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FEATURE STORY

Indian Democracy and Public Reasoning

Amartya Sen

NOBEL Laureate and economist-philosopher Amartya Sen's rigorous and meticulous analysis of Indian economic situation has invariably led to a critical engagement with a number of political problems and public policy issues.

In this exclusive interview published in Frontline Professor Amartya Sen speaks to John M. Alexander about the role and importance of public reasoning in approaching the issues of democracy, secularism and social justice in contemporary India. "Democracy," says Sen, "is integrally linked with public reasoning."

Three essential features of public reasoning especially receive continuous attention in this discussion. First, public reasoning involves respect for pluralism and an attitude of tolerance for different points of view and lifestyles. Second, public reasoning demands an open public discussion of issues of common concern. Third, public reasoning encourages political commitment and participation of people in public action for the transformation of society.

The seeds of democracy and the practice of public reasoning, Sen reminds, are deeply embedded in Indian history and tradition for a very long time.

However, the achievements at present in India are still far short of these ideals. Sen advocates that, among others, school education, basic health care, land reforms, micro-credit facilities, the protection of minorities and the promotion of human rights require the immediate attention of governments, political leaders, the media, non-governmental organisations and the public at large. Also, Sen relates his theoretical insights to practical issues such as reservation policies, "identity politics", liberalisation and globalisation.

Amartya Sen is currently Lamont University Professor, and Professor of Economics and Philosophy, at Harvard University, Cambridge, United States.

See: <u>Interview with Amartya Sen</u>

Source: <u>Frontline</u> Volume 22 - Issue 4, Feb 12 - Feb 25, 2005 & GSN world

A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility

The above is the title of the Report of the United Nations High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change.

United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan gave strong support to this Report saying in a letter transmitting the report,

"I wholly endorse its core arguments for a broader, more comprehensive system of collective security: one that tackles both new and old threats, and addresses the security concerns of all States - rich and poor, weak and strong,"

"The report offers the United Nations a unique opportunity to refashion and renew our institutions," he says in the letter, and promises to quickly consider and implement specific recommendations that fall within his purview. He urges other UN bodies to do the same.

In particular, the Secretary-General pledges to take a lead in promoting a new comprehensive strategy against terrorism, and to articulate his vision for consideration by governments in the new year.

The panel of 16 former heads of state, foreign ministers, security, military,

diplomatic and development officials reaffirms the right of states to defend themselves, including pre-emptively when an attack is imminent, and says that in the case of "nightmare scenarios" - for instance those combining terrorists and weapons of mass destruction - the UN Security Council may have to act earlier, more proactively and more decisively than in the past.

On issues such as the rules governing use of force, "that go to the heart of who we are as the United Nations and what we stand for", the Secretary-General says that decisions should be taken by world leaders at a special UN summit scheduled for next September. "I cannot over-emphasize how important a new consensus on this issue is for a renewed system of collective security," he adds.

Executive Summary of A More Secure World: Our shared responsibility**A More Secure World:** *Our shared responsibility*

Report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change

- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY -

United Nations

2004

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

...There are six clusters of threats with which the world must be concerned now and in the decades ahead:

• war between States;

• violence within States, including civil wars, large-scale human rights abuses

and genocide;

• poverty, infectious disease and environmental degradation;

• nuclear, radiological, chemical and biological weapons;

• terrorism; and

• transnational organized crime.

The good news is that the United Nations and our collective security institutions have shown that they *can* work. More civil wars ended through negotiation in the past 15 years than the previous 200. In the 1960s, many believed that by now 15-25 States would possess nuclear weapons; the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty has helped prevent this. The World Health Organization helped to stop the spread of SARS before it killed tens of thousands, perhaps more.

But these accomplishments can be reversed. There is a real danger that they will be, unless we act soon to strengthen the United Nations, so that in future it responds effectively to the full range of threats that confront us.

Policies for prevention

Meeting the challenge of today's threats means getting serious about prevention; the consequences of allowing latent threats to become manifest, or of allowing existing threats to spread, are simply too severe.

Development has to be the first line of defence for a collective security system that takes prevention seriously. Combating **poverty** will not only save millions of lives but also strengthen States' capacity to combat terrorism, organized crime and proliferation. Development makes everyone more secure. There is an agreed international framework for how to achieve these goals, set out in the Millennium Declaration and the Monterrey Consensus, but implementation lags.

Biological security must be at the forefront of prevention. International response to HIV/AIDS was shockingly late and shamefully ill-resourced. It is urgent that we halt and roll back this pandemic. But we will have to do more.

Our global public health system has deteriorated and is ill-equipped to protect us against existing and emerging deadly infectious diseases. The report recommends a major initiative to build public health capacity throughout the developing world, at both local and national levels. This will not only yield direct benefits by preventing and treating disease in the developing world itself, but will also provide the basis for an effective global defence against bioterrorism and overwhelming natural outbreaks of infectious disease.

Preventing **wars within States and between them** is also in the collective interest of all. If we are to do better in future, the UN will need real improvements to its capacity for preventive diplomacy and mediation. We will have to build on the successes of regional organizations in developing strong norms to protect Governments from unconstitutional overthrow, and to protect minority rights.

And we will have to work collectively to find new ways of regulating the management of natural resources, competition for which often fuels conflict. Preventing the spread and use of **nuclear, biological and chemical weapons** is essential if we are to have a more secure world. This means doing better at reducing demand for these weapons, and curbing the supply of weapons materials.

It means living up to existing treaty commitments, including for negotiations towards disarmament. And it means enforcing international agreements. The report puts forward specific recommendations for the creation of incentives for States to forego the development of domestic uranium enrichment and reprocessing capacity. It urges negotiations for a new arrangement which would enable the International Atomic Energy Agency to act as a guarantor for the supply of fissile material to

civilian nuclear users at market rates, and it calls on Governments to establish a voluntary time-limited moratorium on the construction of new facilities for uranium enrichment and reprocessing, matched by a guarantee of the supply of fissile materials by present suppliers.

Terrorism is a threat to all States, and to the UN as a whole. New aspects of the threat – including the rise of a global terrorist network, and the potential for terrorist use of nuclear, biological or chemical weapons – require new responses.

The UN has not done all that it can. The report urges the United Nations to forge a strategy of counterterrorism that is respectful of human rights and the rule of law. Such a strategy must encompass coercive measures when necessary, and create new tools to help States combat the threat domestically.

The report provides a clear definition of terrorism, arguing that it can never be justified, and calls on the General Assembly of the UN to overcome its divisions and finally conclude a comprehensive convention on terrorism.

The spread of **transnational organized crime** increases the risk of all the other threats. Terrorists use organized criminal groups to move money, men and materials around the globe. Governments and rebels sell natural resources through criminal groups to finance wars. States' capacity to establish the rule of law is weakened by corruption. Combating organized crime is essential for helping States build the capacity to exercise their sovereign responsibilities – and in combating the hideous traffic in human beings.

Response to threats

Of course, prevention sometimes fails. At times, threats will have to be met by military means. The UN Charter provides a clear framework for the **use of force.** States have an inherent right to self-defence, enshrined in Article 51. Long-established customary international law makes it clear that States can take military action as long as the threatened attack is imminent, no other means would deflect it, and the action is proportionate. The Security Council has the authority to act preventively, but has rarely done so. The Security Council may well need to be prepared to be more proactive in the future, taking decisive action earlier.

States that fear the emergence of distant threats have an obligation to bring these concerns to the Security Council. The report endorses the emerging norm of a **responsibility to protect** civilians from large-scale violence – a responsibility that is held, first and foremost, by national authorities. When a State fails to protect its civilians, the international community then has a further responsibility to act, through humanitarian operations, monitoring missions and diplomatic pressure – and with force if necessary, though only as a last resort. And in the case of conflict or the use of force, this also implies a clear international commitment to rebuilding shattered societies.

Deploying military capacities - for **peacekeeping** as well as peace enforcement - has proved to be a valuable tool in ending wars and helping to secure States in their aftermath. But the total global supply of available peacekeepers is running dangerously low. Just to do an adequate job of keeping the peace in existing conflicts would require almost doubling the number of peacekeepers around the world. The developed States have particular responsibilities to do more to transform their armies into units suitable for deployment to peace operations.

And if we are to meet the challenges ahead, more States will have to place contingents on stand-by for UN purposes, and keep air transport and other strategic lift capacities available to assist peace operations.

When wars have ended, **post-conflict peacebuilding** is vital. The UN has often devoted too little attention and too few resources to this critical challenge.

Successful peacebuilding requires the deployment of peacekeepers with the right mandates and sufficient capacity to deter would-be spoilers; funds for demobilization and disarmament, built into peacekeeping budgets; a new trust fund to fill critical gaps in rehabilitation and reintegration of combatants, as well as other early reconstruction tasks; and a focus on building State institutions and capacity, especially in the rule of law sector. Doing this job successfully should be a core function of the United Nations.

A UN for the 21st century

To meet these challenges, the UN needs its existing institutions to work better. This means revitalizing the **General Assembly** and the **Economic and Social Council**, to make sure they play the role intended for them, and restoring credibility to the **Commission on Human Rights**.

It also means increasing the credibility and effectiveness of the **Security Council** by making its composition better reflect today's realities. The report provides principles for reform, and two models for how to achieve them – one involving new permanent members with no veto, the other involving new four-year, renewable seats. It argues that any reforms must be reviewed in 2020.

We also need new institutions to meet evolving challenges. The report recommends the creation of a **Peacebuilding Commission** – a new mechanism within the

UN, drawing on the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, donors, and national authorities. Working closely with regional organizations and the international financial institutions, such a commission could fill a crucial gap by giving the necessary attention to countries emerging from conflict.

Outside the UN, a forum bringing together the heads of the 20 largest economies, developed and developing, would help the coherent management of international monetary, financial, trade and development policy. Better collaboration with

regional organizations is also crucial, and the report sets out a series of principles that govern a more structured partnership between them and the UN.

The report recommends strengthening the Secretary-General's critical role in peace and security. To be more effective, the Secretary-General should be given substantially more latitude to manage the Secretariat, and be held accountable.

He also needs better support for his mediation role, and new capacities to develop effective peacebuilding strategy. He currently has one Deputy Secretary-General; with a second, responsible for peace and security, he would have the capacity to ensure oversight of both the social, economic and development functions of the UN, and its many peace and security functions.

The way forward

The report is the start, not the end, of a process. The year 2005 will be a crucial opportunity for Member States to discuss and build on the recommendations in the report, some of which will be considered by a summit of heads of State.

But building a more secure world takes much more than a report or a summit. It will take resources commensurate with the scale of the challenges ahead; commitments that are long-term and sustained; and, most of all, it will take leadership – from within States, and between them.

Source http://www.un.org/secureworld/

Indo-Australian Tectonic Plate at Risk

The geological forces behind the Sumatran quake and tsunami of December

2004 may have even more destruction in store, warns a team of researchers led by Mike Sandiford at the University of Melbourne's School of Earth Sciences.

"The Indian Ocean quakes are, in effect, leading to the active rupture of the Indo-Australian plate into separate Indian and Australian plates," says Sandiford. "This new research provides us with important information about the stresses that are driving this drawn-out tectonic plate divorce."

The Indo-Australian plate is one of the eight major plates upon which all the continents and oceans lie. These plates "float" on the currents of the earth's upper mantle, whose movements are the driving force behind plate motion and earthquake activity.

Sandiford and his colleagues studied stresses generated along two tectonic segments between the Indo-Australian and Eurasian plate borders. They found that about 90% of the energy released when the plates rub up against each other is

dissipated deep within the earth's mantle; the remaining 10% of the energy thrusts back into the Indo-Australian plate, generating potentially destructive seismic activity that could lead to its breakup.

Source: Futurist Update

Our Stressed Tectonic Plate May Be Breaking

Friday 18 February 2005

By Elaine Mulcahy

Australian and American researchers investigating forces exerted on the Indo-Australian tectonic plate have discovered that the considerable stresses on the plate could be leading to it breaking up.

ARC Professorial Fellow, Mike Sandiford, from the University of Melbourne's School of Earth Sciences, has received new ARC funding for research aimed at understanding the forces that drive the motion of the Earth's tectonic plates and the distribution of stresses that give rise to earthquakes such as the magnitude 9 Sumatran quake which caused the devastating Boxing Day tsunami.

Professor Sandiford says the research shows that as much as 10 per cent of the huge amounts of energy being created at plate connection points at Sumatra and Java are being transferred back into our plate and causing major stresses.

"This is enough stress to contribute to mild earthquake activity in the central regions of the plate, such as in the Australian continent or central Indian Ocean, and provides clues as to why our plate has been slowly breaking up," he says.

"The Indian Ocean quakes are, in effect, leading to the active rupture of the Indo-Australian plate into separate Indian and Australian plates. The new findings provide us with important information about the stresses that are driving this drawn out tectonic plate divorce."

The research, which was conducted in collaboration with Wouter Pieter Schellart of the Australian National University and David Coblentz of the Los Alamos National Laboratory in the US, was published in the journal Geology (27 January 2005).

Professor Sandiford says the research is also important for understanding why smaller intra-plate earthquakes such as the 1989 Newcastle quake, which occurred nowhere near the edge of the plate, take place. Up to now it has not been well understood why earthquakes occur in apparently safe zones in the centre of plates.

"Earthquakes such as the 1989 Newcastle quake that killed 13 people and caused more than $1 billion in damages are just one manifestation of mild tectonic activity that has been affecting the Australian continent for the past five to 10 million years,"

he says.

The new research shows that stresses originating at points of collision between two plates are dissipated back into our plate, generating enormous internal stresses.

The ARC funded project will map the spatial and temporal pattern of this tectonic activity and relate it to the factors that drive the motion of the Indo-Australian plate.

"This research will contribute to our understanding of the factors that drive plate motion, to earthquake risk assessment in Australia and other comparatively stable continental regions, and to the factors that have shaped our distinctive Australian landscapes," he says.

Source: Melbourne University

2005 Pamela Denoon Lecture by Professor Judith Whitworth

Professor Judith Whitworth is Director of the John Curtin School of Medical Research and Howard Florey Professor of Medical Research at The Australian National University. She is Chair of the World Health Organization Advisory Committee on Health Research — the first woman to hold the post. She has practiced medicine and research extensively in Australia and overseas. She was made a Companion in the Order of Australia in 2001 for service to the advancement of academic medicine and as a major contributor to research policy and medical research administration in Australia and internationally. She was ACT Australian of the Year for 2004.

The theme for the 2005 Pamela Denoon Lecture was Women, Health, Medicine and Science. Pamela Denoon was herself a science graduate and biochemist whose life was tragically cut short by leukaemia.

At Federation, life expectancy in Australia was over 20 years lower than it is now. Health and medical research accounts for half of those life years gained and Australian women have been at the forefront of medical research in Australia. According to Access Economics, 'investment in health R&D surpasses every other source of rising living standards in our time'. The evidence is overwhelming that investments in health pay off in controlling disease, improving productivity, speeding economic growth and fostering social and political stability.

Professor Judith Whitworth

Women in Health: not drowning but waving

Pamela Denoon Lecture Coombs Lecture Theatre, ANU

10 March 2005

Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

In the spirit of reconciliation, I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land, the Ngunnawal people, their living culture and unique role in the life of this region.

It is a great honour to give this lecture, named as it is in memory of Pamela Denoon.

I have chosen as my theme Women, Health, Medicine and Science, a theme I hope would have appealed to Pamela Denoon, herself a science graduate and biochemist, whose life was tragically cut short by leukaemia, a disease in which research has led to dramatic improvements in survival, and in quality of life.

And I hope to develop the theme of health as a driver of equity.

When I was a child a great deal of lip service was paid to the notion of the fair go. Of course, that meant everyone except women, aboriginal people and migrants. The first time I came to Canberra was in the sixties to stay with the Clark family in what is now known as Manning Clark House. I was very taken with the view of Australia that Clark 's history presented to the world. In later life he made it clear that the things he regretted about this monumental work were his failure to give weight to women and his failure to give weight to indigenous Australians. As he himself said, he was a child of his time. But the notion of a fair go is appealing: the idea that irrespective of race or gender or position or wealth, there should be equality of opportunity. And in many ways these values have underpinned our great institutions. When Peter Baume launched a book by Marian Sawyer, *The Ethical State ? Social Liberalism in Australia*, he spoke of how social liberal thought, the fair go, had led to some of our great social achievements — minimum wages, and universal suffrage for example.

Women gained the vote, and the right to stand for Parliament in 1902. They voted the following year, and stood for election, although it was 41 years before a woman was elected. But we were the first country in the world to legislate for women's rights in this way, and Australian women did much to support their colleagues, in the campaigns for universal suffrage in Britain and Europe .

These early achievements have been overtaken by many liberal democracies. I look with envy at New Zealand , where women have led or are leading all the great institutions — the Prime Minister, the leader of the opposition, the Chief Justice, the Governor General and the President of the Royal Society. We do have a woman as head of state but I look forward to seeing an Australian woman as head of state, and Australian women taking their turns as our political and social leaders. With the aging of our society, we simply cannot afford not to capitalise on all our human assets — no society can waste the talents of half its members. So the tradition of a fair go becomes a social imperative.

Judith Lorber is a distinguished US commentator:

Slides

'A women's choice to devote her energies to her family rather than to her work may be the result, rather than the cause, of her diminished career opportunities. Just as her supposed lack of ambition may be the product, not the producer, of her blocked career advancement'.

'The adequate explanation of the under representation of women physicians at the top levels of the medical profession must consider the effects on their career development of the structure of medical training and medical practice, the sorting and shifting process of sponsorship and patronage, and the help and hindrance of colleagues, mentors and husbands'.

There are some telling data around, that when you look at women in universities in applications and promotions and in grants or scholarships or fellowships, all the data show that women do at least as well if not better than men in terms of success rates. The problem is that they don't apply. More recently I've seen similar information about the Australian honours system. More women nominated are approved than men but far fewer are nominated. So, one way to increase the number of women in leadership positions is to encourage women to apply and to encourage men and women to nominate or suggest women. My personal and professional experience is

that men are far more likely to put up their hands early for positions whereas women are far more likely to think, quite erroneously, that they aren't good enough. New Zealand is showing us the way. In New Zealand women know their place. They run the country.

There is a great deal more that can be done and everybody, man or woman, can contribute to what is very much in the national interest — to increase the number of women in leadership positions.

A few words about my working environment, the university.

Sir Robert Menzies in 1939 laid out seven ideals of what makes a university. These were

- a place of culture and learning;
- a training ground for professions;
- mutuality that should exist between theory and practice;
- a place of research — of objectivity and unclouded minds;
- a trainer of character, its graduates enriching the entire community;
- custodianship of intellectual freedom;
- and a training ground for leaders

I think there are 3 essential qualities for a university. The first is a commitment to scholarship — the highest standards of teaching and learning, research and discovery. Other institutions have elements of these: a university combines them.

The second is people.

People make universities and great people make great universities.

And third, last but not least, commitment to truth. Absolute integrity in the pursuit of knowledge is the essential foundation of the academic enterprise, just as honesty and integrity are essential to the practice of medicine, indeed to all the professions, and to our very social fabric.

In speaking about truth and integrity I speak of the process. What is honestly done may or may not lead to the ultimate truth — what is not done honestly will never lead to truth.

Universities today are enormously complex institutions. Economic realities have changed the way universities are run and how they see themselves. This of course is not unique to Australia , but a world wide phenomenon. Across the political spectrum there is an expectation that public funds be invested in the national interest. Neither is this a new phenomenon — when the great 19th Century British Prime Minister William Gladstone visited the laboratory of Michael Faraday, he asked whether this esoteric substance called electricity would ever have any use. Faraday responded 'one day, sir, you will tax it'.

Some of the tensions around public v private good in universities are well founded, but others can be misplaced. My colleague Chris Parish at the John Curtin School of Medical Research has developed a novel anti-cancer drug, which looks very promising in phase II clinical trials. He is a scientist's scientist whose interest is in fundamental discovery. But he points out, that at least in biomedical research, if you don't patent your discovery, you ensure it will never be used for the benefit of humankind. With new drugs costing up to a billion dollars to take from bench to bedside, patent protection is essential to attract the required level of investment.

That not withstanding, the greatest returns on investment in universities are societal — graduates enriching the entire community. Perhaps the most famous attempt to define the essentials of a university was *The Idea of a University*, written by Cardinal John Henry Newman in 1852.

In Discourse 7, Knowledge viewed in Relation to Professional Skill, he writes:

> … If then a practical end must be assigned to a University course, I say it is that of training good members of society …

> But a University training … aims at raising the intellectual tone of society, at cultivating the public mind, at purifying the national taste, at supplying true

principles to popular enthusiasm and fixed aims to popular aspiration, at giving enlargement and sobriety to the ideas of the age, at facilitating the exercise of political power, and refining the intercourse of private life.

A century and a half later, universities have profited from admitting women, but in every other respect what Newman wrote is true today.

The term academic freedom runs the risk of becoming debased where it is a justification for self indulgence — the medico who talks about defence policy, or the mathematician who pontificates on political history. To my mind academic freedom is the right and the responsibility of academics to speak out on subjects on which they are expert. The researcher, the scholar, avoids the rush to judgement and weighs and sifts the evidence using all available source material, before formulating a view. But all graduates from whatever discipline, have a responsibility to speak out for truth.

Which brings me back to health, medicine and research.

Slides

What about women in research?

When I was a kid of one my great heroes was Marie Curie **[slide]**. She as a hero not because she was a woman, a wife, and a mother but rather because she triumphed over poverty and adversity to be one of the world's very greatest scientists — the first person to win two Nobel prizes. I should add that her work on radium is the perfect example of the importance of the fundamental disciplines of physics and chemistry to clinical medicine, a lesson we need to heed.

Slides of Yalow and Cori

Australian women have been at the fore front of medical research in this country. Kate Campbell discovered the link between high dose oxygen and blindness in neonates. Jean McNamara was involved in the early days of polio research. Priscilla

Kincaid Smith was key in the successful campaign to understand and prevent analgesic induced kidney disease. She was involved in every stage, from the identification of the clinical syndrome, to describing the pathology, to experimental studies elucidating the aetiology, to the ultimate control through legislation and regulation.

As I speak, Suzanne Cory, who has a huge reputation in the molecular biology of cancer is running the WEHI. Fiona Stanley is Director of the ICHR at UWA. Fiona's work with Carol Bower, particularly on folate, has helped prevent birth defects. Kerin O'Dea who studied the role of diet change in diabetes in Aboriginal people and spent months living nomadically in the outback to do so, is Director of the Menzies Institute in Darwin . The work of Anne-Marie Ponsonby, now in Canberra , on sleeping position as a risk for sudden infant death syndrome has saved many lives. There are outstanding women all around. Adele Green at QIMR has developed techniques for reducing the burden of melanoma, Marelyn Wintour and Eugenie Lumbers have made great contributions to how events in foetal life shape what happens in adult life. There are exciting researchers like Bronwyn Kingwell working in exercise and Jaye Chin Dusting helping understand liver disease, Diane Alcorn in kidney disease and and Chris Mitchell in blood disorders — the list goes on. On the industry side, names like Sue Pond, Joan Dawes and Merilyn Sleigh. In my own School here in Canberra, we have five women professors including Caryl Hill, Angela Dulhunty, Frances Shannon and Jill Gready and they are only a few of the outstanding women researchers at the John Curtin School of Medical Research.

So you can see that women are everywhere in research — and if you think the people I've mentioned are good, you should see the bright creative young women coming to us as students and post-docs.

A few words about the human genome project. **[slide]**

The human genome project has shown that we all have about 3 billion base pairs, about 1% of which functions as genes and we probably only have 30 thousand genes each. The rest may or may not be junk, we don't know. And the differences between

us and other organisms are not nearly as big as you might think. We have only twice as many genes as a worm and any mouse is about 98.3% genetically identical with people in this room. In fact all of you are roughly 30% genetically identical with a banana so next time you eat one you might reflect on whether its an act of ritual cannibalism.

The identification of the human genetic code is certainly a great scientific and technological achievement but as yet has not translated into better human health, particularly in developing countries. A lot of the hype has been around the fact that it will provide unprecedented opportunities for understanding disease and developing new prevention and new treatments. All the drugs in the world act on less than 500 known molecular targets and even if only 10% of the genome represents targets for drugs, conservatively there must be at least another 2500 new targets for new drugs out there.

But most of that is in the future. What might be more relevant for developing countries is the sequencing of known pathogens or germs. Sequencing the genome in an organism allows us to identify new targets for vaccine development or for drug treatment e.g. the new vaccine for meningococcal meningitis.

But genes aren't our destiny and what is really important is gene environment interaction. For example, a biotech is putting effort into identifying genetic predisposition to lung cancer. It's not difficult to think through the policy implications. The industry thesis is that there is nothing we can do about smoking. The way forward is to find out who can smoke safely and who can't. This must be an absolute bonanza for the tobacco industry who are presumably funding the work. The public health implications are very frightening.

> There will be inevitable tensions between individual based designer therapies and drugs and vaccines to prevent disease and disability in populations. The genome project if not used properly may simply increase health disparities. One very big positive to come out of the genome project is a tool in the ongoing struggle against racism. It turns out that human beings are very very

similar genetically, 99.9% identical. Between any two individuals in this room there are small, albeit significant, variations in the fine structure of individual genes. The genome project found that the differences between individuals of the same racial background are as great as those between people of different races.

Finally, you may remember the Wizard of Oz, when Dorothy and Toto are plucked out of deepest Kansas by a tornado, and transported to the wonderful world of Oz, where they meet three potential transplant recipients — the tin man who wanted a heart, the straw man who wanted a brain, and the cowardly lion that wanted courage. They followed the yellow brick road to find the Wizard who could do the operations, and they found the Wizard at the end of the road, a disembodied voice behind a curtain. But the curtain falls away, and the Wizard is revealed as a fraud — a middle aged man with a megaphone who hasn't got any magic powers.

So tin man and straw man and lion and Dorothy and Toto realise they have to do it themselves. So the metaphor is not that we are a lot of powerless middle aged women with megaphones, rather that the future is in our hands.

Women in Health: Not Drowning but Waving

Signposts to Welfare Reform

The McClure Report's framework for welfare reform which was released in 2000 and took two years to formulate directions which gained general concensus and advocated **"the use of penalties as a last resort only."**

With the upcoming Federal Budget in mind, Andrew McCallum, President of ACOSS says, "If the Government builds on this framework, it will announce five things in the budget..."

Signposts to welfare reform

Address by ACOSS President Andrew McCallum to Melbourne Institute - The Australian 'Sustaining Prosperity' conference, March 2005

In this Federal Budget the Government is likely to announce major changes in our systems of social security and employment assistance for jobless people.

In responding to these proposals, we will ask five questions:

1. Will jobless people be better off or worse off financially?
2. Will the changes improve their future job prospects?
3. Will they strengthen or weaken the fairness and security of the safety net?
4. Will they strike a reasonable balance between the obligations of jobless people, government and employers?
5. Will it help make Australia a fairer and more inclusive society?
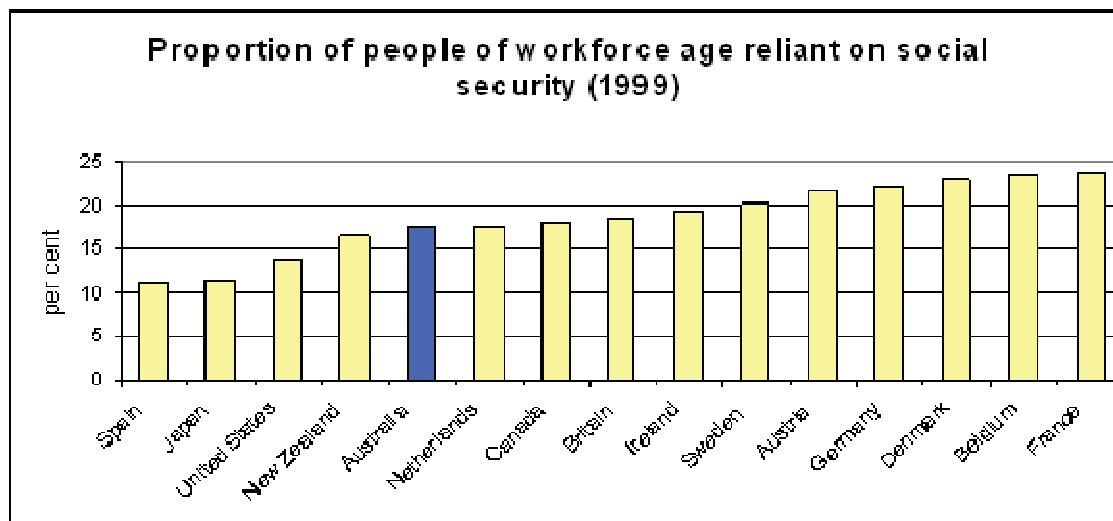
The Government's main argument for change is that too many people are dependent on social security. The media has picked up this theme. A recent media report was headlined '*Jobless crisis costs $4.7 billion*' 1[1].

The irony is that the official unemployment figures are at 30 year lows – close to 5%. How can reliance on social security be rising when unemployment is falling? The short answer is that reliance on social security has *fallen* over the last seven years as full time jobs have grown. *There is no welfare dependency crisis*. But as unemployment falls, it is the people facing the greatest obstacles to employment who still rely on income support. Helping them find secure jobs is the real challenge.
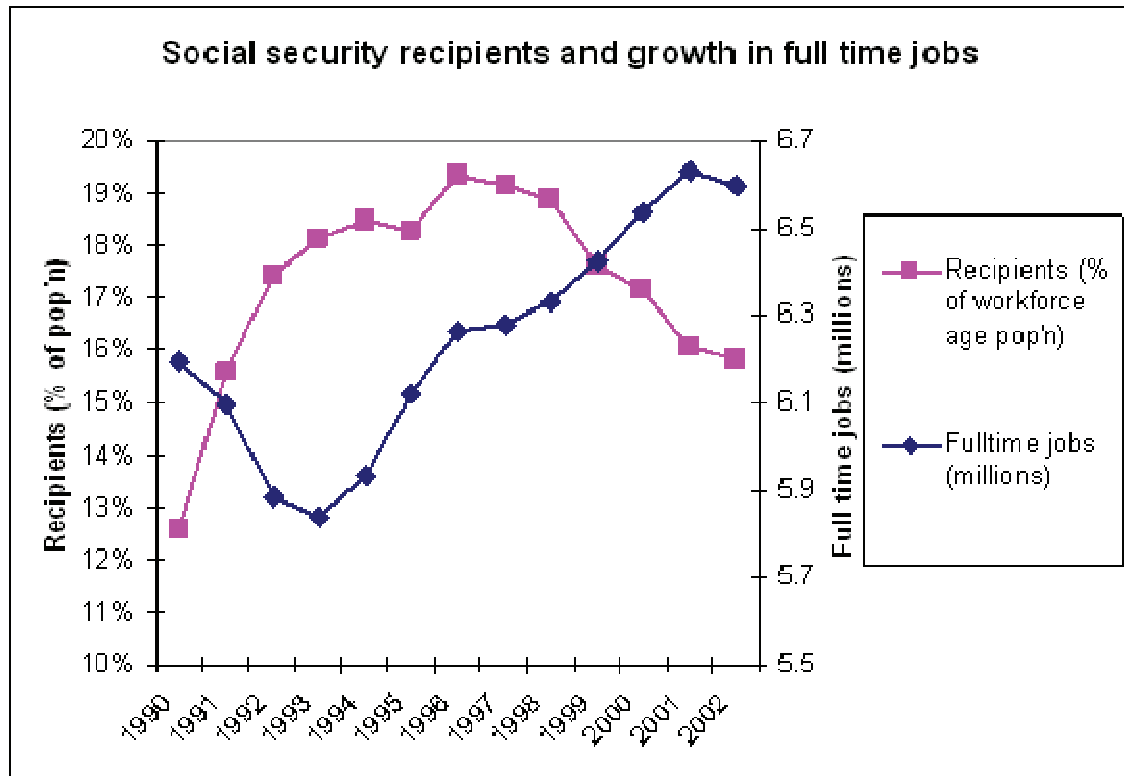
The basic facts are these:

1. Reliance on social security is below the OECD average, and it has been falling as full time job growth has picked up over the past seven years.

% of people of workforce age on social security in OECD countries2[2]

Proportion of people of workforce age reliant on social security (1999)

Reliance on social security payments is below the OECD average, and reliance on disability pensions is about average3[3]. Social security spending is well below the average. The Productivity Commission acknowledges that social security is affordable, even as the population ages4[4].
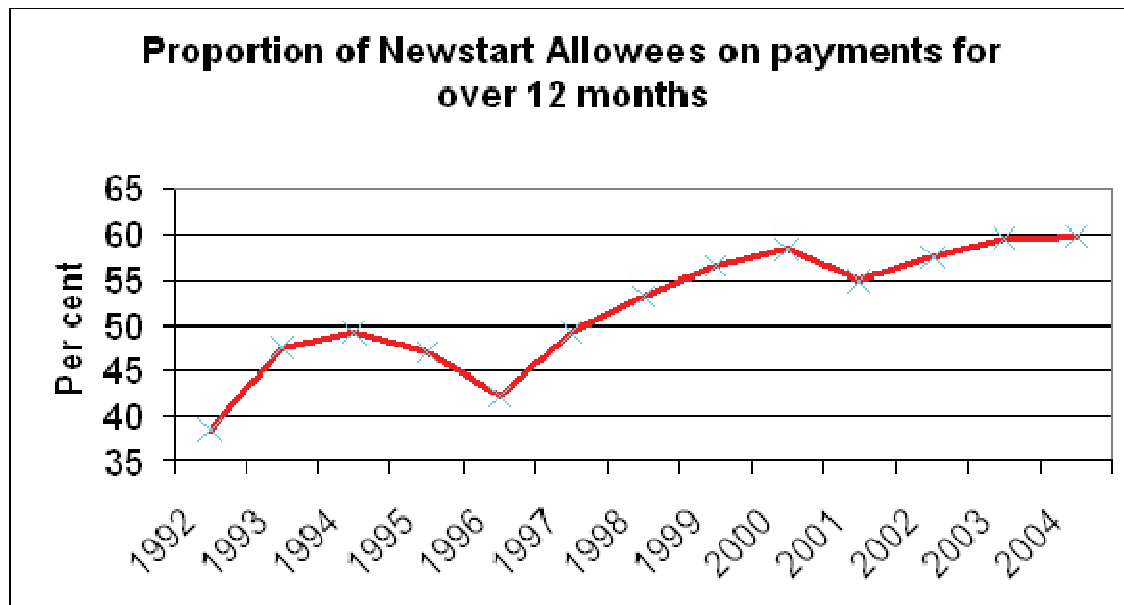
Reliance on social security, compared with full time job growth5[5]

Social security recipients and growth in full time jobs

These figures show that reliance on social security has fallen with strong growth in full time jobs over the past seven years. But for most of the 1990s we only enjoyed strong growth in part time jobs. Many social security recipients got part time work, but their income wasn't enough to take them off income support. In the recession of the early 1990s many fulltime jobs were lost. That led to the sharp rise in reliance on social security in the early 1990s.

2. At this stage of the business cycle, people with the greatest barriers to employment form a growing proportion of social security recipients. Getting them into work becomes harder.

Long term unemployed as a % of Newstart and Youth Allowance recipients

Proportion of Newstart Allowees on payments for over 12 months

For example, the proportion of unemployment payment recipients on benefits for more than a year has risen from under 40% after the last recession to over 60% today.

Barriers to work

Barriers to work
60% of people with disabilities have no post school qualifications   350,000 Newstart and Youth Allowees have been on payments for over 12 months   25% of sole parents on Parenting Payment suffer from depression   - DSP recipients are medically assessed and must be unable to work fulltime for at least 2 years   - at least 50,000 Newstart recipients are assessed as having disabilities or illnesses.

The barriers to work include limited education, lack of recent work experience, disabilities, poor physical and mental health, and lack of affordable child care.

These facts provide no grounds for 'moral panic' over 'welfare dependency'. But we do have an historic opportunity to assist the most disadvantaged jobless people into work. In the short term, employment is still booming. Over the next 30 years, labour shortages will emerge as the population ages.

ACOSS enthusiastically supports efforts to assist people off social security into employment, where this is a reasonable and realistic expectation. We have consistently supported positive policies to that end from *Working Nation* in the mid 1990s to the *Australians Working Together* changes in 2000. I emphasise this because this support is often forgotten, or taken for granted, in the heat of debate.

Over the past five years there has been a broad consensus over welfare reform, in favour of the broad directions advocated by the Government's Reference Group on Welfare Reform five years ago (the McClure Report).

The key elements of that Report, and the Building a Simpler System paper released by Ministers Vanstone and Abbott in 2002 are as follows6[6]:

McClure Report framework

The McClure Report's framework for welfare reform (2000)

• encourage participation in the labour market, subject to people's capacities and caring responsibilities • employment assistance, advice and support based on individual needs • a simpler and fairer social security system in which distinctions between 'pensioners' and 'allowances are removed • improve work incentives by easing income tests and assisting with the direct costs of work and further education and training • use penalties as a last resort only.

If the Government builds on this framework, it will announce five things in the budget:

- First, a substantial improvement in employment assistance, especially the Job Network.

  Those who remain out of work long term today are among the most disadvantaged people in the labour market. Many have been out of work for two years or more. It would be misleading to argue that simply imposing greater obligations will turn this problem around.

  The Job Network must now focus on the individual needs of the most disadvantaged jobseekers, and both the Job Network and specialist providers must be available for people with disabilities and sole parents. The Government should give Job Network providers the resources they need to invest in wage subsidies and substantial training. They can now use a *Job Seeker Account* to help overcome work barriers. But the average sum

available is around $1,000 – enough to buy a few weeks training. That won't overcome years of educational disadvantage and exclusion from the mainstream employment.

It would be a mistake to burden the Job Network with social security administration – for example work testing. The Job Network would start to look less like an employment service and more like a privatised Centrelink. There is already too much emphasis on benefit compliance, and too little scope to offer people the individual help they need to get them into work.

The Government is planning changes to the CDEP for Indigenous communities. The key to reducing the very high levels of Indigenous joblessness is a partnership between the Government, Indigenous communities and employers. Change should not be imposed from above.

On the employer side, a national strategy to encourage and support employers to take on people with disabilities, mature age workers and other disadvantaged job seekers is needed.

- Second, the unfair and counterproductive anomalies between pension and allowance payments should be removed without making anyone worse off.

  For example, if a disability pensioner undergoes rehabilitation and is able to work again they are likely to be transferred to Newstart Allowance. This means a drop in income from $235 per week to $197 – a fall of around $40 per week. If they then undertake full time study to improve their job prospects they go onto Austudy, which is at least another $30 per week less. People are penalised for trying.

  The old distinction between 'allowances for people able to work' and 'pensions for those who aren't' is the worst work disincentive in the social security system. Pensions have become 'dead end payments'. But people are discouraged from leaving them because they would be even poorer on the Newstart Allowance.

  This is what would happen if the Government proceeds with proposals to shift people with disabilities who can work part time from the Disability Support Pension (DSP) to Newstart Allowance. We urge the Government not to go down this track.

  There is no evidence to suggest that the people affected could easily get full time work if compelled to do so. Most would simply end up on Newstart Allowance, and at least $20 to $40 a week worse off. The DSP would become even more of a dead end payment because people would be reluctant to try part time work in case they lose it.

  The solution is to close the gap between pension and allowance payments,

not to shift people to the cheaper payment. This was proposed by the McClure Report five years ago and raised by Ministers Vanstone and Abbott in a discussion paper three years ago. This is the direction New Zealand is taking. We hope Helen Clark convinced the Prime Minister to follow suit.

- Third, work incentives should be improved by offering more help with the costs of job search, training and employment and easing the most severe income tests.

  An unemployed person living on around $200 a week can't afford to look for work. They don't get the same public transport concessions and telephone allowances pensioners get. Nor do they get the pensioner education supplement to help with the cost of fees and books for their TAFE course.

  And if they earn more than $71 per week, they lose 70 cents in Allowances for every additional dollar earned, together with income tax.

  People with disabilities face much higher work related costs – for example transport – but receive too little help with those costs.

- Fourth, obligations for recipients must be realistic, grounded in individual circumstances, and balanced by a substantial government investment in employment and support services.

  For example, the Government imposed new activity requirements on Parenting Payment recipients in 2001 – to participate in part time employment training or voluntary work once their youngest child reached 13 years. Those requirements were balanced by investment in personal advisors at Centrelink and an expansion of child care subsidies. Efforts were made to keep breaches and penalties down to a minimum. Parents unable to meet the new requirements (for example those whose children were ill or have a disability or who are subject to domestic violence) were exempted. Breach and penalty arrangements were changed.

  If activity requirements for parents are increased without maintaining and improving these protections and supports, the well being of poor children would be jeopardised.

  The McClure Report argued that governments must invest up front to reap benefits later on. If the forthcoming welfare reform package saves money, or even if it is revenue neutral, that means there will be large number of losers. It will be a cost cutting exercise, not welfare reform.

- Fifth, the harsh, counterproductive breach regime should be eased and the review and appeals systems strengthened.

  The present system imposes penalties of up to two months' loss of payment

where people fail to meet requirements that are often unrealistic and badly administered.

For example, many people with mental illnesses are breached because their illnesses are not properly identified and they fail to attend an interview, or to declare earnings, when they have an 'episode'.

The Social Security Appeals Tribunal and other protections against arbitrary and unfair decisions should be strengthened, not removed.

These protections are all the more important if the Government is considering extending activity requirements to vulnerable groups like people with disabilities and sole parents.

The Government says it will not use its control of the Senate in a harsh or preemptive way and that they won't impose American style welfare reform on Australians. There are indications that the Minister (Kevin Andrews) understands the barriers that confront jobless people in their efforts to raise themselves out of poverty7[7]. The Government has been talking with community organisations about these issues, but has only formally consulted over about the last four weeks.

It took two years to develop the McClure Report and the directions for reform in that report are broadly supported. We urge the Government to stick with the balanced approach, the consensus approach to welfare reform. This requires an investment of public funds now to reap benefits in future years. It requires a careful balancing of requirements and legislative protections for vulnerable Australians. It requires much more substantial consultation than four weeks to get it right.

We urge the Government to build on the work already done, not to force welfare recipients to take a leap in the dark in the name of welfare reform.

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The Natasha Factor: Politics, Media and Betrayal by Alison Rogers

During her rise to the leadership of the Australian Democrats party in 2001, and her subsequent highly publicised demise, Natasha Stott Despoja struggled to maintain the unity of the Democrats. Alison Rogers provides a revealing behind-the-scenes viewpoint as Stott Despoja's chief media advisor, documenting her rise and fall amidst intense media scrutiny and public speculation.

"Stott Despoja's treatment by media carries negative messages for aspiring female leaders. Women parliamentarians are still treated differently to male colleagues, and the experiences of other females provide a daunting history. Perhaps the media do not give females a chance because they have stepped into a masculine world, and so in attempting to fit male-constructed leadership paradigms, female parliamentarians are exposed to greater scrutiny, criticism, and judgment." (Tony Smith Australian Review of Public Affairs)

Alison Rogers *The Natasha Factor: Politics, Media and Betrayal*, Lothian, 2004
Source: Lothian

A History of International Women's Day in words and images

The Cyber Edition of this book which was written twelve years ago by Joyce Stevens, an activist for many years in the left, union and feminist movements, is at:

A History of International Women's Day in words and images:

http://www.isis.aust.com/iwd/stevens/contents.htm

Susanne Martain, Founder of ISIS continues to publish 'herstoricals' where Joyce left off.

Source: ISIS   Research

On the Battlefield of Women's Bodies: An Overview of the Harm of War to Women

Dr H. Patricia Hynes is Professor of Environmental Health at the Boston University School of Public Health and Director of the Urban Environmental Health Initiative is author of the Research Paper: On the Battlefield of Women's Bodies: An Overview of the Harm of War to Women in which she writes:

"A unique harm of war for women is the trauma inflicted in military brothels, rape camps, and the growing sex trafficking for prostitution and by increased domestic violence, all of which is fuelled by the culture of war, male aggression, and the social and economic ruin left in the wake of war.

Widows of war, women victims of landmines, and women refugees of war are particularly vulnerable to poverty, prostitution, the extortion of sex for food by post-war peacekeepers, and higher illness and death in the post-conflict period. While problems exist with definitions and methods of measurement, a full accounting of the harm of war to civilian women is needed in the debate over whether war is justified."

Dr Hynes' Paper can be viewed at The Feminist Peace Network website at the following link:

http://www.feministpeacenetwork.org/

LEADING aRGUMENTS

"AIRC's setting of minimum wage levels, along with the Government's family payments, has kept many low-paid workers and their families out of poverty," said McCallum.

Conversely, high rates of child poverty are found in countries where political leaders have introduced policies to promote low rates of pay. UNICEF figures indicate that in the US, 25% of workers are low paid and 25% of children are living in poverty. In the UK, 18% of workers are low paid and 18% of children are living in poverty.

"To reduce unemployment by cutting minimum wages the cuts would have to be dramatic. In the US, a low skilled worker works 5 days a week to earn the same wage as an Australian worker on a minimum wage earns in 3 days," said McCallum. "You can imagine what such a change would do to our national poverty levels – they would be shameful." **ACOSS President Andrew McCallum**

NEWS fLASH

YWCA's WomenSpeak Network is currently working on a research project called 'Young Women's Recruitment, Retention and Leadership: lessons learned from the women's movement.' The overall aim of the policy research is:

To establish broadly young women's involvement and perceptions of their involvement in women's organisations; To find out whether organisations are actively involved in the recruitment, retention and promotion of young women's into leadership positions; Reflect on how effective young women's participation, networking and diversity is within the organisations

Two surveys have been developed

1) to ask young women about their involvement and perceptions of that involvement in community organisations especially women's organisations

Survey at:

Young Women's Survey

2) to ask women's and community organisations about their current experiences with young women's recruitment, retention and leadership

Survey at:

Women & Community Organisations Survey

The results of the research will be published later in the year and made freely available through the WomenSpeak Network

Any questions contact Erica Lewis, on ygals@ywca.org.au or 02 6230 5150.

WORLD FOCUS

A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsiblity

Indo-Australian Tectonic Plate at Risk

NATIONAL FOCUS

2005 Pamela Denoon Lecture by Professor Judith Whitworth

The Natasha Factor: Politics, Media and Betrayal by Alison Rogers

A History of International Women's Day in words and images

CURRENT RESEARCH

On the Battlefield of Women's Bodies: An Overview of the Harm of War to Women

FEATURE STORY

Indian Democracy and Public Reasoning

Amartya Sen

NOBEL Laureate and economist-philosopher Amartya Sen's rigorous and meticulous analysis of Indian economic situation has invariably led to a critical engagement with a number of political problems and public policy issues.

In this exclusive interview published in Frontline Professor Amartya Sen speaks to John M. Alexander about the role and importance of public reasoning in approaching the issues of democracy, secularism and social justice in contemporary India. "Democracy," says Sen, "is integrally linked with public reasoning."

Three essential features of public reasoning especially receive continuous attention in this discussion. First, public reasoning involves respect for pluralism and an attitude of tolerance for different points of view and lifestyles. Second, public reasoning demands an open public discussion of issues of common concern. Third, public reasoning encourages political commitment and participation of people in public action for the transformation of society.

The seeds of democracy and the practice of public reasoning, Sen reminds, are deeply embedded in Indian history and tradition for a very long time.

However, the achievements at present in India are still far short of these ideals. Sen advocates that, among others, school education, basic health care, land reforms, micro-credit facilities, the protection of minorities and the promotion of human rights require the immediate attention of governments, political leaders, the media, non-governmental organisations and the public at large. Also, Sen relates his theoretical insights to practical issues such as reservation policies, "identity politics", liberalisation and globalisation.

Amartya Sen is currently Lamont University Professor, and Professor of Economics and Philosophy, at Harvard University, Cambridge, United States.

Indian democracy and Public Reasoning

Interview with Amartya Sen

The interview took place on November 26, 2004 at Harvard University. Excerpts:

Democracy

In the summer of 1997, when asked by a leading Japanese newspaper to name the most important phenomenon of the 20th century, you singled out the rise and development of democracy. Later, towards the end of 1999, in the article for the Journal of Democracy, you argued that democracy was a universal value. Your engagement with the idea of democracy, however, is not anything recent. In 1980, and even earlier, in your analysis of famines and hunger, you pointed out the importance and relevance of democracy in tackling pressing economic problems. Thus, your justly famous statement: "It is certainly true that there has never been a famine in a functioning multiparty democracy." Could you mention some of the reasons for this life-long engagement and unwavering confidence in democracy?

Democracy can make, I think, three major contributions to a country. First, since political freedom is an important freedom, the freedom to participate, to speak and to vote is part and parcel of human freedom that we have reason to value. Democratic freedoms have intrinsic importance, no matter what else they achieve.

Second, a democratic political system is instrumentally important, both (1) because it gives the rulers the incentive to respond to problems and predicaments of the public (the government has to take note of opposition criticism as well as the

possibility of electoral defeat), and (2) because information becomes more easily available and shared with democratic practice.

Third, through allowing and encouraging public discussion, democratic political systems can help the formation of values. For example, the importance of gender equality or of protecting minority rights or of taking note of inequalities in the distribution of economic fortunes or social benefits can become more fully understood through forceful democratic dialogue and discussion - but all this can be suppressed if political freedoms and electoral politics are suspended.

What is the best way to understand your universality claim regarding democracy? Should we understand it `empirically' in the sense that in most parts of the world today (especially in the post-colonial and post-communist transition period) people begin to recognise that the best way of governing themselves is through free and fair elections, protection of basic liberties, an effective judiciary, and free and critical media. Or, should we understand it as a normative claim in the sense that it is valuable and desirable for people anywhere in the world?

There are two universality claims. One is a normative claim, regarding the universal importance of democracy and its constitutive features of political participation, shared deliberation and electoral competition. All societies can benefit from these democratic practices. The second universality claim is empirical, and partly historical, namely that the tradition of public reasoning and open public discussion has tended to develop in every society in one form or another, and the history of democracy - in the broad sense of "government by discussion" - is spread across the world and goes back for a very long time.

Your appraisal of Indian democracy has always been, if I may call it, realistic. While appreciating a number of positive achievements so far, you speak of the "gap" or discontinuity between the democratic ideals and institutions on the one hand and democratic practice on the other. What are the best ways to close this gap?

Democratic institutions give people the opportunity to participate in deliberations and dialectics, to press for justice and equity, and to reject socially unacceptable policies. These are matters of public action.

Institutions make room for such action and allow its free use. But institutions alone cannot yield public action in any mechanical way.

Democratic institutions cannot substitute for public action and participatory politics.

There are a number of ways one can try to reduce the gap between democratic institutions and practice. For instance, achieving greater democracy at the local levels, especially by way of initiatives to promote panchayati administration and decisional power can go a long way in transforming the practice and quality of Indian democracy. Similarly, democratic institutions cannot function adequately if political

leaders, judges, civil servants and others could be induced to act on private and special interests.

Along with that we should also try to bring in more transparency and accountability at all levels. In the absence of adequate public accountability, government schools, health centres, the public distribution system and other development schemes have continued to provide poor service to people. Political commitment and involvement of people in public agitations and protests are also among the ways of strengthening the practice of democracy.

In recent years, there have been conflicting claims on the effects of liberalisation and the economic reforms introduced by the end of 1991 on Indian democracy. The previous coalition government led by the Bharatiya Janata Party in some sense tried to exaggerate it through its "India Shining" campaign. But others, however, point out that it has made very little difference to the vast majority of population in the country. How do you view liberalisation and its effects on Indian democracy at this moment?

You have often pointed out that debate should focus not on liberalisation per se but on issues "beyond liberalisation". What does that refer to?

My position has been that Indian policymaking and planning have suffered both (1) from "the licence Raj" with an overactive government in some fields (stifling industrial initiative), and (2) from the "neglect of social opportunities" with an underactive government in other areas (such as school education, basic health care, land reforms, micro-credit facilities).

Liberalisation addresses the first problem, but not the second.

There is a growing fear that globalisation is not strengthening the democracies around the world, including Indian democracy but rather it has especially aggravated the levels of inequality and deprivation. Democratic governments and institutions have to explicitly or implicitly follow the logic of global capitalism and toe the line of Western multinational corporations and international institutions. This concern has been gaining momentum in recent years especially in the form of anti-globalisation movements and the World Social Forum. How do you view this phenomenon? And how should one judge the process of globalisation, which is, in some sense, inevitable?

For thousands of years, global contacts and interactions in science, mathematics, engineering, literature and economy have constituted a positive force in the world. They still remain a source of benefit for all countries.

But the sharing of benefits can be made less unequal through global as well as local policies.

The former requires a better system of technology movements and use of innovations and intellectual properties as well as more welcoming trade policies on the part of the rich countries in the world.

But there are also issues of local policies, to make a country move forward in benefiting from the opportunities of global exchange of ideas and commodities. The lessons that China offers in this second respect have to be viewed more seriously in India - there is much to learn from, there. To admire China's performance, but to ignore what makes that possible, cannot be a sensible attitude.

In contemporary philosophical discussions of democracy, we could broadly identify three influential conceptions: liberal, participatory and deliberative democracy. Liberal democracy, especially the one articulated by Rawls, recognises a set of basic liberties and tries to address the demands of equality and efficiency in the economic sphere. Participatory democracy emphasises the idea that citizens should actively participate in politics.

And deliberative democracy stresses the idea that individuals as free and autonomous persons engage with one another in open and public deliberation on issues of common concern. So far, you have not limited your views on democracy to any one particular conception. On a close reading of your writings, one can find that values of freedom, equality, participation and public discussion all receive significant attention. Could we, therefore, take your approach to be a "hybrid" view?

Those cannot really be isolated conceptions of democracy, since democratic politics requires the protection of political freedom (such as free speech, uncensored media, freedom from political prosecution or persecution), as well as public participation and social deliberation. Broadly speaking, democracy is integrally linked with "public reasoning", and the three different features to which you refer all fit into that broad understanding of democracy.

Secularism

You had strongly condemned the destruction of the Babri Masjid on December 6, 1992, and the communal violence that followed across the country especially in Mumbai. In the article "The Threats to Secular India" published in the New York Review of Books (April 8, 1993) you described the claims and activities of the Hindu political extremists as threats to secular India. But when it comes to the understanding of the concept of secularism in the Indian context, there are a number of critics who point out that it is an "obscure" and "empty" concept and is based on an arbitrary distinction between what is religious and secular. Would you agree with that observation?

No, I don't agree at all. It is not "obscure" to demand that everyone be given the opportunity to practise his or her religion without having to face violence or

vandalism. Nor is it "empty" to demand that no religion should be politically favoured over others.

Your position on secularism is succinctly summarised in the sentence found in the above mentioned article: "Given the diversity and contrasts within India, there is not, in the comprehensive politics of the country, much alternative to secularism as an essential part of overall pluralism." Here, you point out that any attempt to reflect on secularism should be always placed in the larger horizon of pluralism and advocate a "symmetry" interpretation of secularism. Could you elaborate these with some examples?

There are two ways of understanding secularism: focussing respectively on

(1) political neutrality between different religions, and (2) political prohibition of religious associations in state activities. Indian secularism has tended to emphasise neutrality in particular, rather than prohibition in general. In contrast, it is the "prohibitory" aspect that has been the central issue in the recent French decision to ban the wearing of headscarves by Muslim women students, on the grounds that it violates secularism.

The secular demand that the state be "equidistant" from different religions (including agnosticism and atheism) need not disallow any person individually - irrespective of his or her religion - from deciding what to wear, so long as members of different faiths are treated symmetrically. The immediate issue here is not so much whether the French ban is a wrong policy. It could, quite possibly, be justified for some other reason (different from the alleged violation of secularism), for example on the grounds that the head scarves are symbols of gender inequality and are offensive to many women, or that women (especially young girls) don't really have the freedom to determine what to wear, and that dress decisions are imposed on them by more powerful members of families with male dominance.

Those can be important concerns (I shall not undertake here a critical scrutiny of their comparative relevance and force), but they are distinct from the demands of secularism in terms of the equidistance approach, which has emerged powerfully in India, of which a good example is Akbar's legal principle: "no one should be interfered with on account of religion, and anyone is to be allowed to go over to a religion that pleases him". In this sense, the acceptance of the legitimacy of pluralism is central to secularism.

The tolerance of religious diversity is implicitly reflected in India's having served as a shared home - in the chronology of history - of Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, atheists, Jews, Christians, Muslims, Parsis, Sikhs, Baha'is, and others. The Vedas, which date back at least to the middle of the second millennium BCE, paved the way to what is now called Hinduism (that term, was devised much later by Persians and Arabs, after the river Sindhu, or the Indus). Buddhism and Jainism both emerged by the sixth century BCE. Buddhism, the practice of which is now rather sparse in India, was the dominant religion of the country for nearly a thousand years.

Jainism, on the other hand, which was also born at the same time as Buddhism, has survived as a powerful Indian religion over two millennia and a half.

Jews came to India, it appears, shortly after the fall of Jerusalem, though there are also other theories of earlier arrivals. Christians too came very early, and by the fourth century, there were large Christian communities in India. Parsis started arriving from late seventh century, as soon as persecutions of Zoroastrianism began in Persia.

The Baha'is were among the last groups to seek refuge in India - in the last century. Over this long period, there were other migrations, including the settlement of Muslim Arab traders, which began on India's Western coast in the eighth century - well before the invasions that came from other Muslim countries via the more warlike northwestern routes. There were in addition many conversions, especially to Islam. Each religious community managed to retain its identity within India's multi-religious spectrum.

Tolerating and even celebrating diversity have also been explicitly defended in strong arguments in favour of the richness of variations, including fulsome praise of the need to interact with each other, in mutual respect, through dialogues. Defences have come from emperors like Asoka in the third century BCE to Akbar in the sixteenth century CE, and also from such spokesmen of public tolerance as Kabir, Dadu, Mirabai and other poets.

When the flames of intolerance are being fanned by some sectarian groups, it is important to remember Asoka's argument, presented 2,300 years ago: "He who does reverence to his own sect while disparaging the sects of others wholly from attachment to his own sect, in reality inflicts, by such conduct, the severest injury on his own sect." The arguments for secularism in the sense of symmetry and equidistance have a long history in India, and they have stood their ground despite the presence of much military confrontation and sectarian violence over thousands of years.

I believe one of the clear advantages of the "symmetry" model of secularism is that it offers people an opportunity to choose a life of freedom in general, including religious and cultural freedom. In the Human Development Report 2004 (chapter 1) you argue that the concept of human development should be further deepened to include cultural liberties. In that connection, you even speak of the right to one's identity. But when this is translated into political practice in India it invariably generates "identity politics" that hardens group identities and polarises society along the lines of caste, religion and language. Could this tension be resolved?

The right to choose one's cultural practice need not lead to "identity politics." Quite the contrary. Identity politicians deny the right of anyone to choose his or her religion. They also try to instil an intolerance of the cultural lifestyles of others.

On different occasions, you not only object to a Hindutva's idea of India and its interpretation of India's past but also find a certain affinity between Hindutva and the tendency of certain Western interpretations of India? Could you comment on this connection?

Even though the early colonial administrators in late eighteenth century - Warren Hastings among them - took a very broad interest in India's intellectual past, the narrowing of the imperial mind was quite rapid once the empire settled in. The demands of coercion and dominance were strong for the kind of distancing that could sustain the "autocracy set up and sustained in the East by the foremost democracy in the Western world" (as Ranajit Guha has insightfully described colonial India). India's religions and mystical thoughts did not threaten to undermine that imperial intellectual distance. There was no great difficulty in providing encouragement and assistance to those who gathered and translated "the sacred books of the east" (as Max Muller did, with support from the East India Company, commissioned in 1847, resulting in a 50-volume collection).

But in the standard fields of pure and practical reason, the propensity to see a gigantic intellectual gap between India and the West - stretching long back into history - was certainly quite strong.

Let me illustrate. Consider, for example, the originality of Aryabhata's work, completed in 499 A.D., on the diurnal motion of the earth (disputing the earlier understanding of an orbiting sun) and the related proposal that there was a force of gravity, which prevented material objects from being thrown away as the earth rotated. The most influential colonial historian of British India, James Mill, took these claims to be straightforward fabrication. It was clear to Mill that the Indian "pundits had become acquainted with the ideas of European philosophers respecting the system of the universe", and have then proceeded to claim that "those ideas were contained in their own books". Mill's Indian history, which Macaulay described as "on the whole the greatest historical work which has appeared in our language since that of Gibbon", was tremendously influential in the intellectual world of the British Raj.

As it happens, however, the scientific ideas in dispute were well reported not just in Indian books, but also in the accounts of outside observers. In particular, they received careful and detailed description - as did other early Indian works in astronomy and mathematics - from Arab and Iranian mathematicians, who also translated and extensively used (with generous acknowledgement) some of the relevant Sanskrit books. For example, the Iranian mathematician Alberuni, commented specifically on this particular work of Aryabhata (which Mill took to be the result of 19th century fabrication) in an Arabic book on India (Ta'rikh al-hind) written in early 11th century. Indeed, Alberuni presents Aryabhata's arguments in some detail.

The Hindutva activists are, of course, keen to take pride in India's past, but seem to have some difficulty in knowing what to take pride in. The focussing on religion is

similar to a part of the British imperial reading of Indian history. The neglect of real Indian science and mathematics, which began flourishing from the first millennium CE, in favour of some imaginary view of "Vedic mathematics" and "Vedic science", plays right into the hands of James Mill's charge of Indian fabrication. Also Hindutva's hostility to the Arab civilisation, because of its Muslim connection, overlooks the fact that the Arab and Iranian commentators always gave full credit to Indian mathematical and scientific accomplishments. The fruits of Hindu mathematics, from Aryabhata onwards, went to Christian Europe almost entirely through the works of Muslim Arab and Iranian mathematicians and astronomers, who explained the nature of the Indian contributions to the European readers.

Social Justice

In 1973, you dedicated your first edition of On Economic Inequality to Antara and Nandana with a rather unusual and interesting expression: "with the hope that when they grow up they will find less of it no matter how they decide to measure it." Now that more than 30 years have passed, do you think inequality in India has reduced?

First of all let me say that when I made that dedication, I was hoping for a reduction of inequality in the world everywhere not just only in India. The book is not particularly India-centered, but is concerned with general theoretical issues that are relevant everywhere, including of course India.

Now, concerning the reduction of inequality in India, I think it depends on which area one looks at. In terms of income inequality, I think the picture is much the same. I don't think there has been any dramatic change one way or another.

But if you look at some other areas, there seems to be some improvement, and this of course varies from region to region. If you, for example, consider land ownership in places like West Bengal and Kerala, there has been considerable progress. However, such progress has not happened in most other regions. Similarly, there have been some signs of improvement in the spread of opportunities for education reported in the National Sample Survey, although there is nothing nearly as much yet as I would like.

While I was writing the book in 1973, the opportunities for education were indeed extremely limited and much governed by class and gender. But now this situation seems to be changing. One could hope to go much further in that direction. In having the fruits of higher education shared, there has been much more equality in that respect; the fruits of higher education are now shared by a bigger part of the society than three decades ago. On the other hand, the gap between the highly educated Indian and the illiterate masses remains extraordinarily large. Therefore, the determination to face the issue of inequality fairly and squarely still remains extremely important and relevant even today.

Does that mean you would keep the same dedication?

Yes. I don't think there is a need for a different dedication today. The aspiration for more equality and justice is very much relevant even in today's context. We need to still keep the commitment to work for a more egalitarian society.

In recent years, Indian democracy has witnessed the emergence of a variety of social movements: Dalits, civil liberties, human rights, women, tribal, environmental, self-help groups and so on. Although each of these has its own unique emphasis and agenda, most of the activists of these groups think that social justice will be effectively realised by formulating their claims in terms of rights. However, you advocate an ethical approach of `broad consequentialism' that seems to integrate rights as well as other social goals. Do you think that this is a good way of approaching the issue of social justice? Does this not minimise the importance of rights?

It is an important question. I don't think my approach would minimise the importance of rights. Indeed, I take rights very seriously. Rights constitute a good way of formulating social goals in terms of the individual lives involved. I don't like formulating social objectives in aggregative terms like economic prosperity, modernisation and so on. We will have to see in what way different social objectives can really affect the lives of people.

Of course, human rights enter this story in a big way. We must not confine our conception of rights only to traditional individual liberties but also include the rights of people to lead a free life like freedom from premature death, morbidity, to hold one's head high, to practice religion and so on.

All these freedoms are covered by a broad cluster of human rights. It is the personal coverage of human rights that I see as very important.

Along with rights come duties. Rights also generate duties on the part of others in society - what they are able to do, for instance, for people who have the right to literacy but do not get the opportunity for school education. A politician, or a journalist, or even a general citizen has duties to see what he or she can do to help the realisation of rights of people.

However, human rights are not exactly the same as legal rights. There are a lot of things that can be demanded as human rights without wanting these demands to be legal rights in every case. While it is useful to make some rights legal like, for example, the Supreme Court's judgment on the right of school mid-day meals, there are others which should be approached from the view of human rights.

Consider, for example, the issue of minority rights. When minority rights are violated, three terrible things are happening. First, the human right of the minority not to be terrorised or killed is violated. Second, there is the violation of what Immanuel Kant called a perfect obligation or duty, that no one should violate other people's rights. And here, it is being violated by those who are injuring and killing the minorities. Third, there is the non-fulfillment (to use Kant's term again) of the

imperfect obligations of others, which refers to the failure of others in the community to protect the minority as in the case of Gujarat. The third may not be a legal duty but it is a human duty. The potential victims have not only a legal right not to be attacked by anyone, but also have a human right to receive assistance from anyone who can help. So, we need an ethical approach that would address all these inter-related rights and duties.

At the heart of most of your writings are the ideals of freedom (liberte) and equality (egalite). One could even argue that freedom and equality are more tightly linked in your approach than other competing theories of justice. But what about a third accompanying ideal of fraternity (fraternite) understood in the sense of sympathy and solidarity for fellow human beings? Unless one has a sense of solidarity for fellow citizens, no number of fine-grained theories of justice would help to build humane societies. How should we think of the relationship between justice and solidarity?

I think solidarity fits in well within the framework of freedom and equality. Solidarity, as I see it, has two different roles in this framework. First, among the freedoms we value is the freedom to be loved rather than hated by others. In that sense, solidarity is part of the infrastructure for human freedom and has to be constitutively valued.

Second, in order to advance different kinds of freedoms, solidarity can play an instrument role. A sense of solidarity, for instance, can play a positive role in making people accept that there needs to be a reduction of inequality in society. If, for instance, medical care for all requires sacrifices on the part of the rich, then solidarity suggests that you have to appeal to that rather than insisting that this must be done through some clever policies without people making sacrifices for each other. So, solidarity in the sense of willingness of people to take other people's lives and freedoms seriously, and to do appropriate things for advancing them, could be central to the pursuit of freedom and equality.

Take for instance human rights. Human rights can be seen as political and ethical claims that in an open public discussion will survive and even receive a lot of support. So public discussion and public reason are central to an understanding of human rights (as I have argued in my paper "Elements of a Theory of Human Rights" in the Fall number of Philosophy and Public Affairs). Human rights can survive in public reasoning through opening up the issue from being a narrow concern of one single individual to the concern of community as a whole. And for that we need solidarity. So solidarity is very much an underlying factor in what emerges in public reasoning.

Also, solidarity is important for the success of democracy. Let me illustrate it with the thesis, to which you pointed earlier, that there has never been a famine in a functioning multiparty democracy. Why would this be so? If you take the percentage of the potential victims of famines, they are relatively small. Often it is around 5 per cent, and normally this does not exceed 10 per cent of the total population. If these 5 per cent or 10 per cent do not vote for you, your government need not fall. So, we

need to ask the question again: why is famine a big threat to a government in democracy?

It is not just because the famine victims will vote against you, but because through solidarity and public reasoning others will also criticise you and possibly vote against you. So, solidarity plays a central part in the way public reasoning works.

You have a short but an excellent essay "Merit and Justice" which could bring some clarity to one of the most contentious issues of social justice in India: affirmative (reservation) policies in politics, public employment and education. The issue has recently come to the fore again in the form of a demand for reservation in the private sector. The basic argument of this essay is that the notion of merit and the related idea of efficiency cannot be viewed in isolation from the notion of a good society and especially society's distributive goals. How would you relate this argument to India's reservation policies?

The whole idea of merit is a contingent one; it really depends on what things are to be valued. We cannot disassociate the idea of merit from the idea of a good society, from the idea that people have reason to value what is seen as merit. It is not so much a question of being generically for or against reservation policies. In fact, one has to judge the policies of reservation in terms of whether it will actually promote equity, as many people claim, or whether it does no such thing. These are serious issues to be discussed.

Moreover, in discussing the issue of reservation policies, we must understand that it is not based on an argument of intrinsic merit but that of social merit. By social merit I mean first and foremost whether the recognition of something as a merit improves the achievement of social goals, including the reduction of deprivations.

Of course, one of the difficulties to consider is that once some people are favoured through "reservation", this would generate a pressure group identity in that direction. Among the dangers to look at is to what extent it splits society. We have to see whether the beneficiaries of these policies are deprived groups and how these policies would enhance their lives and standing in society.

By way of analogy, the Indian situation could be compared up to a point to the situation in 19th century Europe when the leftwing parties (the Labour Party, the Socialist and the Communist parties) were trying to advance a class-based struggle. The argument on the other side was to say "what do you mean by class, we are all the same"; "we do not distinguish between upper class and lower class"; "we are all just human beings"; and so on. The insistence to avoid "class" came mainly from the upper classes and the conservatives. Those who wanted to change the system and bring the underdogs up were the ones who wanted a class-based discussion.

Similarly, the argument that caste must be avoided in politics can be seen, at least partly, as a move to escape addressing issues of inequality linked with caste. It does depend much on who is invoking caste and why. If the upper caste Hindus want to

go around terrorising and killing landless lower caste peasants (as has happened in, say, Bihar), then caste is being used for anti-egalitarian regressive politics. But if caste is used for solidarity of the lower castes in order to demand some right and to have a less unequal society, then it has clearly a positive function. The problem, however, is that even for lower castes, sometimes the identities are so divisive that instead of being a source of solidarity against the top-dogs of society, they end up being internally divisive for bottom-dogs.

Will not the attempt to balance between merit and equity create incentive problems?

Incentive is an extremely serious issue. One can't ignore incentives and just say we will do the right thing no matter what the result is. However, people often underestimate the reach of incentives. Incentive is not just a desire for more income. Incentives include wanting a fulfilling life. There is benefit also from participatory satisfaction. If people acted only on the basis of narrow selfish interests, then we will have problem in motivating people to vote. Because every individual can say that his or her vote is not going to make a difference. One of the reasons why people vote is because they have an incentive to participate in a political process. So if you take that into account, we need to understand the whole issue of incentives more broadly.

Source: (http://www.frontlineonnet.com/fl2204/stories/20050225005401300.htm)

Frontline Volume 22 - Issue 4, Feb 12 - Feb 25, 2005

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        world

 A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility

The above is the title of the Report of the United Nations High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change.

United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan gave strong support to this Report saying in a letter transmitting the report,

"I wholly endorse its core arguments for a broader, more comprehensive system of collective security: one that tackles both new and old threats, and addresses the security concerns of all States - rich and poor, weak and strong,"

"The report offers the United Nations a unique opportunity to refashion and renew our institutions," he says in the letter, and promises to quickly consider and implement specific recommendations that fall within his purview. He urges other UN bodies to do the same.

In particular, the Secretary-General pledges to take a lead in promoting a new comprehensive strategy against terrorism, and to articulate his vision for consideration by governments in the new year.

The panel of 16 former heads of state, foreign ministers, security, military, diplomatic and development officials reaffirms the right of states to defend themselves, including pre-emptively when an attack is imminent, and says that in the case of "nightmare scenarios" - for instance those combining terrorists and weapons of mass destruction - the UN Security Council may have to act earlier, more proactively and more decisively than in the past.

On issues such as the rules governing use of force, "that go to the heart of who we are as the United Nations and what we stand for", the Secretary-General says that decisions should be taken by world leaders at a special UN summit scheduled for next September. "I cannot over-emphasize how important a new consensus on this issue is for a renewed system of collective security," he adds.

Executive Summary of A More Secure World: Our shared responsibility**A More Secure World:** *Our shared responsibility*

Report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change

- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY -

United Nations

2004

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

...There are six clusters of threats with which the world must be concerned now and in the decades ahead:

• war between States;

• violence within States, including civil wars, large-scale human rights abuses

and genocide;

• poverty, infectious disease and environmental degradation;

• nuclear, radiological, chemical and biological weapons;

• terrorism; and

• transnational organized crime.

The good news is that the United Nations and our collective security institutions have shown that they *can* work. More civil wars ended through negotiation in the past 15 years than the previous 200. In the 1960s, many believed that by now 15-25 States would possess nuclear weapons; the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty has helped prevent this. The World Health Organization helped to stop the spread of SARS before it killed tens of thousands, perhaps more.

But these accomplishments can be reversed. There is a real danger that they will be, unless we act soon to strengthen the United Nations, so that in future it responds effectively to the full range of threats that confront us.

Policies for prevention

Meeting the challenge of today's threats means getting serious about prevention; the consequences of allowing latent threats to become manifest, or of allowing existing threats to spread, are simply too severe.

Development has to be the first line of defence for a collective security system that takes prevention seriously. Combating **poverty** will not only save millions of lives but also strengthen States' capacity to combat terrorism, organized crime and proliferation. Development makes everyone more secure. There is an agreed international framework for how to achieve these goals, set out in the Millennium Declaration and the Monterrey Consensus, but implementation lags.

Biological security must be at the forefront of prevention. International response to HIV/AIDS was shockingly late and shamefully ill-resourced. It is urgent that we halt and roll back this pandemic. But we will have to do more.

Our global public health system has deteriorated and is ill-equipped to protect us against existing and emerging deadly infectious diseases. The report recommends a major initiative to build public health capacity throughout the developing world, at both local and national levels. This will not only yield direct benefits by preventing and treating disease in the developing world itself, but will also provide the basis for an effective global defence against bioterrorism and overwhelming natural outbreaks of infectious disease.

Preventing **wars within States and between them** is also in the collective interest of all. If we are to do better in future, the UN will need real improvements to its capacity for preventive diplomacy and mediation. We will have to build on the successes of regional organizations in developing strong norms to protect Governments from unconstitutional overthrow, and to protect minority rights.

And we will have to work collectively to find new ways of regulating the management of natural resources, competition for which often fuels conflict. Preventing the spread and use of **nuclear, biological and chemical weapons** is essential if we are to have a more secure world. This means doing better at reducing demand for these weapons, and curbing the supply of weapons materials.

It means living up to existing treaty commitments, including for negotiations towards disarmament. And it means enforcing international agreements. The report puts forward specific recommendations for the creation of incentives for States to forego the development of domestic uranium enrichment and reprocessing capacity. It urges negotiations for a new arrangement which would enable the International Atomic Energy Agency to act as a guarantor for the supply of fissile material to civilian nuclear users at market rates, and it calls on Governments to establish a voluntary time-limited moratorium on the construction of new facilities for uranium enrichment and reprocessing, matched by a guarantee of the supply of fissile materials by present suppliers.

Terrorism is a threat to all States, and to the UN as a whole. New aspects of the threat – including the rise of a global terrorist network, and the potential for terrorist use of nuclear, biological or chemical weapons – require new responses.

The UN has not done all that it can. The report urges the United Nations to forge a strategy of counterterrorism that is respectful of human rights and the rule of law. Such a strategy must encompass coercive measures when necessary, and create new tools to help States combat the threat domestically.

The report provides a clear definition of terrorism, arguing that it can never be justified, and calls on the General Assembly of the UN to overcome its divisions and finally conclude a comprehensive convention on terrorism.

The spread of **transnational organized crime** increases the risk of all the other threats. Terrorists use organized criminal groups to move money, men and materials around the globe. Governments and rebels sell natural resources through criminal groups to finance wars. States' capacity to establish the rule of law is weakened by corruption. Combating organized crime is essential for helping States build the capacity to exercise their sovereign responsibilities – and in combating the hideous traffic in human beings.

Response to threats

Of course, prevention sometimes fails. At times, threats will have to be met by military means. The UN Charter provides a clear framework for the **use of force.** States have an inherent right to self-defence, enshrined in Article 51. Long-established customary international law makes it clear that States can take military action as long as the threatened attack is imminent, no other means would deflect it, and the action is proportionate. The Security Council has the authority to act preventively, but has rarely done so. The Security Council may well need to be prepared to be more proactive in the future, taking decisive action earlier.

States that fear the emergence of distant threats have an obligation to bring these concerns to the Security Council. The report endorses the emerging norm of a **responsibility to protect** civilians from large-scale violence – a responsibility that is held, first and foremost, by national authorities. When a State fails to protect its

civilians, the international community then has a further responsibility to act, through humanitarian operations, monitoring missions and diplomatic pressure – and with force if necessary, though only as a last resort. And in the case of conflict or the use of force, this also implies a clear international commitment to rebuilding shattered societies.

Deploying military capacities - for **peacekeeping** as well as peace enforcement - has proved to be a valuable tool in ending wars and helping to secure States in their aftermath. But the total global supply of available peacekeepers is running dangerously low. Just to do an adequate job of keeping the peace in existing conflicts would require almost doubling the number of peacekeepers around the world. The developed States have particular responsibilities to do more to transform their armies into units suitable for deployment to peace operations.

And if we are to meet the challenges ahead, more States will have to place contingents on stand-by for UN purposes, and keep air transport and other strategic lift capacities available to assist peace operations.

When wars have ended, **post-conflict peacebuilding** is vital. The UN has often devoted too little attention and too few resources to this critical challenge.

Successful peacebuilding requires the deployment of peacekeepers with the right mandates and sufficient capacity to deter would-be spoilers; funds for demobilization and disarmament, built into peacekeeping budgets; a new trust fund to fill critical gaps in rehabilitation and reintegration of combatants, as well as other early reconstruction tasks; and a focus on building State institutions and capacity, especially in the rule of law sector. Doing this job successfully should be a core function of the United Nations.

A UN for the 21st century

To meet these challenges, the UN needs its existing institutions to work better. This means revitalizing the **General Assembly** and the **Economic and Social Council**, to make sure they play the role intended for them, and restoring credibility to the **Commission on Human Rights**.

It also means increasing the credibility and effectiveness of the **Security Council** by making its composition better reflect today's realities. The report provides principles for reform, and two models for how to achieve them – one involving new permanent members with no veto, the other involving new four-year, renewable seats. It argues that any reforms must be reviewed in 2020.

We also need new institutions to meet evolving challenges. The report recommends the creation of a **Peacebuilding Commission** – a new mechanism within the

UN, drawing on the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, donors, and national authorities. Working closely with regional organizations and the

international financial institutions, such a commission could fill a crucial gap by giving the necessary attention to countries emerging from conflict.

Outside the UN, a forum bringing together the heads of the 20 largest economies, developed and developing, would help the coherent management of international monetary, financial, trade and development policy. Better collaboration with **regional organizations** is also crucial, and the report sets out a series of principles that govern a more structured partnership between them and the UN.

The report recommends strengthening the Secretary-General's critical role in peace and security. To be more effective, the Secretary-General should be given substantially more latitude to manage the Secretariat, and be held accountable.

He also needs better support for his mediation role, and new capacities to develop effective peacebuilding strategy. He currently has one Deputy Secretary-General; with a second, responsible for peace and security, he would have the capacity to ensure oversight of both the social, economic and development functions of the UN, and its many peace and security functions.

The way forward

The report is the start, not the end, of a process. The year 2005 will be a crucial opportunity for Member States to discuss and build on the recommendations in the report, some of which will be considered by a summit of heads of State.

But building a more secure world takes much more than a report or a summit. It will take resources commensurate with the scale of the challenges ahead; commitments that are long-term and sustained; and, most of all, it will take leadership – from within States, and between them.

Source http://www.un.org/secureworld/

Indo-Australian Tectonic Plate at Risk

The geological forces behind the Sumatran quake and tsunami of December

2004 may have even more destruction in store, warns a team of researchers led by Mike Sandiford at the University of Melbourne's School of Earth Sciences.

"The Indian Ocean quakes are, in effect, leading to the active rupture of the Indo-Australian plate into separate Indian and Australian plates," says Sandiford. "This new research provides us with important information about the stresses that are driving this drawn-out tectonic plate divorce."

The Indo-Australian plate is one of the eight major plates upon which all the continents and oceans lie. These plates "float" on the currents of the earth's upper

mantle, whose movements are the driving force behind plate motion and earthquake activity.

Sandiford and his colleagues studied stresses generated along two tectonic segments between the Indo-Australian and Eurasian plate borders. They found that about 90% of the energy released when the plates rub up against each other is dissipated deep within the earth's mantle; the remaining 10% of the energy thrusts back into the Indo-Australian plate, generating potentially destructive seismic activity that could lead to its breakup.

Source: Futurist Update

Our Stressed Tectonic Plate May Be Breaking

Friday 18 February 2005

By Elaine Mulcahy

Australian and American researchers investigating forces exerted on the Indo-Australian tectonic plate have discovered that the considerable stresses on the plate could be leading to it breaking up.

ARC Professorial Fellow, Mike Sandiford, from the University of Melbourne's School of Earth Sciences, has received new ARC funding for research aimed at understanding the forces that drive the motion of the Earth's tectonic plates and the distribution of stresses that give rise to earthquakes such as the magnitude 9 Sumatran quake which caused the devastating Boxing Day tsunami.

Professor Sandiford says the research shows that as much as 10 per cent of the huge amounts of energy being created at plate connection points at Sumatra and Java are being transferred back into our plate and causing major stresses.

"This is enough stress to contribute to mild earthquake activity in the central regions of the plate, such as in the Australian continent or central Indian Ocean, and provides clues as to why our plate has been slowly breaking up," he says.

"The Indian Ocean quakes are, in effect, leading to the active rupture of the Indo-Australian plate into separate Indian and Australian plates. The new findings provide us with important information about the stresses that are driving this drawn out tectonic plate divorce."

The research, which was conducted in collaboration with Wouter Pieter Schellart of the Australian National University and David Coblentz of the Los Alamos National Laboratory in the US, was published in the journal Geology (27 January 2005).

Professor Sandiford says the research is also important for understanding why smaller intra-plate earthquakes such as the 1989 Newcastle quake, which occurred

nowhere near the edge of the plate, take place. Up to now it has not been well understood why earthquakes occur in apparently safe zones in the centre of plates.

"Earthquakes such as the 1989 Newcastle quake that killed 13 people and caused more than $1 billion in damages are just one manifestation of mild tectonic activity that has been affecting the Australian continent for the past five to 10 million years," he says.

The new research shows that stresses originating at points of collision between two plates are dissipated back into our plate, generating enormous internal stresses.

The ARC funded project will map the spatial and temporal pattern of this tectonic activity and relate it to the factors that drive the motion of the Indo-Australian plate.

"This research will contribute to our understanding of the factors that drive plate motion, to earthquake risk assessment in Australia and other comparatively stable continental regions, and to the factors that have shaped our distinctive Australian landscapes," he says.

Source: Melbourne University

2005 Pamela Denoon Lecture by Professor Judith Whitworth

Professor Judith Whitworth is Director of the John Curtin School of Medical Research and Howard Florey Professor of Medical Research at The Australian National University. She is Chair of the World Health Organization Advisory Committee on Health Research — the first woman to hold the post. She has practiced medicine and research extensively in Australia and overseas. She was made a Companion in the Order of Australia in 2001 for service to the advancement of academic medicine and as a major contributor to research policy and medical research administration in Australia and internationally. She was ACT Australian of the Year for 2004.

The theme for the 2005 Pamela Denoon Lecture was Women, Health, Medicine and Science. Pamela Denoon was herself a science graduate and biochemist whose life was tragically cut short by leukaemia.

At Federation, life expectancy in Australia was over 20 years lower than it is now. Health and medical research accounts for half of those life years gained and Australian women have been at the forefront of medical research in Australia. According to Access Economics, 'investment in health R&D surpasses every other source of rising living standards in our time'. The evidence is overwhelming that investments in health pay off in controlling disease, improving productivity, speeding economic growth and fostering social and political stability.

Professor Judith Whitworth

Women in Health: not drowning but waving

Pamela Denoon Lecture Coombs Lecture Theatre, ANU

10 March 2005

Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

In the spirit of reconciliation, I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land, the Ngunnawal people, their living culture and unique role in the life of this region.

It is a great honour to give this lecture, named as it is in memory of Pamela Denoon.

I have chosen as my theme Women, Health, Medicine and Science, a theme I hope would have appealed to Pamela Denoon, herself a science graduate and biochemist, whose life was tragically cut short by leukaemia, a disease in which research has led to dramatic improvements in survival, and in quality of life.

And I hope to develop the theme of health as a driver of equity.

When I was a child a great deal of lip service was paid to the notion of the fair go. Of course, that meant everyone except women, aboriginal people and migrants. The first time I came to Canberra was in the sixties to stay with the Clark family in what is now known as Manning Clark House. I was very taken with the view of Australia that Clark 's history presented to the world. In later life he made it clear that the things he regretted about this monumental work were his failure to give weight to women and his failure to give weight to indigenous Australians. As he himself said, he was a child of his time. But the notion of a fair go is appealing: the idea that irrespective of race or gender or position or wealth, there should be equality of opportunity. And in many ways these values have underpinned our great institutions. When Peter Baume launched a book by Marian Sawyer, *The Ethical State ? Social Liberalism in Australia*, he spoke of how social liberal thought, the fair go, had led to some of our great social achievements — minimum wages, and universal suffrage for example.

Women gained the vote, and the right to stand for Parliament in 1902. They voted the following year, and stood for election, although it was 41 years before a woman was elected. But we were the first country in the world to legislate for women's rights in this way, and Australian women did much to support their colleagues, in the campaigns for universal suffrage in Britain and Europe .

These early achievements have been overtaken by many liberal democracies. I look with envy at New Zealand , where women have led or are leading all the great institutions — the Prime Minister, the leader of the opposition, the Chief Justice, the Governor General and the President of the Royal Society. We do have a woman as head of state but I look forward to seeing an Australian woman as head of state, and Australian women taking their turns as our political and social leaders. With the aging of our society, we simply cannot afford not to capitalise on all our human assets — no society can waste the talents of half its members. So the tradition of a fair go becomes a social imperative.

Judith Lorber is a distinguished US commentator:

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> 'A women's choice to devote her energies to her family rather than to her work may be the result, rather than the cause, of her diminished career opportunities. Just as her supposed lack of ambition may be the product, not the producer, of her blocked career advancement'.

> 'The adequate explanation of the under representation of women physicians at the top levels of the medical profession must consider the effects on their career development of the structure of medical training and medical practice, the sorting and shifting process of sponsorship and patronage, and the help and hindrance of colleagues, mentors and husbands'.

There are some telling data around, that when you look at women in universities in applications and promotions and in grants or scholarships or fellowships, all the data show that women do at least as well if not better than men in terms of success rates.

The problem is that they don't apply. More recently I've seen similar information about the Australian honours system. More women nominated are approved than men but far fewer are nominated. So, one way to increase the number of women in leadership positions is to encourage women to apply and to encourage men and women to nominate or suggest women. My personal and professional experience is that men are far more likely to put up their hands early for positions whereas women are far more likely to think, quite erroneously, that they aren't good enough. New Zealand is showing us the way. In New Zealand women know their place. They run the country.

There is a great deal more that can be done and everybody, man or woman, can contribute to what is very much in the national interest — to increase the number of women in leadership positions.

A few words about my working environment, the university.

Sir Robert Menzies in 1939 laid out seven ideals of what makes a university. These were

- a place of culture and learning;
- a training ground for professions;
- mutuality that should exist between theory and practice;
- a place of research — of objectivity and unclouded minds;
- a trainer of character, its graduates enriching the entire community;
- custodianship of intellectual freedom;
- and a training ground for leaders

I think there are 3 essential qualities for a university. The first is a commitment to scholarship — the highest standards of teaching and learning, research and discovery. Other institutions have elements of these: a university combines them.

The second is people.

People make universities and great people make great universities.

And third, last but not least, commitment to truth. Absolute integrity in the pursuit of knowledge is the essential foundation of the academic enterprise, just as honesty and integrity are essential to the practice of medicine, indeed to all the professions, and to our very social fabric.

In speaking about truth and integrity I speak of the process. What is honestly done may or may not lead to the ultimate truth — what is not done honestly will never lead to truth.

Universities today are enormously complex institutions. Economic realities have changed the way universities are run and how they see themselves. This of course is not unique to Australia , but a world wide phenomenon. Across the political spectrum there is an expectation that public funds be invested in the national interest. Neither is this a new phenomenon — when the great 19th Century British Prime Minister William Gladstone visited the laboratory of Michael Faraday, he asked whether this esoteric substance called electricity would ever have any use. Faraday responded 'one day, sir, you will tax it'.

Some of the tensions around public v private good in universities are well founded, but others can be misplaced. My colleague Chris Parish at the John Curtin School of Medical Research has developed a novel anti-cancer drug, which looks very promising in phase II clinical trials. He is a scientist's scientist whose interest is in fundamental discovery. But he points out, that at least in biomedical research, if you don't patent your discovery, you ensure it will never be used for the benefit of humankind. With new drugs costing up to a billion dollars to take from bench to bedside, patent protection is essential to attract the required level of investment.

That not withstanding, the greatest returns on investment in universities are societal — graduates enriching the entire community. Perhaps the most famous attempt to define the essentials of a university was *The Idea of a University*, written by Cardinal John Henry Newman in 1852.

In Discourse 7, Knowledge viewed in Relation to Professional Skill, he writes:

> … If then a practical end must be assigned to a University course, I say it is that of training good members of society …
>
> But a University training … aims at raising the intellectual tone of society, at cultivating the public mind, at purifying the national taste, at supplying true principles to popular enthusiasm and fixed aims to popular aspiration, at giving enlargement and sobriety to the ideas of the age, at facilitating the exercise of political power, and refining the intercourse of private life.

A century and a half later, universities have profited from admitting women, but in every other respect what Newman wrote is true today.

The term academic freedom runs the risk of becoming debased where it is a justification for self indulgence — the medico who talks about defence policy, or the mathematician who pontificates on political history. To my mind academic freedom is the right and the responsibility of academics to speak out on subjects on which they are expert. The researcher, the scholar, avoids the rush to judgement and weighs and sifts the evidence using all available source material, before formulating a view. But all graduates from whatever discipline, have a responsibility to speak out for truth.

Which brings me back to health, medicine and research.

Slides

What about women in research?

When I was a kid of one my great heroes was Marie Curie **[slide]**. She as a hero not because she was a woman, a wife, and a mother but rather because she triumphed over poverty and adversity to be one of the world's very greatest scientists — the first person to win two Nobel prizes. I should add that her work on radium is the perfect example of the importance of the fundamental disciplines of physics and chemistry to clinical medicine, a lesson we need to heed.

Slides of Yalow and Cori

Australian women have been at the fore front of medical research in this country. Kate Campbell discovered the link between high dose oxygen and blindness in neonates. Jean McNamara was involved in the early days of polio research. Priscilla Kincaid Smith was key in the successful campaign to understand and prevent analgesic induced kidney disease. She was involved in every stage, from the identification of the clinical syndrome, to describing the pathology, to experimental studies elucidating the aetiology, to the ultimate control through legislation and regulation.

As I speak, Suzanne Cory, who has a huge reputation in the molecular biology of cancer is running the WEHI. Fiona Stanley is Director of the ICHR at UWA. Fiona's work with Carol Bower, particularly on folate, has helped prevent birth defects. Kerin O'Dea who studied the role of diet change in diabetes in Aboriginal people and spent months living nomadically in the outback to do so, is Director of the Menzies Institute in Darwin . The work of Anne-Marie Ponsonby, now in Canberra , on sleeping position as a risk for sudden infant death syndrome has saved many lives. There are outstanding women all around. Adele Green at QIMR has developed techniques for reducing the burden of melanoma, Marelyn Wintour and Eugenie Lumbers have made great contributions to how events in foetal life shape what happens in adult life. There are exciting researchers like Bronwyn Kingwell working in exercise and Jaye Chin Dusting helping understand liver disease, Diane Alcorn in kidney disease and and Chris Mitchell in blood disorders — the list goes on. On the industry side, names like Sue Pond, Joan Dawes and Merilyn Sleigh. In my own School here in Canberra, we have five women professors including Caryl Hill, Angela Dulhunty, Frances Shannon and Jill Gready and they are only a few of the outstanding women researchers at the John Curtin School of Medical Research.

So you can see that women are everywhere in research — and if you think the people I've mentioned are good, you should see the bright creative young women coming to us as students and post-docs.

A few words about the human genome project. **[slide]**

The human genome project has shown that we all have about 3 billion base pairs, about 1% of which functions as genes and we probably only have 30 thousand genes each. The rest may or may not be junk, we don't know. And the differences between us and other organisms are not nearly as big as you might think. We have only twice as many genes as a worm and any mouse is about 98.3% genetically identical with people in this room. In fact all of you are roughly 30% genetically identical with a banana so next time you eat one you might reflect on whether its an act of ritual cannibalism.

The identification of the human genetic code is certainly a great scientific and technological achievement but as yet has not translated into better human health, particularly in developing countries. A lot of the hype has been around the fact that it will provide unprecedented opportunities for understanding disease and developing new prevention and new treatments. All the drugs in the world act on less than 500 known molecular targets and even if only 10% of the genome represents targets for drugs, conservatively there must be at least another 2500 new targets for new drugs out there.

But most of that is in the future. What might be more relevant for developing countries is the sequencing of known pathogens or germs. Sequencing the genome in an organism allows us to identify new targets for vaccine development or for drug treatment e.g. the new vaccine for meningococcal meningitis.

But genes aren't our destiny and what is really important is gene environment interaction. For example, a biotech is putting effort into identifying genetic predisposition to lung cancer. It's not difficult to think through the policy implications. The industry thesis is that there is nothing we can do about smoking. The way forward is to find out who can smoke safely and who can't. This must be an absolute bonanza for the tobacco industry who are presumably funding the work. The public health implications are very frightening.

There will be inevitable tensions between individual based designer therapies and drugs and vaccines to prevent disease and disability in populations. The genome project if not used properly may simply increase health disparities. One very big positive to come out of the genome project is a tool in the ongoing struggle against racism. It turns out that human beings are very very similar genetically, 99.9% identical. Between any two individuals in this room there are small, albeit significant, variations in the fine structure of individual genes. The genome project found that the differences between individuals of the same racial background are as great as those between people of different races.

Finally, you may remember the Wizard of Oz, when Dorothy and Toto are plucked out of deepest Kansas by a tornado, and transported to the wonderful world of Oz, where they meet three potential transplant recipients — the tin man who wanted a heart, the straw man who wanted a brain, and the cowardly lion that wanted courage. They followed the yellow brick road to find the Wizard who could do the operations, and they found the Wizard at the end of the road, a disembodied voice behind a curtain. But the curtain falls away, and the Wizard is revealed as a fraud — a middle aged man with a megaphone who hasn't got any magic powers.

So tin man and straw man and lion and Dorothy and Toto realise they have to do it themselves. So the metaphor is not that we are a lot of powerless middle aged women with megaphones, rather that the future is in our hands.

Women in Health: Not Drowning but Waving

Signposts to Welfare Reform

The McClure Report's framework for welfare reform which was released in 2000 and took two years to formulate directions which gained general concensus and advocated **"**the use of penalties as a last resort only."

With the upcoming Federal Budget in mind, Andrew McCallum, President of ACOSS says, "If the Government builds on this framework, it will announce five things in the budget..."

Signposts to welfare reform

Address by ACOSS President Andrew McCallum to Melbourne Institute - The Australian 'Sustaining Prosperity' conference, March 2005

In this Federal Budget the Government is likely to announce major changes in our systems of social security and employment assistance for jobless people.

In responding to these proposals, we will ask five questions:

1. Will jobless people be better off or worse off financially?
2. Will the changes improve their future job prospects?
3. Will they strengthen or weaken the fairness and security of the safety net?
4. Will they strike a reasonable balance between the obligations of jobless people, government and employers?
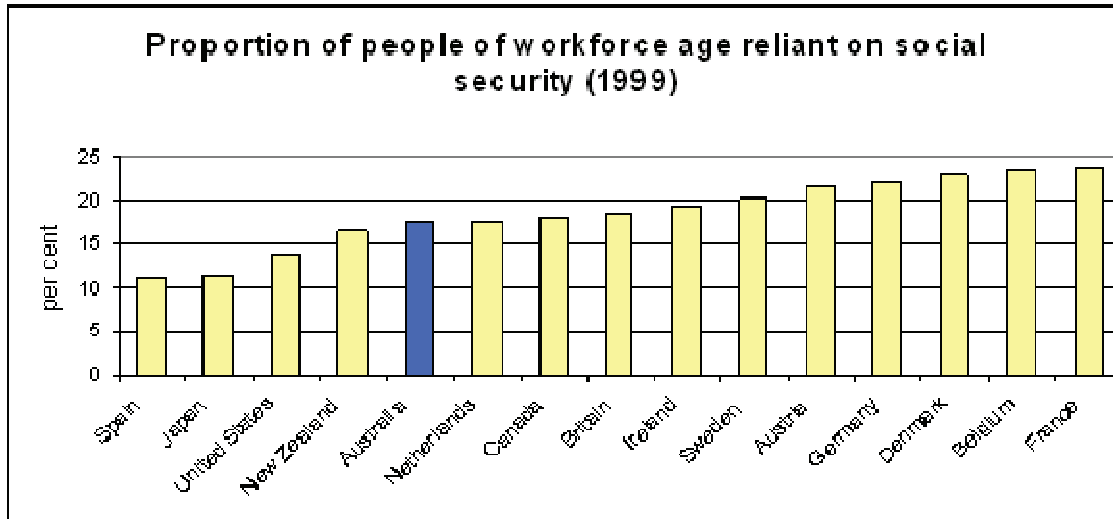5. Will it help make Australia a fairer and more inclusive society?

The Government's main argument for change is that too many people are dependent on social security. The media has picked up this theme. A recent media report was headlined '*Jobless crisis costs $4.7 billion*' 1[1].

The irony is that the official unemployment figures are at 30 year lows – close to 5%. How can reliance on social security be rising when unemployment is falling? The short answer is that reliance on social security has *fallen* over the last seven years as full time jobs have grown. *There is no welfare dependency crisis*. But as unemployment falls, it is the people facing the greatest obstacles to employment who still rely on income support. Helping them find secure jobs is the real challenge.
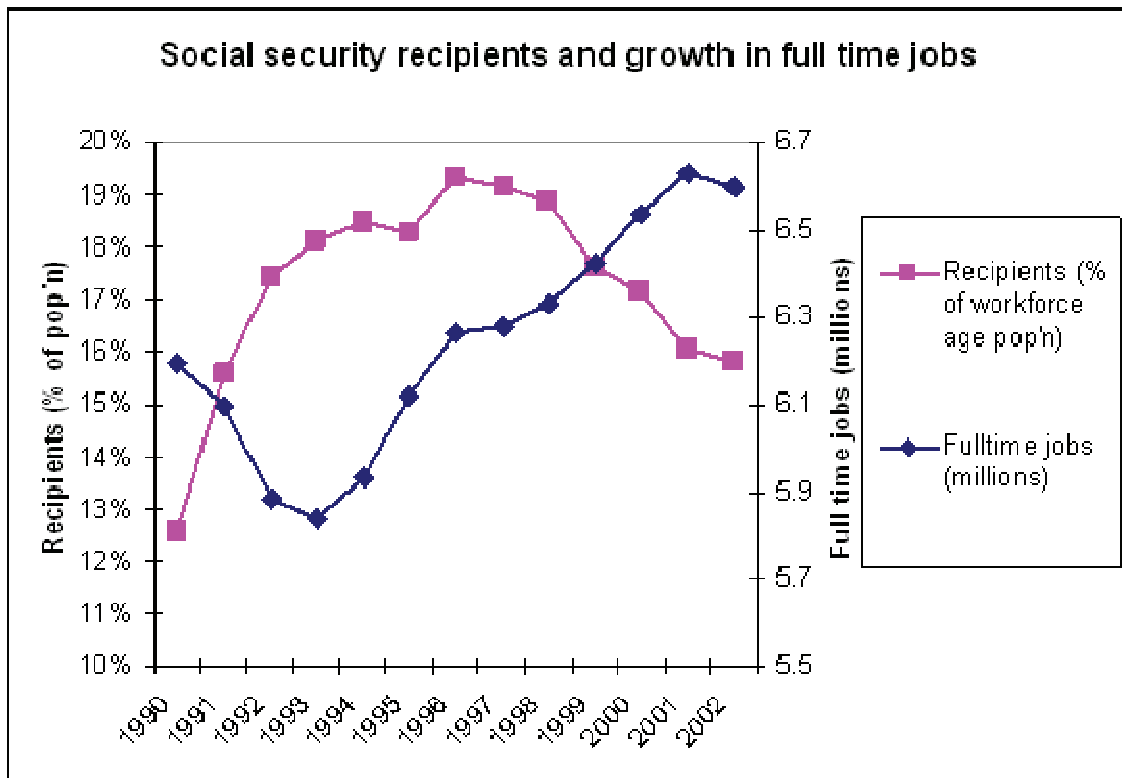
The basic facts are these:

1. Reliance on social security is below the OECD average, and it has been falling as full time job growth has picked up over the past seven years.

% of people of workforce age on social security in OECD countries2[2]

Proportion of people of workforce age reliant on social security (1999)

Reliance on social security payments is below the OECD average, and reliance on disability pensions is about average3[3]. Social security spending is well below the average. The Productivity Commission acknowledges that social security is affordable, even as the population ages4[4].
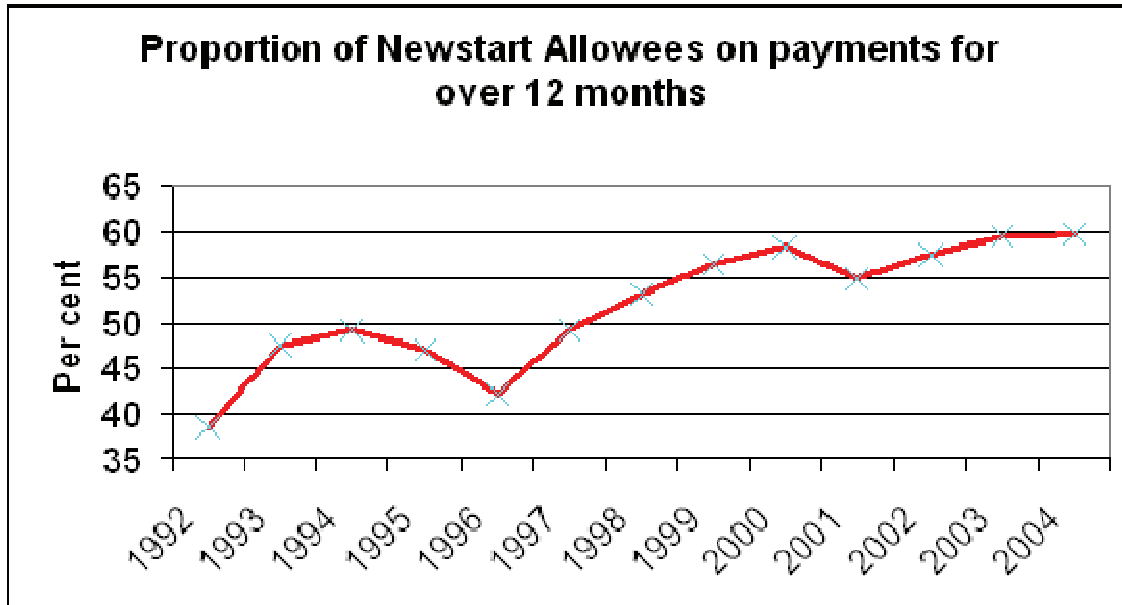
Reliance on social security, compared with full time job growth5[5]

Social security recipients and growth in full time jobs

These figures show that reliance on social security has fallen with strong growth in full time jobs over the past seven years. But for most of the 1990s we only enjoyed strong growth in part time jobs. Many social security recipients got part time work, but their income wasn't enough to take them off income support. In the recession of the early 1990s many fulltime jobs were lost. That led to the sharp rise in reliance on social security in the early 1990s.

2. At this stage of the business cycle, people with the greatest barriers to employment form a growing proportion of social security recipients. Getting them into work becomes harder.

Long term unemployed as a % of Newstart and Youth Allowance recipients

Proportion of Newstart Allowees on payments for over 12 months

For example, the proportion of unemployment payment recipients on benefits for more than a year has risen from under 40% after the last recession to over 60% today.

Barriers to work

Barriers to work
• 60% of people with disabilities have no post school qualifications • 350,000 Newstart and Youth Allowees have been on payments for over 12 months • 25% of sole parents on Parenting Payment suffer from depression • DSP recipients are medically assessed and must be unable to work fulltime for at least 2 years • at least 50,000 Newstart recipients are assessed as having disabilities or illnesses.

The barriers to work include limited education, lack of recent work experience, disabilities, poor physical and mental health, and lack of affordable child care.

These facts provide no grounds for 'moral panic' over 'welfare dependency'. But we do have an historic opportunity to assist the most disadvantaged jobless people into work. In the short term, employment is still booming. Over the next 30 years, labour shortages will emerge as the population ages.

ACOSS enthusiastically supports efforts to assist people off social security into employment, where this is a reasonable and realistic expectation. We have consistently supported positive policies to that end from *Working Nation* in the mid 1990s to the *Australians Working Together* changes in 2000. I emphasise this because this support is often forgotten, or taken for granted, in the heat of debate.

Over the past five years there has been a broad consensus over welfare reform, in favour of the broad directions advocated by the Government's Reference Group on Welfare Reform five years ago (the McClure Report).

The key elements of that Report, and the Building a Simpler System paper released by Ministers Vanstone and Abbott in 2002 are as follows6[6]:

McClure Report framework

The McClure Report's framework for welfare reform (2000)

- encourage participation in the labour market, subject to people's capacities and caring responsibilities
- employment assistance, advice and support based on individual needs
- a simpler and fairer social security system in which distinctions between 'pensioners' and 'allowances are removed
- improve work incentives by easing income tests and assisting with the direct costs of work and further education and training
- use penalties as a last resort only.

If the Government builds on this framework, it will announce five things in the budget:

- First, a substantial improvement in employment assistance, especially the Job Network.

  Those who remain out of work long term today are among the most disadvantaged people in the labour market. Many have been out of work for two years or more. It would be misleading to argue that simply imposing greater obligations will turn this problem around.

  The Job Network must now focus on the individual needs of the most disadvantaged jobseekers, and both the Job Network and specialist providers must be available for people with disabilities and sole parents. The Government should give Job Network providers the resources they need to invest in wage subsidies and substantial training. They can now use a *Job Seeker Account* to help overcome work barriers. But the average sum available is around $1,000 – enough to buy a few weeks training. That won't overcome years of educational disadvantage and exclusion from the mainstream employment.

  It would be a mistake to burden the Job Network with social security administration – for example work testing. The Job Network would start to

look less like an employment service and more like a privatised Centrelink. There is already too much emphasis on benefit compliance, and too little scope to offer people the individual help they need to get them into work.

The Government is planning changes to the CDEP for Indigenous communities. The key to reducing the very high levels of Indigenous joblessness is a partnership between the Government, Indigenous communities and employers. Change should not be imposed from above.

On the employer side, a national strategy to encourage and support employers to take on people with disabilities, mature age workers and other disadvantaged job seekers is needed.

- Second, the unfair and counterproductive anomalies between pension and allowance payments should be removed without making anyone worse off.

For example, if a disability pensioner undergoes rehabilitation and is able to work again they are likely to be transferred to Newstart Allowance. This means a drop in income from $235 per week to $197 – a fall of around $40 per week. If they then undertake full time study to improve their job prospects they go onto Austudy, which is at least another $30 per week less. People are penalised for trying.

The old distinction between 'allowances for people able to work' and 'pensions for those who aren't' is the worst work disincentive in the social security system. Pensions have become 'dead end payments'. But people are discouraged from leaving them because they would be even poorer on the Newstart Allowance.

This is what would happen if the Government proceeds with proposals to shift people with disabilities who can work part time from the Disability Support Pension (DSP) to Newstart Allowance. We urge the Government not to go down this track.

There is no evidence to suggest that the people affected could easily get full time work if compelled to do so. Most would simply end up on Newstart Allowance, and at least $20 to $40 a week worse off. The DSP would become even more of a dead end payment because people would be reluctant to try part time work in case they lose it.

The solution is to close the gap between pension and allowance payments, not to shift people to the cheaper payment. This was proposed by the McClure Report five years ago and raised by Ministers Vanstone and Abbott in a discussion paper three years ago. This is the direction New Zealand is taking. We hope Helen Clark convinced the Prime Minister to follow suit.

- Third, work incentives should be improved by offering more help with the costs of job search, training and employment and easing the most severe income tests.

  An unemployed person living on around $200 a week can't afford to look for work. They don't get the same public transport concessions and telephone allowances pensioners get. Nor do they get the pensioner education supplement to help with the cost of fees and books for their TAFE course.

  And if they earn more than $71 per week, they lose 70 cents in Allowances for every additional dollar earned, together with income tax.

  People with disabilities face much higher work related costs – for example transport – but receive too little help with those costs.

- Fourth, obligations for recipients must be realistic, grounded in individual circumstances, and balanced by a substantial government investment in employment and support services.

  For example, the Government imposed new activity requirements on Parenting Payment recipients in 2001 – to participate in part time employment training or voluntary work once their youngest child reached 13 years. Those requirements were balanced by investment in personal advisors at Centrelink and an expansion of child care subsidies. Efforts were made to keep breaches and penalties down to a minimum. Parents unable to meet the new requirements (for example those whose children were ill or have a disability or who are subject to domestic violence) were exempted. Breach and penalty arrangements were changed.

  If activity requirements for parents are increased without maintaining and improving these protections and supports, the well being of poor children would be jeopardised.

  The McClure Report argued that governments must invest up front to reap benefits later on. If the forthcoming welfare reform package saves money, or even if it is revenue neutral, that means there will be large number of losers. It will be a cost cutting exercise, not welfare reform.

- Fifth, the harsh, counterproductive breach regime should be eased and the review and appeals systems strengthened.

  The present system imposes penalties of up to two months' loss of payment where people fail to meet requirements that are often unrealistic and badly administered.

  For example, many people with mental illnesses are breached because their illnesses are not properly identified and they fail to attend an interview, or to

declare earnings, when they have an 'episode'.

The Social Security Appeals Tribunal and other protections against arbitrary and unfair decisions should be strengthened, not removed.

These protections are all the more important if the Government is considering extending activity requirements to vulnerable groups like people with disabilities and sole parents.

The Government says it will not use its control of the Senate in a harsh or preemptive way and that they won't impose American style welfare reform on Australians. There are indications that the Minister (Kevin Andrews) understands the barriers that confront jobless people in their efforts to raise themselves out of poverty7[7]. The Government has been talking with community organisations about these issues, but has only formally consulted over about the last four weeks.

It took two years to develop the McClure Report and the directions for reform in that report are broadly supported. We urge the Government to stick with the balanced approach, the consensus approach to welfare reform. This requires an investment of public funds now to reap benefits in future years. It requires a careful balancing of requirements and legislative protections for vulnerable Australians. It requires much more substantial consultation than four weeks to get it right.

We urge the Government to build on the work already done, not to force welfare recipients to take a leap in the dark in the name of welfare reform.

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The Natasha Factor: Politics, Media and Betrayal by Alison Rogers

During her rise to the leadership of the Australian Democrats party in 2001, and her subsequent highly publicised demise, Natasha Stott Despoja struggled to maintain the unity of the Democrats. Alison Rogers provides a revealing behind-the-scenes viewpoint as Stott Despoja's chief media advisor, documenting her rise and fall amidst intense media scrutiny and public speculation.

"Stott Despoja's treatment by media carries negative messages for aspiring female leaders. Women parliamentarians are still treated differently to male colleagues, and the experiences of other females provide a daunting history. Perhaps the media do not give females a chance because they have stepped into a masculine

world, and so in attempting to fit male-constructed leadership paradigms, female parliamentarians are exposed to greater scrutiny, criticism, and judgment." (Tony Smith Australian Review of Public Affairs)

Alison Rogers *The Natasha Factor: Politics, Media and Betrayal*, Lothian, 2004
Source: Lothian

A History of International Women's Day in words and images

The Cyber Edition of this book which was written twelve years ago by Joyce Stevens, an activist for many years in the left, union and feminist movements, is at:

A History of International Women's Day in words and images:

http://www.isis.aust.com/iwd/stevens/contents.htm

Susanne Martain, Founder of ISIS continues to publish 'herstoricals' where Joyce left off.

Source: ISIS   Research

On the Battlefield of Women's Bodies: An Overview of the Harm of War to Women

Dr H. Patricia Hynes is Professor of Environmental Health at the Boston University School of Public Health and Director of the Urban Environmental Health Initiative is author of the Research Paper: On the Battlefield of Women's Bodies: An Overview of the Harm of War to Women in which she writes:

"A unique harm of war for women is the trauma inflicted in military brothels, rape camps, and the growing sex trafficking for prostitution and by increased domestic violence, all of which is fuelled by the culture of war, male aggression, and the social and economic ruin left in the wake of war.

Widows of war, women victims of landmines, and women refugees of war are particularly vulnerable to poverty, prostitution, the extortion of sex for food by post-war peacekeepers, and higher illness and death in the post-conflict period. While problems exist with definitions and methods of measurement, a full accounting of the harm of war to civilian women is needed in the debate over whether war is justified."

Dr Hynes' Paper can be viewed at The Feminist Peace Network website at the following link:

http://www.feministpeacenetwork.org/

LEADING aRGUMENTS

"AIRC's setting of minimum wage levels, along with the Government's family payments, has kept many low-paid workers and their families out of poverty," said McCallum.

Conversely, high rates of child poverty are found in countries where political leaders have introduced policies to promote low rates of pay. UNICEF figures indicate that in the US, 25% of workers are low paid and 25% of children are living in poverty. In the UK, 18% of workers are low paid and 18% of children are living in poverty.

"To reduce unemployment by cutting minimum wages the cuts would have to be dramatic. In the US, a low skilled worker works 5 days a week to earn the same wage as an Australian worker on a minimum wage earns in 3 days," said McCallum. "You can imagine what such a change would do to our national poverty levels – they would be shameful." **ACOSS President Andrew McCallum**

NEWS fLASH

YWCA's WomenSpeak Network is currently working on a research project called 'Young Women's Recruitment, Retention and Leadership: lessons learned from the women's movement.' The overall aim of the policy research is:

To establish broadly young women's involvement and perceptions of their involvement in women's organisations; To find out whether organisations are actively involved in the recruitment, retention and promotion of young women's into leadership positions; Reflect on how effective young women's participation, networking and diversity is within the organisations

Two surveys have been developed

1) to ask young women about their involvement and perceptions of that involvement in community organisations especially women's organisations

Survey at:

<u>Young Women's Survey</u>

2) to ask women's and community organisations about their current experiences with young women's recruitment, retention and leadership

Survey at:

<u>Women & Community Organisations Survey</u>

The results of the research will be published later in the year and made freely available through the WomenSpeak Network

Any questions contact Erica Lewis, on <u>ygals@ywca.org.au</u> or 02 6230 5150.