From the right to development to the rights-based approach: how 'human rights' entered development

Peter Uvin

From the right to development to the rights-based approach: how 'human rights' entered development

Peter Uvin

This article offers an intellectual genealogy of how the concept of human rights has entered the development discourse—from the formulation of a 'right to development' to the rhetorical incorporation of rights within prevailing discourse, to the articulation of a 'rights-based approach' to development. It concludes with some propositions about the important role that a focus on rights might play in the practice of international development.

Introduction

'Rights', 'human rights', and 'rights-based' are relatively recent additions to the development lexicon (Tomasevski 1993; Sano 2000). For decades, the development enterprise lived in perfect isolation, if not ignorance, of the human-rights system and its implications for development. During the 1990s this began to change, for three main reasons. The first was the end of the Cold War, which opened the door to greater missionary zeal. The second was the manifest failure of structural adjustment programmes, which came to be seen as caused by a lack of government accountability and prompted a major push for good governance and democracy. And thirdly, development thinkers always seek to redefine development as being about more than economic growth: talking about human rights is one way to construct a more holistic definition.

By the end of the 1990s, both the PowerPoint presenters and the dirty-fingernails folk had converged around some acceptance that human rights ought to play a larger role in development. But quite what role, and what this might mean for the development enterprise itself, has remained both vague and contested. This article offers an intellectual genealogy of rights in development – from the formulation of a 'right to development' to the rhetorical incorporation of rights within prevailing development discourse, to the articulation of a 'rights-based approach' to development.[1]

The right to development

Development as a concept first entered the human-rights edifice through the debate on the 'right to development'. The idea was launched by the Senegalese jurist M'Baye in 1972 – a period of radical debate about the New International Economic Order (NIEO). During the first half of the 1970s, Third World countries used their numerical majority in the United Nations to try to negotiate reforms in the global political economy of trade, finance, investment, aid, and information flows. This effort was led by well-known Third World nationalists, emboldened by the success of the OPEC oil embargo, which many believed was the beginning of a fundamental reshuffling of the world's economic power cards.

The notion of a right to development provided legal and ethical authority to the Third World's request for the international redistribution of resources. In addition, it acted as a counter-argument against rich countries' exclusive insistence on political and civil human rights. Acrimonious discussions about the NIEO persisted for years, but led to no concrete results, apart from the signing of a few weak international commodity agreements. By 1985, the intellectual and political pendulum had swung dramatically rightwards, and structural adjustment had replaced international reform as the talk of the day. The notion of a right to development did not die altogether, partly because the developing countries had learned that, in the words of Ian Brownlie, 'it had become evident that the political futures market was in the area of human rights and it was therefore prudent to pursue policy goals under that banner' (1989:3, cited in Slinn 1999: 370). After much legal wrangling, in 1986 a 'right to development' was adopted as a UN General Assembly resolution (i.e., not a treaty, and thus without binding force), stating as follows:

> *The right to development is an inalienable human right by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized.* (www.unhch.ch/html/menu3/b/74.htm)

This was the kind of rhetorical victory that diplomats cherish: the Third World got its right to development, while the First World ensured that the right could never be interpreted as a greater priority than political and civil rights, that it was totally non-binding, and that it carried no resource-transfer obligations.

Human rights, once set down on paper, never die, even though no one may care much about their survival. Rather, they mutate into working groups, commissions, and expert panels, each of which produces reports that are occasionally the subject of discussions in low-level meetings. Sometimes, however, out of this patient work contested or marginal rights obtain a second lease of life. This is what happened to the right to development. At the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, the right to development was re-adopted, this time unanimously, as part of the broader Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. Thus it can be claimed that the right to development now reflects a global legal consensus, and as such represents a victory for its advocates, pyrrhic as it may be. Following this, in 1997 the right to development was honoured with its very own 'independent expert', Indian economist Arjun Sengupta, who has produced a series of fine reports.

From a political, real-world, perspective, the track record of the right to development is catastrophic. According to most legal scholars, the declaration was bad law: vague, internally contradictory, duplicating other already codified rights, and devoid of identifiable parties bearing clear obligations (Slinn 1999; Rosas 1995; Obiora 1996). Affirming that all people have the right to development, and that such development consists of, and is realised through, the realisation of every existing category of human rights is surely a beautifully

worded statement, but it is also operationally meaningless. This quality is nicely exemplified in the following quote from the UN Working Group on the Right to Development, which describes the right as being

> *. . . multidimensional, integrated, dynamic and progressive. Its realization observes the full observance of economic, social, cultural, civil, and political rights. It further embraces the different concepts of development of all development sectors, namely sustainable development, human development, and the concept of indivisibility, interdependence, and universality of all human rights.* (Approvingly quoted in UNDP 1998: 3)

It is little wonder that the right to development has so rarely been invoked by a social movement or by a major organisation promoting social change.

Rhetorical-formulaic incorporation

During the 1990s, bilateral and multilateral aid agencies published a slew of policy statements, guidelines, and documents on the incorporation of human rights in their mandate. An enormous amount of this work was little more than thinly disguised presentations of old wine in new bottles. A few quotes suffice. '[The World Bank's] lending over the past 50 years for education, health care, nutrition, sanitation, housing, environmental protection and agriculture have helped turn rights into reality for millions' (Lovelace 1999: 27; World Bank 1999: 3, 4). Or UNDP, claiming that it 'already plays an important role in the protection and promotion of human rights. . .. Its program is an application of the right to development' (UNDP 1998: 6). What these statements essentially do is colonise the human-rights discourse, arguing, like Molière's character who discovered that he had always been speaking prose, that human rights is what these development agencies were doing all along. Case closed; high moral ground safely established.

A more benign interpretation is that these verbal changes constitute the first steps towards a true change of vision. Indeed, much scholarship argues that discourse changes have real-world impacts: they slowly redefine the margins of acceptable action; create opportunities for redefining reputations and shaming; change incentive structures and the way in which interests and preferences are defined; influence expectations, etc. This is, after all, a key proposition of all international law: that even in the absence of enforcement mechanisms, international law does matter by affecting actors' perceptions, calculations, reputations, and norms. Hence, rhetorical incorporation, while it may change little in the immediate term, may make a real difference in the longer run.

Until now, however, what this approach has produced is not only a simple sleight-of-hand. It has also overlooked the tensions between the different logics of human rights and of development. As Donnelly (1999: 611) convincingly argues, referring to the UNDP's new work on human development,

> *Human rights and sustainable human development 'are inextricably linked' only if development is defined to make this relationship tautological. 'Sustainable human development' simply redefines human rights, along with democracy, peace, and justice, as subsets of development. Aside from the fact that neither most ordinary people nor governments use the term in this way, such a definition fails to address the relationship between economic development and human rights. Tensions between these objectives cannot be evaded by stipulative definitions.*

To work out the relations between development and human rights requires more than simply stating that one automatically implies, or equals, or subsumes, the other. Michael Windfuhr

(2000: 25), founder of FIAN, one of the world's foremost human-rights organisations devoted to an economic right (the right to food), adds:

> *Besides the general misconceptions related to ESC* [economic, social, and cultural] *Rights – that they are costly to implement, that implementation can only be done progressively and that they are therefore not rights at all but rather political objectives—one additional basic misunderstanding often comes up in discussions on how to integrate ESC-Rights into development cooperation, the concept that development cooperation automatically implements ESC-Rights because it is oriented to improve health or food situations of groups of the population. A rights-based approach means foremost to talk about the relationship between a state and its citizens.*

There is a real danger, then, in this kind of rhetorical discourse. Far from constituting the first step towards a fundamental re-conceptualisation of the practice of development co-operation, it seems merely to provide a fig-leaf for the continuation of the *status quo*. By postulating that development projects and programmes by definition constitute an implementation of human rights, the important difference between a service-based and a rights-based approach to development is obscured. To have a right to something—say, food—it not just about having enough of that: a slave can be well nourished too. It is about having a 'social guarantee' (Shue 1980), which implies that it is about the way the interactions between citizens, states, and corporations are structured, and how they affect the most marginal and weakest in society. This is obfuscated in a lot of the easy and self-serving rhetoric that agencies produce.

Human rights and good governance

Human rights came, in the 1990s, to be harnessed to the 'good governance' agenda (see Thandika Mkandawire's contribution to this issue). Initially developed by the World Bank as an extension and deepening of the economic-conditionality agenda contained in the classical structural adjustment programmes of the 1980s, the terminology of 'good governance' has been taken over by some bilateral donors and the entire UN system. Governance specialists, indicators, programmes, and conferences have multiplied like mushrooms after a rainy night. In *Development and Human Rights: The Role of the World Bank*, the Bank declares:

> *By helping to fight corruption, improve transparency, and accountability in governance, strengthen judicial systems, and modernize financial sectors, the Bank contributes to building environments in which people are better able to pursue a broader range of human rights.* (World Bank 1998: 3)

As this quote suggests, and as discussed above, much of the conversion to human rights still amounts to little more than rhetorical repackaging: policies that were once justified by their potential to improve investor confidence are now justified for their human-rights potential, at least in brochures destined for the human-rights community. Nothing else, however, changes. It takes more than a few ideological leaps to see how strengthening financial systems is a human-rights activity. One feels sure that the framers of the Universal Declaration and the two Covenants were not thinking of shoring up banking-reserve requirements, improving accounting standards, or current-account liberalisation when they were building the human-rights edifice.

In statements like these, the many faces of power, and their associated discourses, come together. Human rights, free trade, or the willingness to let rich-country multinational corporations (MNCs) buy national assets, become conflated. All amount to re-statements of the 'good world' as the powerful see it. They are decreed from above, morally self-satisfying, and

compatible with the *status quo* in the centres of power. A huge range of other rich-country behaviours remains immune to criticism. Northern over-consumption, a history of colonialism, lopsided environmental degradation, protectionism, the dumping of arms in the Third World, the history of shoring up past dictators, the wisdom of structural adjustment, and globalisation – all are off the discussion table. No wonder so many people resent the human-rights agenda.

Freedom as development

A new paradigm emerged in the early 2000s. In it, development and rights become different aspects of the same dynamic, as if different strands of the same fabric. Development comes to be re-defined in terms that include human rights as a constitutive part: all worthwhile processes of social change are simultaneously rights-based and economically grounded, and should be conceived of in such terms. Without doubt the most referred-to reflections on this new paradigm are found in Amartya Sen's *Development as Freedom*, in which he defines development as the expansion of capabilities or substantive human freedoms, 'the capacity to lead the kind of life he or she has reason to value' (Sen 1999: 87). He argues for the removal of major factors that limit freedom, defining them as 'poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic social deprivation, neglect of public facilities as well as intolerance or over-activity of repressive states' (Sen 1999:1).

Sen treats freedom as simultaneously instrumental, constitutive, and constructive for development, setting out the deep mutually constitutive links that exist between these two concepts and domains in ways that make their inseparability clear. With Sen as their champion, these ideas have made great inroads in international development discourse. But they are not in themselves new: democracy and development have long been linked in political and development discourse. Take this statement, for example, from the UN Secretary-General's *Agenda for Development*:

> *Democracy and development are linked in fundamental ways. They are linked because democracy provides the only long-term basis for managing competing ethnic, religious, and cultural interests in a way that minimizes the risk of violent internal conflict. They are linked because democracy is inherently attached to the question of governance, which has an impact on all aspects of development efforts. They are linked because democracy is a fundamental human right, the advancement of which is itself an important measure of development. They are linked because people's participation in the decision-making processes which affect their lives is a basic tenet of development.* (United Nations 1994, para. 120)

This was written five years *before* Sen's book, by an institution that is not exactly the hotbed of philosophical innovation. We have to acknowledge that these ideas have been around a long time in the development field. Rather than congratulating ourselves on how smart and perceptive we have become since reading and discussing Sen's work, we ought to ask why we have not acted on these ideas before. And this is where we encounter the limits of Amartya Sen's major contribution to development. There is no politically grounded analysis of what stands in the way of his approach. This is hardly cause for discarding his contribution: no man is obliged to do everything. What it does mean, though, is that agencies, by signing up to Sen's vision, remain committed to little more than improved discourse – in this case in a well-appreciated economic-sounding form.

It is interesting here to consider UNDP, the institution whose discourse has adopted Sen's ideas most enthusiastically. Its milestone *2000 Human Development Report* dealt with human rights and human development, and the relations between the two. The section that

describes the practical implications of 'promoting rights in development' (UNDP 2000:112) proposes five concrete measures:

- launch independent national assessments of human rights
- align national laws with international human-rights standards and commitments
- promote human-rights norms
- strengthen a network of human-rights organisations
- promote a rights-enabling economic environment.

As we can see, four of the five implications are of the largely meaningless legalistic and technical kind that will not challenge anyone: ensure that governments make references to human rights in their constitutions and remove laws that are contrary to human rights; educate, sensitise, or mobilise people in human rights; create national human-rights commissions, ombudsmen, and the like. These are all potentially useful activities, but they do not reflect any mainstreaming of human rights into development practice; they are simply small, technical add-ons, of doubtful operational relevance. Only the fifth seems to offer the potential of going further. Allow me to quote from it at more length:

> *How to create an enabling environment in which public policy can most effectively provide resources for advancing human rights? First, the public sector must focus on what it can do and leave for others what it should not do. . . . Second, with this division of labour, the state can focus on the direct provision of many economic, social, and civil rights. . . . Third, the major economic ministries, such as finance and planning, need to integrate rights into the economic policy-making process. . . . Fourth, the private sector also has responsibilities in creating an enabling economic environment. Chambers of commerce and other business organizations should contribute to efforts to further improve human rights. . .* (UNDP 2000: 118-19)

This is all that the new approach amounts to: a standard repetition of the end-of-the-1990s liberal dogma of the sanctity of economic growth combined with some human-resource development and a few pious recommendations that ministries and corporations – and the Chamber of Commerce? – ought to think about human rights. Vagueness dominates. Note also that none of the human-rights objectives relates to UNDP, the aid enterprise, or the international community itself. All of them are to be implemented out there, in the Third World, without requiring a critical look at oneself.

The 'rights-based approach'

Others – mainly NGOs – have gone much further, presenting a new vision of their work, the so-called 'rights-based approach'. The rights-based approach to development is useful not so much because it posits rights as fixed properties or legal certainties, nor because it somehow leads us to engage in actions or supply services that we would never have thought of beforehand. Rather, its use lies in two things that are both important for development specialists: one about claims, and one about processes – in other words, one about ends and one about means (Sengupta 2000a: 568).

First, the rights-based approach to development encourages a redefinition of the nature of the problem and the aims of the development enterprise into claims, duties, and mechanisms that can promote respect and adjudicate the violation of rights. Typically, this brings about a 'root cause' approach, focusing primarily on matters of state policy and discrimination. The move from needs to rights, and from charity to duties, also implies an increased focus on accountability. Indeed, at the heart of any rights-based approach to development are concerns

with mechanisms of accountability, for this is precisely what distinguishes charity from claims (Frankovits and Earle 2000:7; Mukasa and Butegwa 2001; de Feyter 2001: 285; UNDP 2000; HRCA 2001: 2). If claims exist, methods for holding to account those who violate claims must exist as well. If not, the claims lose meaning. Note that this is not the same as saying that only 'justiciable' legal remedies – suing people before courts of law – are suitable remedies: many forms of social counter-power, administrative mechanisms, open discussion, and shared ideo-logical constraints can act as mechanisms of accountability as well. At the end of the day, although they seem to rest on a clear and fixed legal basis, the nature of the claims and the duties created by human-rights claims is a deeply political and constantly shifting matter; for what is socially and legally feasible today is never fixed, but a matter of political struggle.

Second, a rights-based approach brings to development work the realisation that the pro-cesses by which development aims are pursued should themselves respect and fulfil human rights (Sengupta 2000b; UNDP 2000). The human-rights approach to development argues that any process of change that is being promoted through development assistance ought to be 'participatory, accountable, and transparent, with equity in decision-making and sharing of the fruits or outcome of the process' (Sengupta 2000b: 21-22; see also Frankovits and Earle 2000; Mukasa and Butegwa 2001; DFID 2000). In other words, it ought to respect the dignity and individual autonomy of all those whom it claims to help, including the poorest and the most excluded, including minorities and other vulnerable groups, often discriminated against; it ought to create opportunities for their participation – opportunities that are not dependent on the whim of a benevolent outsider, but rooted in institutions and procedures.

Nice as this all sounds, it still poses the 'so what?' question rather acutely. After all, the insight that all development ought to take place in a participatory manner, with priority given to the poorest and the most excluded, is hardly revolutionary for the development com-munity. All these issues have been on the agenda for anywhere between ten and 30 years. Development practitioners did not need to wait for human-rights lawyers to tell them that these things are important; rather, what they need is a sense of the extent to which the human-rights paradigm can constitute the basis for a different practice. And of course that has been much, much harder to achieve, or to implement. The risk always exists that taking up a rights-based approach amounts to little more than making nice statements of intent regard-ing things that it would be nice to achieve, or duties we would like the world to assume one day, without setting out either the concrete procedures for actually achieving those rights or methods of avoiding the slow and dirty enterprise of politics. A number of more progressive NGOs are trying to think through what it concretely means to apply a rights-based approach, but the jury is still out on whether this makes any difference in either programming or impact on the people for whom and with whom they work.

Conclusion

As might be expected, there is a lot less in the emerging human-rights-in-development regime than meets the eye. Much of it is about the quest for the moral high ground: draping oneself in the mantle of human rights to cover the fat belly of the development community, avoiding chal-lenging the *status quo* too much, or questioning oneself or the international system. As a result, one can see power at work here. This is to be expected: most of this rethinking constitutes a voluntary act by people in New York, Washington, London, or Geneva – smart and well-intended, most of them, but not exactly those in great need of overthrowing the established order. This stuff has not been fought for by the masses in whose name it is adopted. It is not part of a fundamental reshuffling of the cards of power, or a redistribution of resources

worldwide: no such dynamic has occurred. As a result, one could expect little more, maybe, than fluff, self-congratulation, and more or less hidden transcripts of power.

At the same time, there is no reason to be exclusively cynical. Major change always starts small, and even rhetorical gains sometimes turn out to be the snowballs that set in motion fresh avalanches. In addition, there are organisations and people, in both rich and poor countries, who are courageously rethinking their long-held ideologies and practices in terms of human rights. And there are many more development practitioners, everywhere, who debate questions in a new manner and try to add layers of accountability, transparency, and organisation to their own work. Much more can be done with human rights.

If a rights-based approach to development means empowering marginalised groups, challenging oppression and exclusion, and changing power relations, much of this task lies outside the legal arena, falling squarely in the political realm. Support for the development of international coalitions mobilising shame; the creation of ideational and normative pressure through the spread of convergent shared expectations and discourses; the mobilisation of grassroots and citizen power in favour of certain rights; the certainty that international aid actors will speak out loudly against violations and will extend support to local actors opposing these violations; the creation of ombudsmen, whistle-blowers, and other complaint mechanisms: all these are means – not purely legalistic – of promoting human rights.

If the development community is serious about human rights, then the rights focus cannot be limited to projects. This is an issue of coherence: why use the approach for one part of life and not for another? If donors, be they governments, NGOs, or international organisations, profess attachment to human rights in their development aims, they must be willing to apply the rights agenda to all of their own actions (the inward focus), and to the global political economy of inequality within which they occupy such privileged places (the outward focus). In the absence of such moves, the human-rights focus is little more than a projection of power, and the world has had enough of that already (Duffield 2000; Windfuhr 2000). In other words, the promotion of human rights begins with oneself.

As with most ethically desirable aims, organisations seeking to promote human-rights outcomes through the use of aid have a very easy place from which to start: themselves. Ensuring that their internal personnel management and decision-making procedures are non-discriminatory, non-exclusionary, transparent, and accountable, for example, especially for field offices, may well be a minor revolution. Adding to this the application of the same criteria to an organisation's dealings with its closest direct partners in the field increases the impact: does it hire its employees, or provide its services, on a non-discriminatory basis? Does it function in a manner that is accountable and transparent? Does it promote these outcomes through all means possible: dialogue, support, principled communication?

In addition, the human-rights approach to development clearly implies an absolute requirement of participation, whose suspension, abrogation, or limitation is only allowable in the most extreme of circumstances. In practice, this means that aid agencies should ensure that they provide all relevant information to those concerned, in local languages if necessary; that they strictly monitor and ensure the security of those who do choose to participate; that they do all that is possible to ensure that under-represented groups are brought into the process as well; that they meet all the costs that participation may cause, both to themselves and to the potential participants. Let's face it: this costs money. Besides money, the strong requirement for participation also entails a strict duty for donor agencies to be transparent, to ensure that their aims, assessments, resources, and constraints are known (or could be known) by all those concerned.

The resulting clarity may benefit not only wide participation and frank discussion among all parties concerned: it may also contribute significantly to an increase in donor credibility. It also

calls for a broad commitment by aid agencies to give much greater priority to promoting local dialogues, to stimulate local knowledge-generation and research, to find ways of making people's voices heard by those in power – both out of respect for the dignity of people, and because they are the ones who have to live with the consequences of being wrong.

Acknowledgements

References

DFID (2000) *Realizing Human Rights for Poor People*, Strategy Paper, London: DFID.

Donnelly, Jack (1999) 'Human rights, democracy, and development', *Human Rights Quarterly* 21 (3): 608–32.

Duffield, Mark (2000) *Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security*, London: Zed Books.

de Feyter, Koen (2001) *World Development Law*, Antwerp: Intersentia.

Frankovits, André and Patrick Earle (eds.) (2000) *Working Together: The Human Rights Based Approach to Development Cooperation*, Report of the NGO Workshop, SIDA, Stockholm 16–19 October.

Human Rights Council of Australia (HRCA) (2001) Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defense and Trade Inquiry into the Link between Aid and Human Rights, Canberra: HRCA.

Lovelace, James C. (1999) 'Will rights cure malnutrition? Reflections on human rights, nutrition, and development', *SCN News*, 18.

Mukasa, Stella and Florence Butegwa (2001) 'An Overview of Approaches to Economic and Social Rights in Development in Uganda – Draft Report for DANIDA', Kampala: Nordic Consulting Group.

Obiora, L. Amede (1996) 'Beyond the rhetoric of a right to development', *Law and Policy* 18, 3/4 (July-Oct): 355–418.

Rosas, Allan (1995) 'The right to development', in Asbjorn Eide, Catarina Krause and Allan Rosas (eds.) *Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. A Textbook*, Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, pp. 247–256.

Sano, Hans-Otto (2000) 'Development and human rights: the necessary, but partial integration of human rights and development', *Human Rights Quarterly* 22(3): 734–52.

Sen, Amartya K. (1999) *Development as Freedom*, New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf.

Sengupta, Arjun (2000a) 'Realizing the right to development', *Development and Change* 31(3): 553–78.

Sengupta, Arjun (2000b) 'Right to Development', Note by the Secretary-General for the 55th session, August A/55/306.

Shue, Henry (1980) *Basic Rights. Subsistence, Affluence and US Foreign Policy*, New York, NY: Basic Books.

Slinn, Peter (1999) 'The international law of development: a millennium subject or a relic of the twentieth century?', in Wolfgang Benedek, Hubert Isak, and Renate Kicker (eds.) *Development and Developing International and European Law*, Frankfurt: Peter Lang, pp. 299–318.

Tomasevski, Katarina (1993) *Development Aid and Human Rights Revisited*, New York, NY: Pinter.

United Nations (1994) *An Agenda for Development: Report of the Secretary-General*, New York, NY: UN, A/48/935, 6 May.

UNDP (1998) 'Integrating Human Rights with Sustainable Development', *UNDP Policy Document 2*, New York, NY: UNDP.

UNDP (2000) *Human Development Report 2000: Human Rights and Human Development*, Oxford and New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Uvin, Peter (1998) *Aiding Violence: The Development Enterprise in Rwanda*, West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press.

Windfuhr, Michael (2000) 'Economic, social and cultural rights and development cooperation', in A. Frankovits and P. Earle (eds.)

World Bank (1992) *Governance and Development*, Washington, DC: World Bank.

World Bank (1999) *Development and Human Rights: The Role of the World Bank*, Washington, DC: World Bank.

The author

Peter Uvin holds the Henry J. Leir Chair of International Humanitarian Studies at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. He has worked for many multilateral, bilateral, and non-government development agencies in Africa, especially the Great Lakes region. His book, *Aiding Violence: The Development Enterprise in Rwanda*, won the African Studies Association's Herskowits Award for most outstanding book on Africa in 1998. His latest book is *Development and Human Rights* (2004). Contact details: Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, 160 Packard Avenue, Medford, MA 02155-7082, USA. <peter.uvin@tufts.edu>