



AFRICA

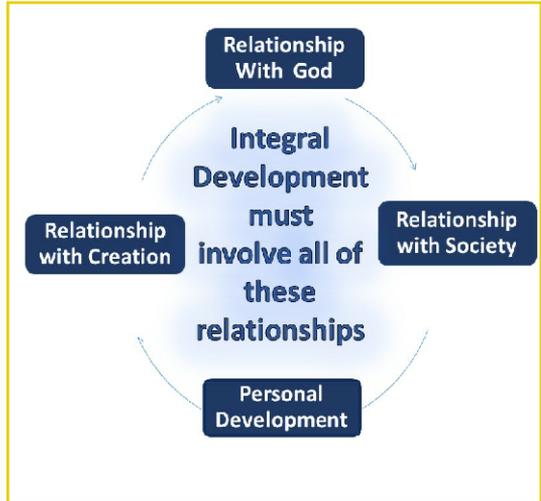
Integral Human Development

The world is experiencing a time of growing division, that has been referred to as “multi-faceted polarisation.” This is based on politics, race economics and religion.

Walls are being built and borders strengthened. The growth towards openness, international cooperation and respect for human rights experienced in past decades is under threat. As a result, the respect for human dignity and the solidarity needed in the face of conflict, mass migration, and human suffering are being undermined and challenged.

The Church has consistently taught that unity - born of dialogue and cooperation - is truly more powerful and more fruitful than conflict. This Good News was announced again in Pope Francis message for World Day of Peace 2017. “Peace is the only true direction of human progress – and not the tensions caused by ambitious nationalisms, nor conquests by violence, nor repressions which serve as mainstay for a false civil order”.

This Briefing focuses on Integral Development as the key to achieving Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation.



Integral Human Development

The term “integral human development” is wide ranging and significant. First used by Pope Paul VI in his 1967 letter “*Populorum Progressio*”, the term goes beyond the commonly accepted understanding that development has simply got to do with economics, technological advancement and the accumulation of wealth.

While gains in education, health and living standards are important and may be considered in the secular world as “core dimensions” of human development, a more complete understanding of the concept and practice is required.

Dimensions such as:

- Opportunities for each person to develop his/her talents and fulfil their potential.

- Social justice, human rights, self-respect.
- A sense of community.
- Cultural, social, political and religious freedom of expression.
- Right relationships with God.
- Respect for and protection of creation.

All of these are constituent parts of “integral human development”.

More than Economics

It is becoming increasingly clear to World Agencies (such as the *United Nations Development Programme* (UNDP) and the *Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development* (OECD) - as well as some governments throughout the world - that the model of development based *solely* on economic criteria is incomplete.

As regards African countries, for example, the authoritative document

The African Economic Outlook Report 2016 states that, while “*steady progress*” has been made in some countries in education, health and living standards, it is clear that the pace of progress in integral human development is insufficient to reach the 2030 targets set for Africa for sustainable development.

Among other things, the Report cites:

- Existing inequalities and exclusion, which are weakening the impact of growth on poverty reduction.
- Limited advances in gender equality.
- Existing tensions between social groups.
- Attempts at transforming structures and eradicating corruption are inconsistent.

(*African Economic Outlook Report 2016* page 92. For full report, cf. www.AfricanEconomicOutlook.org)

There is no doubt but that ensuring integral human development for the continent is a major challenge to the 62 nations and territories in the geographical region of Africa.

A Global Challenge

But these challenges do not face African nations alone. “*Any society which fails to address basic human needs, equip citizens to improve their quality of life, protect the environment, and provide opportunity for its citizens is not succeeding. We must widen our understanding of the success of societies beyond economic outcomes.*”

(cf *2016 Social Progress Index* page 13. For full report: cf. www.socialprogressimperative.org)

In the light of this increasing understanding of what integral human development means, **the 2016 and 2017 political developments in the United States of America, in the European Union countries and in the United Kingdom, present a major challenge.**

It is to be hoped that the words of Pope Francis will provide food for thought for all of us – especially for negotiators and decision-makers:

“In the meantime, economic powers continue to justify the current global system where priority tends to be given to speculation and the pursuit of financial gain, which fail to take the context into account – let alone the effects on human dignity and the natural environment. Here we see how environmental deterioration and human and ethical degradation are closely linked.

Many people will deny doing anything wrong because distractions constantly dull our consciousness of just how limited and finite our world really is. As a result, “whatever is fragile, like the environment, is defenceless before the interests of a deified market, which becomes the only rule” (Laudato ‘Si 2015: No. 56).

What the Popes’ Say

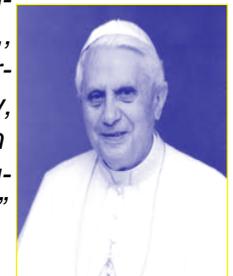
Pope Saint John Paul II implored us not to understand development “*solely in economic terms, but in a way that is fully human. It is not*

only a question of raising all peoples to the level currently enjoyed by the richest countries, but rather of building up a more decent life through united labour, of concretely enhancing every individual’s dignity and creativity, as well as his capacity to respond to his personal vocation, and thus to God’s call.

The apex of development is the exercise of the right and duty to seek God, to know him and to live in accordance with that knowledge”. (Centesimus Annus 1991: No. 29)

Pope Benedict XIV reiterated the message that human development must be unified as one - involving all aspects of humanity.

“Development needs above all to be true and integral....It is contradictory to insist that future generations respect the natural environment when our educational systems and laws do not help them to respect themselves. The book of nature is one and indivisible: it takes in not only the environment but also life,, sexuality, marriage, the family, social relations: in a word, integral human development” (Caritas in Veritate 2009: No. 51).



Facts

The Area of the African Continent is 30,065,000 Square Kilometres.

The combined area of Europe, North America and China is less - at 29,165,123 Sq. Kilometres

Population

Africa:	1,245,504,865
Europe:	739,207,742
North America:	363,224,006
China:	1,385,695,763

www.worldometers.info



Pope Francis who has dramatically brought to our attention the place of our relationship with creation and its place in human development states:

"When we speak of the "environment", what we really mean is a relationship existing between nature and the society which lives in it. Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or a mere setting in which we live. We are part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it...."

It is essential to seek comprehensive solutions which consider the interactions within natural systems themselves and with social systems. We are faced not with two separate crises – one environmental and the other social – but rather with one complex crisis which is both social



and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature".

(Laudato Si' 2015: No. 139)

Finally, we must never become closed in and ignore our brothers and sisters throughout the world. *"We must regain the conviction that we need one another - that we have a shared responsibility for others and the world, and that being good and decent are worth it. We have had enough of immorality and the mockery of ethics, goodness, faith and honesty. It is time to acknowledge that light-hearted superficiality has done us no good."*
(Laudato 'Si 2015: No. 229).

More Facts

Since 2015 the richest 1% has owned more wealth than the rest of the planet.

Credit Suisse (2016) 'Global Wealth Databook 2016'.

Eight men now own the same amount of wealth as the poorest half of the world.

Oxfam calculations using Forbes Billionaires listing and wealth of the bottom 50%: from Credit Suisse Global Wealth Databook 2016.

The African continent (with its 1.2 billion inhabitants, approx) has a median age of 19.5 years, i.e. half of the population is younger than 19.5 years.

www.worldometers.info