

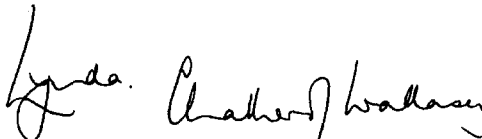
by Baroness Chalker of Wallasey

I am delighted to contribute to this special edition of the Bulletin and welcome it as an important contribution to the celebrations marking the 50th anniversary of the United Nations.

In the 50 years since the creation of the United Nations the global political and economic system has changed dramatically. We have witnessed the emergence of new nation states and the collapse of the communist system but in many countries political stability and efficient accountable government remain elusive. Many parts of the world have experienced unprecedented improvements in living standards but widespread poverty still haunts us. And a new agenda of difficult issues faces us. Environmental degradation, unsustainable population growth and the mass displacement of victims of conflict and involuntary migration across borders are just three stark examples of the issues to which the international community must give increased attention.

Heads of Government of the main industrialized countries recognized these challenges at the recent Halifax Summit and agreed upon an agenda for tackling them. A reform process is already underway in the United Nations. The Halifax Summit reached agreement on broadening and deepening that process, not least by supporting initiatives such as the Secretary-General's Agenda for Development, by improving work on human rights and humanitarian assistance and by recognizing the important role of NGOs in the UN's economic and social development activities.

This special edition of the Bulletin also makes an important contribution to that debate, featuring articles by some of today's leading development academics and practitioners. Their contributions are wide-ranging, stimulating and doubtless controversial to some readers. We may not share all their ideas. But if the debate about the UN's future role is to be meaningful, it must be rich in innovation and in diversity of view. This is certainly the case in this Bulletin which I hope will stimulate wide discussion.



BARONESS CHALKER OF WALLASEY