



CNI

COMMENT - Will Financing for Development 2015 be 'good news for the poor'?

Archbishop Justin Welby urges leaders gathering in Addis Adaba this week for the third annual UN conference on financing for development to reach an ambitious agreement that reflects Christ's good news for the poor. Archbishop Justin writes -

The achievements of the Millennium Development Goals have been enormous. They have contributed to many people being lifted out of poverty. More than that, they have raised the profile of development of the poorest on the face of the earth in a way that would have seemed impossible in the 1990s.

Yet even more remains to be done. The very success of the last fifteen years points to what can be achieved. Humanity is called to justice, compassion and standing alongside the poor. St

Paul, writing to the Christians in Philippi, said that Jesus, although in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant. (Philippians 2:6-7). The pattern of the love of Christ is for the powerful to serve, the rich to give and the vulnerable to be cherished so that they may flourish and stand strong. The pattern of God is the rule for human beings.

We all recognise the need for a just and sustainable pattern of growth and development. Economic growth plays the foundational role in aiding development, but cannot be a goal in itself. The poverty, inequality and environmental destruction that surrounds us must be tackled. There is clearly a biblical injunction against the systematic and indefinite accumulation of grossly unequal societies. We need to re-set the dial, to re-examine the way that our global economy works, and to put the flourishing of all humans at the heart of what we are collectively trying to achieve. We need a global economy that includes everyone, in which no-one is without a voice.

This year's global gatherings are the best opportunity we have had for a long time to do just that. The forthcoming **Financing for Development Conference** is a chance to re-

examine whether we are getting the right resources to the right people in the right way to help them flourish. It will also be an opportunity to consider how we can have more effective, democratic and accountable institutions for managing global finance and for promoting effective cooperation that contributes towards the global common good.

The gap in financing that faces developing countries as they seek to implement the Sustainable Development Goals over the next fifteen years is a challenge we are each called to meet – and where God calls, God equips. The challenge is within our grasp. When we recognise and understand the urgency with which we must tackle the global issues of our time, then the political will to mobilise resources must follow. Business as usual will result in the poorest and most vulnerable being left behind. All must play a part if we are to avoid this happening.

Promises have been made by developed countries, and these promises must be honoured. On aid. On climate finance. I rejoice in the United Kingdom's leadership in meeting its commitment to give 0.7% GNI in aid, a clear and significant commitment to solidarity with our global neighbours. And while aid is only part of

the solution, it saves lives in emergencies, can support a safety net for the most vulnerable, and be a catalyst for other forms of investment.

We need collective international action to reduce the harm done by tax dodging and the illegal movement of money from one country to another. Strengthening the tax base in developing countries can increase the capacity of governments to create an environment where people can access basic services and can flourish. This requires leadership and courage from political leaders in these countries. The less positive effects of globalisation and outdated and overly complex global tax rules mean that much finance leaves developing countries untaxed. We urgently need increased transparency, fairer and simpler global tax rules, and institutions that allow developing countries to contribute to the global tax debate.

We need a just system of international trade that prevents the rich protecting themselves while the poor can do nothing. The dignity of creative work is a gift of God in creation, a treasure which is so often forgotten that it is easily stolen. Creative work preserves and treasures the creation, in a partnership of care and respect.

Just as aid and global structures are part of the puzzle, so too is the crucial role to be played by companies (large and small) and private investors. We must encourage innovative and responsible investment that helps people to realise their human rights, helps to reduce inequalities between men and women, and tackles environmental risks and the effects of climate change. The ultimate goal of all finance, properly invested and regulated, should be to further human flourishing. Finance at its best is liberating, not enslaving.

In all of the debates about the volume of finance required and how to raise it, it is important not to lose sight of what the money is ultimately for, and the shared vision we have for the kind of world we want to live in: a world where every woman, man and child is equally empowered to flourish and where the problems of one are the problems of all. In these technical debates, we must remember that poverty has a human face. The reality of its face is seen in the Christ child at Bethlehem, poor, homeless and a refugee; God identifying with the most helpless people on earth. If we forget this, we begin to serve the global economy, rather than using it as a tool for advancing the global common good.

We achieve great things when we work together, and when we elevate the pursuit of human flourishing above our own self-interest, as individuals and indeed as nations. My appeal is that our political leaders do not forget this, and as they negotiate this vital agreement, ask themselves: is this fair? Is this generous? Is this sustainable?

The outcomes of this conference will be important for laying the groundwork to agree the SDGs and the UN climate talks later this year. I urge leaders to deliver a strong and transformational agreement, which overcomes the pressure to dilute commitments for the sake of expediency. I pray for courage, for leadership, for an outward-looking vision for our world, which will have a lasting impact and will truly be good news for the poor.