

MICHAEL BURAWOY: Okay. Well, welcome to you all. Today is day one of the American Sociological Associating Meetings 2004.

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It's already been an exciting day and even more excitement ahead of us. And day one is sort of billed as talking to powers as opposed to necessary talking to publics. And we had a wonderful plenary already midday today, and we are now going to have a wonderful address. President Robinson or former President Robinson has had much experience talking to powers. And she is involved in many important works in the area of, you know, of human rights. I'm not going to introduce Craig Calhoun, well, but before I hand it over to Craig, I want to just tell you the--how we're going to organize questions. We're not gonna have any roving mic. We're going to actually--you should write them out on a card or a piece of paper and hand them to, I'll not use left or right, I'll say hand them to the isles that's either side of this room where they will be collected by six T-shirted, Marxist T-shirted students from Berkeley here and six over there. They're all gonna be very visible. They will wear the T-shirt that says I think it says, "Karl Marx is the original public sociologist."

[Laughter]

I'm glad the word--they used the word "original" because he was not much of a public sociologist. He just stunned everybody in public.

[Laughter]

Anyway, that's the plan. So, when President Robinson has finished, we will start having questions that we brought up to the front and we'll sort them out and we will sort of survey, what was it we'd watch for, Craig, very discriminatory way, non-discriminatory way. Efficient way. We will post the questions to Mary Robinson. Okay. So, Craig Calhoun, I think you all know, Professor of Sociology in New York University, President of Social Science Research Council, and he will do the introduction, Craig.

CRAIG CALHOUN: Thanks Michael. Good evening. And welcome to those of you who have just arrived today at this exceptional meeting, American Sociological Association. I think it's one of the most exciting in years maybe in my memory. One of the reasons for this excitement is the initiative of our President Michael Buraway took in reaching out to important public figures addressing issues of key sociological importance and issues to which sociologists ought to be contributing more and more. One of these issues is human rights. And it is my enormous pleasure to be able to introduce to you to one of the

world's foremost campaigners for human rights, Mary Robinson. Mary Robinson trained as a lawyer at Trinity College, King's Inn Dublin, and at Harvard. Fortunately, this did not stop her from developing a sociological imagination.

[Laughter]

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For she has seen the interconnections of different social issues, institutions, political processes through her career. And she has acted on them effectively, ethically, and with remarkable enduring energy. Mary Robinson was both a practicing lawyer in Ireland and internationally, and a distinguished professor of constitutional law, indeed the youngest ever elected to the professorship at Trinity. She entered politics like so many important progressives in the wake of the 1960s and served for 20 years as a senator before being elected President of Ireland in 1990. Serving seven years, Mary invigorated not only Irish government but Irish society in important ways that have contributed to its growing prosperity and innovativeness. She led on education and social policy, for example. But more importantly, I think, Mary Robinson more than any other single person brought Ireland into dynamic relationship with the rest of the world and made it an important ally of the least developed countries in the world. I have to tell you my family immigrated many generations ago so it is not really nationalistic pride that makes me point out how the innovations Mary Robinson led have made Ireland a country of international importance disproportionate to its size. Take into historical example of the Great Irish Famine, she called on contemporary Irish citizens to take the lead in dealing with famine, nutrition, and indeed poverty around the world. She built links not only with Europe in the midst of its integration or with the United States and other countries of Irish Diaspora, but very impressively, with Africa and with the post-communist societies of Eastern Europe. Mary Robinson was the first head of state to--Somalia following the crisis of 1992, and the first head of state to travel to Rwanda in the wake of the 1994 genocide, and the first head of state to visit the international war crimes tribunal in the former Yugoslavia. A tireless advocate for more effective international action, she was also an effective advocate to the Irish people encouraging their sense of connection to the world and their willingness to support international development and relief activities. She received the Care Humanitarian Award in recognition of her leadership. And on stepping down as President, she became the United Nation's High Commissioner for Human Rights. She reformed the duration of the UNHCR, helped to reorient its priorities to work at local and national levels and regions of dire need drawing on her own political experience but I think also her under recognized sociological imagination. She not only reported on abuses and advocated for help, she proactively sought to build institutional protections for human rights. She was perhaps most successful raising public consciousness of human rights issues and developed networks for advocacy--knowledge organizing for example the 2001 Durban World Conference against Racism. This was not without controversy. The US and Israeli delegations walked out protesting the credence given to charges of

racism and human rights violations in Palestine. But controversy is not all bad. I think I can say to an audience of justice. Public sociologists indeed tend to like it, but alas, it is still the case that few other politicians or international diplomats have been willing to speak as honestly and bluntly as Mary Robinson. She warned early, for example, and sadly she warned rightly of the potential for abuse in the so-called war on terror after September 11th. Despite growing awareness of the importance of human rights, I am afraid the global human rights records still cost for outrage as much as optimism. And with that in mind, I'm glad that Mary has not stopped working in the field. She heads the Ethical Globalization Initiative bringing to focus on human rights and especially gender rights to fostering more equitable international trade and development, strengthening responses to HIV-AIDS in Africa, and shaping more humane migration policies. These are indeed critical issues and they are issues that should be in the forefront of our attention as sociologists as well as citizens and human beings. And there is no one better to help us see them in their global context than Mary Robinson. Will you welcome her?

[Applause]

MARY ROBINSON: Good evening. It is a great pleasure to be here in San Francisco, and to take part in the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association. I'd like to thank as a president, Michael Burawoy for inviting me to address you tonight. And I'd also like to thank Craig Calhoun. I tried to stop him to sort of say the short version, the very, very short version, but being of Irish blood, he has the bliss, so there's nothing I could do. He is determined to say his piece, and I did appreciate every word that he said because he linked human rights and your vision, your work as sociologists. And although this gathering is still in its initial stages because I know you actually celebrate 99 years at this meeting, so it's not initial in that sense, I've been impressed by the quality of the discussion and even more by your collective willingness, indeed your self-appointed charge to examine where public sociology is going and how it can best adapt itself to make the most valuable contribution to a rapidly changing world. That's genuinely not just interesting for sociologists, but important for the rest of us. And so, I'm glad to be here while you engage in this series discussion, and I will be very interested to follow this discussion over the remainder of your annual conference. Given your disciplines intrinsic ties to civil society, I'm not actually surprised by this, because civil society worldwide has begun to be shaped by emerging global social movements which are increasingly unwilling to accept a status quo of gross inequality and widespread lack of respect for human rights. So, sociology--

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So, sociology is with this movement. It's engaged in exposing the discrepancy between what is and what ought to be, and encouraging the building of bridges that respect diversity and the differing

perspectives. I know that there is debate, indeed harsh debates on the issue, and that's good too. If you're debating hotly then you're in touch with the issues that really matter. And I like--description and I quote him, "Public sociology aims to enrich public debate about moral and political issues by infusing them with sociological theory and research." Let me encourage you further by noting a strong parallel with the current debates that are taking place in the human rights community. There is active internal discussion among my human rights friends on how to integrate a human rights approach into development programs, how to advance economic, social, and cultural rights more effectively, and how to link human rights and human security more closely in order to counteract the erosion of civil liberties in the aftermath of the terrible attacks of 9/11. It seems to me that this rethinking and renewal of purpose among sociologists and among human rights activists is a current at a time in which a more value is led. To me, a more ethical globalization is possible. And why do I say that? My optimism is on two developments in recent years that I believe are genuinely significant. First, debates about globalization have moved beyond the rather unhelpful and simplistic arguments for and against to deeper discussions about new strategies that can make this complex processes more transparent, participatory, and accountable at every level - local, national, and international. A growing number of credible initiatives and projects are now underway. One example is the World Commission on the social dimensions of globalization which produced its support of fair globalization creating opportunities for all. Another is the current Helsinki Process on globalization and democracy. At the end of this month, I traveled to Tanzania to take part in further discussion under the Helsinki Process. The aims of these initiatives are to provide constructive agendas for reform of international policies and organizations, and to ensure greater involvement in decision making by relevant stakeholders. The challenge for sociologists and for human rights--the human rights community is to contribute actively and to enrich and to inform this process and these initiatives. The second development, one I think that you'll resonate with perhaps more personally is that wider civil society to which your discipline is closely connected has become steadily more effective, more practical, more hands-on in demanding that political leaders make principled decisions. Leaders are under pressure to organize national and international relations with a greater sense of shared responsibility for the faith of those who have been most excluded from the potential benefits of open markets and societies. We saw signs of this change in the United Nations Millennium Declaration adopted as you recall in September 2000 by the largest gathering of heads of states ever assembled. The Declaration affirmed, "Thus--" and I quote, "the central challenge we face today is to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all the world's people." Crucially, the leaders agreed to share responsibility for achieving a set of specific targets and commitments which we now call the Millennium Development Goals or the MDGs. These eight goals include halving those in extreme poverty and hunger by 2015, achieving universal primary education for boys and girls by 2015, specific targets for promoting gender equality and empowerment of women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability, and developing a global partnership, a partnership for development. Let me just stop at this moment and say what I'm looking forward to this evening is not the rest of what I'll say to you but how together we will look at these issues. So, take out your pads and start writing these questions with Craig Calhoun will be storing up, and which the Berkeley students will be gathering at the edges of this evening. This is to be a real dialog about how we make a difference with the tools that we have to hand. And I just mentioned one of those tools, the Millennium

Development Goals. I'm aware of a lively debate here in the ASA on the merits of public sociologies. And I'm aware that some concerns have been expressed as to whether there's a danger that they may somehow be subjective, maybe even arrogant rather than professional in a rigorous--agenda of sociologists. It's the agenda of political leaders on behalf of their peoples. It's a very authentic shared global agenda drawn up by political--framework of the United Nations and with a time limit of 2015. And these Millennium Development Goals provide a practical set of objectives, both for public sociology and for the human rights community. So, rather than divide and debate among ourselves as to whether there is a way forward, I think it's important that we recognize that we're fortunate enough at the beginning of this century to have global priorities determined.

And this is valuable because our task is to influence the implementation of those global priorities. But then the terrible attacks of September the 11th 2001 in this country shifted the collective attention of the international community off this people-centered commitment and replaced it with a more traditional state-centered idea in which national security has dominated the agenda often as we worry about in the human rights community at the expense of civil liberties, and yet securing borders and forcing strong antiterrorism measures come a vital part of our modern world. But the time has come to-- at the start of the century. It's time to hold governments accountable for the commitments they made to alleviating some of the factors that give rise to the most widespread conditions of insecurity in our world. Not only 'cause it's the right thing to do, but also because it's a crucial component of achieving sustainable national security. Sociologists and the human rights community need to be more actively engaged both from an academic and also from an advocacy perspective in raising the issue of responsibility for addressing the widespread conditions of poverty in our world. We need to question a world in which globally only some 50 to 60 million--50 to 60 billion is spent on development assistance while 300 billion dollars is spent on agricultural subsidies for farmers in the richer developed countries, and over 900 billion is spent on global military expenditures. I think we'd all agree that individual countries continue to bear primary responsibility for their own development and for the building of national structures that ensure the protection of fundamental rights. Experience shows that societies for the domestic infrastructure reflects the state's commitment to democracy and to the rule of law and countable power--ultimately subject to the authority of elected representatives and an independent impartial judiciary are also best stable to respect human rights and to achieve sustainable development. Yet the World Bank's 2004 World Development Report on making services work for the poor, points out that even where governments do have the basic infrastructures in place to provide services such as clean water, preventive healthcare or primary education, the poorest are often unable to access them. So, what is still missing in this process is widespread accountability between people and service providers, between people and policymakers, and between policymakers and service providers. The World Bank acknowledges that making these changes and strengthening levels of accountability involves fundamental shifts in power, something that cannot happen overnight, but it's precisely the issues of power and responsibility that need to be addressed and need sociologists and the human rights community to address from the different wisdoms, the different experiences, the different perspectives. This is where also the particular strengths of your sociological discipline can be crucial to holding

governments accountable for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Today's large parts of civil society in this country haven't been actively engaged in promoting the MDGs nor in mobilizing pressure on Washington to take effective action on them. I know this because I've been addressing audiences in this country, and when I talk about the Millennium Goals I can see the blank expressions, "What is she talking about and where is this coming from, how--" you know and you almost see people beginning to leak out at the corners because they don't know what the hell I'm talking about. And yet this is the global--this is the uniquely significant world agenda for change. And if this country isn't fired up about the Millennium Development Goals, then how are we going to set a fire around the world on the importance of this change. And it's not an easy situation. It's complicate--human rights community have been critical of the MDGs. Criticisms include the concern that the Millennium Goals sideline more pressing human rights issues and can distract attention from the broad human rights agenda. For instance, a number of women's groups argue that the MDGs ignore much of the women's rights platform of the 1990s including violence against women and the whole issue of reproductive rights. Another criticism is that the MDG process is top down. Civil society wasn't involved in fighting the MDGs which are seen by some as an attempt at a one size fits all approach. For all of their imperfections however, the Millennium Goals represent a shared global agenda for action with the overarching objective of advancing human development. The task ahead is to ensure their implementation and practice which will require a massive social mobilization especially of young people in both developed and developing countries. It's the young people that I'm particularly concerned about and interested in because they are not switched on at all to the Millennium Goals. But I was interested to learn recently that there is a consort--approach to mobilize young people around implementation of the MGDs and it's being spearheaded by an initiative called ImagineNations and it's trying to gather strength through the UN and through other organizations. Given the demographic reality of majority of populations under the age of 25 and with huge youth unemployment in many developing countries, this would seem to me to be an appropriate priority for public sociology. Doing my homework in preparation for this talk, I was struck by the degree to which what some of you define as public sociology has similar objectives to the international human rights movement. In a real sense, the ASA embodies the vision laid out over 50 years ago in the Preamble of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. The rights and principles enshrined in the direct declaration serve and I quote directly, "as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance." The theme statement for this conference describes how you endeavor to do this. And again I quote, "as a mirror and conscience of societies promotes and informs public debate about class and racial inequalities, new gender regimes, environmental degradation, multiculturalism, technological revolutions, market fundamentalism, and state and non-state violence. With some minor changes, this statement could easily have come from my former office, the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights. It implies the notion--

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It implies the notion that everyone has duties to the community, which as you know, is enshrined in Article 29 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Indeed, human rights could almost substitute for the word "sociology" in the recent article published by Michael Burawoy in Norway's Journal of Sociology. He writes, "Sociology lives and dies with the existence of civil society. It teeters away with totalitarianism and gains strength when totalitarianism teeters. Moreover, sociology is not only a mirror of civil society, it can also actively promote such civil society. Here surely lies sociology's distinctively public purpose: to represent humanity's interest in containing the unbridled tyranny of the market and state."

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In this passage, the connections between public sociology and fundamental human rights and freedoms are clear. Human rights, like sociology, flourish and grow when civil society does. That is that individuals have the right to express their ideas as they please, to labor in their chosen field, and to be paid for their work so that they may support themselves and their families. When totalitarian governments do not permit their citizens to live freely, civil and political and economic, social and cultural rights are not realized. Similarly, rights like sociology also serve as a mirror for society. In my role as High Commissioner for Human Rights, I used to say that how minorities, how those in prison, how migrants, how people with disabilities are treated is a very revealing mirror and tells a great deal about a society. It's the way that the vulnerable are treated that can tell us so much about the priorities of a society. And human rights represent in essence humanities' interest in containing the tyranny of the state and the market. I would take it a step further. Rights are also tools of accountability with which to dismantle the unbridled tyranny of the state and the market. [Applause] And they are the means--they're the means with which to protect and provide assistance to those who are most adversely affected by the state and the market in situations where significant changes have yet to take place at the macro level where the society is repressed but you can see that there are small changes and significant changes taking place. So in a way, this is a key difference between public sociology and human rights. Human rights are at essence legal obligations that states have signed on to and are required to uphold. That's not to say that sociology doesn't have a vital role to play in supporting an increasing knowledge of the values of diversity, of dignity, of human expression and human development. It's one of sociology's strengths that it has the authority and the ability to share these values with others by teaching students and universities or by engaging in writing about them in ways that expand public awareness, ownership, and debate. I'd like to encourage those of you who share this perspective to recognize yourselves as part of the advocacy movement for human rights. You are, in my view, already doing this. Like human rights advocates, you deflect--of public goods from privatization challenges. You address questionable activities of multinational firms and repressive national security regimes. You constantly remind the world that it can be different, that it must be different, and expose the vast gaps in income and

opportunity that currently obstruct and stand in the way of this reality. You also search for the connections between disciplines, an endeavor to build bridges that as your team statement has set out, put it, that are open to all without tolls. But I would invite you to take your involvement one step further. In effect, to really insert yourselves and your views and your experience and your contribution into the vibrant debate now taking place in the human rights community. We could use the depth of research, the intellectual integrity, and the knowledge of civil society that you would bring to the discussions currently playing themselves out on the best way to secure human rights for all. The implementation of the MGDs is just one area in which your expertise would add value. Another arena in which your contribution is needed is the debate around how non-governmental organizations can most effectively influence states to implement their economic, social, and cultural rights, their ESC rights obligations. To refresh you on the basics of the human rights legal mechanisms, implementation of human rights obligations by states depends to a large extent on the work of those on the ground, on civil liberties groups, women's groups, those working on child rights, those working to combat poverty in holding their governments to accountability by monitoring how they fulfill their obligations. This is more straightforward under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Article 2 of which specifies an immediate obligation to respect and ensure all the enumerated rights in the Covenant. International human rights organizations like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have been very successful in naming and shaming governments for their failure to fulfill their legal obligations. And local human rights NGOs in countries around the world are increasingly skillful in using these international standards to hold their governments accountable. Effective monitoring and enforcement of the International Covenant on Social and Cultural Rights is more complex, of the different standard in its Article 2, which commits state parties, that is those countries which have ratified the Covenant, to take steps individually and through international assistance and cooperation especially economic and technical, to fulfill these rights to the maximum of its available resources with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of the rights recognized in the Covenant. The requirement that progressive realization be evaluated according to available resources assumes that countries have differing states of development and available resources which necessitates differing performance standards. To be truly effective, much of the data on progress needs to be disaggregated in relevant categories by race, by gender, region, socioeconomic, and linguistic groups et cetera. This data which is not as yet generally available also needs sophisticated evaluation, which again is on the whole beyond the capacity of many NGOs and indeed many resources for governments as well. Initially, for this reason, human rights NGOs focus their energies on monitoring the violations rather than on assessing the progressive realization of economic and social rights. They base their work mainly on Article 2 Paragraph 2 which requires state parties to guarantee that the rights set out in the Covenant, and I quote, will be exercised without discrimination of any kind as to race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. And also on Article 3, which makes it clear the state parties are required, and again I quote, "to undertake to ensure the equal rights of men and women to the enjoyment of all economic, social, and cultural rights set forth in the present Covenant." So, the strategy of human rights groups was to focus their action around the--making it clear that non-discrimination is an immediate right, and the obligation to fulfill and that could not be delayed by the standard of progressive realization. So, it is important to prevent discrimination, to prevent any lack of equality in the realization of economic, social and cultural rights. With the additional help of the

general comments on specific economic and social rights such as to health and right to education, the committee on economic, social and cultural rights to the body charged with monitoring the implementation of the Covenant by state parties, as well as the recommendations contained in that committee's individual country reports, helped NGOs who could hold governments accountable for violations reflecting discriminatory actions and policies that perpetuate or aggravate, endorse or institutionalize forms of discrimination.

Two other treaties, the Convention on the Elimination and Discrimination against Women which has been ratified now by some 177 countries and the Convention on the Rights of the Child which has been ratified by 192 countries include specific provisions concerning economic, social, and cultural rights. And their respective monitoring committees have been carrying out similar work, and this is in relation to women's rights and child rights. In recent years, a number of international human rights organizations have been exploring additional further innovative ways to advance economic, social, and cultural rights. This include collaborating with local human rights organizations, a broad spectrum of women's groups, those working on child rights, working against poverty locally, in lobbying for systems of services that meet needs in a manner consistent with human rights requirements. In advocating for more resources for education and health et cetera, to fulfill economic, social and cultural rights, and in pointing out the impact, the negative impact of agricultural subsidies and terrors in preventing poor countries from trading out of poverty as well as monitoring compliance by states with the increasingly explicit obligations including core obligations to protect, to respect, and to fulfill these rights as elaborated by the different committees and the special repertoires. And now all of this work which is rigorous, which is detailed specific on human rights on economic social and cultural rights is being linked to the work being done on the Millennium Development Goals. For example, in recent weeks, my colleagues and I in realizing rights the Ethical Globalization Initiative have been working with the Millennium Project in assisting the academic task forces on hunger, on HIV and AIDS, on improving the lives of slammed dwellers and on poverty, to integrate what we call a rights-based approach and a strong gender dimension to their interim reports on how countries should plan to implement the Millennium Goals. And this is a very important resource because as we know next year in 2005, there will be a stock taking on the Millennium Goals. Stock taking in individual--and also a major debate in the general assembly in September 2005. So, we have a chance to link this rigorous work on the commitments under the covenant and relevant conventions with the work on the Millennium Development Goals. If we can bring these two together and if we can have social movements that are using these tools, this can be really serious. These are the building blocks, the ways forward, a change, an empowering because there are tools of empowerment at local level. It's also, I believe, significant that United Nations agencies and programs have adopted a common understanding of what they mean by a rights-based approach. And that international humanitarian and development non-governmental organizations are expanding their work to include research, policy planning, and advocacy around economic and social rights. I've been aware in my capacity as President of Oxfam International of that organization's expressed commitment to integrating a human rights approach into their development work. But I was pleasantly surprised when I attended a recent retreat and that retreat took place in the most rural part--some part outside of

Boston. When I come from Ireland and I'm used to rural areas, I've rarely been in a more rural area than this retreat. It was a retreat with heads of humanitarian and development NGOs operating from the United States included CARE, Save the Children, Mercy Corps, Oxfam America, International Rescue Committee and World Vision. And I was so pleased to learn that each of their organizations is committed to implementing a rights-based approach. And this is new. This is different. This is a thinking that is really quite radical, and it's going on in each of the organizations in a way that fits the approach and cultural ethos of the organizations. It's not the same in each organization, but it is happening. And there are other changes taking place. As current Chair of the Fund for Global Human Rights, I'm aware of the expertise which a number of foundations have been developing through their support of innovative grassroots work in holding governments accountable for implementing economic, social, and cultural rights including useful work on budget analysis. A notable example here in San Francisco is the Global Fund for Women which has supported literally thousands of women, many of them in Muslim countries working worldwide to combat violence and discrimination, and to develop projects for economic empowerment. An area where I believe much further debate and research is needed and work needs to be done is on the role of business in advancing economic and social rights or at least not being complicit in their violation. If you recall in the Global Compact, there are nine principles, and the first two of those principles are that companies and there are now more than 1,500 of them undertake to support and be faithful to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and not be complicit in its violation. That means not be complicit in violation of economic, social and cultural rights. At the World Social Forum in Mumbai last January, I participated in a stimulating panel discussion on holding governments accountable for economic and social rights, and I believe that the emerging social movements in different regions will rely increasingly on the tools of accountability offered under the Covenant and under relevant conventions, helped by the information sharing that has taken place worldwide and the examples of good practices offered by networks such as ESCR-Net. With your strong connection to civil society, I firmly believe that you as sociologists assist this process of discerning new and imaginative ways that governments, corporations, and international financial institutions can be held accountable to fulfill their economic and social rights obligations. In doing so, you can clear critical part in the larger discussion about how these rights can and must be--to addressing global challenges such as addressing extreme poverty and the catastrophic AIDS pandemic which cry out for increased engagement and leadership. Such collaboration has already produced valuable new evidence and increased observance of human rights in certain areas. Let me give you a couple of examples. The sustained advocacy of the anti-dam network, which was an affiliation of conservationists, environmentalists, and other civil society groups, was directly responsible for the establishment of the World Commission on Dams, which published a report assessing the social impact of dams. In essence it found that in many instances, these dams had an overwhelmingly negative effect that was rarely, and I quote, "adequately addressed or accounted for", and they were directly responsible for a range of human rights violations including: forced displacement without compensation of between 40 and 80 million people around the world, loss of livelihood, loss of cultural heritage, loss of development capacity, and so on. In a new book, "Dams and Development: Transnational Struggles for Water and Power", by Sanjeev Khagram, tells the detailed story. Another example of this type of collaboration is the international campaign to ban land mines. This campaign, which was recognized with the Nobel Peace Prize in 1997, brought about a major international treaty without it having any direct support and was largely successful due to the grassroots

campaigns in a number of countries that worked in tandem with the sustained efforts of government personnel and of international NGOs. Currently, I see campaigns such as the published What You Pay Campaign as being an effective means of tackling corruption and requiring accountability both on the part of extractive industries and of relevant states.

As sociologists, you can also strengthen the efforts of civil society by making the language and approach of human rights more accessible to a wider audience. This is a long-standing challenge for the international human rights community. We lawyers have rarely been very successful at communicating in simple language and getting our message across to people. We need the help of sociologists to do this.

[Laughter]

I also believe you have a unique ability to mitigate some of the dilemmas intentions of civil society activism. Your strong roots in research and academia lend a breadth and a depth to campaigning work that can otherwise be accused--of oversimplifying problems to gain widespread public support. The multidisciplinary nature of the social sciences enables you to present social problems to official from a broader perspective. And in doing so, enables them in turn to devise remedies that address the range of causes of social breakdown or other factors. Your networks within academic institutions internationally also enable you and your counterpart in the south to speak for themselves and to lead the debate in their areas. In closing, I leave you with this challenge - as you engage in finding solutions for the most pressing issues of our time, I would urge you to add to your analysis a human rights lens, and to identify human rights violations when they are such, when they should be recognized as human rights violations. I am not talking here about war crimes or crimes against humanity or other international level infractions as important as they are to confront, but rather the things close to home - the human rights violations occurring here in the United States as elsewhere and to which we're all if we look around exposed. I am speaking of the one in four American children living below the poverty line.

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I'm speaking of poverty itself, which I believe is the greatest human rights problem in the world today. I'm speaking of children and their families who have few rights and little dignity, and live a precarious life without human security. Not only are they insecure monetarily and physically, but they often face discrimination based on race, on gender, on class, and on a combination of those. These are central concerns to both sociologists and the rights community alike. A recent Ford Foundation report close to

home case studies of human rights--work in the United States, which is published this year, illustrates the grassroots work being done on the issues as diverse as progress on the death penalty, economic rights, and domestic violence. In an article in 1996 entitled "Advancing Rights Protection", Dorothy Thomas put it this way, and I quote her, "One thing is certain. The struggle to guarantee America the full panoply of rights recognized under international law cannot rest solely with the executive, legislative or judicial branches. This requires the active involvement of the American people themselves. The future demands a more dynamic and mutually reinforcing strategy that unites diverse people and institutions across sectors and at all levels of policy and practice. Only in this way will sustainable social change be realized in the United States and throughout the world." Her words are more true today than ever. The majority of citizens in our world face a bridge with the toll too high, too steep to pay. The wide discrepancies they face can seem insurmountable, and many no longer believe in global equity or global social justice backed by concrete and consistent actions by all. Fifty-five years ago when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted, Eleanor Roosevelt reminded us that if human rights are to matter at all, they must matter in small places close to home. That's the challenge for sociologists and also for the human rights community. And we have no excuse because we are better equipped than ever before to meet the challenge. Thank you.

[Applause]

CRAIG CALHOUN: I am pleased to say, fellow sociologists, that you have not proved yourself lacking in questions. One or two hundred have just been delivered to me. Let me begin, Mary, if I may, with the question which I think is one that you've raised and as a request for some elaboration of this, but one of our colleagues asks, "How are nation states held accountable for reaching the Millennium Development Goals, and in particular, dealing with the MDGs that address--dealing with ways in which the MDGs are addressed equitably for racial, ethnic, and regional minorities?" And this echoes at least a couple of other questions here that ask specifically about the status of minorities of various kinds within nations that are usually treated in some sense as holes when one speaks of, for example, national leaders being accountable for their peoples?

MARY ROBINSON: I think that's a very good question to begin with. And it's not an easy question, and I'm going to give you a summary answer and maybe some of you will want to come back again on it, because it is extraordinarily important that we use the global agenda of the Millennium Goals to ensure that within each country progress is made particularly on minorities and vulnerable groups. For example, it looks as though we will niche the first of the Millennium Goals - halving those in world poverty and hunger by 2015, because China and India have been pulling people out of poverty. So, statistically, we will potentially reach that figure. But if we look at the Human Development Report for 2003, for example, UN Human Development Report, 54 countries got poorer in the 1990s. More people are going hungry in a number of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. There is a higher level of maternal mortality, of child mortality, of early death, and this is largely because of the HIV and AIDS pandemic. So,

we have a real challenge, and that is not to be somehow led astray by statistical objectives. It's important that there was the willingness at a global level to set the targets to be achieved by 2015. But it's important that those targets be achieved in all countries if possible. And currently in Sub-Saharan Africa, the estimate is that none of the targets would be achieved before or about 2015 at the earliest. So, there's a huge need both within countries and between countries to focus on the most vulnerable and use this more as a process for global advancement. The reason that I gave you the figures earlier of the amount spent on global development assistance, the amount spent on agricultural subsidies and on military spending, these are figures that are more or less accepted is that there was the conference on financing for development in Monterey which estimated that in order to really advance the Millennium Goals in a targeted way, it would require a doubling of the expenditure on development.

In other words, that the 50 to 60 billion dollars in expenditure on development should be doubled. And when I heard that initially when the former President of Mexico, Ernesto Zedillo and his colleagues brought in their report requiring an additional at least 50 billion US dollars--60 billion to achieve the goals, I thought that that was a huge amount of money. But when you set it against what is benched, I am not too up to date on figures, but I read a figure the other day, I think it was the New York Times of the current expenditure in Iraq as being something like a 144 billion dollars. That's for one regional issue that, you know, is difficult. But the point is the expenditure is made. We can find the money. It's not a problem. The problem is the priorities. Will we [applause] give priorities.

[Applause]

So, I think our alliance should be precisely what this question is about, to ensure that within countries, there is a focus on minorities, on vulnerable groups, on those who will need this expenditure, but also on making the case that not only this expenditure manageable, but it will increase, I firmly believe that it will increase the global human security. If we can reduce the anger and frustration and gross inequalities, we also reduce the tensions and the rallying around fundamentalist ideas because instead of young boys being educated in the madrasahs, they're educated in schools because there is provision for education, and these are the issues that we can tackle and we must.

[Applause]

CRAIG CALHOUN: Thank you, Mary. A number of people are interested in the question of cultural differences in--human rights are defined and whether you and the others in the human rights community are open to Daoist or Hindu definitions of their alternative Confucian or Islamic definitions and how the human rights community deals with these diversities.

MARY ROBINSON: Again, a very good question, the one that I had to think about a lot during my five years as High Commissioner for Human Rights. It is very important, first of all, that we value cultural differences, but that we don't make them the mistake of undermining the values of human rights. And going back to the work that was done by Eleanor Roosevelt and her colleagues, it was very thoughtful work. It well described in a book that I enjoyed very much, and if some of you haven't read it, you might like to have a look at it. It's called "A World Made New" by Mary Ann Glendon, who's a professor in Harvard University, but we won't hold that against her, and it's a wonderful account of how Eleanor Roosevelt worked with the team of legal scholars--a scholar from the Lebanon, Rene Cassin-France, John Humphrey of Canada, and so on. And she wasn't a lawyer, so she was in some sense bullying them to write the Universal Declaration in relatively simple language. It's not bad for lawyers, actually. It's pretty good. And also she understood the importance of drawing on the religions of the world. So, they looked at the values of the great religions, and they deliberately incorporated those values. And she had a big problem. The problem was that she understood, from carrying out this exercise, that human rights had to be a broad agenda. It had to include not just civil liberties, fair trial, freedom from torture or freedom of speech, freedom of religions, et cetera, but also right to food, shelter, to health, to education, to a reasonable standard of living. And so, she fought with the State Department at the time, which had problems about this, but she was the widow of a president, she had a lot of clout, and she won, and that's why the Universal Declaration is a universal declaration. It's not a western agenda of human rights. And it's a great strength that it is a universal declaration. It is the human rights agenda for people everywhere. It doesn't belong to states, it belongs to people. Often you get objections about states on cultural grounds. I've been through that endlessly. But actually when you talk to people, when you talk to women, when you talk to those who are minorities, who are oppressed, they want this agenda of human rights. It is actually a human birthright at the stage 55 years later. So, the main areas where we had problems was with the approach of a number of--Islamic countries to women's rights. And we had long debates on these issues, and I learned from human rights experts from Muslim countries such as Radhika Coomaraswamy who was the--on violence against women, a Muslim from Sri Lanka, Asma Jahangir, a Muslim from Pakistan who was the special rapporteur on extrajudicial killings, Hina Jilani another Muslim from Pakistan, her sister in fact who was the special representative of the Secretary General on Human Rights defenders, and they taught me, in a way that was extremely valuable and useful to me, not to be confused by talk about cultural issues. They said there's nothing cultural about this. You have traditional practices from male-dominated interpretations of text and male-dominated power plays on honor killings, on genital mutilation, and all of these issues. And it is not easy to move forward. You will only move forward if you bring the women with you, and if you educate women, and there are many studies on this, women move naturally. If women have primary education, the number of incidence of genital mutilation falls, of honor killings falls. At secondary, if women have access to secondary education, there's less still and a third level is not an issue. It's not a problem. So, it's an issue to be dealt with from within, but from a human right's point of view, the Universal Declaration took the trouble to be truly a universal manifesto, and it's the strength of the human rights movement. Indeed, the greatest resistance to economic and social rights comes from developed countries including this country. The United States has not signed up to any major international instruments on economic and social rights neither the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which has been ratified by 145 countries. I think the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women,

which I mentioned was ratified by 177 countries, and especially the Convention of the Rights of the child Ratified by 92 countries. Some European countries until quite recently were also quite resistant, but have now accepted that in order to be truly strong on supporting human rights, it's important to embrace that broader agenda. And there is very strong support particularly from Scandinavian countries and countries like Switzerland for economic and social rights because they have understood if you really want to have an integrity and validity of human rights, you must engage with that full agenda. If, and it is my dearest wish, the United States politically were to get behind that agenda, it would be of such importance to human rights. Happily, the United States at a working level, at a grassroots level is increasingly supporting economic and social rights and increasing debating them increasingly addressing them and invoking them and invoking the declaration, but this is part of our debate. And to the extent that you make it your debate, you could I think help to illuminate some of the issues. And I think it would be very helpful.

[Applause]

CRAIG CALHOUN: Mary, not unrelatedly, I have some bad news for you. I have just reached my sixth question that says what are the MDGs, I've never heard of them before. The sixth one and I'm not through the stack yet, this is not an entirely uneducated audience, though I think the audience might do well to get on Google and find out what the MDGs are. What do you think can be done to make the MDG agenda more generally known in society to mobilize around it? Let me encourage you not to answer the question that says would you list all of the MDGs and the progress on them so far, but perhaps to focus in on something like the question of gender and how it figures in the MDGs and what the mechanisms are, what work is going on with the MDGs.

MARY ROBINSON: Well, whoever asked this question, thank you for it. And can I do--I hope it's not an unfair thing 'cause actually it would be very interesting for me 'cause you are an informed audience, and I would be very interested to know how many of you are familiar with the MDGs or rather how many of you are not familiar with the MDGs. Yeah, that's very interesting--

CRAIG CALHOUN: I told you it was a bad news.

MARY ROBINSON: No, no, no, that is very interesting. And as I said, not really to me very surprising, but it is very, very useful, because here is a whole agenda, which is of such incredible importance. If you've been wondering some of you in talking about public sociologies, how do we know that we're not being subjective? I'm not imposing our agenda on others. But here is the answer. This is a global agenda for

action, which was adopted in September 2000 by the largest gathering ever of heads of state and government. It was agreed to by the then president of the United States, President Clinton. It was agreed to by all of the other, you know, it's not binding in a fully legal sense. It's a millennium declaration, but it has been adopted by the UN as its forefront strategy for development, by the World Bank as its forefront strategy, the International Monetary Fund. You know, so, everybody accepts that this is the agenda. The only problem is that it is not being promoted adequately. And what is valuable about it, as I said, is that targets have been agreed and they are fairly simple. I actually set them out for you, the eight goals. And the first goal is to half those in absolute poverty and hunger by 2015. And I mentioned the complexity that that can actually be reached globally by the work that is being done in bringing millions out of poverty in India and China. So, globally, the figures will look like that in 2015. But in many other countries, people are still, and in fact increasingly, in Sub-Saharan Africa and some parts of the former Soviet Union, more people are in poverty and hunger. So, it's complex. Having every child in primary education, boys and girls. That's a big target because UNICEF tell us that over a 100 million children, I think it's about 120 million children never see the inside of a classroom, never go to school, and the majority of them are girls. So, to have every child in full primary education by 2015 would be a major achievement. There is a goal that should be achieved by 2005 which is to rule out inequality between girls and boys at secondary level and at university level, and that will be assessed to some extent during a stocktaking next year. The Millennium Goals have become very important for developing countries because they're also trying to cut down on maternal mortality. At least 500,000 women every year die completely unnecessarily in childbirth because they are not attended by anybody with any expertise because they give birth in refugee camps in situations where they are prone to diseases that can be avoided, and so on. Maternal mortality should be a much higher priority of the women's movement. It's because of a lack of identification with this huge problem of mothers dying in childbirth. Child mortality is as we know a huge issue. There are so many children dying of preventable diseases, but then UNICEF tell us that more than 6 million children die a year of hunger. Now, 6 million is a big figure to me because it's more than the population of my native Ireland. And I have witnessed presently some, I would say, about 40 maybe 50 children dying at feeding stations in the arms of their parents, dying in refugee camps, dying in terrible poverty situations. I remember one 15-year-old boy dying in the arms of his father and I thought he was about an 8-year old. It was an emaciated body and I still remember. So, I remember each of the deaths because we all would if you witness a child dying of hunger, and yet over 6 million children die of hunger in the way we organize our world today. And so, we need a global agenda, and we actually have this, but governments won't take it seriously enough unless as Eleanor Roosevelt said, we bring it home. That's our challenge. And if I could do only one thing in talking to you, which was to get you all to go onto the internet and read up, and then speed up in what you can do, that would be well worth coming. There are so many. If you plug in the Millennium Goals, you'd be inundated. And I mentioned the Millennium Project which is actually a Columbia University-based project, and I'm linked to Columbia, it's one of our institutional partners, and I'm a professor of practice in Columbia. The project is providing an academic infrastructure for realization of the goals, and these task forces on hunger, on HIV and AIDS are doing their work, so you could plug in very easily. It's all on the internet. And it would be actually very valuable if you board it as maybe one of your goals of this meeting.

CARIG CALHOUN: You'll be able to find the Millennium Development Goals on the UNDP website at Undp.org. You'll be able to find them at the Earth Institute website of Columbia. This is the part that Mary just referred to. Jeffrey Sachs heads the initiative that tries to work on monitoring and reporting academic assessment of achievement of the goals. Our sociological colleague, Burt Singer heads the commission on issues of method and measurement dealing with the reporting and assessment of Millennium Development Goals. And I'm serious about putting to Google, you'll find literally hundreds of lists on different websites.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: [Inaudible Remark]

CARIG CALHOUN: Pardon?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: [Inaudible Remark]

CARIG CALHOUN: And we should undertake and we'll get them linked to the ASA website.

MARY ROBINSON: Well done.

[Applause]

MARY ROBINSON: If I may say so, women are always more practical. Thank you. Thank you.

CARIG CALHOUN: Ain't it the truth? Now, with this conversation in mind, Mary, one of the questions is how do we relate to the bottom up and the top down approaches to this? That is to human rights in general, how do we relate the kind of bottom up approaches of local civil society initiatives in a variety of settings and social movements to top down mobilization of heads of state, of the United Nations, and even in regard to the MDGs and all of these, how do we relate what appears to be all too much the top down stealth work of academics working on questions of measurements and assessment to the questions of popular mobilization in a more public engagements with the MDGs.

MARY ROBINSON: Again, I think that's a hugely relevant question that we should all think about. When I was taking up my responsibility as High Commissioner in September in 1997, I recognized that the Office of the UN that I was leading was very small even by UN standards. In fact, the total resourcing for human rights in the UN is less than 2 percent of the regular budget. So, whenever you hear this great rhetoric, always remember, you know, great rhetoric but less than 2 percent of the working budget of the UN, and there are other extrajudicial extra budgetary resources that are provided, but still it's a problem. But I was trying to think how to address the problem, and I decided, and it was a personal decision, just a personal way of doing that I would try to be close to victims and close to those who were working to try and change things in really difficult circumstances. So, I spent a lot of my time going to Chechnya at the time of the war there or going to Sierra Leone to East Timor to the Democratic Republic of Congo, to Colombia. And what I learned was yes I was listening to and trying to encourage and give a sense of somebody caring, of somebody listening to victims, but I was also learning what was going on on the ground, and that to me was a huge lesson of the incredible potential to change circumstances even in the worst of situations because I was talking about populations at--huge crisis, terrible situations of pain. Let me tell you about one in Kosovo that I think illustrates. It was the time of the terrible displacement of the population in Kosovo and I was in a camp in Albania with my human rights colleagues, and we had finished our work of taking from them descriptions of direct violations, gross violations, crimes against humanity. And as we came out, one of my colleagues said, "By the way, there's a wonderful woman here and she is teaching children, would you like to come and meet her?" So, I said, "Yes, I'll go meet her". And I went out and she was teaching a group of about 40 children sitting on the ground in a field and there was actually washing behind her, washing on a line. And she clearly came to an end or as we came, she said to them, "You know, that's the end of the class for this morning." And I talked to her and she told me of her personal circumstances. She and her parents had run out of their home as the home was being burned, and they had been relatively well-off. She was a teacher, her parents were retired, and they were comfortable. And it was so bleak--was trying at least have some sense of herself through teaching. And then she said to me, "Would you please come and meet my parents particularly my mother?" and I said, yes. I went around and met her mother who was a diabetic who was in a remote part of this large camp, very far from the latrines. And during the night, had to go several times, had to go in a humiliating way that she was completely unused to, and the daughter was very worried about her mother, about her depression in these circumstances. And I said to her, "Well, you know, how are you coping?" And she said, "I'm coping because for me my teaching is everything, and I am determined that these children will not lose out because they are here in this camp." And it epitomizes the bottom up. It's not doing for people; it's what they are doing. It's the incredible resilience, courage, power of using what you have to change circumstances. And that is, to human rights people, an absolutely vital part and it has to be recognized. It has to be empowered. It's part of the women's movement. It's part of making change. And it has to meet in the middle the top down, the global agenda for the Millennium Goals, the commitments that governments make to implement human rights commitments. They won't implement them unless they're held accountable, unless there is monitoring, unless there is increasing sophistication in the monitoring. So, to me, the bottom up and top down are vital--and they meet in the middle, and they don't necessarily meet very comfortably. It's a holding to accountability by civil society. And unless there is that holding to accountability, the promises will not be fulfilled, the commitments, the MDGs will remain unknown and unfulfilled, and it's only if

they are part of the mass movement. We have a potential to global mass movement, and we have a global agenda that is an agenda with timelines to be fulfilled. We have a different challenge from Eleanor Roosevelt. I think if she was around today, she'd welcome the challenge we have. It's a lot easier than what she was doing. She was sitting with colleagues to set standards that were to be global, that were to be embraced by every country, and there weren't as many independent countries in those days. We have those standards, and we've been working on them for 50 years now. We have a new global agenda at the start of the century of goals. We've casted those goals with additional 50 billion US dollars a year, what's that, and we're sitting on it, we're not actually--where I thought we need a bottom up to meet that top down Millennium Goals agenda and then we could really see a change.

[Applause]

CRAIG CALHOUN: Then let's try to condense into a short statement, one of the most asked questions, the one of the one that most Scot people write on both sides of the paper. How hard is it to make progress development goals and on the issues of human rights without transforming the global capitalist system?

MARY ROBINSON: Again, that's a very interesting question because the two are not connected officially therefore you know connections can be made. To me, let me put it this way. To me, the Millennium Development Goals are relatively modest. We're talking about halving those in extreme poverty and hunger, not ruling it out. We're talking about, yes, having every child in primary education. So, the way of implementing, I think, within countries may involve an economic and political transformation, but from the point of view in which the goals have been setup, I think that they are capable of being hugely supported in a way that more connects governments with their constituencies, with their grassroots organizations. How those grassroots organizations want to transform their economic situation is really a matter for each country. But I think what I would say is that I don't see it. I mean I see the work that we're doing in the Helsinki Process on globalization and democracy as being closer to trying to shape the different priorities of globalization than I see in the Millennium Goals. I see the Millennium Goals as being targets that countries can seek to achieve in current circumstances. If they, you know, have the resources and can do it within current circumstances, I see other factors that's being more likely to change the-- There's a range of short term improvements and a potential longer term agenda of transformation. In the midst of this, what is your view on the human rights situation particularly economic, social, and cultural rights in the United States, one of the rich countries of the world, but one which doesn't offer universal healthcare, maternity leave for everyone, the right to strike for all workers, and a variety of other economic, social, and cultural goods sometimes presented as rights. A number of people asked related questions. One of them specifically says, "Please, give us your take on why this is. Please do not hold back. If we need a kick in the pants, well, let her rip." One of the reasons why I was very glad with my husband Nick who is here with me tonight to be here in the United States is because this is my preoccupation also. I think it's enormously important to encourage trends in this country, and

there are actually very good trends. And Dorothy Thomas, whom I quoted earlier for her article in 1996, belongs to a group of human rights people based in Geneva, the International Council on Human Rights Policy, which I'm also a member of. And she talked to us at our annual meeting in Geneva last May, and she talked about an important movement at grassroots here in the United States. She said it's a fragile movement, but it's real, which is seeking to use the international human rights standards particularly the Universal Declaration which the United States is not only a party to but Eleanor Roosevelt chaired the Commission on Human Rights that brought it about, but also seeking to really open up that debate and seeking to particularly focus on issues of discrimination because that's the easiest way, as I mentioned earlier, discrimination on the basis of sex, based on race, status, et cetera, to try to make progress. But I would also say that what--the kind of debate here in the United States over the next decades will be also enormously important to the wider world because the standards that the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights and the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on The Rights of the Child are as international that is extraordinarily important. Extraordinarily important in countries like Afghanistan and Iraq. In Afghanistan, the Convention on the Rights of the Child is being used to help education of girls. It's being used to empower women. These are structures and strategies that the Commission on Human Rights in Afghanistan chaired by Sima Samar who was formerly a minister of Women's Affairs and now chair of the Commission, she knows and uses this in her discussions with President Karzai and his administration because Afghanistan has ratified these instruments. And similarly, in Iraq it's part of the debate. But somehow, it's a question that the United States, the most powerful country, has not itself ratified and introduced internally these instruments. And there is a long acknowledged both problem and fact of American exceptionalism. But in fact as our world becomes more integrated, as problems on one part of the world can impact in other parts including impact here in the United States, it seems to me that it's of incredible importance that we share one framework of human rights, and that what is needed is a debate here in the United States about the importance of being fully paid up on the agenda of human rights, of actually--[applause] and it won't be easy because there is a huge resistance. There is a feeling we have the United States constitution, the United States Federal Supreme Court, we have checks and balances, we don't need this. But if we're to persuade the rest of the world about this agenda, the most powerful way to get people to join with you is you have embraced an agenda and are joining an agenda that you're fully behind. It's much harder to persuade when there is not that full adherence. It makes it harder internationally to have a kind of full support for the agenda. Now, the other part of the question that I'm not going to hold back on is what I hear from my friends working on poverty issues, on child rights, on access to medical care, et cetera in this country is I wish we had the tools of the International Human Rights framework in order to really be able, as other groups can do, to bring home the need to have a progressive realization of education, of healthcare, et cetera, that we have a standard that is international that we can apply. So, even at a technical level, in human rights work, I believe that it would be helpful here in the United States if there was a ratification of the three core instruments that I mentioned. In a way, I think that now all of us can kind of link that debate with the human security especially in the aftermath of 9/11, of the preoccupation understandably and necessarily with security against terrorist attacks, homeland security, et cetera. But in fact, this to me, is a further strong reason why here in the United States if there was a debate about having international standards that applied here in the United States the required progressive realization of right to health, to education, to

attacking pockets of poverty here in the states, that would resonate. It would kind of link the issues here in the United States more fully with an international debate on this. And it would, in fact above all else, reinforce credibility. The United States had great credibility in addressing issues of civil liberties. Some of that credibility has been eroded by the inroads that were made post-9/11 in this country and issues like Guantanamo Bay and prison abuse, et cetera, just some of it. I think it's still fair to say that the United States is regarded as a champion of civil liberties of human rights and bodies like Human rights Watch, Amnesty et cetera are part of that wider credibility. But when it comes to what to me is an extraordinarily important dimension of human rights, economic, and social rights, the United States argues for women's rights in countries like Iran and Afghanistan, but never argues what the tools are for that achieving of equality, the importance of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, the importance of the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and the importance of the sharing of experience. Women's groups worldwide are sharing experience of how to do this, and are sharing on the internet good practices of how to do, and the gap is that there isn't, in this country, a similar matching of experience though there is some attempt to do that, because there is not the support for the standards. I go back to Eleanor Roosevelt. I think if she was around, that would probably be her priority, that the United States must align with the world. It must get back to being the--standards because these standards will really make a difference. They are the tools for the grassroots work. They are the tools for holding governments accountable. Without the standards, it's harder to make governments accountable, and that ties in then with the Millennium Goals which can be linked very closely with these standards, and which make for an agenda for a huge activity over the next--it's coming up to 10 years now. We have a decade in which we have an agenda to make a real difference by linking the human rights' commitment with the Millennium Goals, but also being quite pragmatic about those goals, and simply having a massive mobilization to implement them, and having governments accountable for what they promised. It's a great time if we just use it.

[Applause]

CRAIG CALHOUN: I haven't asked you the hard question of asking someone who lives in the US but is not a citizen to comment on the situation. Here I have a question about Ireland in which I am asked to ask you, it's not unrelated to the US, though. What are your views or concerns about the current President of Ireland's decision to let US warplanes land in Ireland rather than maintain neutrality?

MARY ROBINSON: Well, the first response is it wasn't in fact the President's decision, because the presidency in Ireland is a non-executive presidency. Decisions like that would rest with the Prime Minister, the Taoiseach and his government. The wonderful magic of presidency of Ireland is it's a small space, but a very high powered one. You can do a lot in a small marl space and the current president, President McAleese, is using that space effectively. There is a lot of disquiet about the fact that Irish airspace has been used because there is a long tradition in Ireland of not being aligned to any military

alliances other than peacekeeping in the United Nations. When President Clinton came to Ireland, which is an Irish president, he did his homework as he tends to do it, I think. And he made a speech in the Irish Parliament in which he said I am staggered by the figures of the number of Irish who served in peacekeeping, men and women, and who served under the UN Peacekeeping Forces. If I extrapolate and do the figures of the United States, it would mean a tenfold increase of those.

So, there is that very significant disproportionate commitment to peacekeeping under the UN-- resistance which partly goes back to British-Irish relations, to Ireland being colony for a very long time, struggling for its independence and not wanting to be part of a wider participation. Now, Ireland is struggling with the debates in a wider EU context. The European Union is an extraordinarily interesting example of a change in perceptions of sovereignty. Ireland, in particular, I think and a number of other European countries have found that a small European countries they can gain a great deal by pulling some of the--elective sovereignty. This is very much the Irish experience. So, some European Union law penetrates directly into Irish law supersedes if necessary laws made by the Irish Parliament. But there's a wide sense that we gain because we are participating, and have an active role to play on how the European Union collectively acts. Now, the European Union is groping with problems of collective security. And being into detail on it, I think that this is going to be quite a moment of truth for an Ireland which historically developed its own perspective. It's not a member of NATO and has not been part of military alliances, but is going to have to face some of these decisions. In the meantime, I think quite a pragmatic decision was taken by the Irish government not to support officially but not to hinder a refueling in Shannon airport. It was controversial. The war is very unpopular in Ireland, and the vast majority of people would not support. And at the same time, there is a very large coverage of what's happening in Iraq. And I think it's fair to say that the Irish dearly want peace and security for the Iraqi people and identify very much, and hope that what is happening now will result in a sustainable peace and a better way forward for the Iraqi people. So, even though they weren't in favor of the war, they want now the most positive resolution.

CARIG CALHOUN: Okay. I think it's time for us to thank Mary Robinson for her remarks, for her decades of work, and to make some commitment to ourselves to join her in it. Mary, thank you very much.

[Applause]