

COPING WITH BUSINESS DIPLOMACY IN A GLOBALIZING WORLD

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Abstract

At the age of globalization classical diplomacy is under profound transformation and is demanded to function in a qualitatively new context. The United Nations and other international organizations and structures are contributing to the adaptation of diplomacy to new requirements. The strong impact of economic diplomacy becomes more evident in the process of cooperation at all levels. Within that dynamic framework, a successful manager should have some basic knowledge

about the emerging business diplomacy as an essential component of present-day global diplomacy. The main functions of diplomacy, namely negotiation, information, representation and cooperation are more clearly discernible in the business world. No national or international business strategy is conceivable without bilateral and multilateral negotiations. Business entrepreneurs need a global perspective if they wish to find themselves in win-win situations and to prosper in a complex environment offered by a changing, turbulent and imperfect world. The future managers should be

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sensitized to the consequences of ethnocentrism and be prepared to negotiate and to deal effectively with economic and financial issues on a globalizing planet characterized by a new context for and a new connectivity among economic actors and activities at universal level. Multilateral diplomacy has good chances to demonstrate in a more convincing way its centrality and its capacity to meet the crucial challenge of our times to ensure that globalization is a positive phenomenon beneficial for the business community in all countries . The 56th session of the United Nations General Assembly and the Doha Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO) have brought new evidence about the potentialities of multilateral diplomacy to create favourable conditions for profitable business at global level.

1. Topicality and Cogency

The period 2001-2010 was proclaimed by the United Nations as The International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non- Violence for the Children of the World. The proclamation of this decade is the result of a collective diplomatic initiative. One day, American President Ronald Reagan said: “Diplomacy, the most honorable of professions, can bring the most blessed of gifts, the gift of peace.” That beautiful and demanding expectation about diplomacy will guide

us in our reflections about coping with business diplomacy in a globalizing world, having also in mind that the year 2001 is the International Year for Dialogue among Civilizations. Dialogue is open to all and should be based on the fundamental principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. It may be a soft tool of diplomacy but, in the long term, it can prevail.

The word diplomacy itself elicits questions. In accordance with the simplest definition, diplomacy is the method - some might say the art – by which relations between nations are managed. Foreign policy is what you do. Diplomacy is how you do it. It is the manner, as distinct from the content, of conducting foreign policy. It is a fundamental and vital human activity, taking place between people, as well as among nations. Diplomacy functions as an instrument by which States try to realize their potential objectives of influencing target States.

The importance of diplomacy is increasing every year during the irreversible process of globalization which has brought radical changes in economic, political, social and cultural institutions, provoking shifts in identities and aspirations of communities and individuals. People have to learn how to cope with a risk society characterized not only by the benefits of globalization, but also by the manifestations of fragmentation and division, by dislocation, uncertainty,

unpredictability, contestation, challenge of sustainability. Existing rules, structures and signposts are no more generally respected. Violence and terrorism entered the daily vocabulary and penetrated dramatically international life.

Sentences like “business as usual” or “diplomacy as usual” are in obvious contradiction with realities. However, both diplomats and business people assert that there is no doubt about recognizing globalization as a powerful and dynamic force for growth and development. If it is properly managed, the foundations for enduring and equitable growth at the national and international levels can be laid. For that, it is essential to persevere in the search for consensual solutions through open and direct dialogue that takes account of the fundamental interests of all countries, be they big, medium – sized or small. Diplomacy has enormous responsibilities and a crucial role to play in that regard. It is expected to be more transparent and accountable. While being under the pressure of heterogeneity, peoples still have universal values, common ideals and shared visions. Diplomacy may help to promote and protect them.

As emphasized in the United Nations Millennium Declaration adopted by consensus on 8 September 2000 by the United Nations Millennium Summit there are certain fundamental values which are essential to international relations in the 21st

century. These values are: freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibility.

Diplomacy being at the very core of international relations, it should always be guided by these values both in political and business fields.

Many people, including academics, believe in a superficial way that diplomacy is par excellence a very conservative activity. That is simply not true. The dialectics of international life and the dynamics of diplomacy are a datum, being visible for every objective analyst of the community of nations. Professionals are continuously being faced with an unprecedented diversification of diplomacy, with even more complex principles, rules, procedures and usages, as well as with the rapid and challenging emergence of major new issues requiring urgent solutions. Under these new circumstances, by its basic functions of information, representation, negotiation and cooperation, diplomacy is deemed to bring the cardinal topic of the economic future of a nation or a group of nations to universal attention and scrutiny.

While performing its fundamental function of information, diplomacy can bring good and bad news from the economic field to the whole community of nations and for the business community as well.

A short analysis of an example of good news would be instructive.. The Asia – Europe Meeting (ASEM 3) which met as a diplomatic summit in Seoul, Republic of Korea, in October 2000, came to the consensus conclusion that there were clear signs of recovery in the Asian countries affected by the financial and economic crisis and recognized the importance of continued reform in the light of specific situations in countries concerned. The participants acknowledged that ASEM had played a crucial role in bringing Asia and Europe together, to work in conjunction, to address this crisis. They expressed their confidence that the renewed economic dynamism of Asia and the growing economic strength of Europe would in synergy manage to promote prosperity and stability in both regions, thereby benefiting the international community as a whole in this increasingly interdependent world.

There is ample historical evidence that diplomacy can contribute to the development of a multifaceted international cooperation at the regional, inter-regional and global levels. In this regard, there is no better body to undertake this work than the United Nations system with its agencies, plus the system's multiple networks of civil society, the business community and the media among other major actors in global governance.

It is appropriate to remind in that respect that Mr. Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General of the United

Nations, stated: “The United Nations is a noble experiment in human cooperation. In a world that remains divided by many and diverse interests and attributes, the United Nations strives to articulate an inclusive vision: community among nations, common humanity among peoples, the singularity of our only one Earth. Indeed, the historic mission of the United Nations is not merely to act upon, but also to expand the elements of common ground that exist among nations – across space to touch and improve more lives and over time to convey to future generations the material and cultural heritage that we hold in trust for them”. (1) There is there an ambitious programme for bilateral and in particular for multilateral diplomacy. Is it possible to implement that programme ?

2. Catalytic diplomacy

But before answering that topical question we should specify what kind of diplomacy do we have in mind? We believe that in professional/operational terms we have to think first about multilateral diplomacy and its catalytic role. By catalyst we understand a person or an activity which may cause others to be more friendly, enthusiastic, or energetic.

In a short summary made under the auspices of the United Nations Association of the USA, it is pointed

out that multilateral diplomacy is marked by two essential elements: the positions that countries take on issues and the process by which an agreement on these issues is reached. The interplay between these elements is the dynamic nature of diplomatic activity at the United Nations.

The characterization does not stop at that level. Like a business relationship, diplomatic transactions depend upon trust between governments and even more so between the ambassadors (authorized agents) of governments. Diplomatic relations between governments in the multilateral arena encompass all aspects of human activity: politics, economics, law, security, social values, language, culture, art, religion, etc.

Multilateral diplomacy is like a spider's web, with one country pushing in one direction and several others pulling in another or opposite direction. When trying to build consensus in the multilateral setting, diplomats constantly have to adjust to the ongoing process of negotiations. The process compels each country at the UN to find common ground amid competing and conflicting national interests, which, however, are not antagonistic. "Through discussion, negotiation and compromise, an international consensus does emerge. While consensus is the fundamental objective at the United Nations, the complexity of interests and views makes it extremely difficult to achieve in many areas". (2) It should be

recalled that strong contradictions among national positions and the incredible number of agenda items make difficult to arrive to consensus which may take years to be solidly identified.

Irrespective of definitions, classifications and categorizations, there seems to be consensus between diplomats and scientists that the flexibility and utility of diplomacy have been positively tested in global community by a large spectrum of political and economic challenges. We have in mind the end of the Cold War, the rift between the East and the West on shared values and diplomatic practices, tremendous developments in transport and communications and the expansion of the community of nations to universality, the United Nations with a membership of 189 States being a vivid testimony.

The contribution of diplomacy to a genuine international dialogue, including business and globalization, is more and more recognized by the academic community as a useful chapter of specific activities meant to facilitate and develop cooperation at all levels. Professor Jan Melissen of University of Leicester is right when he asserts that "Indeed, diplomacy is an essential condition for the existence of a functioning society of States and, without this continuing and pervasive activity, international life as we know it would simply be impossible."(3)

In that context, in the dynamic world of today, operating by its well-established methods, **multilateral diplomacy** can stimulate meaningful negotiations within a process of systematic interaction between States, the UN system, civil society organizations and the business community, within a vision of global solidarity and shared responsibility. Through catalytic diplomacy new kinds of international actors/protagonists deal with new kinds of issues, in new ways. Inter-governmental and non-governmental conferences are being convened with more frequency and periodicity to deal pragmatically with a multitude of issues belonging to the large and unlimited field of business.

The rise of multilateral diplomacy as a political phenomenon and as a daily practice has been accompanied by a spectacular rise in rapid and easy international communications. The number of international meetings of heads of states and governments and of ministers from various fields of activity has multiplied. United Nations and the World Trade Organization offered in 2001 convincing examples. This trend, sometimes called direct diplomacy has also substantially changed the role of ambassadors. It should be strongly emphasized that it changed it, but not lessened their utility and importance. Politicians and direct government envoys, as well as non-professional ambassadors appointed on the basis of political criteria have a tendency to focus on the short term objectives, if

not on spectacular actions. Professional ambassadors, acting as advisers to them are responsible for constantly reminding of the importance of continuity and stability in international relations and for shifting the emphasis to a longer-term view about the list of priorities.

3. Accurate information

Since immemorial times, good diplomacy relies on information which should be characterized by accuracy, reliability, validity, relevance and usefulness. The duty of emphasizing what is critical in a given complex situation is fundamental. The process of analysis of information collected is very important, and should be performed with a high sense of responsibility. Reporting has to be solid and correct. It should be based on large, long and diversified experience and a deep understanding of the national society in which the diplomat is working. No colors and no emotions should influence diplomatic reporting. It is true that CNN informs us faster and better on a great variety of subjects, including business. But that is journalism, and even when it is good or excellent is not diplomatic reporting. Journalism is selective and not universal. It is subjective by its very nature and targeted to a multitude of non-defined destinations.

Among the diplomatic professionals there is a strong belief

that information technology cannot replace good and objective diplomatic reporting. There is a difference between excellent means of communication, which represent in fact a given technology, and an excellent communication which is always related to the substance of political, economic, social and institutional events. We, certainly, need modern up-date computers as excellent technical means of communication, but highly educated people are needed to ensure excellent communication in substance. It has been said that "One machine can do the work of fifty ordinary men. No machine can do the work of one extraordinary man". (Elbert Green Hubbard, American businessman and writer)

The success of any relevant business is always dependent on good information which is essential if not vital for appropriate action-oriented decisions. Any company wishing to do profitable business abroad needs a correct understanding of the economic, political, social and cultural environment in which it plans to develop or expand new sources of profit.

Failure to take in due time adequate account of the real business environment in a given country can cost many millions of dollars. A single undiplomatic remark pronounced by a member of the diplomatic corps can kill a promising business relationship. Perhaps not surprisingly, while accepting the definition of diplomacy as

the first line of defense of any country, many American authors came to the consensus conclusion that **E-mail diplomacy is no substitute for the real thing**. This is an idea fully shared by the Secretary – General of the United Nations who does not use e-mail for diplomatic communications with governments on sensitive issues.

The tangible success in business is a vital national interest in all countries. Millions of jobs depend on exports-jobs. Decline in exports is a source of unemployment. The economic well-being and national security are reinforced when national companies successfully compete in the global economy. Permanent support for business is presently a must for the diplomacy of any country. Indeed, practice is there to prove that diplomacy offers advocacy and help in solving on a daily basis many business problems.

4. Effective negotiations

Diplomats play a permanent and active role in negotiating bilateral, regional and international/global economic agreements and making sure that the obligations assumed by the contracting parties are honored. They help business people to resolve trade and investment disputes with foreign countries and assist them in overcoming various difficulties. They are also instrumental in identifying additional

business opportunities for national companies and advocate for new and challenging initiatives in many fields.

Today the number of substantive problems which have to be solved by international negotiations is of such magnitude that unavoidably they have to be entrusted to the competent work of eclectic individuals who must be acquainted more than in the past with finance, banking, trade, energy, armaments, computer technology, etc. The subjects to be dealt with in detail under these headings, long before reaching the stage in which they are debated on merits in negotiations, have to be the object of constant, thorough, exhaustive search and learning. The heads or members of government, in other words the individuals dedicated by their own will to political activity in their own countries, can intervene only to give the final touch or the political consensus to what has been previously worked out through negotiations. In fact, the increase in commercial and cultural exchange throughout the world, and the evermore frequent meetings between heads of governments and other top government officials, do not outdate or diminish the role of diplomats. On the contrary, life shows that the new tasks and challenges demand of them vaster, more articulate specializations, as well as a deeper application of public relations techniques.

With the multiplication of summit-level meetings (including minister-to-

minister meetings), the work of diplomacy certainly has acquired new and augmented responsibilities. Meetings at those levels require meticulous and responsible preparation which can be successfully achieved only through the work of real technicians/experts in foreign relations. Suffice it to say that a notable part of the work done before many important meetings concentrates just on preparation of the "final communiqué or statement" and the prior agreements and disagreements on that document determine to a great extent how the meeting itself will go and what will be the outcome.

Although the diplomats cannot and should not try to substitute themselves for the political leaders who are finally the decision -makers, diplomats are often requested to provide for them the knowledge of specific problems that they cannot easily acquire, pressed as they are by their internal political worries or influenced by the demands of press coverage. Some superficial journalists advance from time to time the opinion that even if ambassadors were done away with, this would not affect the free and full development of political relations, trade and cultural exchanges, because these would be carried on by means of meetings of heads of government, of ministers of foreign affairs, of finance, of commerce, of governors of central banks, of representatives of the arts, all of whom could supply periodically the fabric of the necessary contacts.

Professionals believe that this can now be seen to be no more than a brilliant paradox. Even if it is true that the margins of action and power of a diplomat are reduced because of the facility with which instructions reach him through telephone, telex, radio or e-mail, he still has to act very frequently without instructions, or with old, incomplete or contradictory ones, and in any case must adapt his instructions and mandate to what will be effective with the local government.

In the international organizations a deep knowledge of procedural rules provides the means essential to successful activity in a given specific context. According to a long experience, derived from the activity of ambassadors at bilateral level and from the practice of representatives to the United Nations and other international institutions, the fundamental endowment of the diplomat must be the same in both cases, except for the obvious need in the second case of greater consciousness of international interactions and of the growing needs and collective strength of Third World developing countries, known as the Group of 77.

In both situations (bilateral and multilateral levels), an ambassador's task is to harmonize the positions, ideas, approaches of the experts in various sectors of activity, whether they operate in his own mission or come from departments of the central government. He must constantly avoid

discrepancies between these various elements so as to produce effective common positions in order to promote national interest.

An excellent example is offered in that regard by the successful UNCTAD X hosted in Bangkok in February 2000.

In the Bangkok Declaration with the subtitle Global Dialogue and Dynamic Engagement, the member states of UNCTAD stated in careful diplomatic language the following:

“We came to Bangkok to deliberate on developmental strategies in an increasingly interdependent world, and on how to make globalization an effective instrument for development. In the context of the opportunities created by the technological revolution, the opening of markets, and globalization, the paramount objectives of our endeavors have been the challenge of translating broadly agreed concepts into effective action. We leave Bangkok with the conviction that we will be able to advance in the effort of achieving more effective coordination and cooperation among governments and among international institutions in dealing with global interdependence and development.”

The Bangkok Declaration further emphasizes that globalization is an ongoing process that presents opportunities, as well as risks and challenges. It has expanded the prospect for technological advances and for

effective integration into the international economy. It has increased prosperity and the potential for countries to benefit. However, globalization also raises the risk of marginalization of countries, in particular the poorest countries, and the most vulnerable groups everywhere. Income gaps within and among countries remain wide, and the number of people living in poverty has increased. Asymmetries and imbalances in the international economy have intensified. A realistic conclusion is unavoidable: instability in the international financial system continues to be a serious problem and requires urgent attention. The topicality of that assessment is obvious for all diplomats and business people.

In the irreversible process of globalization Europe and Asia have an active role to play. That elementary truth was expressed in diplomatic terms for future business by ASEM 3 in October 2000. The leaders of 25 countries reiterated the need for ASEM to promote dialogue and cooperation between the business communities of the two regions and emphasized the central role of the Asia-Europe Business Forum (AEBF), reinforced with the adoption of the AEBF Guidelines in 1999. Leaders welcomed the positive results and the input from the AEBF concerning **inter alia**, trade facilitation and investment promotion as evidence of deepening business sector engagement in the ASEM process. They invited the AEBF to play

a more active role.

Recognizing that SMEs comprise the core economic activity of all countries and are essential in creating new jobs, leaders welcomed the results of the Asia-Europe SME Conference and Seminar, and efforts on the part of the AEBF in encouraging Asian and European SMEs to pursue growth and prosperity in tandem and the development of networks among SME organizations to promote and facilitate SMEs activities between the two regions. They also welcomed the setting up of ASEM Connect to facilitate on-line business matching and access to information as part of ASEM's efforts to address the needs of SMEs.

From the point of view of business diplomacy the conclusions reached by ASEM 3 are meaningful and action-oriented. The Leaders reiterated the importance of a rules-based multilateral trading system in promoting global growth, prosperity and sustainable development and meeting the challenges of globalization. In this regard, they underlined their commitment to work together to promote further liberalization and to strengthen and develop rules through a new round of multilateral trade negotiations. They agreed to intensify their efforts with other WTO Members to launch such a round at the earliest opportunity. The negotiating agenda should reflect an overall balance which responds to the interests of all WTO Members, including developing country

Members. This would more likely be achieved by an inclusive approach to the agenda setting, with no a priori exclusion of subjects of interest to individual WTO Members, seeking to secure the WTO's continued relevance in the globalizing world economy. To this end, they stressed that strong political will and greater flexibility as well as open and constructive dialogue among all WTO Members would be necessary to lay the ground for the necessary consensus decision on the launching of a new round of negotiations.

Leaders welcomed the positive and constructive manner in which the negotiations under the built-in agenda have so far been carried out and pledged to actively pursue these negotiations in good faith. They recognized that more meaningful and balanced results within a reasonable time frame could be achieved if negotiations were conducted as part of a new round. In this regard, there was also a general understanding among them, of great relevance in 2001, that further progress in the mandated negotiations would in turn have a positive effect on such multilateral negotiations. The Doha Ministerial Conference of WTO decided on November 14, 2001 to start a new round of negotiations to free up global commerce covering issues from agricultural products to services. (4) In this context, interregional structures of cooperation may demonstrate their utility.

Asia – Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) was established in 1989 in response to the growing interdependence among Asia – Pacific economics. Began as an informal dialogue group, APEC has since became the primary regional vehicle/structure of dynamism and sense of community. Today, APEC's members act for promoting open trade and practical economic cooperation. APEC 2001-2002 priorities highly relevant for the business community are concentrated on:

- Continued efforts to advance APEC's agenda on trade and investment liberalization and facilitation.
- A focus on the development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) continuing to take into account valuable input from the business community and looking into ways of enhancing APEC's relevance to business. A High Level Meeting on Micro-enterprises will be hosted by Mexico in 2002.
- A focus on the development of human resources with a particular emphasis on capacity –building.
- With the increasing emergence of knowledge-based economics, a strengthening of work in the area of information and communication technology, including growing problems of “digital divide” in electronic economic and information technology infrastructure.

Perhaps, the best way of making known the real message of APEC for business diplomacy is to give some examples from APEC Economic Leaders Declaration, adopted by 21 countries on 16 November 2000 in Brunei Darussalam and on 21 October 2001 in Shanghai.

In the opinion of APEC there is no doubt that the revolution in information and communication technology is dramatically boosting the development of a global economy. It carries with it unprecedented opportunities in a new style of economy with new forms of markets, higher levels of productivity and new demands for knowledge, entrepreneurship and innovation.

The Leaders declared themselves encouraged that businesses and individuals even in traditional sectors can also benefit from the new economy as the use of technology becomes more widespread within each economy and throughout the region. However, they recognized that the technology and the benefits it can bring have not yet reached millions of people.

There is a promising idea which deserves to be known in its original form. The Leaders said: "Our vision is to prepare each of our economies and all of our people to use the technology revolution as a passport to the fruits of globalization. (emphasis added) We announce today new strategies which we believe will profoundly improve the livelihood of our community in the

years ahead. We commit to develop and implement a policy framework which will enable the people of urban, provincial and rural communities in every economy to have individual or community-based access to information and services offered via the Internet by 2010. As a first step toward this goal we aim to triple the number of people within the region with individual and community-based access by 2005"(5)

The specific contribution of diplomacy in making technology revolution a passport to the fruits of globalization may be considered a very ambitious aim. This may be true, but even the official public launching of such a challenging and generous idea will certainly increase the interest for business diplomacy.

The appeals to be realistic are quite appropriate in this respect. Good business diplomacy promotes and must promote realism in dealing with globalization. We find an encouraging element of that evidence in the APEC Declaration. The vision of the future is too complex to be left only in the responsibility of governments. Other competent factors should be actively involved.

5. Youth, academia and globalization

Therefore, the Leaders stated specifically: "Governments alone cannot achieve this vision. We recognize that it will require massive

infrastructure development and human capacity building, and technologies which are only now in their formative stages. It will require a regime of outward-looking and research institutions, colleges and schools. We also recognize that the pace of development and implementation of the appropriate policy framework will vary in each economy because of the diversity among members and the widely different levels at which information and communication technology is now integrated". (6)

It is rewarding to find at such high political level a specific reference about the role of universities. It should be noted that the academic community has distinguished itself on the international arena through its solidarity and competence. The initiatives in the foreign policy of States as promoted by diplomats are frequently based upon the studies and uninhibited informal debates among the professors and researchers from universities and with the participation of the mass of students.

It is not easy to identify frequently a clear-cut acknowledgement of the role of younger generation in the process of globalization. Diplomacy is working on it.

The results are not spectacular. Therefore, there should be reasons of satisfaction to read the following paragraph:

"We place particular emphasis on preparing our young people for the challenges ahead and agree that information technology should be a core competency for learning and teaching. We support APEC programs to enhance the quality of teachers and build sound education management through a process of cooperation in education in the region and commend the Association of Pacific Rim Universities and other organizations for their initiatives to develop distance learning capacity within the region. The new information and communication technology also enables important networks to be developed to extend health and medical services to the wider community and to address basic health issues"(7)

The final conclusion is encouraging in all respects. "The future lies in our youth. The investments we make in encouraging them to cherish the regions rich cultural diversity, and in the development of their knowledge and skills, will to a large degree determine the future course of globalization. We welcome the wide-ranging programs offered by several economies promoting the interaction of youth this year and we strongly encourage these activities to continue in order to build a greater sense of community within the Asia Pacific"(8)

In their wisdom, the diplomats who drafted the Bangkok Declaration of UNCTAD X took care of the necessity of "a greater sense of community" and

stressed inter alia that “Solidarity and a strong sense of moral responsibility must be the guiding light of national and international policy. They are not only ethical imperatives, but also prerequisites for a prosperous, peaceful and secure world based on true partnership. Such partnership requires more inclusive, transparent and participatory institutional arrangements for international economic decision-making so as to ensure that the benefits of globalization are accessible to all on an equitable basis. In addition, the success of international development efforts depends on account being taken of all stakeholders, including the private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and academia.”(9)

It is rewarding to observe that diplomacy managed to reiterate in prestigious official documents the link between business and academia. Universities and students are covered by generic term ‘academia’. Mr. Kofi Annan, the Secretary- General of the United Nations, was more explicit in that regards on 24 October 2000 when he made reference to think tanks and universities, voluntary groups and private corporations.

The link between business diplomacy and universities which are in fact the entities called upon to educate people for diplomacy during the globalization process is expressed at the highest level in the United Nations. The interaction between business diplomacy and universities should be strengthened

in the years to come.

The reasons for that are fundamental and pressing. Indeed, formidable challenges remain. Countries, affected by the crisis have had to address their structural problems, which have been magnified by social and human suffering and dislocation. They must, with the assistance of the international community, define strategies that will strengthen and sustain growth while allowing for a rapid return to the levels of human and social development seriously undermined by the crisis. They must also transform their institutions into efficient instruments for the implementation of these strategies.

The qualities that characterized East and South-East Asia and that are common to all success stories of development remain valid. They include sound macroeconomic fundamentals, improved governance, high savings rates, investment in human resources, sustainable use of natural resources, strong partnership between the public and private sectors, and export orientation. These characteristics are among the necessary conditions for sustained economic growth and sustainable development.

Purposeful action should be taken to avoid, and mitigate the risks of future crises. In addition to national efforts, the international community as a whole has the responsibility to ensure an enabling global environment through

enhanced cooperation in the fields of trade, investment, competition and finance and to contribute to currency stability so as to make globalization more efficient and equitable.

These tasks and objective stated by UNCTAD X in Bangkok are perhaps more topical in November 2001 than in February 2000.

What should be done for their implementation?

6.Current and Future Challenges

To address the formidable challenges of the day, diplomacy is indicating some directions which have the consensus of Member States of the United Nations. All countries are requested to strengthen their national capacities, particularly their human resources. Education is essential for the success of efforts to prepare societies to reap the benefits of globalization in a more equitable and just manner.

National efforts, however, are not enough. One cannot meet effectively the extraordinary challenges still ahead without a collective commitment to translate into action what multilateral diplomacy managed to recommend in the political, economic, and social fields. Peoples have shared responsibilities and a common destiny. In this regard a more active interaction between diplomacy and business will

help to build a better international community. Through concerted and sustained efforts human society is capable to achieve its aims and aspirations and to create a world of peace and cooperation for present and future generations.

This idea was reaffirmed by the UN General Assembly in November 2001 both in general and specific terms. A report of the UN Secretary-General on business and development emphasized that most United Nations efforts to promote entrepreneurship focus on the access problems faced by small- and medium-sized enterprises, that is, access to markets, finance, business skills and technology. That access had, in many cases, been aggravated during the last decade by the intense competition on the global market. UNCTAD is continuing to implement an entrepreneurship programme that assists in developing business skills, accessing finance, partnering and networking. It has also undertaken extensive research on linkages between foreign affiliates of multinational enterprises and local companies in developing countries. (10)

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) provides a broad range of services to help strengthen private-sector representative organizations so that they can offer effective advisory and training services to their members. The UNIDO Partnership, another initiative dependent on effective multilateral

diplomacy, was launched in 1998 with the objective of working with the established business community to enhance competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises and facilitate their integration into the global value chains.

Developing and transition economies are taking steps to encourage entrepreneurship and start-ups of small and medium-sized enterprises. They recognize that these enterprises required only modest amounts of capital to generate employment, spread economic activity and distribute the benefits of economic development. As to the socially responsible behaviour, a major complaint of chief executives in all regions was not about the existence of regulations. Rather the main complaint was about the lack of harmonization of laws and regulations around the world. There seemed to be space for trying to establish a kind of best practices guide for corporate governance as a global public good.

The UN Secretary-General stated that while there was growing awareness of such issues in corporate boardrooms, socially responsible behaviour of business remains far from being assured. It is encouraging though that the most reported international cases in recent times that have involved endangering the environment, bribery or inhuman working conditions have been solved based on the demands of public opinion, which is a form of “citizens” diplomacy.

While introducing the report of the Secretary-General on business and development, the representatives of the UN Secretariat said that the balance sheet on human development was in great need of improvement. Even if the goal of halving extreme poverty was met by 2015, there would still be 900 million people in the world who would continue to live in extreme poverty. Coping with such challenges would be impossible without the help of the business community. The enormity of the task of human development and the role of business continues to make the topic relevant for United Nations discussion with the participation of diplomats.

The representative of Belgium, speaking at the United Nations on behalf of the European Union and Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, said the business sector was increasingly being called upon to intensify its efforts in terms of social responsibility. It was no longer sufficient to sell a good inexpensive product and generate profits. Doing well without doing harm was no longer enough. Companies must perform their job well and also generate well-being around them. The responsibility of business in terms of social development, respect for human rights and protection of the environment was no longer questioned. It should be acknowledged, he said, that the United Nations was stepping timidly but

steadily towards a recognition of the private sector, and transnational corporations in particular, as actors in their own right in the pursuit of sustainable development goals. That certainly represented a positive response to the anti-globalists of all kinds, who sometimes accused the transnational corporations of being the perverse instrument of social and environmental degradation.(11)

In the opinion of the representative of Japan industry and business both contributed greatly to development and poverty reduction. They played a key role in economic growth, which was an important condition for poverty eradication. Even though the private sector was the main actor in industry and business, the public sector could promote those economic activities by creating a suitable environment. Such an environment should contain three basic elements - political stability, a regulatory framework and physical infrastructure. First, he said, governments could maintain political stability, the precondition for any economic activity. Political instability, on the other hand, could hinder such activity, including the investment necessary for the promotion of industry and business. Thus, it was important to prevent armed conflict or peacefully resolve it when it occurred, maintain harmony in society and promote tolerance among different regional, ethnic, religious and linguistic groups. Secondly, governments could pursue a stable and sound macroeconomic as

well as industrial policy, and establish a legal framework in which the private sector could engage in its activities. The establishment and fair implementation of legal frameworks in the areas of contracts, bankruptcy, intellectual property rights and labour were particularly important. Thirdly, the public sector could develop physical infrastructure that industry and business needed. Adequate power and water supply, roads, railroads, ports, airports and telecommunications networks were important for industry and business to flourish.

7. State in a Globalizing World.

In his remarks, the representative of Portugal said globalization had brought about, among other things, a decline in transportation and communication costs. At the same time, it had brought about the internationalization of cross-border problems. In addition, globalization had produced international disparities. Its benefits were concentrated among very few countries. For many, globalization had meant greater vulnerabilities and marginalization. Globalization was simultaneously both a positive and negative force.(12)

Nitin Desai, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, said that during the 1990s, there had been many questions regarding the national State in a

globalized world. There was a sense that a reconsideration of the role of the State was needed. In country after country, the role of the government was being re-examined. During the 1990s, there had been a sense that the State was retreating. Diplomacy and business had to react. It was necessary to re-examine the role of the government in the context of globalization. The first reason was the events of 11 September 2001, which had reinforced the classic role of the State - the maintenance of order and security. The crucial role of global cooperation had been re-emphasized following those events. The second reason was the slowdown in the world economy. It was no accident that, today, government after government was planning economic stimulus packages for their economies. The third reason was the growing consciousness of the negative impacts of globalization.

Apolo Nsimambi, Prime Minister of Uganda, said globalization opened people's lives to other cultures and all their creativity to the flow of ideas and values. However, as cultures interacted, some cultures were being diluted and/or destroyed at the expense of others, and negative values were being spread all over the world with relative ease. Globalization had eased international trade and commerce, facilitating foreign investment and capital flows. But it had also encouraged illicit trade in drugs, prostitution, pornography and the depletion of the environment by unscrupulous entrepreneurs.

The effect of globalization in Africa was not only of an economic nature, he said. The process and the outcome of globalization involved much more than economics. It included permeation of political ideas and practices across borders, and the permeation of cultural and religious beliefs and practices which resulted in dilution of some cultures. There was also the permeation of administrative/managerial concepts and practices across borders and organizations. It involved internationalization of conflicts and wars that would otherwise remain local.

The representative of Spain said that because globalization was something that could not be restricted, there had arisen anti-globalization movements, which paradoxically were becoming increasingly globalized. Globalization could not be reduced merely to economic terms. Current events had proved that the international community should not move away from globalization, but link it with international standards. Globalization was an adherence to new realities, which had both positive and negative effects. In the economic arena, globalization was characterized by an increase in international capital flows and financial speculation. In the social and political areas, global information had torn down borders and created new needs for citizens of all States. Globalization was not a single phenomenon, but the consequence of a complex process with multiple

dimensions. It was not a global concentration of economic power. It had been claimed that, given the pressures of globalization, the State had been losing power. Criticisms concerning the alleged weakness of the nation-State had been of both an economic and political nature. He believed that the State continued to have great vitality and was accomplishing its essential functions. One of the consequences of globalization had been the urgency of moves by States to maintain sound macroeconomic policies. The phenomenon of regional integration was a good response to globalization. The European Union was committed to a process of enlargement which would offer other European countries greater economic development, social justice and closer cooperation. It was important to continue in that direction. To respond to the main problems of the current international order, he said, globalization must include an ethical dimension. That was what should be explained to protesters, who mistakenly equated capitalism with globalization. While globalization had an economic dimension, it also had political and social dimensions.

For the representative of Pakistan, globalization was, unfortunately, the flavour of the day. In essence, it was a shrinking of the world both in time and space. The difference today was in the level of speed and awareness, both of which had changed dramatically. There was a general unhappiness about what

was happening because it was felt that the benefits of globalization were unequally shared. Not only had globalization led to a globalization of opportunities, but it had also led to a globalization of poverty. In the last 30 years, all globalization had done was double the gap between the rich and the poor. He went on to describe three examples of unequal opportunity within the context of globalization. The first was in the area of human rights, which in recent years had taken centre stage and penetrated national sovereignty. Human rights were not just about freedom of speech and assembly, but also involved the question of the right to development. The second example was trade, which was a vital aspect of today's world as it was the engine of growth. While several rounds of negotiations had sought to bring down tariffs and non-tariff barriers, protectionism was rampant in today's world. The third example, the Internet, was vital because for the first time in history, everyone with access to it had equal access to information. The problem lay in the level of that access. The vast majority of the world did not have access to the Internet and would not have access in any foreseeable future. In Africa today, 90 per cent of Internet access was in one single country. Thus, the opportunities were lopsided where access was concerned.

The answer lay in an exchange of cultures and a dialogue among civilizations.

The academic community was represented in the debates under consideration. One example is eloquent. Anthony Giddens, Director, London School of Economics and Political Science, United Kingdom, said the debate over globalization was going on all over the world. There had been two phases in that debate. The first phase was an academic debate over whether globalization existed at all and whether it differed from previous periods. It was basically a debate over whether the end of the twentieth century had been different from the end of the nineteenth century. That phase of debate was now over. And clearly the answer was that the current global age was different in many respects from any other age of history. This globalization was much more dynamic and comprehensive. The second phase of the globalization debate was based on what the consequences of globalization would be, he said. That second phase had drawn people out into the streets in Genoa, Seattle and other places. Neither the protesters nor the people attending the meetings had an understanding of what globalization really was. It was not just a phenomenon of the market place or of financial institutions. It was driven by the technological revolution of the late 1960s and early 1970s. For the first time it was possible to have instant communications between one side of the world and the other side, which was very significant. It was crucial to recognize that globalization was not a single thing. It pulled power from the nation down to civil society,

but it also pushed power out past national borders to regions. It was incorrect to say that globalization had increased inequalities, he said. Since 1960, global inequality had in many respects become less, not greater. It was a more complex picture than the protesters perceived and more complex than those at the United Nations perceived as well. It was also not true to say that globalization eroded the power of the nation-State. With the demise of the last empire, the Soviet Union, the nation-State was now the strongest form of government in the world for the first time in history. What had happened, however, was that the nation-State was too big to solve the little problems and too small to solve the big problems. There were almost no problems that could be solved solely by a single nation. The process of globalization was entering a new phase, which highlighted the role of global communications. What took place on September 11, 2001 was not just the horrible murder of thousands of people, it was also a global media event and designed to be so. The point of violence now was not to kill people in order to subdue the enemy. Violence was now used to create division and build up a following. The great battle was between cosmopolitanism and fundamentalism. Fundamentalists said there was only one right and proper way of life. Cosmopolitanism respected diversity and differences, which was one of the goals of the United Nations. The challenge for all was to ensure that the cosmopolitan spirit triumphed.

From the diplomatic point of view a special emphasis during the above debate was put on the aspiration that “We need to turn losers into winners”. Instead of pretending globalization did not exist, the international community should hold an honest debate on how more people could benefit from it. One major way to spread those benefits was through technology. In that regard, it was emphasized that governments had to strengthen educational capacities and open opportunities for technological development. One general conclusion was that globalization was an irreversible phenomenon. The anti-globalization movement included many trends, but it was not a movement of clear ideas. Efforts to improve trade regulations and the economic infrastructure were important. The State has still an significant role to play, and it must be prepared to confront globalization. That meant greater efforts to reform education, advance technologies and strengthen the private sector.

How could poor and weak States benefit from the global village? That is a fundamental question. Many answers may be offered. The first responsibility was to help those countries that lacked the minimum requirements to attain the benefits of globalization. If not, globalization would remain a myth for such countries. The international community must establish what was in the public interest of the global village. Without such a consensus, it was unlikely to enjoy equal distribution of

the cake. People were tired of slogans and wanted the benefits of globalization equally distributed.

On the other hand, it was pointed out that people must not rally around the term globalization as if it was one “thing” and that thing could be blamed for negative factors. There had not been increasing polarization over the last few decades. Also, the difference between the rich and the poor had to do with technological changes, class changes, changes in the role of women and many other factors. The kind of rhetoric that says globalization was to blame, will get one nowhere. The anxieties about globalization were not limited to people in the Western industrialized world. People all over were concerned about its effects, even if they were not at the protests in Seattle and Genoa.

8. Encouraging Similarities

A comparison between the priorities envisaged above by the specialized discussions at expert level in the Second (Economic Committee) of the UN General Assembly and those held at a high political level in the plenary of that universal body cogently reveals encouraging similarities in the views expressed on expectations related to business diplomacy.

From the point of view of multilateral diplomacy, the general debate has been held in 2001 in a most

extraordinary setting, unprecedented in the history of the United Nations. Statements were made by a total of 188 speakers. Among them were 31 Heads of State, 11 Heads of Government, 9 Deputy Prime Ministers, and 96 Foreign Ministers.(13)

We will refer in that respect, by way of exemplification, to the considerations formulated in the plenary forum of the United Nations by Romania and Thailand.

For Romania, for instance, the greatest challenge to the international community is still how to reduce economic and social disparities and to achieve sustainable growth and poverty reduction within and between all countries through appropriate policies and well-focused institution building. It has been recalled that world's leaders have pledged to engage political determination, financial resources and innovative policies to reduce global poverty by half before 2015. This is most commendable, but it may prove to be more difficult to accomplish than originally envisaged.

According to Romania's view, the September 11, 2001 attacks have affected not only world security but also global economy, which was already showing signs of a slowdown in the preceding months. The consequences are likely to be far-reaching and much more dangerous than those of the 1997-1998 Asian financial crisis. The volume of

international trade that increased in 2000 by almost 13 percent may decline by as much as 3 percent in 2001. People in the developing countries in particular are going to be hurt again.

The United Nations has an essential part to play in promoting further integration of the world economy according to the principles of sustainable development. Reality has to be properly faced. The developmental gap between the center and the periphery, between the North and the South, between the rich and the poor is still big, and getting wider. The existing mechanisms for an orderly transfer of resources appear to have been sadly inadequate. It is to be expected that the recent shock and the renewed sense of global solidarity that it has triggered would prompt countries into action to cope with the underlying causes of blind anger born out of misery and hopelessness. The war against terrorism can only be truly successful if it also becomes a war against poverty, illiteracy, disease and intolerance. Consequently, the collective wisdom and good will of responsible politicians everywhere should be able to produce new and effective international mechanisms meant to combine the vision of sustainable, environment-friendly development with good governance and generalised observance of basic human rights.

In addition, there are disturbing signs that the increasing polarisation in terms of wealth creation goes hand in

hand with a deepening knowledge divide. The emerging 'knowledge-based economy' has hardly heeded the injunctions of globalization. It still appears in the eyes of many as self-serving and parochial. A new pattern of open networking is needed, which all the players will benefit from, and so will the system as the whole. Again, the existing institutions do not seem to be creative and flexible enough to cope with this challenge. Multilateral diplomacy should be more visible in its efforts to solve global problems in the interests of all. The UN system may become the catalyst for concerted action in public-private partnerships to bring the 'digital dividend' into every community and every home.

The knowledge gap is compounded by the ubiquitous phenomenon of 'brain drain'. The problem is almost as old as the United Nations. Business in developing countries is suffering from the dramatic confrontation with this phenomenon. How to reverse that trend into 'brain regain' is another major challenge facing all States. Put in simple terms, it is a not-so-hidden steady flow of subsidies from the poorer nations to the richer ones. After all, most of the education budget comes out of the taxpayer's pocket. It may make sense to start thinking of some sort of legally binding international instruments that would be built on a broader interpretation of the concept of intellectual property to ensure a fairer distribution of the benefits of knowledge. International intellectual

partnerships, mutually beneficial for the countries having advanced technologies and infrastructure and likewise for those generating human creative energies, may be envisaged in the near future (14). Multilateral diplomacy may have a major say in that regard.

The specificity of the present period cannot be underestimated while discussing the priorities of business diplomacy. In that regard, Thailand cogently pointed out that international terrorism has exacerbated the slowdown in the global economy which has negative consequences on business. This carries with it significant social ramifications as well. Airlines, tourism, and related industries worldwide have felt the impact of international tension. Countries already struggling to recover from the recent economic slowdown are preparing to safeguard their economies from sliding further into sluggishness. Confronted with the ever-widening gap between developed and developing countries, the United Nations and Member States must work together to arrest and reverse this trend.

The efforts to bridge the gap must not be confined only within the United Nations framework. The World Trade Organization meeting in Doha, Qatar, concluded on 14 October 2001, was a timely opportunity in which nations proved that they could work together and achieved substantial progress in pushing forward the global trade agenda for the common good of the world.(15)

9. A Visionary Approach

A general assessment is needed on what 188 countries considered to be topical for the agenda of multilateral diplomacy practiced by the United Nations. In the opinion of the President of the General Assembly, H.E. Hang Seung-Soo, the issues addressed during the general debate (10-16 November 2001) were of great importance and urgency, particularly in light of the current international situation. Speakers, almost without exception, highlighted the need for concerted common action to combat terrorism. Amid widespread emphasis on the need for effective multilateral cooperation to address the immediate threats posed by terrorism, the importance of directly linking the wider goals of the UN with the fight against terrorism was also recognized. In this regard, it has often been stressed that terrorism can only be eliminated if the conditions creating a fertile breeding ground for terrorism, such as poverty and social and economic marginalization, are removed.

It was widely agreed that the Millennium Declaration, mentioned at the beginning of the present article, adopted by the Heads of State and Government one year ago, provides a valuable blueprint for tackling global issues and that the international community needs to proceed expeditiously with its implementation. Many speakers drew attention to the role of the United Nations as a focal

point of multilateralism, especially in the aftermath of the attacks of 11 September, and as a cooperation forum for pursuing the objectives of the Millennium Declaration.

On the economic and social side, concern was expressed that the current global economic slowdown made the achievement of the poverty reduction goal more difficult. In addition to a resumption of economic growth, meeting this objective would require the mobilization of new resources for economic and social development. The need to deal more effectively with globalization was highlighted along with the importance of humanizing this trend, encompassing, *inter alia*, the UN's role in international cooperation in response to globalization.

As the impact of the economic slowdown is felt most acutely by developing countries, especially the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), it has become even more urgent to address issues relevant to this problem. These include the continuing lack of full access to the markets of developed countries for products from the developing countries, especially in agriculture and textiles and other barriers to trade, unsatisfactory levels of foreign direct investment, and unsustainable debt levels.

Many speakers saw in the Ministerial Meeting of WTO in Doha an opportunity to tackle imbalances in the international trade system. It is

particularly noteworthy that the WTO member states agreed to name the new round of multilateral trade negotiations as the Doha Development Round, and that mainly for the benefit of developing countries, the Ministerial Declaration included issues such as access to medical supplies, enhanced market access and technical assistance. The new trade round is expected to provide powerful impetus to global economic growth.(16)

10. Strengthening Multilateralism

Multilateral diplomacy cannot develop adequately without a constant political support from the States as main actors in the process of cooperation. That truth is undisputable. Therefore, it should be noted as a significant aspect that the UN Secretary-General while welcoming the successful conclusion of the World Trade Organization's Conference in Qatar, and saluting the spirit of cooperation and compromise that made this outcome possible, found it necessary to emphasize that the Doha agreements were also *an important achievement for multilateralism*.

The decision to launch a new round of negotiations on global commerce holds great promise for all countries, especially in the developing world. There is hope that these negotiations will lead to a true "development round" that removes trade barriers to

developing-country goods, opens additional market opportunities and helps developing countries build up the capacity to take advantage of those opportunities. From the practical point of view nothing in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights should prevent developing countries from taking measures to protect public health. This will have a positive impact as it may lead to increased availability of drugs to combat AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other epidemics. There is a promising commitment of the United Nations system to continue to work with all countries to make the new round of negotiations a success, while ensuring full and timely implementation of agreements reached during the Uruguay Round. Helping developing countries to trade their way out of poverty is in everyone's interest, especially at a time of considerable uncertainty for the global economy.(17)

Multilateral diplomacy should re-demonstrate its potentialities in this complex context. From the legal and institutional point of view conditions are favourable. The legislative framework defined in Doha Ministerial Declaration of 14 November 2001* is action-oriented. What next?

The answer is contained in the document itself. The WTO's member

* see Appendix

governments must now follow through and realize the potential embodied in the Doha agreements. The multilateral trading system created through the World Trade Organization has contributed significantly to economic growth, development and employment throughout the past fifty years. In the light of the global economic slowdown, the process of reform and liberalization of trade policies should be maintained, thus ensuring that the system plays its full part in promoting recovery, growth and development. Therefore, WTO Member States strongly pledged to reject the use of protectionism.

There is no doubt that international trade can play a major role in the promotion of economic development and the alleviation of poverty. All peoples have the right to benefit from the increased opportunities and welfare gains that the multilateral trading system generates. The majority of WTO Members are developing countries. Their needs and interests are placed at the heart of the Work Programme adopted in Doha. This is a positive diplomatic achievement. Positive efforts should be made to ensure that developing countries, and especially the least-developed among them, secure a share in the growth of world trade commensurate with the needs of their economic development. In this context, enhanced market access, balanced rules, and well targeted, sustainably financed technical assistance and capacity-building

programmes have important roles to play.

The particular vulnerability of the least-developed countries and the special structural difficulties they face in the global economy have been recognized. This is very significant from the political point of view. The marginalization of least-developed countries in international trade and improving their effective participation in the multilateral trading system should be urgently addressed. There are already clear commitments to help least-developed countries secure beneficial and meaningful integration into the multilateral trading system and the global economy.

Business diplomacy has a lot to gain from effective multilateral diplomacy whose essence resides in negotiations. The calendar of negotiations has a special significance. The negotiations to be pursued under the terms of Doha Declaration shall be concluded not later than 1 January 2005. The Fifth Session of the Ministerial Conference will take stock of progress in the negotiations, provide any necessary political guidance, and take decisions as necessary. When the results of the negotiations in all areas have been established, a Special Session of the Ministerial Conference will be held to take decisions regarding the adoption and implementation of those results. Decisions on the outcomes of the negotiations shall be taken only by WTO Members.

From the operational point of view, negotiations shall be conducted in a transparent manner among participants, in order to facilitate the effective participation of all. They shall be conducted with a view to ensuring benefits to all participants and to achieving an overall balance in the outcome of the negotiations. It has been decided that negotiations and the other aspects of the Doha Work Programme shall take fully into account the principle of special and differential treatment for developing and least-developed countries embodied in relevant international documents. At institutional level, the Committee on Trade and Development and the Committee on Trade and Environment shall, within their respective mandates, each act as a forum to identify and debate developmental and environmental aspects of negotiations, in order to help achieve the objective of having sustainable development appropriately reflected.(18)

Multilateral diplomacy as practiced by the United Nations and by WTO proved to be a real catalytic vehicle for advancing rich ideas, profound insights and far-reaching visions “presented by some of the best minds of our world”.(19) It has consolidated a collective responsibility to maintain and nurture the spirit of commitment and cooperation at the high political level. Diplomacy and its practitioners remain profoundly involved in the search of realistic solutions to best reflect, promote and give tangibility to the

concerns, hopes and aspirations expressed by all members of the international community. The United Nations is, indeed, an embodiment of the will of humankind to defeat violence with the power of reason and to build a world of order and justice. Through a comprehensive use of multilateral diplomacy the United Nations can fulfil its ideals and its promise as an indispensable and fundamental institution for universal cooperation. (20) “The poverty of multilateral economic diplomacy”(21) should remain a metaphoric expression of the past.

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