Presenting the Book

Valpy FitzGerald, Judith Heyer and Rosemary Thorp

Some three-quarters of human beings live in developing countries, and half the world's population are victims of inequality, poverty and insecurity. Yet, despite historically unprecedented advances in global technology, productivity and communications, the ‘international policy community’ of democratic states, intergovernmental institutions, non-governmental organisations and academic bodies still seems unable to address this injustice directly. The issue has recently been thrown into stark relief by the global economic crisis, which makes clear not only that the market alone cannot maintain employment and incomes, but also that the commitment to dignified welfare standards as a citizen entitlement can be questioned even in industrialised countries. Increasing conflict on the grounds of ethnic, religious, environmental and property inequality in the developing world further underlines the need for fundamental institutional change in order radically to reduce social, political and economic injustice.

This book aims to contribute to the construction of a new policy framework to address these issues, by building on the foundations established by a pioneer in this field of development studies, Professor Frances Stewart. During her academic career Frances opened up new fields in appropriate technology, human development and social conflict; and this volume has been designed to demonstrate how her colleagues and students have carried forward these lines of enquiry into current research and policy debates. The individual chapters were commissioned from the authors with this objective in mind. The drafts were presented at an international conference in September 2009, to mark Frances's official retirement from Oxford, and were then rewritten in response to the lively debate that ensued. This is, therefore, no ordinary festschrift, but rather a substantial contribution to an
ongoing research and policy conversation of vital importance to all our futures.

The book has three main sections. The first (Part II) focuses on technology, employment and growth: this was the first major topic on which Frances did pioneering work in the 1960s and 1970s, and the creation of technology and its relation to employment remains central to questions of poverty and inequality today. The second (Part III) concerns human development, income distribution and poverty, a topic to which Frances made major research and policy contributions in the 1980s and 1990s. This, too, is a subject with enormous resonance today, as we approach the target date for the Millennium Development Goals. The third main section (Part IV) moves on to issues relating to conflict, ethnicity and inequality, a topic which Frances has pioneered more recently in her work on ‘horizontal’ or group inequalities and political violence.

The Introduction outlines the volume and its key insights in the present chapter, which is complemented by an intellectual biography of Frances Stewart provided by John Toye in Chapter 2. This chapter demonstrates not only her enormous creativity as a scholar, but also the key role she has played (and continues to play) in international development policy debates over some four decades. Indeed, the growth of her own ideas reflects (or perhaps is reflected in) the evolving debates – particularly within the United Nations system, where her influence has perhaps been greatest – on the broadening of the concept of development itself, from one focused mainly on economic growth and structure, through concepts of human development and inequality, to notions of human security and social inclusion. Last but not least, Toye underlines Frances's remarkable contributions as a teacher of development studies and a builder of research institutions, not only in Oxford but across the world.

**Part II: Technical change and economic development**

Technology is clearly central to economic development: not only as a key driver of economic growth, but also as one of the central characteristics of society itself since the Enlightenment – the social application of knowledge to improving the human condition. Development is about knowledge embedded in people or in firms (in the broad sense of collective human endeavours). Technical change has generally been understood to be about firms – who are the agents who undertake investment and embody technology – and these in turn are the main actors in markets, which largely define modern society. It is not surprising,