

Globalisation and the Scouts and Guides movement

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Ladies and gentlemen,

Introduction

First of all, let me thank you for inviting me to this high level international meeting of the Guides and Scouts Movement and giving me the opportunity to introduce the issue of globalisation in relation to your activities. I am an international economist by training and worked amongst others for Médecins sans Frontières (Doctors without Borders), for church organisations and the media. As campaigns director of Novib, I am responsible for communication, fundraising, popular campaigning and a number of related functions. The Dutch organisation Novib, the Netherlands Organisation for International Development Co-operation, is one of the twelve affiliates of Oxfam International.

In this address I will try to give a kick start to your debate on Globalisation and in particular the impact of globalisation on the policy of the Scout and Girls Movement.

Why are the issue of globalisation and related issues of poverty and injustice so important for your movement?

- Firstly, the Guides and Scouts Movement is an international movement itself. This meetings, with people from so many European countries present, reflects this international character.
- Secondly, globalisation has a bearing on the daily lives and future of young children everywhere in the world. An international movement that would neglect the dynamics in the global society would lose its ties with today's young generation and may be also lose its legitimacy.
- Thirdly, and may be most importantly, the issues of poverty and globalisation are closely linked to the very hearth, to the mission of Scouting and Guides as a non-formal education movement. In the words of your founder Robert Baden-Powell: *"No man can be called educated who has not a willingness and a desire, as well as trained ability to do his part in the world's work. And this is the main road to happiness and prosperity for all"*. One of the fundamental principles of Scouting is duty to others. This includes the promotion of international peace, understanding and co-operation and the participation in the development of society. Globalisation has broadened the scope of this duty to the international level. The question is how to carry out this mission in today's rapidly changing and unjust world.

The issue

Let's now turn to the state of the earth and the world population. What are we talking about in this context? My starting point is, that the earth provides enough to fulfil everybody's basic needs:

- there is sufficient food for everybody;

- there is sufficient water for everybody;
- there is sufficient energy for everybody.

The basic problem is not the availability of resources at a global scale. It is rather the unfair way we share those resources at the international level and also within countries.

- Half of the present world population, three billion people, live below the poverty line and are malnourished.
- 25% can spend no more than one dollar per day; another 25% can spend two dollar per day, or 700 dollar per year – compared to an average income of 27.000 dollar in the Netherlands.
- 25% has no direct access to good drinking water.
- The 20% poorest in the world spend 1.4% of the total world income, whereas the richest 20% are responsible for 86% of all consumption.
- 125 million children – mostly girls - do not go to school; another 125 million children have no sufficient education; we would need 8 billion dollar per year for them – this equals to 11% of the military spending on the Iraq war.

It is clear that we live in an unequal world with a wide gap between people living in poverty and affluence. The growing world population, which may increase to 9 billion people in 2050, will create a social and environmental time bomb. In a globalising world we do not only see their poverty, they also see our affluence.

There is not enough space on this earth to allow all future world citizens to adopt our present consumption patterns. Technical developments will be needed to keep pace with population growth. However important, the key to a just world without poverty is sharing of resources and power.

Is this revolutionary language? Is this a political analysis from the political extreme left? It is not. We are talking about the violation of basic rights of all people, which are laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. If the world and their leaders would respect those rights we would not see such wide gaps between poor and rich, starvation and obesity and illness and health. In the Millennium Declaration of 2000, the United Nations recognised *‘the duty to all world’s people, especially the most vulnerable and particularly the children to whom the future belongs.’* The UN formulated six *fundamental values* essential for the international relations in the 21st century: freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibility. They also agreed on and eight Millennium Development Goals for 2015:

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Achieve universal primary education
- Promote gender equality and empower women
- Reduce child mortality
- Improve maternal health
- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Ensure environmental sustainability
- Develop a global partnership for development.

Let me elaborate on one of those starting principles: *solidarity*.

In my opinion the value of solidarity should not solely be defined in terms of pity for the poor, compassion with others who are less well-to-do. Compassion is a valuable religious of non-religious starting point for the relations with our neighbours in the

global village. However, there is also the strong feeling that in the long run living in a world so unequal is bad for all of us: that the time bomb may indeed explode in our lifetime or that of our children. And there is also the moral starting point that we do not want to live in an unjust world, that we do not feel happy ourselves as global citizens in an unfair world. This does not hold for individuals only but also for organisations – and the more so for international organisations.

Globalisation

Don't we know all this already? What is new in this analysis? The new aspect is the rapidly globalising world, in which we are increasingly confronted with the reality of poverty and injustice, not only far away in the South but also in our own cities and villages, through the media, through internet, as travellers and tourists.

Globalisation can be roughly defined as the “increasing connection of the world and its people”. It is the summary and result of a number of interrelated processes: international trade in goods and services, international financial flows, international transport and tourism, transport, refugee flows and migration, and the internationalisation of mass media, culture and institutions.

Globalisation is making the world a smaller place. Nothing seems far away and we can speak to and visit people around the globe without much effort. Yet, as the distance between the haves and have-nots continues to increase at an alarming rate, we seem to push at least one billion global neighbours away even further.

The gap between rich and poor is widening. It is shown in all aspects of poverty and social injustice: between and within nations, between men and women, between majority and minority cultures. The rise of armed conflict, mostly in poor countries in the South, is making these trends even worse. These damaging patterns are complex in nature. Some are rooted in age-old injustices such as colonialism and slave trade; natural factors – such as droughts – may worsen development and food production. Inadequate local governance in the South is an important factor. However, inequality at the local, national and international levels is a key factor. In particular, there is a clear link with globalisation, which is dominating the world's economics, politics and culture.

Globalisation is not bad in itself. It is creating opportunities for those with the assets, skills and, crucially, the education needed to operate in increasingly competitive markets. Those without – the landless, the urban poor and illiterate, groups of women and minority groups – are being left behind. Big companies and powerful countries have the strength to dominate the world's politics and economies in a world where proper mechanisms to counterbalance are lacking.

That is why Oxfam campaigns for Global Equity, for fair globalisation, for just international relations that help overcome poverty. In a globalising world there are also many possibilities for social movements, international corporate social responsibility. Both the Scouts and Guides Movements and Oxfam International are expressions of international civil society, which can play an increasingly important role in addition to national and international governments and organisations and the corporate sector.

The Oxfam International strategy called *‘Towards Global Equity’* is based on three propositions about globalisation:

- *A focus on equity:* Globalisation can only help end poverty if ‘equity’ is given the same priority as economic growth. Equity means that all men and women have equal rights. Without reform and regulation of international economic and financial policies and practices, the benefits of globalisation will be unsustainable and unevenly shared. To give you just one example: the present import tariffs by developed countries cost the developing countries 100 billion dollar per year; this is twice the total annual amount of Official Development Assistance of 50 billion dollar. Despite all internationally agreed *‘fundamental values’* such as equality and solidarity, despite Millennium Development Goals for 2015, there is still a substantial net-flow of money from the South to the North, from poor to rich countries through trade relations and debt payment. The Millennium Development Goals are most unlikely to be met by the target date of 2015. The economic and social rights of women, children and marginalised communities and the natural environment are more important than shareholder value and the bottom line of the balance sheet. Hence Oxfam’s present campaign Make Trade Fair, aiming for more equal trade relations, that will also benefit the poor. This campaign concentrates on international coffee prices and labour conditions of women in the garments industry.
- *The need for a new global movement:* We can help change the course of globalisation for the better. This will require a massive and sustained effort by the emerging global citizen’s movement. That has been the reason for Novib to join Oxfam International. Novib and Oxfam, and many other organisations, are becoming part of a global movement of partner organisations in North and South, trade unions, consumers unions, youth movements, citizen’s organisations, local communities of migrants and refugees. This ‘Global Campaigning Force’ for justice is emerging rapidly in North and South. *Is the Scouts and Guides Movement part of such a global network for justice or should it be part of it?* This is a key question in this morning’s session.
- *A break with “business as usual”.* Oxfam no longer sees itself as a traditional ‘development’ organisation. The more traditional role of financing and facilitating development projects has given way to a more integrated approach of building partner relationships with organisations in North and South, in which direct poverty alleviation, campaigning and advocacy for global equity go hand in hand. Again a question for your movement can be posed: *to what extent should the present trends in globalisation have consequences for your ‘core business’? Is there a need to break with “business as usual”?*

Globalisation and youth

This may all sound very global, abstract and far away. But at this point we come closer to the issue of this morning: the relations between globalisation in an unequal world and the mission and policies of the Scouts and Guides Movement.

The globalisation of culture – in other words the effect upon culture of the “increasing connection of the world and its people”- is also visible in the changing nature between the world’s youth and their sense of identity. It is evident that the future world of

young people will be much smaller and more multicultural than the world in which earlier generations have grown up.

- An international *culture* is growing. Young people are receptive to new ideas by definition – if not rebellious - and engaged in a process of cultural borrowing, that is disruptive of the reproduction of their own traditional culture. Nowadays they are receptive for foreign cultural practices are acquainted with food from different countries; with world music – their idols may come from the UK and Japan, from USA and Senegal.
- The *television*, with up to 100 or even more different channels from all corners of the world, gives us information about the wealth or poverty in different contexts. Global media conglomerated are becoming powerful and can strongly influence the mindset of young people.
- Through the *Internet* we can communicate with friends from all over the world and create virtual communities of like-minded people or people with similar interests.
- Through international *tourism and travelling*, including exchange programmes, like those of Scouting Netherlands and South Africa, young people can experience differences in living conditions and cultures and similarities in their ways to live and love. At the same time, they are confronted with the gap between rich and poor and with problems like HIV/AIDS.
- Through *international meetings*, such as the recent World Jamboree in Thailand or even this gathering, young people exchange ideas and develop creative initiatives for Global Equity.
- Globalisation is also noticeable in our own Northern societies and within the Guides and Scouts organisations. As a consequence of international migration, many Northern countries have become *multicultural societies*. This creates many problems increasing, like fear for refugees and other cultures, but also opportunities and challenges for our societies, and in particular for the educational system and youth organisations and may have a bearing on Scouts and Guides in many countries.
- Last but not least, young people have become *consumers* with increasing spending power. They are targets of big companies, retailers and advertising firms. They create their own lifestyles. In our globalising world brands have become global brands, often linked with global idols and symbols. Simultaneously brands have been separated from the products proper. ‘Hot’ products, such as Nike’s sneakers and sportswear, may be produced in low-income countries like India and Indonesia by women with low incomes, inadequate labour conditions and absence of employment security. Awareness campaigns, take the present Oxfam Make Trade Fair Campaign, can reach young people and take their concrete involvement in the global economy as consumers as a starting point for awareness raising and action.

It is Novib’s deep conviction that in today’s world we can no longer afford to live in isolation. Hence, in our communication we ask a question to the Dutch population – and to young people in particular: ‘*How big is your world?*’ Do you realise how you are connected to other people through mostly invisible ties? What can you do to promote equity, as a consumer, traveller, employee or director of a big company, as a member or leader of a youth movement? Through various activities in the Guides and Scouts organisations, thanks to so many volunteers in so many countries, young people get to learn to know each other and become more acquainted with different

cultures and realities. This is the joyful side of globalisation. At the same time, our joint challenge is to develop and implement concrete, creative and practical steps to connect people to each other and further equal relationships within movements and –even more difficult – contribute to a more equal world. This is also the challenge for you as an international youth movement. Let's keep in mind that today's young people are tomorrow's leadership. There is much to be done.

Thank you.

Jan Bouke Wijbrandi,
Cologne, 25 October 2003

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**Jan Bouke Wijbrandi,
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1. Why is this issue important for Scouting?

- **International movement**
- **Globalisation has impact on youth**
- **Relation to Mission of Scouting**

2. The issue:

- **Gap between rich and poor**
- **Availability of resources is not the problem**
- **Unequal sharing of resources and power**
- **Basic Human rights laid down in UN Declaration (1948)**
- **Solidarity is more than ‘compassion’**

3. Globalisation

- **Definition: increasing connection of the world and its people**
- **The gap is widening**
- **Domination by economic, political and cultural power**
- **Fair globalisation is possible**

4. Oxfam: Towards global Equity

- **Focus on Equity**
- **Need for a new global movement**
- **Break with business as usual**

5. Globalisation and youth

- **Youth's world becomes smaller and multicultural**
- **Global links for youth**
- **“How big is your world?”**
- **Need for concrete steps**

Issues for the debate:

- **Is the Scouts and Guides Movement (part of) a global network for justice?**
- **To what extent should the present trends in globalisation have consequences for your ‘core business’? Is there a need to break with “business as usual”?**
- **Can we identify and develop new creative and practical steps to connect people to each other and promote global justice?**