



Fortunate World Aptly Understood by Humanities

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Abstract

States have front-line responsibility for the social and economic well-being of their citizens. Fair economic growth has a critical role to play in this, and the Commission believes it is crucial to see a stronger connection between economic policy and the instruments of human rights. It is evident, however, that the challenges faced by many states cannot be resolved entirely by actions in those states alone. There is an overwhelming moral case for interpreting the social and economic rights provisions of the Declaration as placing obligations on the international community to alleviate world poverty.

Keywords: International organisations; Justifiable; Legitimacy; Governments; Human rights; Restrictive conditions; Global ethics

Introduction

International aid and transfers, aimed at strengthening the capacity of recipient states to secure the social and economic rights of their citizens, thus have an indispensable role to play. Responsibilities among the international community to uphold social and economic rights are in the Commission's view held not only by states, but also above the level of states by international organizations and below the level of states by corporations and individuals [1]. It is sometimes said that, although the rights in the Declaration are presented as an interconnected body of principles, complementary and mutually supportive, there are in fact serious conflicts among them. It is sometimes argued, for example, that the rights to freedom of speech or assembly may conflict with the right of people not to live in poverty, that the only way to lift large numbers of people out of poverty may involve authoritarian rule. In certain very specific real world settings, our ability to fully implement one right may conflict with our ability to fully implement another, at least temporarily. However, any such claim would be very hard to establish and must always be subjected to the most rigorous scrutiny. Furthermore, it is always a serious question whether any particular proposed trade-off is morally justifiable [2]. The laws and national constitutions of states, in most instances, will be the first recourse to address any violations of human rights, and should be regarded as the ordinary mode of implementation. In a globalized world, it is also the duty of each state to concern itself to a certain extent with the human rights of persons outside its borders. While states have the primary responsibility for ensuring the human rights of their citizens, there are numerous examples of situations where governments no longer control substantial tracts of territory, no longer control the military or have a monopoly on force, lack legitimacy, and are unable or unwilling to provide public services. In these situations, this issue needs to be urgently addressed by the international community [3]. The fact that one entity like a state has responsibility for a given right is quite compatible with other entities also having their own obligations. Rights generate waves of responsibility, and those responsibilities may fall on an array of duty-bearers [4]. Though national state responsibility is primary, sub-national governments, international institutions, corporations, and private persons each and all have a common duty to ensure recognition of human rights and accept responsibility to secure them.

Discussion

Rights-bearers themselves also have responsibilities with respect to their own rights and responsibilities as rights-bearers to the rights system as a whole and to society generally. It would be a mistake to develop a rigid or closed model of responsibility for rights, or to

conclude that rights are of no value until responsibilities are actually specified. The advantage of specifying rights first is that this provides a basis for thinking about the duties of the state and other entities [5]. The Commission has judged that it is both sensible and essential to retain an open and developing sense of where responsibilities lie, since the environment in which rights have to be satisfied is constantly changing. The international community needs a toolkit of governmental and multilateral responses to rights violations that is more legitimate and more sophisticated than we have today, and which relies on mechanisms other than the use of force. There are many instruments of change used: some widely acknowledged, like trade sanctions; some far less recognized, such as human rights name and shame mechanisms; and others perhaps less clearly articulated, such as providing shelter to migrants fleeing from neighbouring countries in times of great distress. We recommend that a study be undertaken of what governments do when they genuinely want to seek to change another government's behaviour, and what governments are susceptible to in terms of real world pressures on human rights [6]. The Commission supports the concept of the Responsibility to protect governing the process of humanitarian intervention. However, intervention under the auspices of responsibility will be far from regular and will be appropriate only in the case of egregious and widespread human rights violations. The violation of rights, the erosion of rights, or the failure to fulfil rights is matters of concern, even when they are not widespread. Any time a violation occurs which may affect one person or one thousand we must take notice. Underpinning this imperative is the principle that the violation of the rights of anyone is the concern of everyone. The promulgation of the UDHR in 1948 made a difference in how people saw their place in the world and their relations with their state and with each other [7]. This is in itself a valuable contribution, quite apart from the securing of the rights actually listed in the document. Over the decades since 1948, the UDHR has provided the rudiments of a common conscience for humanity. In the words of Immanuel Kant, a violation of rights in any place is now felt all around the world. The international community is continuing to build on this, and the UDHR should be

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regarded as one of the pillars of an emerging global ethic for our increasingly interdependent world. Across the ages, people of different religions, civilizations, and political orders have advanced the ideal that each human being has moral ties and responsibilities to all others. And for three quarters of a century and more, in a world increasingly and globally interconnected, the human family has witnessed new and path-breaking initiatives to articulate and expand the summons of this ideal [8]. Among the most vital and powerful of these endeavours is the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. From the start, endorsed and adopted by most Member States of the United Nations, the Declaration has been a beacon and a standard, its influence both wide and deep [9]. It is a living document that demands renewed recognition and speaks urgently to the issues of today even though states and others may repeatedly flout or fall short of the rights and norms it expresses. We, the members of the Global Citizenship Commission, undertook our exploration of the Declaration, its legacy, and its promise with open minds. We were determined to learn from one another, with our distinct beliefs and our disparate places of origin, and ready to account for the weaknesses as well as the strengths of the Declaration and the modern human rights system for which it is a life force [10]. We have discovered in our multinational collaboration that working together to reflect on the UDHR and its writ, its reach, and its impact has reaffirmed our faith in its stirring invocation of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family as the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. There is much more to be done to fully secure the rights and more effectively carry out the responsibilities that are essential to the work of making real the ideals of the UDHR. Hideous and systemic human rights abuses continue to be perpetrated at an alarming rate across the world. Sadly, too many people, so many of them in authority, are hostile to human rights or indifferent to their claims or willing to devalue them as secondary issues. This makes it all the more imperative to reassert our firm belief in the call of the UDHR as a central mission for the entire world [11]. Most of this report involves a detailed discussion of the UDHR and its enduring relevance for today. But we begin by elaborating the sense of global community and global ethics in which both the Declaration and our discussions are grounded [12]. The idea that every human being is part of a seamless human fabric, a single global community, bound by moral ties to every other human being, is as ancient as recorded history. Confucius, born in the sixth century BCE in Lu State, China, conceived of all under heaven as the widest span of moral concern; two centuries later, Diogenes of Sinope, a Greek settler on the southern coast of the Black Sea, declared that he was a citizen of the cosmos, of the entire earth [13]. The Abrahamic faiths, Judaism, Christianity and Islam are all rooted in the concept that every human being is the creation of a loving God who cares for us and commands us to care for one another. Buddhism and Hinduism enshrine the interconnectedness of all creatures, the view of a shared humanity is voiced in the Southern African notion of Ubuntu, and the same fundamental insight is found in the traditions of peoples on every continent. There is, in short, a global understanding that, in the truest sense, we are a single human family. None of these separate traditions, however, proposed a commitment to a global community resting on the creation of a single world government. And neither do we. Historically, each held that moral duties were strongest toward those to whom we were closest. As concern moved out from friends and families, moral obligations were attenuated [14]. There were special obligations to those with whom we shared a state, but there were still real and significant obligations to others with whom we did not. This duty to care is the basis for citizenship local or global. The idea of global citizenship does not, then, exclude citizenship in a nation or state, or membership in a family or a local community. Indeed, it presupposes

that we have significant moral connections at all three levels. As a Commission on Global Citizenship, our charge has been to reflect on what it is for each of us to be members of a global community and, in particular, what each of us owes to all others everywhere. But recognizing that we are all members of single human community citizens, as Diogenes put it, of the entire earth is not just a matter of articulating rights and duties. It involves approaching each other with an attitude of respect and concern, treating each human being as someone who seeks and deserves to live a life of dignity, a life imbued with significance. For global citizenship to have practical meaning, we believe it is indispensable for us to come to a common appreciation of these basic ideas [15]. The need for a shared comprehension of our moral connections has become more and more pressing in the past century as the world has become more and more interdependent. Goods, money, diseases, pollutants, and ideas: all move across the globe more swiftly and sweepingly than ever, whether by ship or by plane, whether in the currents of the oceans and the atmosphere or electronically through the revolutionary media of our time, including, of course, the World Wide Web. Our ecological interconnections through climate change and global epidemics, for example – require us each to join together to overcome challenges that have an impact on us all, and on the prospects of generations yet unborn. Global economic realities, and especially the persistence of extreme poverty, confront us with problems that are practical as well as moral challenges, which we can only meet and master in common cause. In the decades since the Second World War, the UDHR stands as a monumental embodiment of that ancient idea that we all belong to a single global community and that all of us must do our part to ensure that every human being can live a life of dignity. With the endorsement of the nations of the world, the Declaration expressed the idea of the human family as a globally shared ideal. Article 1 speaks to the first principle that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. Article 2 holds that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration without exception. The notion of global citizenship can be empowering to every individual in the world, particularly when those suffering learn of its attachment to a set of basic human rights that are far more than they could have imagined. For this reason, we decided that exploring the continuing role and relevance of the UDHR was the best starting point for developing a common contemporary understanding of the meaning of global citizenship. That ambition is the guiding purpose of this report.

Conclusion

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Conflict of Interest

None

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