



Globalisation, Justice, Charity



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H.E. Msgr. Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo
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The Phenomenon of Globalisation – The human family has acquired a new awareness about its unity, integration and global interdependence. Globalisation is the defining characteristic of our time.¹ Time and space are shrinking and many borders are disappearing, giving rise to an increasing interdependence between economies, cultures, religions and people. This 'New World Order', which emerged fully after 1989 with the collapse of European communism, is a dynamic and dialectic process whose characteristics have not been identified completely but one which has brought with it a belief in: lower trade barriers; an end to exchange controls; a freer movement of investment capital, goods and people; new forms of labour; and the displacement of public sector capital by the private sector. This latest historical stage has created new possibilities, opportunities and raised new hopes for the world, especially for developing countries. In fact, technological innovations (especially information technology, telematics, the global satellite network and the Internet), the new forms of labour, expanding trade and increased direct foreign investment offer enormous potential for the elimination of poverty, hunger, disease and illiteracy during the millennium that has just started.² Nevertheless, many of these potential benefits have not been realised so far for everyone and for the common good. Globalisation has been driven by the rampant expansion of markets and financial systems not necessarily linked to production, leading to increasing levels of inequality in labour, income, resources, opportunities and education. According to the latest Human Development Report,³ globalisation in this phase has benefited only one fifth of the world's population while marginalising the rest. Therefore, we cannot but agree with what the United Nations Millennium Declaration says: 'We believe that the central challenge we face today is to ensure that globalisation becomes a positive force for the entire world's people'.⁴ This is all the more evident after the atrocious terrorist act of 11 September 2001 and its direct consequences.

1 Cf. M. Khor, 'Globalisation and the South: Some Critical Issues', in *UNCTAD Discussion Papers*, n° 147, April 2000.

2 Cf. UNDP, *Human Development Report*, 1999 (Oxford University Press, New York, 1999).

3 UNDP, *Human Development Report*, 2003 (United Nations Development Program Edition, New York, 2003).

4 The United Nations Millennium Declaration, 5.