

Assignment #2

Report on current development issues

Presentations: Wednesday, October 8, 5:00-8:00pm

Each of you will draw two themes randomly from the following list of topics, keep the one you prefer, and return the other to the pool.

The idea of this assignment is to contribute rigorous economic analysis to current development debates.

You should prepare a 4-5 pages report with:

- (1) Presentation of the subject (provide or suggest quantitative information that would inform the importance of the problem).
- (2) Formulation of a research hypothesis.
- (3) Depending on the nature of the subject, provide
 - either a conceptualization of an underlying economic logic to this hypothesis
 - or an outline of an empirical strategy to test this hypothesis.

Information gathering for the report should include the following:

- Identify 2-3 seminal papers using search procedure, etc.
- Use the internet to locate 2-3 relevant sources of information and identify contrasted positions.
- Use interviews with 2 experts in the field (principally professors and graduate students on the Berkeley campus).
- Make sure to identify the references, web sites, and informants you used.

Reports will be presented orally with 15' total per case, including no less than 5' for discussion. Hence, you have 10' to make your case, not an unusual situation in public meetings. You should prepare overheads or a PowerPoint presentation to tighten and accelerate your delivery. Make sure that your proposal is clearly evident to all.

Selected themes

1. Why the confrontation on globalization? Focus on the outcome of the WTO negotiation at Cancun
2. The debate on foreign aid: Focus on the Collier/Dollar/Gunning-Sachs exchange about the role of policy pre-conditions?
3. New trade agreements: should labor standards be an integral part of LAFTA?
4. Kyoto agreement: how should the pollution quotas be distributed between MDC and LDC?
5. The global water crisis: how could efficiency in water use be improved?
6. Land reform: will the World Bank's market assisted approach to land reform work?
7. What is the potential of biotechnology for poverty reduction, particularly in a context of intellectual property rights on gene research?
8. Informal finance: does it work for the rural poor?
9. Social management of reforms/transitions: do social funds work?

10. Democracy and development: should international agencies push for democracy as a precondition for aid?
11. Population and demographic transition: how can it be achieved in poor countries (e.g., Bangladesh)?
12. Devolution of management of local public services to communities: when to choose this approach (e.g., for irrigation, potable water, sewage, etc.)?
13. Decentralization of governance: will it help the poor?
14. International migration: should international labor movements be liberalized?
15. Drug traffic and the LDC: what are the policy options for both MDCs and LDCs?
16. NAFTA's impact on Mexican rural poor: how to resolve the acrimonious debate?
17. Public goods and privatization: should cost recovery in health services be introduced in poor countries?
18. Educational subsidies programs: how can they be more effective?
19. How to secure access to pharmaceutical for AIDS and malaria for the LDCs poor?
20. Payment for environmental services: who should be paid and how much?