

The MDCs, giving lip-service to the goal of development, have spent only a token amount of their income for development in the LDCs. The success of the Marshall Plan in Europe led policy-makers in the West, and especially in the United States, to expect that a similar outpouring of aid to the underdeveloped nations would result in equally rapid progress. It was initially assumed that Asian, African, and Latin American recipients possessed comparable decision-making, programming and administrative abilities. When American and other sources of foreign aid did not effect the anticipated results, disillusionment about the whole foreign aid program grew, a phenomenon which can readily be observed in Congress today. The United Nations has recommended that MDCs apportion 1 percent of their GNP to LDCs for development. U.S. commitments of economic assistance to LDCs and multilateral agencies rose from 0.54 percent to 0.68 percent of GNP between 1956-1960 and 1961-1965. But from a 1962 high of 0.76 percent, they fell steadily to 0.60 percent of GNP in 1965. Recent cuts in Congress in the foreign aid bill suggest that official aid may be falling absolutely as an amount, as well as relatively as a percentage of income.

The primary responsibility for development has to rest with the LDCs themselves. This proposition is not really subject to practical debate. But the developed countries, with an important and widely acknowledged interest in the establishment of more viable conditions in the LDCs, have a responsibility to treat UNCTAD as a means to this end. UNCTAD's success will depend upon the ability of the participants to discover potential areas of agreement and on their willingness then to reach agreement--this process, in fact, amounts to an act of political will. UNCTAD provides a unique forum to which both MDCs and LDCs come expressly to discuss development.

The 1964 UNCTAD Conference, while successful in naming most of the important issues and in establishing the permanent machinery so urgently desired by the LDCs, failed as such a forum for genuine discussion. This kind of discussion among LDCs and MDCs alike is exactly what the development problem needs if it is to be moved off dead center. In 1964 the LDCs spoke in terms of rigid demands without giving an opportunity for compromise, and the MDCs, though favoring development in principle, refused in fact to accept its assumed heavy economic price.

With the touchy question of permanent machinery out of the way, this next UNCTAD Conference should lend itself to more fruitful discussion. The MDCs need to recognize and act upon their interest in alleviating the unacceptable poverty of the underdeveloped world. A willingness, on the part of both LDCs and MDCs,