

World Day of Social Justice – February 20



Recognizing that social development and social justice are indispensable for the achievement and maintenance of peace and security within and among nations and that, in turn, social development and social justice cannot be attained in the absence of peace and security or in the absence of respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, the United Nations established this day in 2007.

Social justice is an underlying principle for peaceful and prosperous coexistence within and among nations. The world has changed dramatically. We are going to need an economics that respects planetary boundaries, that continues the dependence of human well-being on social relations and fairness, and that recognizes that the ultimate goal is real, sustainable human well-being, not merely growth of material consumption.

The new economics recognizes that the economy is embedded in a society and culture that are embedded in an ecological life-support system, and that the economy can't grow forever on this finite planet.

"With exclusion and inequality on the rise, we must step up efforts to ensure that all people, without discrimination, are able to access opportunities to improve their lives and those of others," the UN Secretary-General wrote last year stressing the need to "build inclusive societies, promote decent work, bolster social protection floors, and bring people in from the margins." Observance of World Day of Social Justice should support efforts of the international community in poverty eradication, the promotion of full employment and decent work, gender equity and access to social well-being and justice for all.

We, as world citizens, uphold the principles of social justice when we promote gender equality or the rights of indigenous peoples and migrants. We advance social justice when we remove barriers that people face because of gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, culture or disability.

We no longer live in a world relatively empty of humans and their artifacts. We now live in a full world where humans are dramatically altering their ecological life-support systems. Our traditional economic concepts and models were developed in an empty world. If we are to create sustainable prosperity and if we seek "improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risk and ecological scarcities," we are going to need a new vision of the economy and its relationship to the rest of the world that's better adapted to the new conditions we face.

