

# **Toward Wider Consensus on Development and Security**

**Lucy Webster**

[Back to Previous Page](#)

The “Washington Consensus” that prevailed in recent years, setting economic policy for many countries, has proved inadequate. It does not serve the needs of most of the world’s six billion people. Also the international system that should secure peace and protect human rights has instead secured military establishments and protected government leadership groups.

## **A Better Way Depends on Many Actors**

It is the sovereign duty of the state and the international institutions to ensure that basic needs are met according to the standards of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Action Programs of the U.N. Conferences on Food, Sustainable Development, Environment, etc., to which almost all governments have affixed their names. These programs call for action by international institutions, regional and sub-regional bodies, national governments and civil society.

It is not just the national state and the global institutions that are responsible. Regional bodies, non-governmental groups, corporations and individuals all need to help ensure economic justice, freedom from war and basic human rights. NGOs are not only critical as actors, they are essential to put forward new ideas and hold officials to their obligations.

The scale of what the World Bank and IMF can do is insufficient for the pace and size of global capital flows a major reason IMF policies are so harsh on the poor. I doubt there is much intent to keep poor people in poor countries out of the world economy or blocked from healthy lives. But bringing them in with dignity has not been a top goal either. It should be.

## **A Few of the Many Development Actions Needed**

National governments need to help people and villages invest in their own potential. Regional banks should be expanded to back up national banks as lenders of last resort. Many countries with dire poverty areas have total productivity levels that could support rural and industrial investments in the poorer areas. This would spread and increase national wealth.

Such action in countries throughout the world with support from global and regional institutions and banks, and from NGOs and corporate leaders would result in a wider consensus on development because it would entail practical steps to bring most of humanity into the world economy. Here is a suggestive, noncomprehensive action list for governments and others to bring millions of people into lives of freedom and well-being:

Invest in sustainable agriculture, and rural housing —to end famine and reduce migration to urban slums;

Provide primary education for all and further education for most —to upgrade work and productivity;

Give girls and women access to education and jobs —to empower women to have fewer children and care for them better;

Ensure clean water, basic health care, and accessible credit —to allow everyone to contribute to peace and plenty.

## **Protecting Peace and Human Rights**

The militarized, weapon-infected nations that emerged from the Cold War are geared to do what they have learned. It is the sovereign duty of the international community to change this. If a state cannot itself provide peace and human rights to its citizens, others must. No government and no individual is outside the international legal system established in the conventions and norms endorsed by almost all nations over the past half century.

United Nations peacemaking and peacekeeping capacities need to be strengthened so the Security Council can authorize quick action to separate civilians from paramilitary forces and others who start any gross systematic violation of human rights.

If willing citizens of all countries are directly recruited either to U.N. Peacekeeping Units or to U.N. Law Protection Teams (LPTs) based at home, there need not be real conflict between the Peacekeepers and others. With enough civil authority committed to peace in each U.N. member state, anyone (whether criminal or rebel or government officer) who starts to violate the recognized norms of the International Criminal Court system can be made to back off before extensive harm is done with a minimum use of force by U.N. Peacekeepers supported by local LPTs .

The Security Council should also take charge of any boostphase capacity to prevent missile launches from reaching people.

Global practices must be changed so the duties of sovereignty to uphold law and community are fulfilled. Meeting global needs is a task for citizens, who are ultimately sovereign, and for the agencies that serve them in the national state and beyond.

Economists for Peace and Security  
<http://www.epsusa.org>