

Globethics Repository

The logo for Globethics, featuring the word "Globethics" in white, sans-serif font centered within a solid blue rectangular background.

Global Poverty and Global Health - From the Millennium Development Goals (MDG' s) To Sustainable Development Goals (SDG' s)

This page was generated automatically upon download from the Globethics Repository. More information on Globethics see <https://www.globethics.net>. Data and content policy of Globethics Repository see <https://repository.globethics.net/pages/policy>.

Item Type	Book chapter
Authors	Ike, Obiora F.
Publisher	Printed and bounded by BEW IT LTD
Rights	With permission of the license/copyright holder
Download date	2026-06-14 20:48:13
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12424/166327

Chapter Five

Global Poverty and Global Health - From the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) To Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's)¹

Challenges and Lessons from the Perspective of Christian Social Ethics

I. The Topic Global Poverty and Global Health Concerns – Challenges and Lessons from Christian Social Ethics

Permit me to start my contributions with some questions as we face difficult challenges worldwide. These challenges are not new but they seem to have increased in the intensity of terrors, wars, global insecurity and economic uncertainty plus political turmoil experienced in virtually all nations at this time. The continuing disrespect for human life and dignity and the seeming lack of will and value driven leadership to solve the problems poses urgent imperatives on the discipline of the Social Teaching of the Church to Teach and Act, in the words of Pope John XXIII in *Mater et Magistra*.

As we mark 30 years of *Ordo Socialis* and stage this important congress here at the CSI in Bad Honnef, it is gradually clear that the most important challenges we face are not simply political, economic or technical. They are rather Ethical, Moral and Spiritual. Our time and countries face fundamental questions of life and death. This implies who moves ahead and who is left behind.

Because we are a people of faith, Gospel demands command us to bear a responsibility in public life as the leaven in society..."You are the Light of the World... You are the Salt of the Earth... A city set on a hill cannot be hidden" (Mathew 5). The challenge is extended for leaders of religious organizations, particularly those who are guided by research and training and in governance to increase their space of participation to include the ethical dimensions to

¹ IKE, O. F.; paper presented at the Catholic Social Institute in Bad Honnef, Germany on the occasion of 30 Years of *Ordo Socialis*

play its role in public life. This is generally the mission of Jesus Christ himself, who, moved by the Spirit, declared "the Spirit of the Lord is upon me for He has annointed me to bring Good News to the Poor" (Luke chapter 4). The current challenges worldwide does not leave us in apathy or lethargy but rather to swing urgently and renewed into more Christian response, founded on sound reason, common sense, natural law and the light of charity to act in the sphere of the Socio-Political and cultural with the leaven of faith.

In serving the Common Good which Christian Social Principles identifies as the only justifiable cause for intervening in the public sphere where all meet, some questions recur, dealing on global health and poverty and such questions remain the domain of the CSI, the ORDO SOCIALIS, CIDJAP and the entire line up of institutes, political parties, agents of State and Church who desire a better world. There is consensus and rejection of the world and its governance as it is currently because many believe it was meant to be different and better. Thus:

1. How can we build not only a safer world for some but a better world for all, a world that is more just, more secure, more peaceful, more respectful of human life and dignity and for all?
2. How will we protect the weakest in our midst, especially those who have no voice. These include the innocent unborn children, the aged, sick, homeless and destitute?
3. How can nations refuse violence as a means to solve some of its most difficult problems, for example, when persons in authority resort to Abortion in order to deal with difficult pregnancies? Or practice the The death penalty to combat crime and criminals? In some cases when Euthanasia and assisted suicide is applied to deal with the burden of age and disability? Or even extreme cases where War is made an instrument to settle matters which normally dialogue and openness could have solved including industrial disasters?
4. How do we address the tragic fact that more than 30, 000 children die every day as a result of hunger, international debt, and lack of development around the globe?
5. What future do we offer the teaming young people facing poverty in the midst of plenty without foster (often replaced by robots) and growing with un-sustainable values

6. Can our parents in various nations of the world raise their children with some relaxed absence fear and anxiety, with respect for life, sound moral values, a sense of hope, an ethic of STEWARDSHIP and RESPONSIBILITY?

7. How can our society defend the central institution of MARRIAGES and better support to FAMILIES in their moral roles offering those Real Choices and financial Resources to obtain quality education and decent houses?

8. Children die of malaria and preventable diseases. Medications are produced in large quantities and then burnt off as well as food because the spaces for stocking them is filled. Is it not possible across parties and nations to address the growing numbers of individuals and families who lack access to affordable Health Care?

9. And how can Healthcare better protect human life and respect Human dignity?

10. Is it impossible for societies to combat continuing prejudices (racial, tribal, class, religions, gender without an ideological agenda)?

11. How do we overcome hostility toward immigrants and refugees?

12. Is poverty destined or man-made and could humanity not overcome widespread poverty, pursue values of justice and peace, reduce widespread injustice and contain violence?

13. What are the responsibilities and limitations of families, community, organizations, markets and governments? How can these units of society, work together and synergize to overcome poverty, pursue the common good, care for creation and overcome injustice?

14. Can we not fortify, improve our determination to work for greater respect for human life, dignity, Religious freedom, democracy and rule of law.

These and other questions cross my mind as I consider the topic you have given to me to reflect upon in this audience. We shall not necessarily find the answers immediately. But we may at least ask the questions and genuinely search for answers along the lines of the Christian Social Principles which is tested and trusted.

3. Fundamental questions on global poverty and the challenges before us

Poverty and inequality have long been concerns of development economics. A social development paradigm with an emphasis on pro-poor growth is replacing the trickle-down industrialization model. Eradicating poverty and rectifying extreme levels of inequality go hand in hand with economic growth. It is true that a broad-based participation of people in productive activities can increase a nation's total output of goods and services, and promote economic development. However, poverty and inequality are not just economic issues. They are ethical issues as well,

When we see people suffering from materially and psychologically desperate conditions, we are compelled to act. Father Adolfo Nicolas, superior general of the Society of Jesus, has spoken about four challenges facing humankind. In his 2008 speech addressing the students of Sophia University, he declared world poverty as a "social challenge", and called on us to work hard to eradicate it. He referred to the lack of worldwide access of learning opportunities as a "cultural challenge", and encourage us to achieve education for all. He also mentioned the protection of the environment as an "ethical challenge," These four challenges are all linked. The eradication of poverty is supported by equal access to quality education and a fairer society so that everyone who receives education can have more options in their lives and fulfill their aspirations. Universal access to education and a fair society are not about promoting economic growth. They are about ensuring human dignity. These challenges call upon our sense of ethical responsibility.

Inequality also tests our ethics. Inequality is not just about income gaps. We may not value the same things in life. People and society may pursue different paths whose values cannot be compared by a simple measure of how much you possess. As Catholic Social teaching suggests, we need to have faith in the poor to organize themselves and choose the life they wish.

Still, an extreme income gap in a society and between societies is alarming because it could erode cohesion a basic sense of trust between people who do not know each other. A reasonable degree of social cohesion is needed so that a society (and the world) can function, and for people to have the chance to increase their opportunities in life.

Again, education is perhaps one of the most important public policies to address inequality and trust. Education can reproduce an unequal society if it

is not offered equally to all. Equal and fair provision of educational services, however, can rectify issues of inequality. Education can also promote bonding of different groups when it draws children of different social, cultural and economic backgrounds. In both cases, a national government plays a critical role, even in this globalized and increasingly borderless world.

4. Fighting Poverty and Global health diseases from MDG's to SDG's

The Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) – 2000 to 2015

These are a United Nations initiative. They correspond to the Eight International Development goals that were established following the Millennium Summit of the UN in 2000 and the adoption of the UN millennium Declaration. They are the world's time-bound, measurable, universally agreed objectives and quantified targets for addressing extreme poverty in its many dimensions. These eight aims are:

1. Income
2. Poverty
3. Hunger
4. Disease
5. Lack of adequate Shelter
6. 5. Exclusion
7. Promoting Gender Equality
8. Education for All
9. Environmental Sustainability

With the job unfinished after fifteen years 2000 to 2015, the Assembly of World Leaders following agitations by millions of people shifted the attention of the UN to another set of objectives now called the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's)- 2015 to 2030

The SDG's replaced the MDG's on 15th September 2015 as the world leaders gathered at the UN in New York to adopt the 2030 Agenda for sustainable Development. The 2030 Agenda comprises SEVENTEEN new Sustainable Goals, which guide policy and Funding for the next fifteen years, beginning with a historic pledge to end poverty, everywhere and permanently.

The SDG's applies to all countries, promotes peaceful and inclusive societies, creates better jobs and tackles the environmental challenges of our time on climate change. The SDG's include the following:

1. End Poverty
2. Zero Hunger
3. Good Health and Well Being
4. Quality Education
5. Gender Equality
6. Clean Water and Sanitation
7. Affordable and Clean Energy
8. Decent Work and Economic Growth
9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
10. Reduced Inequalities
11. Sustainable Cities and Communities
12. Reasonable Consumption production
13. Climate Action
14. Life Below Water
15. Life on Land
16. Peace Justice and Strong Institutions
17. Partnerships for the Goals.

5. Statistics on global health and poverty

Consider these facts obtained from the Website of the United Nations UNICEF and other relevant organs of the UN. The poorest 40 percent of the world's population accounts for 5 percent of global income. The richest 20 percent accounts for three-quarters of world income.

According to UNICEF, 22,000 children each day die due to poverty. And they "die quietly in some of the poorest villages on earth, far removed from the scrutiny and conscience of the world. Being meek and weak in life makes these dying multitudes even more invisible in death.

Around 27-28 percent of all children in developing countries are estimated to be underweight and Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

If current trends continue, Millennium Development Goals target of having the proportion of underweight children will be missed by 30 million children, largely because of slow progress in Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

Based on enrolment data, about 72 million children of primary school age in the developing world were not in school in 2005; 57 percent of them were girls. And these are regarded as optimistic numbers.

Nearly a billion people entered the 21st century unable to read a book or sign their names.

Less than one percent of what the world spent every year on weapons was needed to put every child into school by the 2000 and yet it didn't happen.

Infectious diseases continue to blight the lives of the poor across the world. An estimated 40 million people are living with HIV/AIDS, with 3 millions deaths in 2004. Every year there are 350-500 million cases of malaria, with 1 million fatalities: Africa accounts for 90 percent of malaria deaths and African children account for over 80 percent of malaria victims worldwide.

- Almost two in three people lacking access to clean water survive on less than \$2 per day, with one in three living on less than \$1 a day.
- More than 660 million people without sanitation live on less than \$2 a day, and more than 385 million on less than \$1 a day.
- Access to piped water into the household averages about 85% for the wealthiest 20% of the population, compared with 25% for the poorest 20%.
- 1.8 billion people who have access to a water source within 1 kilometer, but not in their house or yard, consume around 20 liters per day. In the United Kingdom the average person uses more than 50litres of water a day flushing toilets (where average daily water usage is about 150 liters a day. The highest average water use in the world is in the US, at 600 liters a day.)
- Some 1.8 million child deaths each year as a result of diarrhea.
- The loss of 443 million school days each year from water-related illness.
- Close to half of all people in developing countries suffering at any given time from a health problem caused by water and sanitation deficits.
- Millions of women spending several hours a day collecting water.

- To these human costs can be added the massive economic waste associated with the water and sanitation deficit... The costs associated with health spending, productivity losses and labor diversions... are greatest in some of the poorest countries. Sub-Saharan Africa loses about 5% of GDP or some \$28.4 billion annually, a figure that exceeds total aid flows and debt relief to the region in 2003.

- Number of children in the world ...2.2billion
- Number of poverty...1 billion (every second child)
- Shelter, safe water and health for the 1.9 billion children from the developing world, are;
- 640 million without adequate shelter (1 in 3)
- 400 million with no access to safe water (1 in 5)
- 270 million with no access to health services (1 in 7)
- Children out of education worldwide 121 million
- Survival for children worldwide:
- 10.6 million died in 2003 before they reached the age of 5 (same as Children population in France, Germany Greece and Italy)
- 1.4 million die each year from lack of access drinking water and adequate sanitation health of children.
- Worldwide 2.2 million children die each year because they are not immunized
- 15 million children orphaned due to HIV/AIDS (similar to the total children population in Germany or United Kingdom)

Rural areas account for three in every four people living on less than US\$1 a day and a similar share of the world population suffering from malnutrition. However, urbanization is not synonymous with human progress. Urban slum growth is outpacing urban growth by a wide margin.

Approximately half the world's population now live in cities and towns. In 2005, one out of three urban dwellers (approximately 1 billion people) was living in slum conditions.

In developing countries some 2.5 billion people are forced to rely on biomass fuel wood, charcoal and animal dung to meet their energy needs for cooking. In sub-Saharan Africa, over 80 percent of the population depends on traditional biomass for cooking, as do over half of the populations of India and China.

- The world's wealthiest countries (approximately 1 billion people) accounted for \$36.6 trillion dollars (76%)
- The world's billionaire's just 497 people (approximately 0.000008% of the world's population) were worth \$3.5 trillion (over 7% of world GDP).
- Low income countries (2.4 billion people accounted for just \$1.6 trillion of GDP (3.3%))
- Middle income countries (3 billion people) made up the rest of GDP at just over \$10 trillion (20.7)
- The world's low income countries (2.4 billion people) accounted for just 2.4% of world exports
- The total wealth of the top 8.3 million people around the world rose 8.2 percent to \$30.8 trillion in 2004, giving them control of nearly a quarter of the world's financial assets.
- In the other words, 0.13% of the world's population controlled 25% of the world's financial assets in 2004. A conservative estimate for 2010 finds that at least a third of all private finance wealth, and nearly half of all offshore wealth, is now owned by world's richest 91,000 people ---just 0.001% of the world's population.

