

Which advantages and disadvantages might be correlated with the present concept of development?

Development is a political concept. You can't talk about development without qualifying it. You have to make clear what type of development you want, for the benefit of whom, what to produce, what to consume. But the conventional concept of development has reduced it to be synonymous to the expansion of markets, i.e. in fact capitalist markets submitted to what is required for the valorization of capital. Therefore, the conventional concept of development is a "no concept". Consequently, we should keep in mind that "development" implies identifying a particular political and social strategy and its targets. Targets cannot be assumed to be "by products" derived from the expansion of markets, resulting from "growth". You can have growth associated with different patterns of social distribution, with different patterns of global system, reinforcing or reducing the margin for national autonomy, etc. So we have to be very careful. I never use the concept of development without qualifying it.

Are democracy and respect for the human rights two universal themes, and are they inseparable from development?

There is no development, according to the meaning I give to it – which is reinforcing the autonomy of nations and reinforcing the position of popular classes within each nation –, without democracy. But democracy should not be reduced to a blue print: pluralism and fair elections, full stop! This is why, instead of democracy, I prefer to speak of democratization as an endless process: democratization of social life, not just of management of politics, but including also management of the economy, and of social life at all levels: family, city... Democratization must be associated with social progress, not dissociated from it. The conventional pattern of democracy, which reduces it to pluriparty fair elections, is in fact dissociated from social progress and even often dangerously associated with social regression. This is why this democracy is not demanded, and this is why people move away from it, precisely because it's not associated with social progress, but with social regression. When we speak of human rights, we should therefore understand that the progress of human rights is not possible without the progress of all human rights, individual and collective, including social rights: the right for food, for housing, for education, for health care, for access of the peasants to land, for jobs and social protection, etc. Unless we consider the whole panorama of these rights, and not restrict them to what is usually defined as human rights (which are not bad by themselves, but are not enough at all), we won't be able to have the processes of democratization benefit from popular support.

How do you rate the cooperation policies and their respective practices and ideologies? How must cooperation be understood nowadays?

Presently, what is called cooperation between the North and the South, including "aid", is not cooperation at all. It is associated with the programs of global liberalism, which are destructive for the South. Calling that cooperation is a joke. It is in fact a dimension of the geopolitical and geostrategic targets of the triad – USA, Europe and Japan. That is not a program of cooperation for the benefit of a significant development for the peoples of the South. In that frame also, aid is a tool that imperialist powers use to submit the most vulnerable countries – countries of Africa, but also of the Pacific, among others – and maintain them in the status of the "client" states. Aid should create the conditions for it becoming gradually not any more needed; it should generate a significant development liberating the countries considered from "aid dependency". But this is not the case. The country which benefits most from "aid", supposed to "reduce poverty", which is Niger, remains, despite the very high level of aid, at the bottom of the list of the poorest countries. This means that the actual target of aid is not "reducing poverty", nor is it reinforcing a capacity for the countries to develop by themselves. The real target is to maintain them in the status of dependent countries.