

## With Hegemony and Intervention, There Can Be No Peace or Social Development

*by Fidel Castro*

Mr. President:  
Your Excellencies:

“Life is built on a dream, and dreams are dreams,” as Calderon de la Barca, the famous Spanish playwright, said some centuries ago.

Independent of the noble intentions of all those present, in a world where the rich get steadily richer and the poor get steadily poorer; where some countries receive lower and lower prices for their raw materials and basic products and others sell their manufactured items at increasingly higher prices; where the less fortunate countries’ external debt is incessantly growing and has already reached the incredible figure of 1.5 trillion dollars; where interest rates rise arbitrarily from day to day; where the poorest areas have explosive population growth rates; where there is an increasing capital flight from the poor countries to the rich ones; where the brain drain constantly steals skills from where they are most needed; where women, indigenous peoples, black, and other ethnic groups suffer discrimination; and where chaos and anarchy rule under the blind and savage laws of the market, there can be no social development.

Where there is a lack of humanity, there can be no human rights. Where selfishness reigns, solidarity cannot exist. Where consumer societies and waste are established as models for a population already in excess of 5.7 billion human beings, environmental conservation and unpolluted and sustainable natural resources are impossibilities, as is viable social development.

Where the build-up of the arms race persists in spite of the end of the Cold War; where not one cent of what was previously squandered on arms has been dedicated to human progress; where military blocs are irrationally extended; where sophisticated arms are still being constructed and perfected, there can be no social development.

With hegemony and interventions of all types and under any pretext, which only happen in small countries and the Third World, without any respect for the sacrosanct right of every country to full independence and equality in international relations, there can be no peace or social development. This is a falsehood, a total deception.

Neoliberalism, the fashionable doctrine imposed on today’s world, ruthlessly sacrifices the provision of health, education, culture, sports, social security, affordable housing, drinking water, and other basic populational needs in underdeveloped countries.

The fact that people live in poverty in the industrialized countries is simply a disgrace. The

fact that unemployment cannot be reduced and that it actually grows in line with technological advances is proof of the irrationality of the dominant system. The unrestrained growth of drugs, xenophobia, and violence demonstrates its moral decadence.

Cuba, criminally blockaded because it does not share the ideas of its powerful neighbor to the north, and which lost 70 percent of its imported goods with the disappearance of the socialist camp and the Soviet Union, has not closed a single school, hospital, senior citizen's home, or day care center. In spite of being a poor country, we have the highest per capita totals of teachers, doctors, art teachers, and physical educational instructors in the world. Our infant mortality rate stands at under ten per 1000 live births. There is no illiteracy, and the life expectancy average is 75 years.

We have lived through an experience. We can talk about it. What those of us present here desire is possible, but more than promises, resolutions, and declarations are needed: we need the political will and we need justice, not only within individual countries, but among all countries. The world's wealth has to be better distributed among nations, and within nations, and genuine solidarity among the peoples of the world has to be established; only then can today's dreams become the realities of tomorrow.

Thank you very much.