



3RD CONFERENCE ON THE CAPABILITY APPROACH:

FROM SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT TO SUSTAINABLE FREEDOM

8-10 September 2003, University of Pavia, Italy

The Capability Association, in collaboration with the Interdepartmental Centre for Social Philosophy and the European School for Advanced Studies in Cooperation and Development (University of Pavia), the Von Hugel Institute (University of Cambridge), the Centre of Economics and Ethics for Environment and Development (University of Versailles) and the International Institute for Sustainable Development (Canada) invites researchers from different disciplines to submit papers on issues addressed by the capability approach.

The general aim of this third conference, that follows up from the two previous conferences organised in Cambridge on Sen's and Nussbaum's capability approach, is to provide a forum for discussion for the work being done on this topic and to enhance the network of researchers that has emerged from the previous meetings (see: <http://www.st-edmunds.cam.ac.uk>).

In this third conference a special emphasis will be given to the concept of sustainable development. Papers examining the main conference topic are invited to answer to one of the following topics:

1. Global justice: The growing interest that has been shown in recent years in the global dimension of social institutions and practices has included an awareness of the need to extend discussions in normative ethics about the nature of justice from the national to the international level. The capability approach may provide a useful and interesting perspective on this challenging problem. Many questions, however, remain unanswered. For example, is there a conflict within the capability approach between the need to take into account the nature of local circumstances and the commitment to universal criteria of justice? Is it possible to identify evaluative criteria within the capability approach that are context-dependent and do not assume a particular conception of the good life? Can the capability approach provide us with a possible interpretation of ethical universalism? Papers exploring these

philosophical issues, or their implications for institution building and public policy, are welcome.

2. Socially sustainable development: the social dimensions of sustainable development are currently mostly underestimated. The persistence of poverty and social exclusion during growth, the increase in inequality and vulnerability everywhere, brings back this issue on the scene. The idea of “socially sustainable development” aims at combining poverty reduction with the issue of monitoring inequality in order to generate a long-term development that cannot be jeopardised by social motives. Therefore, a proposed definition for “socially sustainable development” may be “a development which implies that public policies – geared towards economic, social and ecological issues – do not generate social dysfunctions (exclusion, poverty, conflicts) in such a way that they jeopardise the capacity of current and future generations to improve their well-being”. Papers that address those issues are welcome.

3. Poverty, the Environment and Sustainable Freedom: the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) clearly highlighted the critical links between poverty and human well-being with the environment or more specifically, ecosystems and ecosystem services. But in many ways human functionings and capabilities are similar and complementary to ecosystem functioning and ecosystem capabilities. Papers that explore the links between ecosystems and capabilities and how this knowledge will go towards poverty reduction and increase human well-being are welcome.

4. Capability approach from a dynamic perspective: capabilities are evolving characteristics of human beings. We can consider them to be static for evaluative purposes, but the fact remains that they are dynamic and develop according to past and future outcomes. Sustainable development is also about dynamics: about preserving the past in face of what might happen in the future. We cannot discuss intra-generational and inter-generational inequalities without a framework and tools specially tailored to handle the temporal complex interactions that emerge from them. Papers on other capability issues, related to dynamics, such as e.g. children's capabilities, path-dependence capabilities and the influence of expected behaviour in shaping capabilities are welcome.

Papers on all areas of the capability approach are equally welcome. Sessions on issues such as poverty and inequality, gender and intra-household distribution, formal and informal institutions, health and education, theoretical issues and technical matters in operationalising

the capability approach will be organized. Foundational philosophical issues are also an important part of the meeting.

The conference will consist of parallel sessions for presentation and discussion of papers, plenary sessions with keynote speakers, including Professor Amartya Sen and Professor Martha Nussbaum, and sessions for working groups to discuss and identify open issues to be examined in depth. Poster sessions could be organized.

The deadline for submission of paper proposals is **1 MAY 2003** and full papers will be due on **1 AUGUST 2003**.

Paper proposals should include the title of the paper, a summary of no more than 1000 words and postal and e-mail addresses. Proposals should be sent to Enrica Chiappero Martinetti by email (capabilitiesconference@unipv.it) or by post (Enrica Chiappero Martinetti, Dipartimento Economia Pubblica e Territoriale, Università di Pavia, Strada Nuova 65, 27100 Pavia – Italy).

The papers will be assessed by a Scientific Committee including Enrica Chiappero Martinetti, Flavio Comim, Jean-Luc Dubois, Anantha Duraipappah, Mozaffar Qizilbash. Notice of acceptance of papers will be sent by 31 MAY 2003.

The conference fee is 200 euros but reduced rate for students and people coming from LDC's will be defined. Accomodation in College rooms and hotels, charged separetely from conference fees, will be available.

More detailed information about conference and accomodation will be posted on the web site: <http://cfs.unipv.it/sen/index.html>

For further information about the conference please send an e-mail message to: capabilitiesconference@unipv.it