RELIGION & STATE DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

*A German-South African dialogue on
historical and current challenges*

Editors
Renier Koegelenberg
Udo Hahn

**KONRAD
ADENAUER
STIFTUNG**

EVANGELISCHE AKADEMIE
TUTZING

EFSA

Church perspectives

Holistic Development: Requirements for Development Cooperation in the Age of Globalization

*Reinhard Marx*¹

I was delighted to have been invited to this event, as my Vita offers several points of departure for the prescribed topic on “Holistic development: requirements for development cooperation in the age of globalization.” As some may know, before my time as bishop I was a scholar of the doctrine of Catholic Social Teaching. As chairman of the German Commission *Justitia et Pax* and as chairman of the Commission for Societal and Social Affairs of the German Bishops’ Conference, I was able to focus on development policy and the challenges of globalization.

As some may know, before my time as bishop I scientifically represented the subject Catholic Social Teaching. As chairman of the German Commission *Justitia et Pax* and as chairman of the Commission for Social Questions of the German Bishops’ Conference, I was then able to deal more intensively with development policy and the challenges of globalization.

And last but not least, last year I was in Madagascar and South Africa to make a small contribution to the consolidation of the religious bond between Europe and Africa.

¹ Cardinal Marx is the Archbishop of Munich and Freising, Germany, and former Chairman of the German Bishops’ Conference (DBK), Munich.

In Madagascar in May 2018 a Catholic African-German Bishops' meeting took place which addressed the question of 'holistic development' under today's conditions. To me the *similarities* that connect the Catholic Church in Africa and Europe became apparent, specifically with respect to the analysis of the economic, social and political reality. Obvious, however, were also the *differences*: Africans and Europeans are not only confronted with different realities, but they encounter these realities with perspectives shaped by different cultural and historical experiences.

The trip to Madagascar was followed by a visit to Cape Town, where I had the opportunity to meet with members of the high-level roundtable. Members of the roundtable had already dedicated their time for several years to the social and environmental problems of mining. The term is: courageous dialogues. This group includes leaders of Christian churches, non-governmental organizations and mining companies. I met, among others, Cardinal Wilfrid Fox Napier in Cape Town, whom I know through our common work in Rome, and with the Anglican Archbishop Thabo Makgoba. Today's event in Tutzing also ties in with this South African context of discussion.

I would like to invite you to join me in reflecting on three considerations:

- First I will try to present the developmental understanding of the encyclical *Laudato si'* of Pope Francis, at least its basic features;
- Then the question of what 'holistic development' as demanded or promoted by Pope Francis means for development cooperation between North and South;
- And finally, I would like to reflect with you briefly on the opportunities and challenges associated with cooperation between state and religion in the field of development.

1. Holistic development according to *Laudato si'*

On other occasions I have pointed to the special significance that three papal encyclicals have had for my own theological development. There is *Pacem in Terris*, the great encyclical of peace by Pope John XXIII from 1963. And there is *Populorum Progressio*. In this encyclical dated 1967, Pope Paul VI describes development as a comprehensive process that goes beyond the economic dimension and affects the

whole person and all people. Development is not one option among others, Pope Paul VI maintains, but it is a right of all human beings to be able to unfold in all their dimensions on this earth. This 'Basic Law' (PP 22) is based on the common origin of all human beings, on their equality before the Creator and on their own human dignity. In this perspective, development is closely linked to a concern for the common good and to the use of the earth's goods in solidarity.

Finally in 2015, in the encyclical *Laudato si'* Pope Francis unfolded anew the process of development in the light of the current challenges. This encyclical is characterized by a synopsis of social and environmental challenges, which he sums up in the following subtitle: Concern for a Common Home. The ecological crisis and social exclusion of people are seen as a single issue; holistic development must take both dimensions into account equally. For this reason the Pope asks the basic question: How can we live together so that not only all people are well, but also creation?

Pope Francis considers both the environment (which is ruthlessly exploited) and the poor (who are deprived of the chance to lead a fulfilling life) as the bereaved who suffer as a result of an understanding of development which has succumbed to the 'technocratic paradigm' (LS 109). According to the Pope, this paradigm represents a truncated view of reality. To him, the predominance of the technocratic paradigm in politics and economics is downright disastrous: "The economy accepts every advance in technology with a view to profit, without concern for its potentially negative impact on human beings" (LS 109), as stated in *Laudato si'*. Against the backdrop of his criticism of the prevailing understanding of progress, Pope Francis advocates a holistic new idea of progress, which not only manifests itself in production figures and material trade balances, but "leaves in its wake a better world and an integrally higher quality of life" (LS 194).

If one wants to further define the idea of 'holistic development', then one must direct one's attention to the Pope's understanding of reality, which he juxtaposes with the 'technocratic paradigm'. The encyclical repeatedly states that "everything in the world is connected" (e.g. LS 16). Instead of abridged views on certain areas, such a far-reaching understanding of reality aims at elucidating the bigger picture. The awareness that everything is interrelated is also a critique of

technological or economic activities in which the pursuit of one-sided interests is at the forefront.

The Pope's holistic view demands that when trying to grasp the concrete situation, the whole of human existence must also always be kept in mind. Consequently, genuine human development must embrace all aspects of human life, including both material and immaterial needs. Development in this sense means to be at the service of the whole human being and of all humankind, and also to take into account and promote the intellectual, moral, spiritual and religious aspects.

As far as the objective of holistic development is concerned, *Laudato si'* does not consider technological innovations or the increase in economic growth rates to be decisive, but rather that the "improvement in the quality of life" (LS 46) should be associated with this type of progress. Quality of life includes health as well as viable social relations, particularly in the family sphere, whose "great importance" (LS 213) is specifically emphasized. Also of importance for a good life is the "historic, artistic and cultural patrimony" (LS 143), which the Popes regards as threatened. Therefore, a holistic idea of development must include the cultivation of cultural riches. Here the premises for living a good life are mentioned, which are to be realised by the criteria for a new kind of progress.

Quality of life as a goal has never been so central in any social encyclical before and refers to man in the likeness of God and his unique dignity. However, the reorientation towards development or progress is not only *for* the sake of human beings, but is also to be undertaken *by* human beings. Pope Francis has great confidence in the abilities of humankind, especially in freedom of choice: "We have the freedom needed to limit and direct technology; we can put it at the service of another type of progress, one which is healthier, more human, more social, more integral." (LS 112).

In addition to freedom, a truly human development requires an ethical awareness responsible for the consequences of its actions. Also here it is expected of human beings to "take another course" (LS 53). A holistic concept of development does not only concentrate on the immediate, short-term benefit, but also takes the long-term effects of actions into account. The denial of limitations is an expression of the "technocratic paradigm" criticised by the Pope. Instead, he calls for the acceptance

of existing boundaries, be they ecological, social or economic in nature. This is part of the ethical perspective of a new concept of progress.

2. A new development policy perspective

The perspective on goals and possibilities of development as formulated by Pope Francis has very practical implications for understanding cooperation in development. Implementing holistic human development requires changes in the political, economic and ecological spheres here and elsewhere, not least in the kind of cooperation between the governments of states.

With the *Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development*, which the international community agreed on in 2015, states express the belief that global, social and ecological challenges can only be solved through joint action. As the preamble to Agenda 2030 states, they are committed to “free the human race from the tyranny of poverty and want and to heal and secure our planet”. This is the standard they want to measure up to and it should serve as a guideline for development cooperation. The 17 goals of the Agenda are their leitmotifs and they strive for nothing less than “transforming our world”. The states emphasize the “common but differentiated responsibility” of all to participate. As the Agenda indicates, development cannot be exported, but we have a duty to support each other in translating the grand word “transformation” into specific, concrete political steps. Development must always be understood in an intransitive way: not only are we working to improve the conditions for others to develop and unfold their full potential. We are also called upon to develop ourselves, for example, to discern the obstacles we impose on others through our way of life and to strive to overcome them.

Holistic development calls for political frameworks, both in the perspective of *Laudato si'* and in Agenda 2030. It is imperative to have the right policy framework if integral human development is to be possible for everybody. I would like to highlight a few key points by way of example, which I consider indispensable for development cooperation in view of the necessary transformation processes.

First: Recognize ecological borders

The catastrophic consequences of the unabated exploitation of the earth's resources are clearly causing the loss of biodiversity, the degradation of soil or the overfishing of the oceans, to name just a few examples. We are overstretching the earth's capacity for regeneration with climate change and the general air pollution, especially in large cities and industrial areas. Leaving God's creation solely to commercial interests will soon mean that we will no longer be able to survive on it. What we need is a framework for protecting our environment. Based on the principle of justice, we have to ask questions as to what needs to be done to protect the natural foundations of life and who is responsible for environmental pollution and damage. Climate change is perhaps the most urgent problem, demonstrating that the framework conditions for equitable development in many cases can only be set at international levels. Failure to do so will have catastrophic consequences in many parts of the world, depriving in particular the poorest countries of opportunities for sound development, including good economic development.

Second: Shape the national order

A state order must function in a way that promotes economic *and* social development. Only if all those involved experience the rules and regulations for economic and political life as reliable, will people and companies get actively involved. Ongoing political instability is the antidote to such reliability. The same applies to corruption, i.e. the ability of individuals or certain constituencies to override the rules that apply to them. Established state institutions are an indispensable framework condition for development in society. It is vital to promote them in each individual country and in the realm of international cooperation.

Third: Reinforce the social market economy in international cooperation

Markets are a central instrument of any economic order that wants to bring prosperity to its citizens. Yet many people experience that what is presented to them as a market economy actually as a game by the powerful, which essentially favours the rich and increases inequality in society. The church has instead always insisted that the market must be understood and shaped as part of a comprehensive social order, as Pope John Paul II called for in the Encyclical *Centesimus Annus*. Rules and restrictions are needed. And they have to be accompanied by state efforts to ensure

social security, the protection of workers' rights and a redistribution of wealth in favour of weaker population groups. I am convinced that only with such an economic and social order can development be successful across the world. In other words, we must think beyond capitalism!

Fourth: Create fair world trade

World trade has been the subject of controversy not only since US President Trump subordinated global trade relations to the principle of "America first". A number of bilateral trade and investment agreements exist that have a major impact on development opportunities of individual countries. In my view, it is difficult to deny that global trade, which has expanded considerably since the 1990s, plays a decisive role in reducing global poverty, especially in Asia. However, there are not only winners in world trade, but also losers. And as many economists point out, the inequality problem has become more acute in recent years.

It is thus of crucial importance that negotiations on trade agreements are conducted in a transparent manner and not be solely dominated by the interests of those who are economically stronger. They also need to be oriented towards the goal of attaining just development for all. Voluntary agreements will not suffice as those who participate may face competitive disadvantages. Clear legal provisions are preferred to voluntary ones and global agreements are preferred to multi- and bilateral agreements. The reason is that when many countries meet, economically and politically weaker states can also organise bargaining power.

Fifth: Regulate migration fairly

We live in an age of migration. Admittedly, the migration of people has been a familiar phenomenon in the history of the world. However, global networking, including new means of communication and improved transport options, precipitated a strong expansion of migration even over long distances. This has had an impact on socio-economic and socio-cultural development in poorer and richer countries. Fair regulations that accommodate the situation of migrants as well as that of the resident population, i.e., "sending countries" as well as "recipient countries", are not easily found. Precisely for this reason it is important for the international community to find frameworks that provide guidance and structure for the decisions of individual countries. One such attempt is the "global compacts" agreed by the United Nations

at the beginning of 2019 on how to deal with refugees and regulate migration. One can only hope that these compacts will provide an impetus for fairer solutions in the difficult field of migration.

All this underlines the importance of policy in realising holistic development. What is at stake – as *Laudato si'* also points out – is the restoration of the primacy of politics (cf. LS 189) vis-à-vis the various individual interests and, at the same time, the global orientation in politics. In this context Pope Francis repeats the demand for a “true political world authority” (LS 189), which had already been expressed by earlier Popes. The international discourse speaks here of “good governance” to avoid the association of a dominant world state. Be that as it may, structural changes in policy making are necessary in order to enhance the “global commons” (LS 174).

3. The church: partner, but not an extended arm of state development policy

Allow me to conclude by briefly addressing the relationship between religions (especially the Christian churches) and the state in development cooperation. Evidently there is a newly awakened interest in religions among individual states and also the community of states. One expression of this is the multilateral initiative PaRD – Partnership for Religion and Sustainable Development – which was launched in 2016. This initiative brings together organisations of the UN, governments, civil society organisations and religious communities to reflect on the fundamental potential of closer cooperation between states and religions. The office of this international platform is located at the Society for International Cooperation [*Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit*] (GIZ) in Bonn. We are grateful for this commitment. On the Catholic side, Misereor, Missio and Justitia et Pax are involved. Several of the international members of this platform are also present here in Tutzing. I will mention only Renier Koegelenberg, one of the initiators of our meeting today.

Yet it cannot be overlooked: temptations are also inherent in the recent attention paid to religion in development cooperation. I would like to briefly mention three of these temptations.

First: Instrumentalization of religious actors for national agendas

Religious communities sometimes have a societal significance that encourages them to be treated as quasi-state actors. This is particularly true in situations of precarious statehood, such as in the Central African Republic or in Southern Sudan. Churches step in with their capacities and their credibility, especially in such situations where the government is hardly able to fulfil its function. However much we all value this commitment, therein lies a danger. Religions can be used by external donors to achieve political goals. Notwithstanding short-term advantages on both sides, religious communities run the risk of narrowing their own potential for action in the long term and consequently harming their credibility.

Second: Lack of respect for the established international relations within religious communities

Religious communities, not least the world religions, are also part of their own increasingly global networks. In different ways this global reality is constitutive of the self-conception of religious communities. One must be aware, however, that the development of relationships between state and religious communities always transcends the respective national contexts. Religions, especially the Catholic Church, will also in local contexts always consider the global perspective, i.e. for the Catholic Church the universal church perspective. For this reason, the state will also have to keep the international dimension of religions in mind when cooperating with religious communities. In post-conflict transformation processes, for example, often international dimensions and experiences have to be taken into account that should not be overlooked. Not sufficiently considering these interrelationships can be counterproductive in the medium-term.

Third: Shifting political responsibility to religious actors

Matters of political accountability and liability must not be shifted inappropriately. Religious communities should not be held liable for political failures. Underlining the relevance of religion and religious communities should not lead to 'religious and cultural backwardness' as being alleged causes of insufficient progress, when instead it is really a matter of economic, regulatory and other issues that specifically concern the state. In this context, special attention needs to be paid to inter-religious dialogue.

RELIGION AND STATE: BETWEEN COPTION AND COOPERATION

All too often we encounter the expectation that only such inter-religious dialogues, as practised by Pope Francis in an exemplary manner, would be able to resolve all problems if they were addressed properly and with sufficient means. We mustn't be deceived: inter-religious dialogue can change the political climate and also very concretely support people, but it remains the task of politics to set a framework that promotes the freedom for people of different religions to cooperate.

Historical experience shows that there is an inextricable tension between state and religion. Attempts to resolve this tension in one direction or another has resulted either in political religions or in forms of theocracy. Neither of the two is conducive to promoting decent living conditions and holistic development. Rather, what is needed is a constructively designed, ideally productive form of tension. In this case, a concrete perspective of integral human development can also emerge.

I am convinced that we, as churches and religious communities, can and must play an important role in shaping the agenda for 'holistic development' and a 'new concept of progress'. I view with great concern the tendency to instrumentalise religions for political purposes, which is even promoted by some religious representatives. It contradicts the efforts towards 'holistic development' for all people. We must orient ourselves towards making the house of creation habitable for all human beings.