governmental organizations and businesses; associations and governments; cities and states and nations; and across disciplines make a critical network for continuing development.

Looking only on a short-term basis at the troubled areas in the world leads us to think that the collaborative investment in social change on a global scale to address and alleviate poverty is short-lived or wasted. On the other hand, most people when asked where investments should be placed to ensure the future of their families, inevitably answer ‘education and health’. It is here that we must continue to invest in the ‘soft side’ of development to ensure the security of the globe. SID’s first 50 years must be seen as laying the foundation from which we can work together towards an even more critical and focused capacity-building in the years ahead.

Khawar Mumtaz
Vice President of SID International Governing Council, Coordinator of Shirkat Gah, Pakistan
I put myself in the advocacy camp. Policy, I find lags behind often coming too late and with too little to offer. From the perspective of my own country (and possibly other developing ones) policy is often externally motivated e.g. the World Bank or IMF and others, or, increasingly by local property developers, contractors and related mafias. There can hardly be any popular ownership of such policies. The pressing debates in my view are around values of social justice, democratic spaces, human and women’s rights; around armament, war and peace; around notions of the power of technology and market; unsustainable model of development and the interface between what is seen as ‘modern’ development (mega projects: big dams, mega cities, wider roads) and rapidly degrading environment.

Juma Mwapachu
SID International Governing Council Member, Secretary General of the East African Community, Tanzania

Without doubt, the SID Journal Development has throughout its history been at the forefront in placing human security at the heart of the development agenda and process. Development has had an important contribution in debunking the conventional wisdom about the centrality of GDP-linked growth to attacking poverty. It has powerfully advanced an alternative theory of measuring development based on a demonstrable improvement in the quality of life of the poor.

First, Development was probably a leading contributor to the birth of the ‘UN Human Development Report’, a major coup in advancing a new theory of development at the global level. In turn, through the GRIS debate in the 1980s, Development was able to promote the concept of participatory development in the third world, an idea that has come to crystallize into what is now widely described as ownership of the development process.

Ideas postulated and interrogated in Development, crucially catalysed a global debate about North–South economic relations and issues and the inequities they grossly manifested, resulting, I believe, in the historic and monumental Reports of the Brandt and South Commission as well as the more recent ILO Report: A Fair Globalization.

One area of change which Development has played a signal role is on gender relations and, in particular, advancing the centrality of liberation and empowerment of women in the development and decision-making processes at global, regional and local levels. The wide world has seen dramatic and effective policies adopted in this area. In many developing countries, women have emerged as the strategic agents of change at policy-making levels.

An area that continues to be a debilitating challenge is the skewed and inequitable global governance architecture. The intensification of globalization has heightened this inequity, regrettably with little prospect for serious action to address the challenge. UN Reports that have focused on this weakness have not been given the due attention deserved. Another area where there has been little action on is the entrenching and deepening poverty that engulfs the poor world. Really and truly, the rich world has been more polemical and rhetorical in its commitments to provide assistance. The stark paradox is that individual and private sector Foundations in rich countries have become more engaged in this area than governments.

The so-called tension in SID between the North and South at the level of ideas formation and articulation could be misplaced. I believe on the contrary that there has been a significant commonality and shared perceptions in and approaches to development issues between the North and South social scientists contributing ideas in Development. The voice of the South...
has enjoyed a high profile and platform. The short-
coming has been that the voice has largely ended
being in the wilderness for the same reasons that
have seen the failure of numerous robust and posi-
tive recommendations put forward by Reports
such as Mwalimu Nyerere’s South Commission.

Who are the key stakeholders in development
today? I would say, first, the progressive global ci-
vil society that has aligned itself with the quest of
the poor world to foster and champion a more
equitable global economic system with a globali-
ization that is underpinned by rules of fairness.
Second is the women empowerment groups that
see the centrality of women in improving the way
development is charted out and managed, espe-
cially in the developing world.

As for the pressing debates around development
today, one can discern the following:

- Global Governance in the era of entrenched
globalization.
- Challenges in achieving the MDGs.
- How to make poverty a history.
- Moving beyond terrorism to addressing issues
  of broader human security.

I believe that Development, probably more than
any other journal, has provided a broad and liberal
platform for different and contrasting ideas on
development to contend. The voice of the South in
particular has been offered a unique space to be
heard and, to that extent, Development has been
the foremost journal for the rich world to access
the intellectual and activist stirrings taking place
in the poor world.

Duncan Okello
Director of East Africa Regional Office, Kenya

The idea that equates development or progress
with economic growth was a very narrow one. It
forgot a fundamental reality: that development,
however defined, should be about people. It is pos-
tive that this narrow view of measuring and label-
ing the progress of humanity was sufficiently
challenged. The Human Development Index and
the UNDP Human Development Report have been
remarkable in constantly conveying the fact that
there is life beyond the figures. That however es-
teric statistics may be, the more compelling thing
to look at are the human faces behind those
figures.

But, it would be naïve to think that the message
has sunk in. In a number of countries, we still
have policy makers and leaders who, by virtue of
their training, ideological bent or, pure sadism,
still find it difficult to appreciate this fact. This is
particularly true in Africa where, after years of
economic stagnation, the pursuit and demonstra-
tion of economic growth, however small, has be-
come so urgent and necessary that everything
else is subordinated to it. The growth imperative
has become too consuming that, even in in-
stances where innovation and experimentation
would create new spaces for more people to contrib-
ute to and share in this growth, remarkable resis-
tance and caution is exhibited. Such is the
blinding power of this pursuit that few have no-
ticed that the last 10–15 years, which have wit-
tnessed considerable macro-economic stability, is
also the period where the levels of poverty have
risen markedly. For a majority of these people,
their lives before and after liberalization and the
attainment of macro-economic stability remains
the same.

In Africa, the preoccupation with the growth
model created an illogical intellectual dependency
that beggars belief. It thus became fashionable to
‘structurally adjust’, and cut down on social
spending, even when it was clear that declining
per capita incomes in the 1980s, had effectively de-
nied the population the ability to operate in the
market. The policy and intellectual leadership
cheered on as poverty spiralled out of control and
it was not until the World Bank shifted focus to
this new problem through PRSPs that a rethink
was considered necessary.
Growth is important but it can be shared – both in its creation and its rewards. That is the development discourse that the world needs to have. It is the development choice that we need to make. One of the areas in which SID leaders made a significant contribution to development is the Human Development Index. The incubation of this great idea in the SID NSRT – of finding alternative ways of measuring development – has been a critical contribution. And the journal has been a good stock exchange of thoughts and ideas, some way ahead of their times.

I think that working on policy change is one of the most difficult things to do. Policy change workers are in the most difficult of careers for a number of reasons. First, governments, which are the most dominant group in policy processes, are always conservative. Second, policy change advocates are usually considered ‘outsiders’ and their mandates, and, sometimes, political intentions, routinely questioned. Third, they do not always have conclusive evidence on their diagnostics or prescriptions on emergent issues but are driven by the power of ideas and allure of logic.

In this context, for policy work to succeed it needs to work on many fronts: the intellectual (where evidence and fact is assembled); the political (where public and political pressure is brought to bear); and the bureaucratic (which seeks to increase government uptake of proposals). I think that over the years one of the issues that has impacted strongly on policy is gender, and Development has played a considerable role in furthering the frontier of this debate. And the relative success of the gender agenda has to do with the fact that it has pitched tent in all the three sites mentioned above even though in Africa, it is still most loose at the bureaucratic level. It is also the one that needs to be heard a lot more because of its multiplier effect on development. The importance and challenge of the ‘gender variable’ in development has been made convincingly; it is yet to be heard sufficiently.

Africa is rapidly urbanizing; its demographic profile is increasingly young; it is unequal; some of its economies are shifting away from agriculture and manufacturing to services. The journal needs to train its focus on these development challenges. The dialogue between democracy and development needs to be sustained for, whereas some countries have reached a ‘third wave of democratization’ (in the form of successful peaceful elections and power transitions), the development outcomes have not kept a corresponding pace. How to close the gap between development and democracy is the next frontier of public policy discourse and political activity.

Whereas the northern bias is discernible, sometimes in the choice of themes, I think that the journal has made considerable effort to bring southern voices to its pages, particularly from Asian and Latin American countries. Yes, the African presence is still thin but it is encouraging that some change is happening. The Issues on ‘Surviving Uncertainty’, ‘Conflicts over Natural Resources’, ‘Sexual and Reproductive Health’, for example, addressed issues that were and still are germane to Africa’s development. And if the contours of debate and discussion in the journal continue to move in these directions – plus – I can see a larger audience for the journal in Africa both in terms of contributions and readership.

The tension between advocacy and policy groups is natural. And letting that tension play out in the journal may be part of its beauty. But as policy work deepens, it may be necessary to take an editorial decision on whether there needs to be a deliberate bias towards policy. This is because increasingly, as the policy dialogue space opens up in Africa in particular, the demand for evidence is rising as a basis for legitimizing advocacy work. The strategy must therefore shift from that of mobilization of ‘troops’, to mobilization of ‘ideas’.

One of the biggest debates about development today is indeed one of legitimacy. The civil society in Africa is facing a ‘crisis of relevance’. First, the ‘third wave of democratization’ has introduced ‘reformist’ governments that have appropriated the civil society language. Second, there is the question of representation. Because of the nature of the struggle to expand democratic space in Africa, grassroots organizations, social movements, and trade unions – the natural civil society organizations – found themselves
without the skills, network, resources and organizational capacity to mount the fight. NGOs came in handy but, now that considerable space has been created, and these organizations have the freedom to openly organize. NGOs are increasingly being seen as having overstayed their welcome. These organizations are going to be the next frontline stakeholders in development in Africa.

Shobha Raghuram  
Member of journal advisory committee, writer, feminist activist, international senior advisor, Knowledge for Development Programme, HIVOS, India

I consider Development to be one of the most important platforms to bring public attention to a set of ideas that are pluralistic, diverse and yet similar for one reason – that they echo the desire and the passion for ideas to permeate the social changes that are occurring constantly on a global scale, at the national and at the local level. The power of well thought out actions and interventions far outstrip the reactive nature of actions that have become common place for solution – seeking when we are confronted with social problems. The journal provides that mediating space for dialogue to precede action and for reason to guide and permeate social action and political interventions.

In terms of the need for reflexive development practice, there is no doubt that the search for growth with equality, what is referred to increasingly as inclusive growth, the simultaneous search for freedom from want as well as the will for happiness continue to be persistent and pronounced especially in the way citizens from different country realities come together in common searches to satisfy differing wants.

It is a tragedy of human efforts that, despite an enormous investment of social capital on the creation of equitable conditions of existence, we continue to be involved in developing cognitive tools for understanding distress. A considerable body of work has been built up on poverty studies and on the politics of everyday resistance. However, the struggle for change has not been commensurate with the theoretical understanding that is available. In terms of real social change, it is inadequate to say that the true worth of our collective understanding will be that, in the last instance, it too must transform and renegotiate the history of submission and extraction. The issues of power that regulate social life are becoming more difficult to discern, especially when viewed from below. The challenge for the journal is to understand the limits of theory in social change and yet maximize its potential by constantly relating it to the processes of social change.

The contribution of development alternatives has been to challenge and question why mainstream development did not sufficiently understand the possibilities for real, incremental changes in the lives of those rendered invisible by the powerful configurations of lending institutions, governments, and other power blocs which accelerate or decelerate oppression at will. It is crucial today that the struggle being waged by highly dedicated efforts all over the world will not be fragmented and internally eroded by the remote processes being unleashed on them. If people are to resist the dystopia of the real world, the definitions of civil society and the multiparty connectivity need to be underscored. They must include the dispossessed, often left out of the processes of political and social decision-making, except when regarded as vote-banks. Political decentralization is the only response to globalization which today widens its scope despite an increasingly narrow social base. Social movements in their political practice are also ‘globalizing’, building up linkages, and altering the character of public-interest institutions, so that the latter not only represent mass movements but also unite organically with the culture of that re-
sistance. Contemporary writers such as Arturo Escobar, and Ashis Nandy have rightly perceived these as strategies to contain the western economy as a system of production, power and signification, and that this social mobilization is in the last instance the construction of collective identities. The world both before and after modern nation state Independence has been the site of some of the most rich and diverse social movements that have shaped the critical dimensions of living, pluralistic democracies as well as the site of highly critical theoretical work.

Several issues of the journal have dwelt on the present crises of governance in civil society, where major portions of the economy are being handed over to markets and corporate alliances, and where private interests override local democratic aspirations. The growing malaise in governments cause severe strains on productive cooperation between them and the voluntary sector, including mass-based people’s organizations in the conception and execution of poverty-alleviation programmes. On what terms institutions in civil society may be asked to integrate their efforts with the state, which is itself in the process of integration with global transnational interests (on terms clearly not set by the people themselves), makes the issue of long-term political change a painfully protracted one. In this context, a major issue I would see as pending and unresolved is the failure over the years to secure a minimum social economic justice agenda for those left to the underside of development being divested of political and social value as an issue in itself. It is conveniently perceived as a failure of both ideology and the public delivery institutions of the earlier regime. The response has been to dismantle further (often by neglect) the systems of public social sector delivery. In the haste to get on with the problem of ‘making the reforms work’ the state and civil society have undergone revisions in perceptions and functions. I argue that the construction of the ‘third zone’ vis-a-vis the voluntary sector as the site of social transformatory obligations is a questionable premise fostering the growing malaise of an ineffective state. The real issue of the endemic problems that have faced the polity particularly in terms of a soft state need greater atten-

That we have the prevalence of twin injustices in 21st century India – farmers suicides and a high rate of female foeticide and infanticide is a telling evidence of how food security to small producers is inconsequential when export-led growth patterns determine the pattern of development in fragile rural economies and how development is being imagined for large numbers of citizens as requiring the elimination of girl children. We urgently need a politics of human aspirations as opposed to a politics of the market: that we must actively discourage corrupt states by orienting social institutions to empower and not enervate their subjects; that we support communities to create the conditions and terms of their existence; and lastly that we must adhere to the maxim ‘to give up locally is to give up globally’. (By ‘local’ I include ‘national’.) Markets have shown little inclination for investment in environment security, for workers’ protection, or for sharing with government the costs of R&D and in investments in education. However, focus on successful future partnerships is required to solve problems that go well beyond the traditional market-state-civil society responsibilities.

Long ago Rajni Kothari in his extensive political critique of our times, rejected the ideological faith in the country’s future of ‘getting integrated into the global economic and technological market as well as a global militarist and strategic marketplace’. He went on to say that in and through all this, the growth of a grotesque mindset has occurred that is willing to treat millions of poor people, the ethnic minorities and other social peripheries (like women and ‘surplus’ children) as historically redundant and presently dispensable. He referred to both national and international regimes. I would not at all call the journal as representative of ‘northern’ aspirations. If we continue in this vein to approach the world of ideas and social action we will never be able to solve jointly what are chronically connected problems. I strongly believe that emotional and intellectual commitments are necessary for the politics of everyday life to be governed by a continued defence of public good, of wider social accountability, and of morality, with conviction in a convergence of
concern and a convergence of the acts that flow from it. The negations of the present times are offset by the thousands of community-level examples in social mobilization and resistance and the experimental construction of alternatives all over the world, from decentralized water management systems to provisions of locally available indigenous-knowledge-driven health-care services. In fact at times such as these, when the losses are getting increasingly hard to bear, and people must struggle against those who try to bend their backs and beggar their neighbours the writing of the politics of social change is not without a recognition of the need for united understandings and actions.

I do not like the term ‘stakeholder’ – I would prefer the terms of participants/social actors/constituencies which is located in the unevenness of development and does not assume that there is a level playing field. In development today I would argue that the main players of nation state, the global multilaterals, the traditional development actors who include the philanthropic organizations, the international NGOs, the local voluntary organizations, the traditional trade unions, minority organizations, peasant organizations, social movements, the trade and commerce platforms, large corporations, the social movements particularly the women’s movement would all be equal major players in determining the course of global, national and local development. The substantive content of contributing and being responsible in common human development endeavours is no longer an agenda for the traditional agencies. Massive investments – both financial and of ideas are required to renew and bring back to public attention the nature of the world as it stands today and the kind of societies we have built. The diversion of serious commitment to superficial interventions has been a tragedy. Let us not further perpetuate fissured, incomplete and chronically troubled social patterns of communication, of cooperation and of survival.

We need to understand the wealth and the extraordinary possibilities that humanity and the dedicated efforts of millions of people have made available to the world at large. In recognizing this we will be able to double and triple the contributions to development and realize that the more the walls we build, the more we remain divided. The journal Development should focus on the possibilities of equitable social change and reveal the wealth of human endeavours in development – this is inclusive of not only critical writing but also of alternatives that lend themselves to replication, investments for further development and open simultaneously the windows of our own minds. Divisive actions reflect divisive patterns of social cognition and social relationships. It would be highly unfortunate for us to accept this divisive nature of development. The serious problems of growing economic, social and political vulnerabilities of millions of global citizens will remain as centres of enquiry and action – but their contexts are rapidly changing. Can the journal capture those changes, the differences and the convergences so that every individual who holds the journal in his or her hands can relate to the issues and leave the journal with a desire for reason and action in their own lives? Let us illuminate the goodness of rich experiences. We need those reminders, those voices and those practices. There is no blue print for responsible and committed engagement – we need to chart that. The imagination of development is the reality of being human and believing in the collective good.

Andrew E. Rice
Founder of SID, member of SID International Governing Council, USA
If by ‘development’ one means the organized effort to improve living standards and create more opportunities for individuals, then clearly development has contributed, albeit very unevenly, to global economic and social justice. Improvements in income, education and health for many millions of people, including notably women, over the past half century have overcome long-standing barriers – such as poverty, isolation, ignorance and ill health – to realizing the potential in every human being.

One specific result of development has been the remarkable growth of civil society which, in a few decades, aided by the dramatic advances in IT, has become a major and very constructive player in the development process. By and large, NGOs, the organized expression of civil society, are a strong voice for global economic and social justice.

SID has always considered development as a multi-disciplinary process, incorporating economic, social and political advancement. Over the years, this multi-faceted approach to development has become an increasingly accepted component of development policy-making. Another policy component, now widely recognized in theory if not always in practice, is the importance of participation in the planning and achievement of development goals by those benefiting most directly from them.

Both of these characteristics of successful development contribute to a third policy approach, now more and more embraced, – namely, the concept of partnership between public (both governmental and inter-governmental) and private (such as socially responsible business and foundations) development actors. The great potential of such partnerships is as yet only partially realized, but the significant steps that have already been taken in the field of health suggest the future possibilities in other fields.

Everybody has a stake in development today, not in the sense that everybody directly participates in it or directly benefits from it but because we all benefit from its success, through the emergence of a more stable, just and prosperous world.

But the path of development is not an easy one. Development is a slow process and, despite its long-term beneficial outcome, there are often short-term or parochial goals that claim greater priority in national and international policies. Moreover, the world is still a violent place, producing constant challenges to the basic security without which development cannot take place. Development is also deeply affected by the conditions of world trade. Policymakers must constantly balance the competing demands on resources. For more than 50 years, ‘North’ and ‘South’ have had differing views as to where this balance should lie, and this difference is likely to continue.

It may be that growing awareness of common threats to the wellbeing of all humankind – such as global warming – may bring about greater consensus on policy priorities. Fortunately, today development is increasingly recognized as one of the fundamental building blocks – together with peace and human rights – of a better world. If this understanding becomes widely accepted, then development’s future is promising.

Wolfgang Sachs
Former editor of Development, writer and ecologist, Wuppertal Institute, Germany

I was always impressed how much the journal Development was able to make out of a zero name. Because ‘development’ means just about everything, from pulling up skyscrapers to putting in latrines, from drilling for oil to drilling for water, is a concept of monumental emptiness. Therefore, it is easily used as a projection screen for contradictory perspectives. On the one hand, there are the GNP champions who identify development with economic growth per capita, undisturbed by the fact that growth often mines natural and social capital for producing more money capital. On the other hand, there are the champions of justice.
who identify development with more rights and resources for the poor and powerless, hoping for less profit-driven, more sustainable societies. Putting both perspectives into one conceptual shell is a sure recipe for confusion.

It is a testimony to the power of ideas that an empty concept has towered over the discussions of half a century. It became even enshrined by the United Nations as the ‘right to development’. What keeps it going? Though ‘development’ does not connote anything, it denotes a great deal. It is an emotional vector rather than a cognitive term. It denotes improvement, advancement, progress; it means something vaguely positive. For this reason, it is difficult to say ‘no’ to development; who wants to be against something positive?

The slippery nature of the concept of development has emasculated the idea of sustainability, which ultimately is the art of living gracefully within the limits of nature. It has been the latest victim of the development creed. By linking ‘sustainable’ to ‘development’ the idea has been stripped of any clear meaning. Indeed, adding a qualifier to a conceptual shell can only result in confusion. By adding ‘sustainable’ to ‘development’ the idea of open-ended growth. This has had enormous consequences for the concept of sustainability. For if growth is taken as a natural imperative, all efforts become focused on reforming the means of growth, that is technologies, forms of organization, incentive structures, while the ends of growth, that is those levels of comfort, choice and consumption reached by the most advanced country, are taken for granted. In such a scheme of things, awareness of nature’s carrying capacity was bound to fall into oblivion. As a consequence, the development discourse has become largely unfit for dealing with the central challenge of the twenty-first century.

I think the conventional distinction between North and South is in any case misleading. ‘North’ and ‘South’ are nothing else than ‘zombie categories’, that is concepts clumsily survive in everyday speech despite the fact that they do not reflect political realities. The collective ‘South’ comprises the most heterogenous situations, ranging from the financial capital Singapore or the oil-rich Saudi-Arabia to the poverty-stricken Mali. The same is true for the North, though to a lesser degree. ‘North’ and ‘South’ are mainly diplomatic artefacts.

The journal, it seems to me, was aware that the conventional North–South distinction rather obscures things. It obscures the fact that the dividing line in today’s world is not primarily running between Northern and Southern societies, but right across all of these societies. The North–South divide, instead of separating nations, cuts through each society, albeit in different configurations. It separates the global consumer class on the one side, from the social majority outside the global circuits, on the other. In terms of resource consumption, the overall size of the consumer class equals roughly those 20 percent of the world population, which has direct access to an automobile. Transnational corporations largely cater to this class, just as they provide its symbolic means of expression, such as films, fashion, music, and brand names. But entire categories of people in the North, like the unemployed, the elderly and the competitively weak along with entire regions in the South find themselves excluded from the circuits of the world economy. In all countries, an invisible border separates the fast from the slow, the connected from the unconnected, the rich from the poor. There is a global North as there is a global South. This reality disappears in the conventional terms of ‘North’ and ‘South’.

Nafis Sadik
President of SID 1991 to 1994, UN Special Advisor on HIV/AIDS South Asia, Pakistan
Development policy has certainly shifted focus from economic growth to a focus on investing in people, health and education. However in the actual practice there is much that has been missed out, particularly poor women. There is much more to do on the ground. There is always a lot of rhetoric but the whole issue is how to do it in reality. In particular, the US situation has led to a deterioration of policies around reproductive rights and health.

SID has been a source of rich ideas and has played a strong intellectual role particularly in the NSRT, which was a hub of new ideas and leadership within the Society and the UN. And I think the gender programmes of SID and the approach of the journal have been innovative and important. But since the 1990s SID has played a far less vibrant role. SID should regain its role as a leading stakeholder in the process of development. SID should continue to provide leadership on the North–South dialogue and certainly on the gender issue. The journal and SID need to ensure that key ideas are discussed and challenged, and return SID to its cutting edge level of earlier years.

I am very concerned that change happens at country level, that is where poor women in particular can be reached. We need to find a better balance between global programme initiatives and countries’ own development agendas. If we can attune overall aid architecture to the vast global changes and country realities and backed by increased predictable long-term funding, reform of the current fragmented, top-down approach to global programmes will follow. If we can achieve greater complimentarity of global programmes with country-based programmes, we will be far closer to our joint efforts to eradicate global poverty.

As I have written in a paper on ‘The Changing Aid Architecture: Can Global Initiatives Eradicate Poverty?’ with Uma Lele and Adele Simmons, donor agencies have agreed on the need to harmonize their priorities, strategies and aid-giving procedures among themselves and to align them with recipient countries’ declared priorities, strategies and procedures. Achieving this integration is a challenge. For example, all donors who support HIV/AIDS programmes have in principle adopted the highly necessary ‘Three Ones’ principle advocated by UNAIDS: one action programme, one national authority, and one monitoring and evaluation system. But there is a confusion of different HIV/AIDS programmes that call for quite different institutional arrangements. For example the World Bank, and the US President’s Emergency Program for AIDS Relief each use different procurement and disbursement procedures and support different drug regimes. This does not ensure that resources are used effectively and reach the people they are supposed to reach.

Under the umbrella of the Millennium Development Goals, we need to work on a global strategy that provides a road map on how to move from the current unplanned growth of numerous global initiatives and organizations to a focused effort to achieve the Goals. Such a global strategy would be both inter-sectoral and sector-specific in support of achieving specific MDGs. The sector strategies would need to be flexible enough to accommodate bottom-up country-specific strategies, given the great diversity of developing countries.

Jos van Gennip
Vice President of SID International, President of SID Europe Programme, The Netherlands

The Society for International Development brings together people who are open minded and who are looking to create a better world. SID members
are, in short, open to the power of ideas. At the core, there is a dynamic tension between those who engage with goodwill in the spirit of solidarity and those who work to elaborate thoughtful and effective policy responses to the dilemmas we face today. SID's role has been to bridge the gap between these different contributions to development. The aim has been to confront and combine and thereby build cooperation among: (1) those engaged at the level of solidarity and goodwill in their work with communities on the ground, (2) those engaged in the academic and scientific community reflecting on development, (3) those with vision and innovation with new ideas based on their knowledge and insights gained in their work, (4) those policy-makers who are trying to make the process of development happen in practice.

SID has played an important role in building bridges and translating across these four approaches; combining solidarity and idealism and policy-making and political realities. It is very important that SID continues to strengthen a complex and necessary dialogue between the academic world and policy world as well as those engaged in development in the spirit of solidarity.

There have been some important approaches where SID has helped make a difference. For example, SID has led a debate on global human security, as it has evolved from the 1980s to the present, and I hope it will continue to do so. SID and also the journal Development has engaged us in an exploration of the links between security and development. The issue of security and political conflict is emerging as critical for development, particularly as we view the realities of faulty states. The Bretton Woods institutions and the development bureaucracy in general, made a major mistake in thinking that development equals good governance. In reality, in the post-colonial world we see there is very little good governance. In Africa, seven in ten states suffer from bad governance and corruption and almost inevitable conflict. How can one develop in this context of deep injustice? A just global development must look at how to ensure that the poor, particularly those of the majority in rural societies really do benefit from state programmes and policies that ensure development not conflict.

Another area where I think SID has done some leading and important work is on gender, most recently with the work on gender and security that takes the debate on gender and development further to understand the gendered nature of conflict.

Sustainable livelihoods (SL) has perhaps been one of the most innovative and important approaches in SID: one that we need to continue to work on to make it become more visible and more viable in the policy world. SL allows for a contextual approach to development. Neither the socialism of Marxism nor the neo-liberalism of free market ideology take into account the realities of the many paths to development. The context of development, the culture, society, religion and history cannot be forgotten without huge damage to societies and peoples. SL has such a contextual approach based on close connection to communities and how their culture, religion, social and historical context shape their economic lives. The problem is that SL tends to fall into romanticism but it is still valuable as a basic approach to enable people to develop autonomously and authentically. We might all have a yearning to return to the village of our youth or to our forebearers. In the Netherlands, as well as in India or other places in the South, we have these romantic ideals of rural life, although I am not so sure it was so ideal in reality. I fully agree we cannot by ride rough shod over local situations and realities. We cannot drag people into modernization without huge damage. But we need to find a balance and equilibrium in our approach.

I think it is important to continue the SL work in SID but to broaden the context we need to deepen the research and engage with the political realities for good and for bad. The SID work in East Africa in the scenarios programme is very important in this regard, it goes beyond a romanticism with the past and the tradition and is looking squarely at social justice issues in order to tackle economic and governance concerns within the context of the authentic development of people at all levels of society.

Of course, a North–South divide continues to exist but the world map of poverty has changed dramatically after 1989 when the term Third
World no longer made any geopolitical sense. I would like to point out that the journal and some of the SID programmes can be too quick to be overly critical of development. I agree there have been wrong pathways taken in development, but we cannot dismiss development wholesale. It is too simple, and too rhetorical to say global development only has led to more inequalities with huge numbers of poor and small numbers of extremely rich. Certainly there are extremes of poverty but development, trade and structural reforms have helped bring 1.5 billion people beyond the poverty line. We need to build on the capabilities for people to develop, not accentuate divides. Nor are we just talking about solidarity. Globalization impacts on all our lives. We all have to face the result of environmental damage; we have known that since the UNCED Conference in Rio in 1992. Our local problems, in the North and South, will not be solved without changes at the global level. Migration is another global issue that engages all of us, along with security, which is far more than the North preoccupation with global terrorism. The collective challenge, one that SID and the journal Development will help us confront in the future is how to end injustice, inequality and insecurities for all of us.