

**Conference on
SPIRITUALITY, CULTURE
and
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

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The categories we employ are the same as the ones we employ in our studies of our own societies, and they postulate the fundamental affinities of all human beings. Their persistent application in research and the diffusion of the results of research into the circles of influential opinion, will, it is hoped, further the process through which that sense of affinity, necessary for constructive policy, is nurtured. Our undertaking does not, however, intend to attain these moral effects through preaching, exhortation or manipulation. We seek to do it through enlightenment. Our chosen instrument of enlightenment is systematic research, conducted under the auspices of the best traditions of contemporary social science.

Edward Shils
(From his foundational essay for the Committee
on the Comparative Study of New Nations)

This document attempts to take a step beyond
this approach.

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Foreword

From their own varied experiences, the participants at the meeting sponsored by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) held in Val Morin, Quebec, in August 1995 sharpened, deepened, and enriched the central insights and challenges involved in any serious attempt to relate culture and spirituality to the dominant economic paradigm, especially in the context of developing countries with which many are personally familiar.

Participants avoided Vaclav Havel's (1995. The responsibility of intellectuals. New York Review, June 22) fear as they applied to the global economic paradigm various incisive criticisms and creative cures that are currently recommended for transforming all modern "abstract, theoretical visions of a better world" that risk becoming embedded in "holistic social engineering."

He [Popper] used this term ["holistic social engineering"] to describe attempts to change the world for the better, completely and globally, on the basis of some preconceived ideology that purported to understand all the laws of historical development and to describe inclusively, comprehensively, and holistically a state of affairs that would be the ultimate realization of these laws. Popper clearly demonstrated that this pattern of human thinking and behaviour can only lead to totalitarianism...

Instead of such holistic engineering, Popper argued for a gradual approach, for an effort to improve incrementally the institutions, mechanisms, and techniques of human coexistence, to improve them by remaining constantly in touch with experience and constantly enriching it. Improvements and changes must be made according to whatever has proved to be good, practical, desirable, meaningful, without the arrogant presumption that we have understood everything there is to know about how to change it for the better.

Indeed, it was clear from the enthusiasm, frankness, mutual trust, respectful listening, and critical creativity of the participants that IDRC's initiative in undertaking this project is now made legitimate - at least in the eyes of diverse partners and intellectuals from round the world. The discussions at the Val Morin meeting supported earlier recommendations to IDRC. These are: be open to nonconventional research; continue to pioneer interventions that embrace spiritual values and systems; and continue to build the research capacity of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

The Val Morin meeting in itself is evidence that IDRC as an organization is serious about moving forward on recommendations made to it earlier this year. In convening the meeting, IDRC has carried out the recommendation of hosting an informal international workshop on "nonconventional research": the meeting in Val Morin sought to reexamine and broaden the definition of research in the development field by placing relatively greater emphasis on people's concrete experience - marked, as it often is, by their values and beliefs, both cultural and religious. A central theme that emerged was the need to expand the notion of science and technology to incorporate into research other forms of knowledge and alternative perspectives of reality. Such research would be firmly rooted in a constant interplay between people's experience of reality and a process of abstract conceptualization. It was recommended that IDRC continue in the role of facilitator and convenor -- a locus around which interlocutors from many different disciplines cooperate in creating a new vision of development.

One participant, Heinz Sonntag, caught the spirit of the meeting by viewing it as a challenge to work toward a reenchantment of the world. Karl Knutsson's plea for conceptual hygiene went to the root of the inadequacy of the dominant economic paradigm by demonstrating its arbitrary use of specialized knowledge and of time - history - each cut off from their original experience and context. According to Knutsson, the paradigm simplistically considers as positive (enhancing development) variables that can change or be changed in the short run and sees as obstacles variables that change very slowly or can be changed only in the long run. Chandra Muzaffar recommended a search for reasons why the dominant economic paradigm is enjoying success, even in what would traditionally be considered hostile cultures and value systems, and suggested that among these reasons may well be the intimate relationship of the dominant model to communications mediums and other centres of power. Others suggested that this power is often intimately linked to a few dominant languages and cultures that are overtaking or homogenizing local languages and cultures. They want this wanton destruction of their traditional treasures stopped by empowerment of local peoples to become the chief protagonists of their own development.

There was a strong consensus that religious or spiritual values and systems must have a role in development research promotion. Although participants described many ways in which such values can or do foster or hinder human development, many were less specific about how to do research in this area or what phenomena should be researched. Some concentrated on the need for "self-conversion" and "consciousness raising," others on a case study approach. What seemed to be agreed on was that spirituality and religious values and systems must themselves be open to scientific research, just as science and scientific methodology must be more open to broader and alternative perspectives on reality. Chandra Muzaffar suggested that the best way to initiate such research is by using "the conversational approach" and by providing forums in which religious leaders and development specialists can engage in open dialogue.

The Val Morin group likewise endorsed efforts to build up NGO research capacity as the most practical way to engage local people directly in building civil society from its roots up and strengthening their communication networks. They favoured partnerships with small NGOs in contrast to current partnerships between bureaucracies. They also put high priority on small pilot projects and comparative case studies of the role of cultural and religious values in local development. Kamla Chowdhry insisted repeatedly on the

need to discover the hundreds, even thousands of local NGOs whose pioneer work in development remains invisible because they do not seek foreign aid or publicity. Local participation was seen as crucial, but the group did not discuss at any length the daunting problems involved in channeling the ideas and energies of NGOs through local elites and charismatic leaders to a wider public and to governments.

Participants challenged IDRC in two ways. First, they asked the Centre to continue to legitimize this process of nonconventional research -- especially through forums, contracting out creative "essays," through pilot projects and comparative case studies, and by communicating this process and its findings widely. They especially pleaded with IDRC not to see itself as a neutral observer in this research. The second, but perhaps more immediate request was that IDRC integrate this new approach to development research into its daily life.

These challenges were consolidated through the group's demand that "the evaluation process" of development agencies, including IDRC, be substantially changed to take into account indigenous spiritual and cultural values -- especially those based on different conceptions of the "time" dimension involved in development projects. They also saw the urgent need for IDRC to bring together a competent forum to address the fundamental questions: What is a successful development project? and What is an unsuccessful or failed development project? Without at least tentative answers to these questions all progress toward discovering a broader definition of development remains mired in inconsistencies and contradictions, as colourfully and humorously exemplified by several of the participants. Asking such elementary questions will challenge IDRC, not only to reconstruct its services, as it is presently doing, but, more fundamentally, to ask whether, in fact, a process of contracting-out research can really meet the expectations of groups such as the one that met at Val Morin, which shared so frankly its basic concerns and hopes for the future.

William F. Ryan, S.J.

Preface

The following document is a record of the meeting held by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in Val Morin, from 16 to 18 August 1995 (see agenda in Appendix A). Its purpose was to bring together leading practitioners and thinkers representing diverse disciplines -- religion, women's studies, education, political science, development -- and to encourage them to share their thoughts on the role of spirituality and culture in economic development. (A list of the participants appears in Appendix B.) During the conference they were asked to help identify the links between culture, spirituality, and the dominant economic model of global development. They were also asked to propose entry points for addressing obstacles to the integration of belief systems and values into development activity and to suggest to IDRC a possible research agenda in this area.

The main consensus reached during the course of the meeting was aptly summarized by Dr Farzam Arbab when he observed that participants were unlikely to reach a consensus on the nature of spirituality, but that sufficient consensus existed on the significance of a spiritual dimension to human life to support new approaches to development research. Dr Arbab's comment provided a springboard for other general themes arising from the conference, motifs that could help guide research choices within IDRC. These overarching themes can be summarized as follows:

- The point of departure is to expand the accepted notion of science and technology to incorporate into development research work other forms of knowledge and alternative perceptions of reality.
- A sine qua non of future development initiatives is a firm foundation in action and reality, i.e., the concrete experience of people, especially those who are most deeply affected by the change process.
- IDRC should not simply function as an observer in this process, but act as a facilitator and a convenor, a locus around which interlocutors from many disciplines can convene to help create a new vision of development.

The comments of participants were recorded during the conference, but not to provide a transcript. This report, which is based on those notes, is intended to relate the information imparted during the conference in a useful format. Accordingly, we grouped together related themes within time segments. This approach offers the advantage of grouping similar themes together without many of the problems of lumping together common themes over the course of the entire conference. The disadvantage of this approach is that some overlap will be apparent as some points were raised in more than one section.

Comments are grouped together under headings that attempt to encapsulate a unit of thought. The source of each comment is identified.

In composing this report, we tried to maintain the flavour, content, and tone that made this meeting such a special event, but the quantity of material and the varying forms of presentation presented us with some challenges. We welcome observations and feedback on this work-in-progress.

Introduction

At the beginning of the conference, participants introduced themselves and gave a brief statement about their reasons for being interested in the following question posed by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC): do spirituality and culture matter in economic development?

Current situation

Participants described a situation in which Western paradigms of development and culture predominate to the exclusion of other models, and in which rapid economic growth has brought increased social injustice.

Dr Ki-Zerbo pointed out that Western paradigms of development do not show the underlying cultural values or "software" that accompanies them. For Dr Chowdhry the concepts of the West filling the conceptual boxes often become intellectually polluted in a different reality. Often cultures have had their fundamental concepts taken away, distorted, and then reintroduced. Dr Dulyakasem reported that Thai society -- like many Asian societies -- has seen impressive economic growth, but that it has also suffered the consequences of rapid change in the wake of this upsurge: a growing gap between the rich and the poor, a breakdown in family cohesiveness, increased social problems, and depletion of natural resources. Similarly, Dr Ki-Zerbo described the poverty and misery in Africa as increasing, despite the money being spent on development.

Dr Kabira spoke about the opinions of the African women she works with, who see political structures as something for the rich -- who already have the basic necessities of life -- and for men -- who have time to spend. Women, they said, are too busy. She pointed out that an emphasis on political structures and certain models of development has helped to marginalize the experience of African women in development processes and to exclude them from choosing development that is for their benefit.

Ms Strong described a situation in which Western society has exported its love of money and power to the rest of the world. From her experience with business leaders, she concluded that even some of these people would like to change the system as it now stands, but the fear of competition from others keeps "the wheels turning." Dr Muzaffar noted that few people in public life have the ability to incorporate a sense of spirituality into the real world, but pointed to Dag Hammarskjöld as an example of a person with a powerful spiritual side to his life and work. Dr Muzaffar quoted Mr Hammarskjöld, who said, "On the bookshelf of life, God is a very useful work of reference; always at hand but seldom consulted."

Mr Barrett suggested that we have been let down by the "fix it" and "helper" models of development and that we are now searching for a new conceptualization, a "facilitator" model in which the West must become a partner in development. In this evolutionary process, Dr Knutsson drew attention to the recent nature of the current dominant paradigm of development saying, "The Western model of development is a short parenthesis in the post-colonial stage of human development."

Economic well-being does not guarantee people the happiness they are looking for¹

A number of participants characterized the emphasis of development paradigms on economic well-being as being misguided.

Mr Barrett suggested that the focus of development should be on human well-being, rather than economic well-being. Dr Arbab pointed to the generation and application of knowledge as the central process of human existence, whereas economic mechanisms merely provide the means for this process. Dr Ki-Zerbo spoke about true development as not simply "producing" or economic production, but as "se reproduire" (self-producing or reproducing humankind). Not everything can be measured in monetary terms, he said, adding for emphasis, "Older people are worth 'better' than their price." Ms. Strong quoted the King of Bhutan, saying he was more concerned about his people's GNH (gross national happiness), than the GNP (gross national product).

¹ Dr. Dulyakasem.

Dr Muzaffar pointed out that some of the major flaws in development thinking stem from an inability to come to grips with metaphysical questions. Both the right and the left have suffered from this flaw. One cannot talk about human welfare without talking about the basic concepts of the human being and human existence, but development thinking always shies away from these issues.

In this regard, Dr Knutsson referred to the difficulty of gaining a real understanding of human values. The way ordinary people interpret their experience, he said, is much different from the way it is interpreted by social scientists and economists, in particular. These disciplines, Dr Knutsson suggested, are expert at abstracting a few principles from reality, then reimposing those few principles as though they represented a complete picture.

The means of exchange are not primary motivating factors, Dr Knutsson added, but because people cannot articulate what really motivates them researchers do not consider these "other" factors to be important. (We know what we are against, but are confused about what we want.) There are technical dimensions to development, he agreed, but these are not the only dimensions. He asked how we give importance to "normal" people who cannot articulate why they know what is "right" and "good." Scientists, he said, value articulation and dismiss "normal" people. Development research has chosen the "hard" [quantifiable?] dimensions and neglected the rest. Dr Knutsson encouraged the recognition of the role of these epistemologic questions in researching and describing the experience that real people have of the world.

Dr Ki-Zerbo challenged the development community to look at the real causes of poverty, rather than focusing on its effects. Now, he said, we are not even looking at the most obvious causes, much less the deeper human causes of poverty.

Focus on the people, their ways of understanding, and their knowledge about their situation to evaluate an intervention and to determine what to do

Dr Sonntag pointed out that it is crucial that development be oriented toward and activated by the people who are to be its beneficiaries. He recalled work that was done in the 1960s and 1970s at the Centro de Estudios del Desarrollo on "styles of development." The work was much quoted for the insight it provided into how every style of development depended on who the actual beneficiaries of aid were. One of these styles of development was "acted by the people," and it is this style that Dr Sonntag believes should be rediscovered.

Dr Chowdhry reminded us that a real understanding of the problems of development must be achieved through experiential means, rather than through conceptualization. Development agencies, she said, will not do the hard work necessary to understand reality. By contrast, she pointed to Gandhi's experience on returning to India from South Africa. For the first year he did not talk about his concepts at all, she said, but instead traveled third class on trains around India, to observe the conditions. In this way, he came to a real understanding of poverty, rather than a conceptual understanding. Dr Chowdhry suggested that, like Gandhi, donors should be talking to the people in their own language and concepts, using words like "sin" and "salvation."

Dr Chowdhry pointed out that, over the last 25 years, partnerships have been with bureaucracy, not with the people who are struggling. The latter, she pointed out, is work for non-governmental organizations (NGOS) that do not work in English or within the accepted paradigm.

Dr Chowdhry said that emphasis in the past has been on modern university structures and quantitative analysis, like deprivation experiments performed on rats rather than by addressing the experience of deprived people. Dr Ki-Zerbo remarked that outsiders come to Africa to point out what the problems are and what the priorities for development should be. These people, he said, are not "developpeurs" but "developpementeurs" [mentir = to lie].

Dr Ki-Zerbo echoed Dr Sonntag's point that we must work in conjunction with the people who are the intended beneficiaries. He described the approach that development must take in the following aphorism, "You can help the tree to grow, but ultimately it must grow itself." Even if this approach is adopted, Dr Ki-Zerbo raised some concerns by asking, "How do you define the problems of a village? How do you bring the villagers to define their own problems and participate in the search for solutions?" He also raised the

issue of identity, saying that Western models try to cure the African without asking "who is the African?" For example, in African traditional medicine, the key relationship in the healing process is not between the patient and the medical treatment, but between the patient and the community. Therefore, unlike in Western societies, the community must be involved in the patient's return to health.

Mr Barrett pointed out that we should let people themselves decide what is "well-being," rather than having it decided for them. He told a story of villagers who, when asked what development initiative would help their village, asked for a mosque. The donor built a road instead. Dr Kabira related similar incidents, of women fashioning development structures for themselves that would sometimes run counter to the official initiatives. Although the women considered the projects to be extremely successful -- they paid for their children's school fees and uniforms, they came together as women to help each other with marital problems -- the donor agencies judged them to be failures.

Dr Guerrero pointed out that an empirical approach must be taken in any future research. He recommended looking to disadvantaged people and their communities -- recognizing their talents and their successful efforts at self-development -- and building on them. He described the poor as having an immense number of resources and positive characteristics: they are hard-working, intelligent, and often self-employed; they enjoy a rich family life and strong religious beliefs.

Despite encouraging the development work of small organizations, Dr Chowdhry noted that working through NGOs can be difficult. How do you identify the NGOs that are doing good work? How do you reach them? How do you learn to listen to their experiences?

Dr Guerrero provided his own yardstick for development initiatives, saying, "If they do not build solidarity, they are not working." Religious parameters help to promote development, he continued, but this help must meet a test: they are good if they promote betterment, they are bad if they harm human society.

Examine oneself and change one's own behavior first, before trying to change others

This idea, raised by Dr Chowdhry, found a number of supporters. Both Ms Strong and Mr Barrett talked about an evolution in consciousness being the first step to real change in development. Dr Dulyakasem mentioned that until we change ourselves, we cannot expect changes in the broader society. He concluded that to change, we must be ready to give up something.

Values to be considered in the redirection of development research

Both Dr Chowdhry and Dr Ki-Zerbo Stressed the importance of nonviolence as an overarching value in any new development paradigm. Dr Ki-Zerbo pointed out that both capitalism and communism were founded on violence, that in fact all human history is founded on violence. Thus, he said, the content of human history must be changed.

A number of conference participants also indicated that any development plan must be sustainable. Ms Strong asked how we can create a plan for human development that does not involve destroying things. We can start this healing process by training the next generation to think and act appropriately, with the understanding that over one billion young people will be entering the job market in the next 10 years. If we are going to create change, it will be up to the young generation to manifest these changes (this is why the Manitou Foundation developed the Earth Restoration Corps). Mr Barrett called for the inculcation of a consciousness of sustainability. Dr Dulyakasem pointed out that, for true happiness, people must live in harmony with nature. In this regard, Ms Strong pointed to the Iroquois as people conscious of sustainability; when making decisions about natural resources, they consider the possible consequences for up to seven future generations of their children.

Dr Ki-Zerbo reminded the group that values are produced historically; they include economic and scientific factors, as well as "negative" aspects. Dr Arbab suggested that the "arrow of history" seems to be pointing toward a world civilization, one that can encompass both the diversity and unity of the human race at the same time. Similarly, Dr Ki-Zerbo suggested two important points of reference for human development: a sense of belonging to a community of all living beings and all humans, as well as a sense of individual difference.

Religion has both negative and positive aspects, which should not be forgotten in analyzing its relation to economic development

Dr Ki-Zerbo reminded participants that, despite the positive effects of religion and spiritual values, religions also have a negative side that should not be ignored. Dr Guerrero said that although religious beliefs are important, a critical approach should be taken to their study.

Dr Arbab recommended that even as we explore spirituality, we should not forget history. Secularism may seem to have many problems, he said, but we must remember that it emerged as a response to the conflict inherent in the old approaches to spirituality. We do not want to regress. Research, undertaken with scientific methods is needed to assist in elucidating the reality of the oneness of human civilization: we must not reduce this reality to a diversity in which power decides who wins.

Nature of knowledge

Dr Ki-Zerbo pointed out that the "cult of science" has produced a wealth of human understanding and ways of knowing. Thus, other forms of knowledge are marginalized. Ms Strong suggested that consideration be given to all major spiritual traditions and ancient wisdom groups to regain their lost knowledge.

Drs Arbab and Knutsson focused on the compartmentalization of knowledge and warned that we must reexamine the disciplinary structuring of knowledge, looking at knowledge as a whole instead. Dr Arbab recalled a tenet of Islam, "Knowledge is one: the ignorant have divided it."

Considerations for future research²

Dr Sonntag pointed out that an important focus for the next 25 years is the trend toward forced homogenization of societies by the media and education. This trend, he submitted, ignores what is happening to heterogeneous groups that are struggling against mainstream thought to rediscover and reassert themselves. However, Dr Sonntag felt it was also important to further the rediscovery of collective identities and practices. It will be hard, he said, to find a development model that tolerates both the universal and particular at the same time. Because it is difficult to reconcile the competing models of the right and left, the mainstream - neoliberalism - occupies increasing space and is generating its own opposition.

Dr Yassin suggested that to understand economic development in a given society, one must have a cultural understanding of that society or an understanding of its "world view." He warned against looking at spirituality as though it were something static. World views, he said, are metaphysical entities that change over time, especially throughout the development of certain cultures. He pointed to the causes of these changes as an important focus of research. In the evolution of world views, sometimes the marginal outlook becomes dominant, and the dominant perspective becomes marginal. As an example, Dr Yassin cited the replacement of the Shah's modernism with the Mullah's Islamic world view.

Dr Yassin explained the concept of "reading" a religion - the interpretation of an individual's religious experience - is also important in understanding a particular world outlook. To understand religion within a culture, one must determine what reading of religion is meant. Today in Egypt, for example, two different readings of Islam exist: radical and moderate. Dr Yassin also recommended the use of comparative methods in research on world views, saying that it is important to understand why similar world outlooks produce different results.

Dr Yassin suggested a study of cultural policy in various societies to identify the cultural forces and barriers in a given society. This leads to the further issue of cultural strategy, that is, how do different forces in a society arrive at a minimum cultural strategy? These analyses, Dr Yassin said, will produce different responses to the question of the interaction between culture, values, and economic development.

2 These considerations are set out under the name of each without trying to group them thematically.

Final questions

At the end of the first morning, participants were left with one question that related to all of the suggestions. It was aptly summarized by Ms Strong and Ms Somerville, who asked: because the world cannot support everyone in a Western style of living, how do we sing the song of a simpler, less materialistic life?

Experiences and observations

The participants agreed that the goal of IDRC - to find ways to understand the role of spirituality and culture in development - is very important; they contributed the following observations.

Participants are unlikely to reach a consensus on the nature of spirituality, but there is a sufficient agreement about the existence of another facet of life to support a new approach to development research³

Dr Guerrero expressed concern about the imprecise nature of the terms "spirituality," "religion," and "beliefs," because they invoke different meanings for different people. Dr Ryan agreed that these words must be used carefully. The word "spirituality" is evasive; some people use it because they do not want to deal with the consequences of an association with [institutionalized] religion.

Several participants were concerned about the use of the term "spirituality" in a potential new approach to research because they feared it might deter some people. Dr Knutsson, for example, would have preferred to see "dimension of values" or "dimension of cultural preferences and meanings" used instead; these terms encompass spirituality but do not refer to it directly. On the other hand, Mr Barrett made a counterplea for the term "spirituality," saying it contains an element of unity, in that it is immediately recognizable, even if people are uncomfortable with it. He felt that the word "spirituality" should become better understood rather than discarded, and thus become common currency.

Development has failed even within its own definition of purpose

Dr Arbab made this point, adding that the failure of development has opened up the possibility of questioning the dominant paradigm. He pointed out that the dominant development model has not worked and that the secular lifestyle has not provided the intended rewards for people in developing countries. Now religion and spirituality are being considered for the insights they might offer. However, we must place this in the context of a world where the strongest voices do not accept this view; while we admit failure, certain highly materialistic ideologies claim triumph. Even well-meaning scientists working in development refuse to recognize 50% of reality - the belief systems of the people whose causes they support in development programs.

Dr Arbab suggested that the assumptions of the dominant development paradigm need to be made explicit and alternatives provided. He pointed out that already the issue of environment has opened up the question of spirituality and sustainability in development.

Dr Arbab said we are experiencing not a failure of method, but of concept, recommending a redefinition of the entire concept of development. A new one must address the following issues:

- The purpose must be a transformation of society beginning with a personal transformation.
- It must invoke history, if we are to understand where its arrow points. We cannot simply go back and start again. Scientific and technological developments are part of the history of the human race. However, they must be used to promote the kind of development that is about people and that views economic development as a means, not an end.
- It must indicate the protagonists, that is, the groups that development must support. African

3 Dr Arbab.

women, native peoples, or the people themselves must be viewed as the protagonists of their own development.

- It must take into account environmental impact. There is a new urgency in redefining development because of its effects. Nature cannot support development as we currently define it. The most common solution seems to be "scaling down." However, this is not necessarily the answer and alternatives have to be sought.

Dr Ki-Zerbo concurred, saying that, to date, development has not been real development. It has not taken into account the "human sacrifices" required by the dominant development paradigm.

On the other hand, Dr Sonntag advised the use of precision in discussing the characteristics of development that lead participants to conclude that development has failed. He mentioned that in economic terms, the Economic Commission for Latin America has had real success in Latin America. Diversification of economics resulted in an annual growth rate of 6% and supported extensive social services. More people gained access to education, housing, and health care. Today, we see the same successes in Southeast Asia, he pointed out.

Dr Guerrero reminded us that what we mean by development is definitely changing. It has moved from a purely economic meaning to a more "human" definition that is now incorporating the question of sustainability and moving on to an even more comprehensive understanding. But, he asked, how will we achieve that concept of development once we have decided what it is?

Learn from the people themselves, their experiences, and their values

The participants showed a strong preference for the process of learning about development from the beneficiaries themselves. Dr Chowdhry suggested looking at examples of spontaneous development - local organizations that have produced good results, such as the Ramakrishna mission, the Krishnamurfi organization, and the Volunteer Rural Organizations in India. Mr Barrett agreed with her suggestion to examine examples of spontaneous development because, he said, true transformation occurs from the inside out.

Dr Kabira pointed out that development has not really mobilized the wealth of knowledge and experience held by people in developing countries, adding that development workers have much more to learn from the communities themselves. She also spoke of alternative models of development being generated at the grassroots, by men and women finding their own solutions. She singled out the Harambe movement in Kenya as an example, yet also noted that it was dying out; because it was able to set up alternatives to government systems, the government neglected it. She recommended looking at their methods and their definitions (e.g., for well-being) as a starting point for development.

In a similar vein, Ms Strong recommended looking to civilizations of the past that existed in a sustainable way, and examining their practices and the wisdom and values they embodied. Dr Arbab pointed out that the scientific method requires that spirituality be taken into account, for we would not be approaching development scientifically if we simply ignored one of the factors that people value so much. This does not mean that change cannot occur, but it should not be imposed by disregarding what is already there.

Dr Muzaffar advised that attention should be paid to the dissenting voices against the dominant discourse, pointing to the Sarvodaya movement in Sri Lanka as an example. He felt that acts of resistance against the prevailing economic model are important and warrant attention. Citing the Chipko movement in India, Dr Muzaffar said that it resists the dominant discourse but will not shape the main political agenda. Research should determine why not.

Dr Chowdhry encouraged the use of case studies of successful local groups that would answer the questions: What mix of elements has produced such good results? Why are these groups supported by the people rather than by government and outside donors? She emphasized the fundamental consideration: "development is people." The suggestion for a practical approach was supported by Dr Ryan, who suggested empirical evidence as a valuable starting point and agreed that the use of case studies is a good approach. We must recognize, he said, how little we see because of the very nature of the networks we use.

Similarly, Dr Guerrero submitted that development is about the betterment of people; thus, rather than spending time on the development of theoretical models, we should look for practical models. He called development theorists "politologists" who, like pathologists who can determine cause of death but not offer a cure, know everything but too late. Practice should be the starting point, he said, from which theory should be developed through a process of induction and deduction. Look at successful projects, he recommended, such as those that have been able to reduce hunger and violence and increase social solidarity. He pointed to the microentrepreneurial system in Colombia and seed banks in India as good examples. Future development initiatives, he suggested, should bring together the practitioners of development and its theorists.

Because there are no absolute criteria for "goodness," Dr Guerrero concluded, a good project must be viewed as something that is producing good results. It is from experiential approaches, he suggested, that some general principles of true development can be deduced.

The allure of the dominant development paradigm

Dr Yassin suggested that new development research should stick to a specific problem, such as evaluation of the prevailing economic model. Considering the force behind the prevailing model, Dr Muzaffar agreed with the importance of research into the characteristics that have made it spread so quickly and made it the dominant mode of socioeconomic organization. He listed four questions that might form the basis for research projects:

How has the prevailing economic model overcome ideological systems that have dedicated themselves to the defeat of this kind of model (e.g., Cuba and Tanzania with their ideological fervour)? Dr Muzaffar wondered why, for example, Vietnam succumbed -its teenagers reaching out for free samples of Pepsi and Coca Cola.

How do we explain societies that, historically, have strong cultures but that have succumbed to the capitalist model (e.g., India, with its illustrious past, and China, a powerful country)?

Dr Muzaffar spoke about the factors explaining the rise of the prevailing economic model: the collaboration of local elites; the system's appeal to selfinterest; the harnessing of the power of science by the capitalist model; and the inability of communism to understand the importance of entrepreneurship. But we also have to ask if entrepreneurship is peculiar to capitalism or if it is more widespread when initiative is rewarded. Is self-interest the most important driving factor in this system, or is it a human tendency toward continuous comfort and ease?

Is the rapid economic growth of Asia another triumph of Western capitalism or it is a completely different phenomenon?

Dr Muzaffar suggested that Asian capitalism is not dependent on the subjugation of other people's territory, and thus is different from European capitalism. Moreover, unlike American capitalism, it does not dominate other cultures. However, like these other forms of socioeconomic organization, Asian capitalism still entails environmental degradation and the creation of an underclass.

Within the compass of this question, Dr Muzaffar also spoke about the differences between Asian and Western societies. In Asian cultures, people have a strong sense of community and, consequently, a different understanding of rights and responsibilities. By comparison, he pointed out that the Western view is based on strong principles of individualism and personal rights. Asian and Western societies also have very different concepts of freedom and authority: in Asia, respect for authority is still very strong, Dr Muzaffar said, whereas in liberal Western societies the notion of individual autonomy has undermined this respect.

In societies that claim to be based on religion (Sudan, Iran, Sri Lanka, and Nepal), is there a difference between ideal and reality?

Interaction of religion and science

Dr Arbab spoke about the basic disagreement in a certain view of science and religion, but noted that Newtonian concepts of science are giving way to allow other forms of knowledge to be validated. We still

have a long way to go, however, before science and religion are considered complementary forms of knowledge. Yet, at the level of essence, Dr Arbab said he found no real conflict between science and religion.

Dr Muzaffar also spoke about the relation of religion and science, saying that many people at the forefront of science are religious. The dichotomy between religion and science, he said, is a problem of Western society. He noted that science has often been developed in the womb of religion, citing the contributions of Islamic civilization to scientific knowledge and progress.

Dr Yassin, however, disavowed a relation between science and religion, saying that the enterprise of science is completely different than that of religion. He pointed out that religion cannot be a source of knowledge because it is based on belief.

Dr Arbab foresaw important shifts in both religion and science, saying that science must move to accept religion and that religion must open itself up to an evaluation of its results. He said, "Those who believe in religion as God-given do not have to yield to the efforts of those who seek to reduce it to a mere system of values and beliefs that can be used by development specialists as a new tool to advance the attainment of material well-being. On the other hand, religions that cannot deliver enhanced humanity will be judged: thus religion must open itself to examination." He emphasized that development must be scientific, but at a level that does not negate the spiritual dimensions of life.

Research methods and institutions

Dr Knutsson called attention to the many participants who had pointed out that our tools for analyzing social problems are crude. We remain confined by the positivistic sectoral consciousness that limits analysis, he said. The challenge is to strive for new conceptual frameworks that integrate elements such as health and education.

Development language is discredited, Dr Knutsson observed, because it covers only a limited field and because it has connotations connecting it to developmentalists, the inheritors of colonialism. Developmentalism is a "credo" based on a false scientific rationality. It hides more than it explains; it is a blanket term that causes the brain to stop working. Moreover, Dr Knutsson called on the skills of people who are interested in seeing development encompass these wider dimensions of human life, saying, "We have to be strategic. We are weak and the weak cannot afford to lose; the strong can."

Dr Arbab noted that development research encompassing culture and spirituality will require the defence of a set of methods that are not now accepted as traditionally scientific. For him, this aspect of the issue leads to the question of what we will accept as scientific? For the answer, he said, we must go back and look at the essence of science, that is, science as the use of a number of human faculties including imagination and intuition, in addition to reason, and not just as a particular set of procedures.

Dr Knutsson suggested some first steps to improve the development process: finding some clarity in the culture of developmentalism, engaging in some conceptual hygiene, taking account of cultural specificity, and proposing practical tools for more holistic program analysis.

In the area of methodology, Dr Arbab also suggested that the concept of evaluation needs to be challenged. Imposing certain models of evaluation, insisting on them, and tying money to them has killed a number of innovative initiatives, he asserted, and has overemphasized certain types of projects, thus rendering the field of development unscientific. Evaluation has been introduced as an artifact of "development science," he continued. It has killed many good initiatives because of the authority it has been given. You cannot go against it and still be considered credible. Your concerns can be easily countered with: You don't want to evaluate what you are doing? Yet, these modes of evaluation have imposed rigidity on development by demanding that results be precisely defined before achieving them. So much of scientific activity is about discovering and figuring out the unknown. To try to describe precisely the object of your search before you have found it is unscientific, indeed.

For Mr Barrett, development practice must accept the notion of unconditional assistance, otherwise a conflict of belief systems occurs, with Western beliefs being imposed on another culture. Failing unconditional assistance, Mr Barrett asked, how do we evaluate development initiatives? He

recommended that a whole new set of evaluation parameters focusing on values be devised. This approach would examine the values behind an experience that both participants and beneficiaries deemed successful. We need new ways of evaluating the new "transforming processes" that start with a study of the underlying values and only value these values. To judge and select values while evaluating is to impose belief systems. Yet, Dr Guerrero pointed out, epistemologic problems could appear in this method of evaluation: who should be the judge of benefits from a spiritual point of view?

Dr Knutsson suggested that universal standards can exist, finding their expression in the concept of the "good society." He emphasized that this definition must be sought through negotiation. He challenged development to find another way of planning that is based on a culturally acceptable definition of "good society."

Dr Sonntag recommended a number of areas for research, recalling those posed by the Gulbenkian Commission on the Social Sciences. To his mind, development should look at:

- The implications of refusing the ontological separation of humans and nature;
- The implications of refusing to consider alternatives to the state as the theatre of social action;
- The implications of not accepting as constant the tension between the one and the many; and
- The implications Of the refusal to accept the fallibility of science.

Dr Chowdhry pointed out that often the parts of development that have not worked have been delivered by the big (international, foreign) institutions. In India, there are large invisible (indigenous) organizations - many based on the principles of karma yoga - influencing millions of people to do good work in hospitals and in forestry. These examples of development that works are worthy of research into the reasons for their success.

At one time, Dr Chowdhry explained, service was delivered by one individual to another, but now we need institutions to provide these services. But, she asked, how do you build institutions that are not instruments of power and control and that do not exclude the poor? Research into institutional modalities is required to harmonize spirituality and development. Dr Chowdhry asked if the question of the North's consumerism was researchable, saying ,if so, the research must be done in the North, not the South

Dr. Arbab said that the challenge is to make development scientific – true to the tenets of good science that have helped us to understand nature and society.

But, to be scientific, development must encompass a greater set of knowledge and knowledge systems; it must be open, so that it does not neglect the spiritual dimensions of life.

Values and their importance

Dr. Chowdhry emphasized the fact that nonviolence – and its relation to equity, ecology, and technology – is the key to development. She asked how research could reinforce the value of nonviolence, in the arms industry, for instance, but also as in the choice of technology, in relations between people and nature, and between the men and women. She noted that nonviolence is an issue for "developed" countries, as well as developing countries, pointing out that although the developing countries may buy arms, it is the Western nations that are selling them.

Dr Ki-Zerbo agreed that nonviolence must be considered as an important value in development, quoting the African proverb, "If there was anything good in violence, the meanest dog would find it." He pointed out that the state claims to be the holder of the legitimate use of force; thus, if the state is not effectively constituted (and Dr Ki-Zerbo felt that in many cases it is not), then the use of violence cannot be legitimized.

Dr Dulyakasem advised an examination of the development plan of each society, keeping in mind the question of the extent of incorporation of religious and local beliefs. Another question to be asked, he said, is what proportion of these values belong to marginalized people in those societies? He also wondered

about the mechanisms through which values are transmitted to a culture, and the extent to which external research and/or funding agencies can help promote values to guide positive development in other cultures.

Dr Ki-Zerbo noted that values can be fabricated, especially by the media. Moreover, he noted that media can fabricate both the products and the consumers, citing Dr Muzaffar's graphic example of Asian teenagers reaching enthusiastically for free samples of Western soft drinks. Development should be asking how the media can do this. What values are being projected by the media? Can we avoid the homogenization of values by the media?

Dr Ki-Zerbo also pointed out that as languages disappear, values vanish as well. Different value systems are often expressed through the characteristics of the language. A few languages dominate the areas of science, technology, and the arts, he said, and these control the portrayal of these areas and our world views.

Dr Kabira reminded us, however, that sometimes we defend culture without asking who is being served and, particularly, how men and women are being affected differently by a traditional culture. She pointed, for example, to the wisdom embedded in traditional African proverbs, which is often very antiwomen. Thus, she said, development must address other oppression, not just poverty. When thinking about development, she added, gender perspectives must be taken into account through more sensitive research methods.

Dr Ki-Zerbo pointed out that women have been marginalized in Africa, just as they have been in many other cultures. The myths and proverbs of a society can reflect this marginalization. As a case in point, Dr Ki-Zerbo told a story about a woman pounding grain, who was blamed for knocking heaven out of reach of humankind when she pushed the sky (heaven) higher with her pestle. Yet, traditional society also provides positive lessons, Dr Ki-Zerbo emphasized. In traditional African religions, he said, women are not segregated from the men. The positive in all cosmologies must be captured, he said, to create a new vision of the world.

Dr Ki-Zerbo also suggested examination of relations involving the state and transnational corporations. Where the state was once the depository of societal decision-making, that role has now been taken over by other forces such as transnational corporations. Civil society has also been weakened. As a remedy, Dr Ki-Zerbo suggested the definition of a new type of citizenship - global, endogenous, aboriginal - a citizenship that reaches below the state to the level of community and beyond the state to the global level. These are both areas that the state has not been able to encompass.

A concluding thought

Dr Ki-Zerbo concluded that development must look for a dynamic articulation of a new social system. Research should look to the best of what was done in the past (e.g., pragmatic experiences and success stories), and should also consider prophetic visions for a new social structure. In seeking these new social structures, development researchers can be compared to the explorers of the 15th century. The task is to understand the "physiology" and not just the "anatomy" of societies. The explorer must look for both elements and examine how these elements fit together to articulate a new method of searching.

Addressing obstacles and building a research agenda

Based on the first day's discussion, a summary paper was prepared by IDRC and distributed to participants for their feedback (Appendix C). Response was positive; participants seemed satisfied that the trend of the meeting had moved from general principles to concrete proposals. Participants then went on to refine the questions and themes presented in the paper.

With respect to the terminology used in the summary paper, Ms Somerville questioned the use of "betterment of human beings," saying that the term carried shades of the 19th-century "white man's burden." She would have used the word "happiness" instead because it better captures the ephemeral quality of human development. Dr Knutsson suggested the use of "betterment of the human condition" instead, and Dr Ki-Zerbo agreed. Dr Ki-Zerbo reminded us that in development we are not merely referring to being "better," but to existing in a more substantial way.

"When the head is there, we do not dress the hair on the knee"

Dr Ki-Zerbo used this African proverb to highlight the erroneous focus of many development projects. Equating the head to the people and the knee to the state, he said that current development initiatives often dress the hair on the knee. Thus, even though the United Nations Charter talks about "we the people of the world," the state inevitably takes over and the people must submit to its will.

Similarly, Mr Lincoln raised the point of megaprojects, which he said disregard completely the local values and mores of the people affected. Development, he said, is between donor organizations and the state without consideration of the values of the local populations.

Dr Arbab recommended that the protagonists and actors in development be identified and that development be done with and for them, the people who are supposed to benefit. Dr Ki-Zerbo recommended that IDRC support research on cultures as they exist in their dynamic state, like the research on the African identity done by the Centre for African Development Studies, which considered endogenous and exogenous factors as well as historical facts.

Dr Kabira expressed her happiness at being involved in the conference because, as she reminded the group, Africa often receives developmental frameworks that are conceived elsewhere. It feels good to be at the beginning of the process, she said.

Ms Somerville declared that it is important for IDRC to support what is not dominant. Moreover, she asserted that dominant paradigm(s) cannot hold the kind of truth development is looking for. A great deal of religion exists, Ms Somerville concluded, "but holiness and prophecy are rare." IDRC, she suggested, must "listen for what is 'alternative' and never will be in the 'driver's seat.'"

Mr Lincoln submitted it would be hard to bring about this transformation because donor agencies themselves resist reforming their way of thinking. Canada is moving toward the right, as are many industrialized countries, he added, and this political shift obviously effects the institutions that donors fund.

We must encourage and support a broader definition of research and knowledge than is contemplated in Western scientific tradition

Dr Muzaffar suggested that a consensus seemed to be emerging among the participants: IDRC should focus on concrete projects. To his mind, concrete projects dealing with the nondominant discourse could be divided into two categories:

- Ongoing projects that revolve around religion as defined by those involved in them (e.g., Sarvodaya movement in Sri Lanka, that works from the values of Buddhism); and
- Protest movements that reflect the dissident reaction against globalization and the dominant paradigm, and against how governments have organized national economies.

Dr Muzaffar also advised that research methods should be changed so that these voices of the people are heard, suggesting that a "conversational style" of research should be considered.

Mr Lincoln also suggested that development initiatives should be approached from a practical perspective. He warned against being too ambitious, suggesting small pilot projects (definable, concrete, achievable) that reflect culture and spirituality. These projects, he said, could be put in place around the world and lessons could be drawn from their experiences. People respond to concrete examples that illustrate real achievement, he suggested, thus these small projects could be used to illustrate the success that can be achieved by taking these "other" factors into account. Like Mr Lincoln, Dr Guerrero suggested that once you have the results of project in hand, you are better able to convince others of its value.

Mr Lincoln pointed to two successful development project, IDRC's Goldfinger Banana project⁶ and his

6 IDRC sponsored research that resulted in the breeding of a banana resistant to a virus that threatened this important source of food and livelihood of millions of people.

experience with the Algonquins of Barrier Lake. Regarding the latter, he highlighted how spiritual and cultural input had worked in practice, not through studies and papers. To answer the question of how you develop a territory that is reflective of the traditional native Canadian way of life, Mr. Lincoln spoke about working with Algonquin elders to produce a picture of the land as it once was, and to gain insight into the traditional way of life and its techniques to ensure sustainability.

Ms Somerville also stressed the importance of supporting small projects. Small projects, she explained, mean that the quality of "human happiness" is more realizable because no single paradigm can prescribe the improvement of human conditions for everyone.

Dr. Guerrero suggested that research should focus on concrete examples, saying that contact with reality is the key to understanding and development, "One can't learn to swim by mail," he added. Dr Kabira also recommended that development research examine grassroots groups, such as the Pan African Christian Women's Association, a regional association in Kenya, to find out how their Christian values affect their projects and how their values relate to their work.

Mr. Lincoln, Dr Chowdhry said, had nudged the discussion from knowledge to political action. The emphasis in development, she continued, should be on appropriate action not on more knowledge. An emphasis on knowledge does not get much accomplished, she said, pointing to the lack of action during the 20 years between the 1972 and 1992 environment conferences.

Dr Chowdhry proposed a developmental process in which action is important and knowledge emerges from the action. Knowledge must be linked to action, she emphasized, and should not appear in isolation. Gandhi, for example, was very successful in igniting social action on a large scale. He urged his followers to spend some part of each day spinning khadi as an act of solidarity and nonviolent resistance against the Lancashire cotton manufacturers. Gandhi's method exemplifies a number of elements of social action, Dr Chowdhry said. The role of symbolism in social action is important, as is doing something everyday, on an individual basis, that is related to social action. Dr Chowdhry referred to the practice of karma yogi by which some people in India seek salvation through good action, devoting some part of their lives to serving developmental processes.

Dr Yassin suggested that good use could be made of a study of the positive and negative impact of "globalism" on small entities like NGOs and churches. Homogenized national economies, reduced accountability, and global economics are all negative aspects of globalism, Dr Yassin pointed out, yet (paradoxically) globalism can also promote an increasingly common basis for human relations.

Drs Arbab and Dulyakasem emphasized that inquiry into new development paradigms and their results should not end up at the level of academic research; Dr Ki-Zerbo recommended against doing research for the sake of doing research. IDRC, he said, must show how research will be linked to practical initiatives, that is, how the models that arise from research will be adopted in everyday life.

Dr Dulyakasem was not convinced that scientific or academic research would help alleviate the suffering inflicted on people as a result of the dominant economic model. How will poor people benefit practically from this knowledge? How will they learn about this knowledge and its insights? He recommended reconsidering requirements for funding, such as the condition that proposals be in English, which guarantees that only certain groups will receive funding. He also suggested that IDRC determine how to distribute its knowledge in an understandable manner, through translation and dissemination strategies.

Dr Knutsson cited variation in the accessibility of knowledge as a potential difficulty in broadening our understanding of other cultures, adding "the more important knowledge is, the less we tend to articulate it. Instead we live by it." Whole areas of knowledge have been ignored by Westerners in the past 200 years, Dr Chowdhry added, saying that people who are university educated talk only about one kind of knowledge. She stressed the difference between "knowledge of familiarity" and knowledge that comes from university study. Knowledge of familiarity comes from indigenous groups and encompasses "other" understanding, Dr Chowdhry suggested that we need to generate more knowledge on the development process. It is important to select the 'right partners' for case studies, and vision etc. and to build bridges between "different" kinds of knowledge and the narrower (scientific) knowledge that is common currency today.

Dr Kabira emphasized that development research should work hard to maximize the input of women into the broader definition of knowledge that it wants to develop. She suggested that women's contributions could help prevent human catastrophes like last year's massacres in Rwanda.

Dr Kabira pointed out that development research must take into account different understandings of reality, such as those of African people. In the same vein, Dr Ki-Zerbo added that research must go beyond the abstractions of science to the reality of the human condition.

What alternatives should IDRC and other donors consider?

Dr Knutsson suggested a series of four exploratory essays, rather than scholarly articles:

- The question of the "good" society: Comparative focus group discussions could be set up among selected countries and communities, concerned professionals, and governments to look at questions such as: what are their respective visions of a "good society" in all its dimensions (i.e., organizationally, technologically, scientifically, and spiritually) and how would they achieve improvements in the human condition?
- Where "values" have been taken seriously: Another essay could examine movements in various countries that have experienced spontaneous development to demonstrate how a mix of science, values, and people's world views result in benefits.
- Historical examples: Another essay could explore an historical dimension, to reveal Western examples of authentic and spontaneous development (e.g., the folk college movement in Denmark).
- A conceptual framework* recognizing values: Another essay could elaborate a new conceptual framework that gives appropriate weight to values and other aspects of the human reality that, compared with physical and economic indicators, may be more difficult to capture but nevertheless are crucial for the correct understanding of problems and for desirable and sustainable change. This essay must encompass the time dimensions in social reality: development organizations have traditionally focused on the aspects of society that change rapidly, or those that can be manipulated to change immediately. Those dimensions that change slowly or are more permanent features of society are considered to be "obstacles to development."

Dr Sonntag indicated three possible areas of focus for development research:

- As evidenced by speeches at the World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen, there exists at the ideologic level much concern about the conditions of disadvantaged groups. However, even with all the rhetoric and policy, the level of practice is dominated by neoliberalism. One can either choose to live with this situation and hope it ends, or one can try to influence the practitioners and their theoretical advisors. The question is how do we reach them? Sometimes NGOs can reach the power structures, but most often these structures are inaccessible. If IDRC and other research groups are concerned about the direction of world development research, they must learn to understand the nature of power relations and power structures within each society.
- The alternative today is not to adopt the world view of the World Bank or International Monetary Fund, but to focus on where we are today and how we got here. Thus, a case can be made for historical research as prospective research. Historical research may be the only way that an effective case for a new approach to development can be prepared and presented.
- The cultural background of Latin America is different from that of other developing regions. Latin American countries are often more united and more culturally uniform. Indigenous peoples are only now asserting their cultural identity. These characteristics raise political concerns, questions of multiculturalism, and the incorporation of indigenous religions. Dr Sonntag advised that questions surrounding the new cultural identity of black Latin Americans should be an avenue for exploration. As well, IDRC should bring people together to exchange experiences, so that Latin Americans can learn from the experience of Africans and Asians.

Dr Arbab suggested that research must view spirituality and material existence as interwoven into the practice and process of development, with an view to using material criteria as a means to promote human ends, not as ends in themselves. This approach means asking questions like:

- How do you motivate people? Dr Arbab pointed out that this question cannot be dismissed by the simplistic answer, "First you feed people, then they will think about higher things."
- What can bring about the kind of change in human beings and groups of people that enables them to contribute to the transformation of society? Dr Arbab identified this is a question at the interface between religion and science.
- How do you build a process that encourages unity and unity of vision when conflict is a way of life? Dr Arbab cited, for example, NGOs that work at cross-purposes.
- How do you reach consensus at different levels - the universal and the particular - in a way that it is not imposed?
- How do we find a new process of decision-making that involves spirituality?
- How do you promote initiative so that it does not emphasize strong individualism, but creates a balance between individuality and community?
- What role does moral leadership - not based on control and power, but on unity and service to humanity - play in this process?
- Technological choice is the basis for the strength of the prevailing economic model. Most people have difficulty applying their principles to the choices that the model offers. How do you help people make the right choices and not be fooled by the blandishments of every modern advance? Furthermore, what is appropriate technology? Dr Arbab pointed out that Schumacher's ideas about appropriate technology and 'small is beautiful' began a search for an answer to this question. But as the discourse advanced, it became clear that the question of appropriateness had to be answered at the level of values and, at that point, the discourse dissipated.
- What is the role of youth in this process? Dr Arbab pointed out that the real potential for transformation can be found in youth, and the real potential for transformation can be found in youth, and the real tragedy of everyday society presents itself to the youth. He described the millions of youth people who have no options, in both rural and urban areas: they have no land, no jobs, and no possibility of education.

Dr Muzaffar raised some concerns about IDRC's summary paper, saying that the concerns it raises are "timeless," and that it does not focus adequately on the concerns of today. He felt that three points were not reflected:

- It did not deal with the rapid diffusion of a certain mode of development;
- Communications technology has become both a symbol of this mode of development and has control over it. Alternative modes of development also need arteries of communication or access to them to spread their message: and
- The first two points in the list have been responsible to some extent for religious and cultural revivalism, as an assertion of identity against the pressure of homogenization.

Dr Muzaffar felt that IDRC should bring together people of different faiths with open minds to look at questions of development and technology. He encouraged a multifaith focus on the issues surrounding development, such as trade, markets, science, and technology. This approach was taken, with respect to environment issues, during the NGO forum in Rio de Janeiro and in Melbourne, regarding the rights of the child. What does one think of a global economy where narcotics and arms dominate trade? What do people of faith think about a world where financial matters are dominated by speculation rather than

production?

In a similar vein, Mr Barrett recommended bringing together individuals from different disciplines - science, environmental studies, and economics - for an intersectoral dialogue to discover the spiritual aspects and approaches in each of these disciplines.

Dr Yassin questioned the ability of social science research to be objective, recalling a statement by Myerdaal: "To declare one's objectivity is to declare one's subjectivity from the start. " He suggested that to counterbalance this tendency, IDRC might support a test of the hypothesis that spirituality is important in development by comparing the results of organization(s) working from this basis (or with this viewpoint) with the results of secular organizations.

Dr Yassin was also concerned about how religion can be used politically against the initiatives of a secular state. Thus, he recommended an examination of cultural conflict and how religion can be used politically in a negative way.

Dr Kabira pointed out that development research must take into account different understandings of reality, such as the different world views of African people. She hoped that the process of evaluation could be widened to take into account people's values and visions, and to accommodate differences in their perspectives of happiness. Mr Barrett indicated that the elements of vision, passion, and service should also serve a function in evaluation criteria. These elements tap into people's deepest and most selfless motives for action.

Dr Chowdhry said that if IDRC is interested in learning more about NGOs and organizations working in India, she or her organization would be glad to act as bridges to the experiential knowledge they have.

A role for IDRC

Dr Kabira indicated that IDRC should act as a facilitator of knowledge that already exists, rather than a conveyor of new knowledge. Dr Sonntag saw IDRC as bringing people together, to help with exchanges of experience. Dr Ki-Zerbo, however, felt that the IDRC could not remain a referee in this new approach to research, but make some decisions.

Mr Lincoln saw IDRC is being ideally placed to do the kind of development research recommended by the participants. He described it as small, adaptable, traditionally innovative, and close to local populations.

With reference to point two of the summary paper, Dr Arbab felt that IDRC research is a contributing element to the discourse on development, and that it can be used to influence that discourse. The specific role of IDRC, he indicated, is to make sure that the taboo on spirituality set up by the scientific, developmental mindset is lifted. Meetings and texts are all very valuable, but IDRC must also look at the mechanisms already being used to shape the discourse on development. For example, he suggested that IDRC explore the use of media to bring the concepts of spirituality into the development discourse of ordinary people; he spoke favourably of WETV,⁷ a project already undertaken by IDRC.

Dr Muzaffar felt it was important that the voices of the nondominant discourse be conveyed to the centres of power. He suggested the IDRC could play a role in interpreting and analyzing these views, and conveying them to the centres of power. No organization, he pointed out, is totally white or black. All organizations contain the possibility for change. In the same vein, Dr Dulyakasem felt that IDRC should work with organizations like the Canadian International Development Agency and the World Bank to change their approaches to development.

Participants suggested a number of partners for IDRC in a potential new direction in development research: the Dag Hammarsköld Centre; the Centre for the Advancement of Man; the Sarvodaya

7 WETV is a global television network, dedicated to engendering a deeper understanding of the critical issues that will shape our world in the 21st century. Its objective is to provide a balance of programming from both Southern and Northern sources, while favouring the work of independent producers.

movement in Sri Lanka; the Pan African Christian Women's Association; and various projects in India.

Values to be considered in the redirection of development research

Dr Ki-Zerbo felt that the struggle of all living things, the multiplication of choice, the exclusion of exclusion, and the improvement of the condition of life were all important values to be considered when working in development. He highlighted solidarity as the most important value in African transformation, citing the following proverb to emphasize his point. In Africa, if an observer sees another person being killed or wounded, the observer does not say to the attacker "do not kill that man," but instead says "do not kill us."

Ms Strong said that the root of the problem is in the human consciousness; one of the most important questions to answer is "what transforms the human heart and mind?" She suggested that a person must first connect with some aspect of transformational spirituality and mind that develops an enlightened attitude and viewpoint before he or she goes out to help others.

Dr Ki-Zerbo expressed his belief that there are no "good guys" or "bad guys" in this endeavour. Everyone needs to be brought together to create a synergy.

A citizen in a multireligious society, Dr Muzaffar said, knows that there are many similarities shared by the different faiths. He used the words of Jalal al-Din Rumi, the Sufi mystic poet, to summarize his thoughts: "The lamps are different, the light is the same. "

- APPENDIX A -
Agenda

Spirituality, Culture and Economic Development
16-18 August 1995

16 August 1995

	Far Hills Inn Dining Room and Lounge
7:30 pm	Welcome by <u>Pierre Beemans</u> , followed by dinner Cocktail reception
9:00 pm	

17 August 1995

8:00 - 9:00	Breakfast (Dining Room)
	(all meetings will be held in Spruce Lodge)
9:00 - 9:15	Introduction: P. Beemans
9:15 - 9:20	Chair Introduction -
	Establishing protocol for the meeting: A. Whyte

I Experiences and Observations: when belief systems meet development interventions.

9:20 - 10:30	Identifying the linkages between culture, spirituality and the global economic environment.
10:30 - 10:45	Coffee Break

II Entry points for addressing obstacles toward belief system and development integration: Challenges and Opportunities

10:45 - 12:00	Entry points to challenges and opportunities
12:00 - 1:30	Lunch (Dining Room)
1:30 - 2:30	Break
2:30 - 4:00	Challenges and opportunities - continued
4:00 - 4:15	Coffee Break
4:15 - 5:30	Identifying points of convergence, and divergence
7:00	Dinner (Dinning Room)

18 August 1995

8:00 - 9:00	Breakfast (Dining Room)
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III Building a Research Agenda

9:00 - 10:30	Participants' wise counsel to IDRC
10:30 - 10:45	Coffee Break
10:45 - 12:00	Likeminded partners, possible resources
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch (Dining Room)
1:00 - 2:00	Last thoughts. Closing of session.

- APPENDIX B -
List of participants

Farzam Arbab, Baha'i World Centre, Haifa, Israel
Richard Barrett, Principal Urban Transport Specialist, World Bank, USA
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**- APPENDIX C -
Summary Paper**

**SPIRITUALITY, CULTURE AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT**

Choosing strategic options

To encourage the process of relating "development" theory and reality to the betterment of human beings:

- Generate more knowledge on "development" processes.
Mechanisms - possibly through case studies: to broaden the vision; to report on what alternatives have worked to make people better off; to encourage a rethinking of the vision of "development."
- Question what is needed to broaden the notion of scientific research to include culture, values, and belief systems.
Mechanisms - possibly through fora to encourage dialogue among spiritual and development practitioners and theoreticians.
- Encourage a dialogue among those with different scientific world views.
Mechanisms - possibly through fora to encourage dialogue among "scientists" from different traditions.
- Promote the reexamination of the nature of evaluation.
Mechanisms - possibly through fora to bring together those concerned with issues of accountability for public financing (e.g., the auditor general), development banks, political leadership, with researchers and practitioners.