Common Humanity in the Information Age: A developing middle-income country perspective

Common Humanity in the Information Age

- Information revolution and increasing interdependence
  - A greater number of people will subscribe to the notion of universal human rights, share those values, and seek to promote them
  - Common universal values will … further [erode] borders and [erase] cultural and religious divides
  - Across time and space, human troubles and aspirations are the same,
    … peace, freedom, dignity and justice should not be the exclusive preserve of wealthy societies, but readily available to all

➔ Sense of Common Humanity

Three Key Drivers

- <u>Technology</u>:
  - Empowering effects of the 'information and communications revolution'
  - Information and education are more portable and accessible
- <u>Values</u>:
  - Near universalisation of access to education
  - Greater awareness of common pressing issues
- <u>Diversity and Migration</u>:
  - Increase in the movement of people around the globe (facilitated by the reduction in transport costs)
  - Increasingly multi-cultural societies (especially as populations in some countries age)

Technology is Value-Neutral

- Technology is a transmitter of information (e.g. newspapers, radio/TV, internet, social networks)
  - Facilitates and amplifies both positive and negative aspects
  - Information being transmitted can be from any/many perspectives
- Gaps: expanding or contracting?
  - Between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'
    - Access to technology, spending on aid and accessibility
  - Among the 'haves'
    - Net neutrality, what media?, whose media?

Shared Values..?

- Numerically, the countries contributing most to humanity will be from the developing world
  - Democratic
    - But different historical and cultural values
  - Prioritisation of values
    - Per capita incomes of US$300-400/year vs. US$40,000 as in the developed world
  - China, India, Brazil, Indonesia still contain swathes of poor persons.
    - At this level, major priorities are for order, social goods and services, food

Diversity (and Values)

- Many countries in the developed North are ageing and taking in ever greater number of migrants
  - Most now hail from countries with dissimilar backgrounds and values
  - Values being transmitted from the West will themselves be changing and evolving
    - e.g. United States

Multi-Ethnic and Multi-Cultural Future

- Characterised by mass movements of people
  - Largely dominated by extreme ends of the spectrum (i.e. privileged, or refugees)
- Increasingly squeezed middle classes
  - Especially lower and middle segments
- Increase in temporary migration
  - Facilitated by the increase in temporary foreign workers
  - Impact of the trade in temporary foreign workers
    - Foreign workers: workers rights, welfare
    - Local workers: wages, availability of jobs
    - Source & receiving countries: structure of labour market and industries

Conclusion

- Global interactions between people are
  - Integrated yet complex
  - Interdependent yet isolated
- Unprecedented opportunities for
  - Sharing of ideas
  - Seeking common ground
  - Finding areas of cooperation
- Human tendency for (largely local) identity formation
  - Conflate or exacerbate tensions

THANK YOU

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