

REMOVING UNFREEDOMS

AMARTYA SEN'S FREEDOMS APPROACH AND SHIFTING THE PARADIGMS OF DEVELOPMENT

*The LSE in conjunction with DFID is holding a one-day colloquium entitled **Removing Unfreedoms - shifting the paradigms of development.***

The Development Management Programme at the Development Studies Institute (DESTIN) will host this event on Monday 7 July 2003 at the London School of Economics with the participation of Professor Amartya Sen and Lord Meghnad Desai from the LSE.

THE CONTEXT

It would appear that our understanding and the goals of 'development' keep changing. Between the 1970's and 1990's the rallying point for the international development agencies was "poverty reduction". Since then this UNDP-led approach has been diversified to include other frameworks such as rights-based and sustainable livelihoods approaches. These have become central for understanding development.

In 1998 Amartya Sen's seminal work "**Development as Freedom**" was recognised by the Nobel committee as a fundamental new paradigm that defined new goals for development, with a conclusion that:

"Freedom is the primary end as well as the means to development"

Is this just another shift in the goals of development and can the means and ends of development coincide? Does this freedom perspective give an entirely new meaning to development and its place in our aspirations for the 21st century?

Last October a discussion paper and film interview with Amartya Sen was presented by Romi Khosla, at the UN World Habitat Day in Brussels entitled *Removing Unfreedoms, Citizens as the Agents of Change*. The paper proposed the potential of a shared International Freedom Framework for Urban Development (see attached UN discussion paper).

Following on from that international presentation, a workshop has taken place with members of National Slum Dwellers Federation, Mahila Milan and Society for Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC) in Mumbai, India, to explore their understanding of Sen's Freedom approach to development.

THE COLLOQUIUM

This colloquium on 7 July 2003 at LSE has been convened to further inform and invite responses from both those who formulate and implement policies and who engage with change at the grassroots level. It will bring together academics, international development agencies and NGO's to discuss the relevance of this new thinking and possibly to help formulate a common overarching freedom framework which can include and go beyond existing development goals.

The colloquium will comprise three parts. The day will begin with brief presentations on Sen's Freedoms approach and its operationalisation in development practice, including a presentation of the findings from discussions in Mumbai with SPARC and the National Slum Dwellers Federation. The second part of the day will comprise participatory discussions. The colloquium will conclude with an afternoon session when findings from applying the freedoms approach are presented, followed by a response from Professor Amartya Sen and a commentary from Lord Meghnad Desai.

You are invited to participate in the colloquium and contribute whatever background material and papers you feel are relevant. Please confirm your participation and contribution by 30th May 2003. Please respond to Nick Hall at WSP International Management Consulting, who is organising this colloquium on behalf of DFID and LSE, at nick.hall@wspgroup.com

