



Personal Contribution to the Helsinki Process

Post-Tsunami Lessons Learned

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The tsunami in the Indian Ocean on December 26 2004 killed around 150,000 people and injured another 500,000. This tragedy is clearly an issue of human security, although this is not the result of globalisation. This event is the result of a disparity in the development of the global economy and society over past two centuries. It can be seen that the developed countries, such as Japan and the United States, have established early warning systems that have not been shared with developing countries. Two lessons can be derived from this event: (1) Relatively equitable growth should be pursued in the process of globalisation; and, (2) The role of U.N. should be further strengthened to coordinate a global strategy for establishing early warning systems in the developing regions of the world.

It seems that achieving the MDGs by 2015 will be difficult in Africa based upon a new report by the U.N. Economic Commission for Africa. Real GDP growth of African countries as a whole reached only 3.8% in 2003, only five countries—Angola, Burkina Faso, Chad, Equatorial Guinea and Mozambique-achieved the 7% growth of GDP necessary to reach the MDG of halving poverty by 2015. Trade liberalization alone will not boost growth and poverty reduction in African according to the above-mentioned report 2004. Better workforces, improved economic and political governance and better quality infrastructures are required. These require a strong political will both domestically and internationally. More ODA is required from the developed countries, though many developed countries have announced that it will take seven to ten years for their ODA to meet the UN target of 0.7% of the GDP. There is need to further change the value and instrument on this.

Although China seems to be in a better position to meet the MDG concerning poverty reduction, the Chinese poverty line is not set up in accordance with the World Bank standard of 1USD per capita per day. If the World Bank standard is used, then the GDP per capita of Guizhou province, the underdeveloped region of South Western part of China barely meets 1USD/capita currently. This illustrates the need for a more realistic measurement of poverty that accounts for the concrete conditions found in different countries.

China has become relatively open and transparent on the issue of HIV/AIDS. President Hu-jintao has visited people suffering from HIV/AIDS, and he had praised the doctors and nurses engaging in their treatment.

In terms of hard security, unilateral action should not be adopted; conflicts should be negotiated with interested partners. The U.S. Congress had raised two issues against China: one is the exchange rate of RMB via the dollar, the other is the

acquisition of IBM's personnel computer business by Lenora, China's biggest computer supplier. In a globalised world, the exchange rate of RMB will not only effect the U.S. and China, but it will also effect other Asia-Pacific countries. China imports a large amount of goods from its Asian neighbouring countries and holds a trade deficit with most of them. Appreciation of RMB will affect those countries. For the case of IBM-Lenova, it is the determination of the firms concerned. Therefore, in a contemporary globalised society, unilateral action should not be adopted by one government; all interested groups should be invited to negotiate to get a satisfactory solution.