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## EL MUNDO EN QUE VIVIMOS

*The Struggle for a New International Economic Order*

## La lucha por un Nuevo Orden Económico Internacional

**Ph. D. Duško Dimitrijević**

Professorial Fellow at the Institute of International Politics and Economics (IIPE), Belgrade, Serbia.

✉ [dimitrijevicd.impp@gmail.com](mailto:dimitrijevicd.impp@gmail.com), 📞 0000-0003-3375-7280

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*ABSTRACT The contemporary world is in the phase of disintegration of the international economic order. Such a constellation generates a political crisis and additionally encourages an accelerated geo-economic regrouping on the geopolitical axis - Global North and Global South. Divergence of economic interests between developed and developing countries stimulated the process of establishing a new world economic order. This order, which is in statu nascendi, was initiated by regional economic powers (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa - BRICS), which strive to balance the liberal order established by the United States of America and the leading capitalist states after the Second World War. This constellation of relations suits the countries of the Third World to some extent, because by establishing a new economic order, they could achieve some of the key goals and principles of economic independence for which the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the United Nations fought persistently for decades. However, before that, these countries should close their ranks and direct their efforts towards solving the most important international economic problems, which include the reforms of international economic institutions, the establishment of an alternative international financial system to the Bretton Woods system, the progressive development and consolidation of international economic law and the reaffirmation of the role of the United Nations in the sphere of international economic relations.*

*Key words: United Nations, Non Aligned Movement, New International Economic Order, BRICS, economic order*

**RESUMEN** El mundo contemporáneo se encuentra en una fase de desintegración del orden económico internacional. Dicha constelación genera una crisis política y, además, fomenta un reagrupamiento geoeconómico acelerado en el eje geopolítico Norte Global y Sur Global. La divergencia de intereses económicos entre los países desarrollados y los países en desarrollo estimuló el proceso de establecimiento de un nuevo orden económico mundial. Este orden, que se encuentra en statu nascendi, fue iniciado por potencias económicas regionales (Brasil, Rusia, India, China, Sudáfrica - BRICS), que luchan por equilibrar el orden liberal establecido por los Estados Unidos de América y los principales Estados capitalistas tras la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Esta constelación de relaciones conviene en cierta medida a los países del Tercer Mundo, porque al establecer un nuevo orden económico podrían alcanzar algunos de los objetivos y principios clave de independencia económica por los que el Movimiento de Países No Alineados (MNOAL) y las Naciones Unidas lucharon persistentemente durante décadas. Sin embargo, antes de eso, estos países deberían cerrar filas y dirigir sus esfuerzos a resolver los problemas económicos internacionales más importantes, que incluyen las reformas de las instituciones económicas internacionales, el establecimiento de un sistema financiero internacional alternativo al sistema de Bretton Woods, el desarrollo progresivo y la consolidación del derecho económico internacional y la reafirmación del papel de las Naciones Unidas en el ámbito de las relaciones económicas internacionales.

Palabras clave: Naciones Unidas, Movimiento de Países No Alineados, Nuevo Orden Económico Internacional, BRICS, orden económico

## INTRODUCTION

As is well known, immediately after the Second World War, there followed the decolonization and emancipation of the colonies and dependent territories of the former imperialist powers. The newly independent states that found themselves within the framework of an economic order in the creation of which they did not participate, which was created on the basis of the “international law of civilized nations”, had to be replaced by a much fairer international economic order that would ensure sovereign equality and free development of their own choice and without retaining any form of dependence on other states or international centers of military, political and economic power (Jansen, Osterhammel, 2017).

The construction of the new world order, as is known, took place within the framework of the universal organization of the United Nations, which assumed the role of a leading political actor in the development of modern international relations. Within the United Nations, the NAM was a key

factor in the efforts of the underdeveloped part of the international community to build a more just and democratic international order. Created as an antithesis to power politics and the bloc division of the world, the NAM actively participated in solving general issues of human progress, which is connected with solving key problems in the economic, political and social sphere of international relations. For the NAM, the United Nations was their important stronghold, an irreplaceable system for realizing their goals and principles, and a significant instrument for justifying their real strength in international relation (Dupy, 1997; Šahović, 1998; Dimitrijević, 2009).

This should not be surprising, because the basic goals and principles of non-alignment were in accordance with the goals and principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations. The ability of the NAM to promote its specific goals and principles through the United Nations system indicated the democratic basis of the world organization in which Third World countries play a significant role.

The principles of the NAM, from which the principles and objectives of the New International Economic Order (NIEO) later originated, were initially systematically formulated in the Declaration on the Promotion of World Peace and Cooperation adopted at the Conference of Asian and African States in Bandung on 24 April 1955 (Bogetić, 2019, p. 31). The “Ten Bandung Principles” include the principles of respect for basic human rights, respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations, recognition of the equality of all races and the equality of all large and small nations, refraining from intervention or interference in the internal affairs of other countries, respect for the right of each nation to defend itself individually or collectively, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations (which presupposes refraining from using collective defense arrangements that would serve the special interests of great powers and refraining from exerting pressure on other countries), refraining from acts or threats of aggression, resolving all international disputes by peaceful means, as well as promoting common interests, cooperation and respect for justice and international obligations.

This progressive ideological platform aimed at radical democratization of all international relations while preserving international peace and security. However, in the conditions of the sharp bloc division of the world, it was clear that the great powers would not adhere to that peaceful political platform. In such conditions, the alternative was represented by the NAM, which was deeply committed to the promotion of peaceful coexistence of all peoples of the world, as well as to the elimination of economic differences that objectively existed between developed and developing countries.

Analyzing the development of this international movement during the last sixty years, it can be established that the NAM was exposed to occasional crises, but also that it also had its “golden period” of rise when its non-aligned doctrine in the domain of international politics showed great progressive strength in the promotion of independence and the fight against imperialism and neo-colonialism,

that is, against every kind of aggression, occupation, racism, domination and torture. In terms of the development and transformation of international economic relations, the strategic commitment of NAM was and remains the struggle to overcome the increasingly pronounced tendency that “the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer”.

In this regard, eliminating the gap that exists between the industrially developed North and the underdeveloped South was the leading paradigm in the design and implementation of the NIEO strategy, which was adopted in the mid-eighties of the last century, at the initiative of the NAM and under the auspices of the United Nations. The strategy was materialized through a series of resolutions and declarations of a programmatic character that contained legal, political and economic principles (Tomuschat, 1997, p. 578; Makarczyk, 2001, p. 123 ).

Those principles were supposed to serve to establish an alternative model of international economic relations, i.e. their development and restructuring in order to eliminate the gap between the countries of the North and the South, as well as less developed countries gathered within the framework of the South-South political platform and the Group of 77. In this sense, the NIEO imposed itself as an objective necessity of the social development of the international community, which, through the progressive development of the principles and rules of international economic law and the economic development strategy, should lead to the establishment of a fairer international economic order.

In the following study, the author will analyze the main formal sources from which the NIEO originated their legal and political content, achievements and obstacles that led to its partial abandonment, using historical, legal and political science methods. The author will also present the tendencies in the establishment of a new international economic order initiated by the BRICS countries, which tends to be a counterweight to the ruling (neo) liberal order established after the Second World War.

## DEVELOPMENT

### Development of the NIEO after World War II

During the Second World War, the Allied Powers proclaimed the right of peoples to self-determination in the Atlantic Charter of 1941, which, *inter alia*, contained the principles of international economic cooperation. In July 1944, the Bretton Woods agreements were concluded between 44 governments, and they laid the foundations of a new international economic order led by the USA. In order to create broad and more stable economic relations, international financial institutions were established at the Bretton Woods Conference - the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which represented the main pillars of the future international financial system. After the failure to establish an international trade organization immediately after the Second World War, in October 1947, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) was concluded, which promoted the right to economic development, and whose main goal was the abolition of quotas and the reduction of customs tariffs between the signatory countries.

The GATT played one of the main roles in the expansion of world trade until the end of the so-called The Uruguay Round of negotiations in 1993, when the GATT members decided to establish the World Trade Organization (WTO), which began operating in 1995 (Sykes, Irwin, Mavroidis Petros 2008). As it was based on executive agreements, it was not subject to the obligation of ratification, which left the possibility of stipulating some of the NIEO principles (Jelisavac, 2015). The GATT promoted international trade without discrimination and with strict adherence to the most-favored-nation clause.

The aforementioned beginnings of the establishment of the post-war international economic order mainly expressed (neo) liberal economic conceptions that primarily respected the interests of industrially developed countries. Underdeveloped and

developing countries were not satisfied with this process, so in 1952, they raised the issue of permanent sovereignty over natural resources during the discussion on the draft of the International Covenant on Human Rights before the United Nations.

On that occasion, it was confirmed that the right to self-determination belongs to the body of basic human rights, and in addition to the political, this right also has an economic and social aspect. The General Assembly, relying on the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 10 December 1948, adopted the historically important Declaration 1514 (XV) on granting independence to colonial peoples and countries from 14 December 1960, and then Resolution 1803 (XVII) from 14 December 1962, which confirmed the sovereign right of every state (nation and people) to dispose of its wealth and natural resources.

Immediately before the adoption of these important decisions, the newly independent states of Asia and Africa held a conference in Bandung on April 24, 1955, where they formulated the “Decalogue of principles” that later became the main ideological platform of the NAM (Mates, 1970, p. 249; Tadić, 1976, p. 142). This progressive political movement, whose doctrine was based on bloc neutrality and active peaceful co-existence at its First summit held in 1961 in Belgrade, issued an open invitation to all countries of the world regardless of their socio-political and economic, cultural, religious and other differences, to take an active part in solving current world problems, which, in addition to security problems, also relate to issues of economic and social progress and development.

In order to create conditions of stability and well-being that are necessary for maintaining peaceful and friendly relations between states based on respect for the principles of equality and self-determination of peoples, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted Resolution 1720(XVI) of 19 December 1961, which promoted the decade of development and the program of international economic cooperation.

During 1964, the United Nations established the Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) as its permanent body and a counter-weight to the GATT. At the same time, the Group of 77 developing countries was formed, which, as the most numerous intergovernmental organization of the South, received a significant role in the creation of the NIEO. At the First Session of UNCTAD held in the same year, important principles were adopted that became the regulatory framework of the NIEO. That regulatory framework of UNCTAD included the principles of free trade and industrialization, then enabling preferential protection and non-reciprocity, limiting price incentives for non-economic activities, providing technical and multilateral assistance to underdeveloped countries, providing assistance through the exchange of products and compensatory financing of the exchange, disposal of surplus goods according to international rules, prohibition of dumping, providing loans through their repayment in national currencies or in goods, encouraging balance of payments arrangements among developing countries, etc.

In general, the stated principles included demands for sovereign equality and non-discrimination in international economic relations, while respecting the differences that exist in the degree of economic development (Dinkel, 2018, pp. 202-207; Prashad, 2007). When world trade began to expand dramatically, developing countries realized the need for the unification of legal standards needed to harmonize national and regional regulations, which until then had regulated international trade. Therefore, at their request in 1966, the United Nations Commission for International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) was formed.

Since immediately after the creation of this subsidiary body of the United Nations responsible for the development and codification of international trade law, it was not possible to achieve timely and adequate protection of the economic interests of developing countries, at the Third UNCTAD Conference held in May 1972, the Resolution 45 (III) was adopted, which confirmed the intention of these countries to establish a “generally acceptable normative

system for the regulation of international economic relations and reducing obstacles to international trade” (Vilus, 1976, p. 286; UNCITRAL, 1986). This Resolution insisted on the request for the drafting of the Charter on the Economic Rights and Obligations of States, which was later, at the Fourth NAM Summit held in Algeria in 1973, supported by a recommendation to the United Nations General Assembly. However, before its creation under the auspices of the United Nations, at the Sixth Special Session of the General Assembly held on 1 May 1974, the Declaration on the establishment of the NIEO and the Action Program on its implementation were adopted [Resolutions 3201 and 3202 (S-VI)].

The adoption of the aforementioned documents was preceded by a major economic crisis in the world, caused by the OPEC oil embargo, which developing countries used as a convenient historical moment for a fundamental change in their position in international economic relations. Starting from the goals and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, which promotes economic and social progress, the NIEO Declaration, on the one hand, promotes an order based on the sovereign equality of states, prohibits the use of force in international relations and violations of the territorial integrity and political independence of states, while on the other hand insist on the broadest cooperation of all member states of the international community based on fairness, which could be achieved by eliminating inequality and ensuring economic prosperity.

The full and effective participation of all countries on the basis of equality in solving the world’s economic problems is in the common interest, and in this sense the need to ensure the accelerated development of developing countries by adopting special measures in favor of the least developed countries, landlocked countries, and island countries is emphasized, as well as those developing countries that are most affected by the economic crisis. Every country has the right to adopt the economic and social system it considers most suitable for its own development, without being exposed to any discrim-

mination. The complete and permanent sovereignty of states over natural resources and all economic activities represents one of the essential principles mentioned in the Declaration in question. No country should therefore be subjected to any political, economic or other forms of pressure to prevent it from freely and fully using this right. In addition, no country, territory or people under foreign occupation, colonial domination and apartheid should be deprived of the right to restitution and full compensation for exploitation and damage to their natural and other resources. Provision of unreserved assistance to such states, territories and peoples by the international community is also a principle guaranteed by this Declaration. Regulating and supervising the activities of transnational corporations, enabling preferential and non-reciprocal treatment, ensuring favorable conditions for the transfer of financial resources, ensuring a fair relationship between the prices of raw materials, primary products, finished or semi-finished products that developing countries export and import, improving scientific and technological exchange, trade, financial and technical cooperation, while facilitating the role of producer associations in achieving the goals of international economic development, represent only some of all the stated goals and principles of the NIEO contained in the Declaration.

In the implementation of these goals and principles, the Action Program adopted together with the Declaration has a special significance. Namely, the Program had the task of ensuring the broadest cooperation and understanding between developed and developing countries in the implementation of concrete measures in the field of production, trade, industrialization, technology transfer, providing financial and technical assistance, controlling the activities of multinational companies, strengthening the functions of the United Nations on plan for the regulation of international economic relations, etc.

The implementation of the measures of the Action Program was one of the main preoccupations of the NAM, which became the main promoter of the agen-

da contained in the Declaration on the establishment of the NIEO. In this sense, the NAM managed to promote various regional trade integration projects, establishing the Solidarity fund for economic and social development and working persistently to improve cooperation in the field of technological development.

However, the dynamics of negotiations regarding the implementation of these program documents took place with difficulty due to the fact that there was a large disagreement about the scope and manner of their implementation between developed and underdeveloped countries. On the one hand, the NAM, which formed the pivot around which the developing countries gathered, advocated the position that it is necessary to make radical changes to the existing system of international economic relations. On the other hand, developed countries were not ready for radical changes due to their own interests, but insisted that the existing system of international economic relations only partially corrects it within the framework of existing international institutions. In order to bridge the deep gap that until then existed exclusively in the West-East relationship and which since the adoption of the mentioned NIEO documents has been significantly shifted towards the North-South geopolitical axis, a proposal was put forward for the adoption of the Charter on Economic Rights and Duties of States (Bulajić, 1980, p. 68).

The Charter on the Economic Rights and Duties of States was adopted at the 29th session of the United Nations General Assembly on 12 December 1974 [Resolution 3281 (XXIX)]. The adoption of the Charter indicated the desire of the majority of the international community to carry out the codification and progressive development of the NIEO rules. The ideas promoted in the Charter refer to the promotion of equal international economic relations, which should be based on sovereign equality, interdependence, common interest and cooperation among all states regardless of their economic and social system. The Charter essentially meant a turning point in the way of normative regulation of the NIEO flows.

The main problem during its adoption between developed and undeveloping countries, related to the resolution of disputes regarding the basis for granting compensation for expropriated foreign property and the choice of applicable law. Although no unique solution was found, the Charter managed to contribute to the creation of conditions for achieving general economic and social progress. By encouraging cooperation based on mutual benefit, the Charter promoted several significant principles that anticipate the principles and goals contained in the United Nations Charter (from the right to self-determination, through the principles of sovereign equality, prohibition of violation of territorial integrity and political independence, non-intervention, peaceful coexistence, to respect for human rights, promotion of international cooperation, fulfillment of international obligations in good faith, peaceful settlement of disputes and achievement of social justice), which were previously elaborated in the Declaration on the Principles of International Law on Friendly Relations and Cooperation of States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations adopted by General Assembly Resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970.

The special value of the Charter is represented by the promotion of the people's right to economic self-determination. This term means that every country has a sovereign and inalienable right to choose its economic, political, social and cultural system in accordance with the will of the people without external interference, coercion or threat. The essence of this right is the sovereign right over natural resources, as well as the right of every state to exercise full and permanent sovereignty and proper disposal over its wealth, natural resources and economic activities. To this end, each state has the right and duty to choose the means and goals of development and to mobilize and use its wealth and resources to implement progressive economic and social reforms that often include the right to expropriate and transfer ownership of foreign property and the right to control foreign investment.

Along with the principle of peaceful coexistence, the right to economic self-determination allows each state to engage in various areas of international economic cooperation without any discrimination. According to the Charter, all states have an obligation to cooperate in international economic relations. In this regard, every country is obliged to contribute to the promotion of the constant and growing expansion and liberalization of world trade and the raising of the well-being and living standards of all peoples, especially those in developing countries. On this plan, the duty of developed countries to work on providing additional benefits for the international trade of developing countries is emphasized in order for them to achieve a substantial increase in their income, diversification of exports, acceleration of the growth rate, while taking into account their real development needs.

Duties therefore extend to the participation of these countries in international cooperation in order to achieve the economic and social development of developing countries. At the same time, these duties do not exclude the right of developing countries to rely exclusively on their own forces. In order to increase the economic development of developing countries, developed countries have the obligation to encourage associations, but also to provide appropriate support for mutual cooperation individually or through the international institutions to which they belong.

Finally, the universality and global interdependence within the NIEO should rest on the obligation of states to contribute to the balanced expansion of the world economy, taking into account the close interdependence between the well-being of developed countries and the growth and development of underdeveloped countries, as well as the fact that the progress of the international community depends on the progress of its constituent parts (Bulajić, 1980). Since the Charter insists on establishing equality in conditions of inequality in the economic relations of countries with different levels of economic

development, developed countries experienced the Charter as a forced compensation for their earlier colonial policy. These countries did not experience this program document of the United Nations as a “voluntary obligation”. Moreover, they expressed dissatisfaction, considering that the “tyranny of the majority” in the United Nations seriously threatened their economic interests and their cooperation with the Third World (Čavoški, 2022, p. 217).

With the end of the economic crisis caused by the oil embargo, developed countries started with new tactics in relations with developing countries. Although the others continued to oppose the actions of the NAM, they also made certain concessions during their presentations at the Seventh Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly held in 1975. In this sense, proposals for improving cooperation at the sub regional and interregional level were presented. Also, requests were made for implementing reforms of international financial institutions, encouraging economic development through foreign investments, transferring technology, providing economic assistance, regulating debt, establishing special trade treatment for underdeveloped countries, developing new energy sources, improving food production, controlling the work of multinational corporations and by strengthening the dialogue between producers and consumers of raw materials.

The presented proposals show the will of developed countries for economic reforms. In a certain sense, this was progress in mutual relations with developing countries, which was demonstrated by the adoption of Resolution 3362 (S-VII) dedicated to development and international economic cooperation. However, this did not essentially lead to a reconciliation of the antagonistic positions regarding the implementation of the NIEO objectives. The situation worsened even more after the NAM Fifth Summit in Colombo in 1976, at which the NAM adopted the Program of Action for Economic Cooperation between Non-Aligned and Developing Countries with Developed Countries.

Although this summit emphasized the necessity for the third decade of the United Nations to be fully dedicated to the implementation of decisions on the establishment of a more balanced economic order based on justice and respect for the dignity of all participants, this did not happen. The transformation of the existing order was not possible without the restructuring of the entire international economic relations (from changes in the international trade-production system and the system of monetary-financial relations), for which specific proposals were presented in the previous year at the ministerial meeting in Lima (e.g. in connection with the formation Fund for the financing of raw material reserves or the formation of a body for coordinating the activities of central banks dedicated to monetary reform).

In the absence of agreement from developed countries to implement serious reforms, the NIEO experienced its first serious failure. The sharp ideological division that took place within the NAM in those years was also reflected in the Sixth Summit held in Havana in 1979, where the conflicting views of the member states on the ways to achieve the NIEO were presented (Bogetić, 2019; p. 47). On the one hand, they insisted on close cooperation with all countries, including the industrially developed countries, and on the other hand, they insisted on abandoning the course of “neutrality” and on rapprochement with “natural allies” - countries of the socialist lager (Rodríguez Hernández and Hernández Pérez, 2021, p. 284). Alternatively, “relying on one’s own forces” was proposed in order to replace the vertical flows of cooperation towards developed countries with horizontal flows of cooperation between non-aligned and developing countries. Mutual disagreements contributed to the weakening of the NAM, and thus to the achievement of the development goals outlined in the NIEO program documents.

Despite such differences, at the NAM Seventh Summit held in New Delhi in 1983, the need for NIEO was re-emphasized since the prevailing international system was



in conflict with the basic interests of developing countries. NAM warned that failure to establish a NIEO based on equality and justice would produce serious negative consequences for all countries.

A similar conclusion was reached at the Fifth UNC-TAD Conference held in 1979, when an initiative was formally launched to adopt a multilateral convention based on the principles of the Charter of Rights and Duties of States, which would revise the rules of international trade that were in force until then. With the adoption of Resolution 34/142 of the General Assembly of the United Nations of 17 December 1979, it was also requested that certain progress be made on this plan through the UNCITRAL as the coordinator of those activities. Hence, the struggle for NMEP continued, albeit on a slightly different ideological basis, becoming more and more part of the struggle to change the entire world order after the end of the Cold War (Leffler and Westad, 2010).

#### Status of the NIEO after the end of the Cold War

In the great "chess game" played by the USA and the USSR at the beginning of the last decade of the 20th century, there was a certain saturation, which led to the collapse of the existing bipolar order. A new post-bipolar world order was formed with only one superpower - the USA, but also with a new division into Global North and Global South.

The expansion of regional economic blocs and the strengthening of economic and political forces led to a geopolitical reorientation on the international political scene (Allison, 2009, p. 308; Kegley and Wittkopf, 2002). With the financial system of Bretton Woods and the placement of foreign investments, the general deregulation and liberalization of world trade, with the aim of liberalizing trade flows and globalization of the international economic order, the Third World found itself in a very unenviable economic situation caused by the debt crisis.

The application of the liberal international order model, which promotes new forms of social integration,

has in practice led to even greater poverty and economic dependence. However, the process of economic development of international relations could not lead to complete social integration, despite the fact that in the meantime the countries grouped within the Global South significantly linked their future to the countries of the Global North, which basically discredited the earlier egalitarian ideological approach promoted by the NAM.

The discrediting of the NIEO, however, did not mark the end of the Third World's struggle to build a somewhat fairer and more democratic international economic order. On this plan, requests were made to strengthen the role of the United Nations through the reform of its institutional and functional capacities, so that this universal organization would continue to be a key factor in achieving peace in the world and solving the most important political, economic, social and humanitarian problems (Damian-Lakićević, 2009, p. 497).

Considering the fundamental geopolitical shifts that occurred after the Cold War, the United Nations system has a significant role in realizing the process of globalization, but also internationalization in order to develop the system of global governance. These two processes should enable states to fulfill their own interests in areas where they are unable to act independently (Dimitrijević and Vučić, 2016). In this sense, all the NIEO achievements realized in the previous period should not escape the spirit of the new time. However, due to the inherited relations in the world embodied in the irreconcilable aspirations of developed and underdeveloped countries, the mismatch of interests of the countries of the Global North and Global South, large and small states, generally speaking, due to the insufficient maturity of political and social conditions, and the strong influence of political opportunism in international relations, the United Nations has found itself at a crossroads when it has to make important decisions regarding the future directions of development of the international economic order. Given the continuity of its activity, one could only assume that it

would return to its own roots and the proclaimed goals of in the future (Dimitrijević, 2009).

In the constellation of new international relations, this specifically meant that the United Nations should improve the entire system of its activities, especially those concerning international economic cooperation. Hence, the reform process was initiated so that the UN mechanism, primarily the Economic and Social Council, could be adapted to the growing needs of Third World countries for the democratization of international economic relations. A similar situation was with the NAM, whose role in this historical period, due to internal ideological disagreements, was placed on the sidelines of international political events. However, the interdependence of developing countries in a number of areas of social life led to the determination of further directions of its action.

Like the United Nations, NAM has generally decided to revitalize and improve its institutional capacities in the direction of upgrading the NIEO. As a respectable factor of the Global South and a representative of Third World interests, the NAM had an independent role based on the affirmation of the principles that represent its “quintessence” within the United Nations system (Dimitrijević, 2021, p. 432). In this sense, NAM has made great efforts in the past thirty years to solve key world problems in the economic and social sphere, such as sustainable development and eradication of poverty and hunger, prevention of pandemics, natural disasters, environmental pollution, climate change and migration, prohibition of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear disarmament, combating terrorism and international crime, and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The realization of the originally proclaimed ideas of the NIEO can therefore be observed today through the focus of its action on achieving the goals of economic and social development, which represent a prerequisite for the development of a democratic order and the rule of law, and which is largely

confirmed through the declarations and action programs of the NAM that were formally promoted at its summits starting from the Eighth Summit in Harare - 1986, the Ninth Summit in Belgrade - 1989, the Tenth Summit in Jakarta - 1992, the Eleventh Summit in Cartagena - 1995, the Twelfth Summit in Durban - 1998, the Thirteenth Summit in Kuala Lumpur - 2003, the Fourteenth Summit in Havana - 2006, the Fifteenth Summit in Sharm el-Sheikh - 2009, the Sixteenth Summit in Tehran - 2012, the Seventeenth Summit in Porlamar - 2016, to the Eighteenth Summit in Baku - 2019 (Final Documents, 1986, 1989, 1992, 1995, 1998, 2003, 2006, 2009, 2012, 2016, 2019).

However, due to changed international circumstances, it is noticeable that NAM at its summits increasingly turned to political issues of international relations, which is why it paid less attention to economic issues in its Final Acts compared to the previous period. However, this did not affect the NAM continuing to reaffirm its obligations accepted in the Declaration on the establishment of the NIEO, in the Action Program for its realization and in the Charter on Economic Rights and Duties of States.

The NAM remained committed to considering various economic and social issues and encouraging negotiations between developed and underdeveloped countries in economic areas that it considered to be very vulnerable at that time and that should be corrected in some way in order to transform the international economic order. For restructuring existing economic order, accelerate economic development and strengthen multilateral economic cooperation, the NAM recommended the adoption of various development strategies and strategies for conducting economic negotiations.

Thus, concrete economic and social issues were often discussed at the summits, with certain recommendations and guidelines being given, for example, in relation to sovereignty over natural resources, transnational corporations, industrialization, insurance, finance, monetary issues, regula-

tion of foreign debt, international trade and goods, transportation, food and agriculture, energy, telecommunications, tertiary activities, health, science, technology and education, standardization, international law of the sea, economic status of certain countries and regions (the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing countries, middle and low-income countries), human rights, social and demographic policy, disarmament, suppression of international crime, environmental protection and climate change, and other qualitative aspects of economic development which are also dealt with by the United Nations in their universal reform program on achieving the Millennium Goals and establishing a new and fairer world order.

### **A new paradigm of the international economic order**

The aspirations of the non-aligned countries for true equality, real independence and unfettered economic and social development expressed in their activities within the NAM were largely limited by the actions of the leading countries of the Global North, which did not diminish the role of the NAM as an important political forum for articulating the economic aspirations of the countries of the Third World.

After all, this is indicated by the fact that NAM recognized the need to further deepen and expand increasingly dynamic relations with other world actors such as the G77 Group, with which it shares an identity and a historical destiny based on a unique struggle against imperialism (Ferguson, 1977). Cooperating with the G77 Group, the NAM has taken a catalytic role in promoting the goals of the NIEO.

The relationship between NAM and the G20 Group is also interesting, which arose as a response to a series of major financial crises that hit developing markets at the end of the 1990s (starting with the Mexican monetary crisis, the financial crisis in Asia and Russia, and the collapse of hedge funds in USA). This event led to the center of gravity of economic

problems being transferred to the jurisdiction of the G 20 group. This situation was also contributed to by the attitude of some developing countries that global economic problems should be solved outside the United Nations system in the future, which additionally raised questions about the role of the world organization in the globalized world.

This very situation illustrated the need to support the coordinated responsibility of the United Nations system for the achievement of development goals, for which the G7 Group of the most industrially developed countries as well as the Bretton Woods system, could not ensure sufficient financial stability. Designing a new economic concept for the association of major world economies therefore came about as a need for the formation of a new world economic order in which there would be a reform of the existing institutional structure and a change in the system of international economic relations.

The establishment of a new international economic order does not mean the simple replacement of regional patterns of free trade with an integrated and comprehensive system of liberal economy, which is what the World Trade Organization otherwise strives for, but the creation of a humane and fairer order that would be more inclusive, sustainable and stable and that would provide benefits for all its participants.

The main reason for the formation of a new international economic order stems from the growing dysfunctionality of the world's financial institutions, but also due to the geo-economic realignment caused by the economic crisis. Consequently, the five member states of the G20 – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – made a certain departure from the existing economic system by agreeing on mutual cooperation on the economic, financial and political level within the framework of the BRICS, as an alternative intergovernmental forum that should to serve not only their interests, but also the interests of the other countries.

The BRICS brings together the countries of North and South, West and East, member countries of different political and economic systems, countries with refined values and civilization platforms that effectively work in favor of democratizing international relations, strengthening multilateralism and advancing development. The BRICS seeks to establish a parallel system with its own distinctive set of rules, institutions and currencies of power, rejecting key principles of liberal internationalism (Stuenkel, 2020).

The leaders of the BRICS countries hold regular meetings at the highest level where they agree and declare economic measures and actions towards the achievement of the set goals. Visible progress was achieved with the reform of international financial institutions (e.g. IMF and World Bank quota reform), then with the establishment of the BRICS New Development Bank with a capital of 50 billion US dollars, along with the establishment of the Arrangement for Contingent Reserves, which should serve the countries of BRICS in case of insolvency and outbreak of economic crises. Since the IMF and the World Bank are no longer attractive to developing countries, having had painful experiences with them in connection with restructuring and austerity programs, BRICS is increasingly turning to the creation of an alliance of countries that would be able to achieve monetary independence from the US dollar and to free the world financial order from hegemonic influences that have a negative effect on economic and social development.

In this sense, concrete proposals were made for connecting the New BRICS Development Bank with the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the China, Central & Eastern Europe Investment Co-Operation Fund and the Silk Road Fund which represent a paradigm to the transatlantic system of monetary economies (Zepp-LaRouche, 2015, p. 3; Dimitrijević, 2018).

Therefore, the current activities of the BRICS confirm a completely new perception of emerging

countries and developing countries regarding the change of international economic relations and the establishment of a fairer world economic order, which in the future should lead to the reaffirmation of some of the more important principles and goals that the NIEO program aimed for in the previous historical period.

This new platform of international economic cooperation recognizes the importance of protecting one's own national interests and does not distance itself from all rational options that can lead to significant mutual benefits. Hence, with the new constellation characterized by conflicts between the alliance of emerging countries and highly developed capitalist states, the NAM gets a new role that should serve to promote the previously confirmed values of the NIEO adapted to the new international economic relations and emerging economic order. At the same time, it also provides a chance for a wider and more open discussion about the possibilities of joint action to achieve the demand for a more radical change in the United Nations system.

In this sense, the NAM called for the reactivation of the constructive dialogue between the countries of the Global North and the Global South regarding the reform of the world organization and its main organs and bodies. This dialogue was hinted at in the Agenda for development of UN Secretary General Kofi Annan from 1994, which emphasizes the importance of international economic cooperation and development for international peace and security (Report of the Secretary-General, 1994).

In the meantime, the world has entered a new cycle of economic and political crises, which is why the role of the NAM has gained special importance. Although significantly weakened, the NAM remained consistent in its position of defense and promotion of the NIEO values, albeit adapted to new international conditions. After all, this is evidenced by the common positions of non-aligned countries formulated at the last NAM Summit held in Baku in 2019. Namely, in the Final Act of the Summit, the need

to share responsibilities regarding the fulfillment of international obligations and the establishment of a new world order was emphasized. In this sense, the NAM does not question the central role played by the United Nations in global governance, but it does not rule out its own role in the multilateral regulation of global social, economic and political problems.

In this sense, NAM has undertaken the obligation in connection with the establishment of a new and fairer international economic order and in connection with the political obligations proclaimed at the World Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen in 1995, the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000, the World Summit on Sustainable Development of 2002, the 2005 World Summit, which resulted from the 2010 High-Level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals, the 2012 Rio + 20 Conference on Sustainable Development entitled: “The Future We Want” and the Third UN International Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Sendai in 2015.

Also, the NAM assumed the obligations from the Final Act, which refer to the fulfillment of the assumed obligations from the General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015 entitled: “Transforming our world - Agenda for sustainable development until 2030”, then the obligations contained in the Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on development financing held in Addis Ababa in 2015, in the Paris Agreement adopted as part of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change from 2015, obligations from the New Urban Agenda, adopted 2016 at the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in Ecuador and at the UN High-Level Conference on South-South Cooperation held in Buenos Aires in 2019 (Final document, 2019). At the jubilee Conference of the NAM, held in Belgrade in 2021, the non-aligned countries confirmed their readiness to fulfill the aforementioned international obligations, but also to revive the original principles of the NAM, as well as the vision of the NIEO, on the basis of

which it would be possible to continue the multilateral dialogue on the future of the world and the struggle to establish equality and justice in international economic relations.

## CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the NIEO program documents indicates that these acts were adopted by the United Nations at the initiative of the Third World countries gathered around the NAM.

These program acts include, first of all, the Declaration of the United Nations General Assembly on the establishment of the NIEO and the Action Program for its implementation, as well as the Charter on the Economic Rights and Duties of States from 1974.

In all of them, the principles and goals of the UN Charter are affirmed, which were anticipated and further elaborated through the promotion of the policy of active peaceful coexistence of the NAM. The program acts clearly emphasize that the NIEO should be based on fairness, sovereign equality, interdependence, common interests and cooperation of all states in order to achieve balanced economic development, regardless of their economic and socio-political order.

The goal of establishing the NIEO was to establish a fairer economic order and eliminate the economic differences that existed (and still exist) between developed and developing countries.

The main obstacle in achieving those goals and principles was economic hegemony, domination, neocolonialism, as well as other forms of violence and economic dependence.

Although some progress has been made on the NIEO plan, not much progress has been made because developed countries are still trying to preserve their privileged position in international economic relations.

After the Cold War, the former rivalry between the West and the East was replaced by the rivalry between the North and the South. In international relations, the neoliberal concept of development prevailed, which led to the promotion of the NIEO concept in practice.

The contemporary economic paradigm is linked to an international political constellation characterized by geo-economic regrouping on the geopolitical axis - Global North and Global South. Divergence of economic interests between developed and developing countries stimulated the process of establishing a new world economic order. This order, which is *in statu nascendi*, was initiated by regional economic powers through the formation of the BRICS.

The BRICS is an intergovernmental political forum that represents an alternative to transatlantic organizations. It should serve the realization of the economic interests of the countries of the Global North and Global South, regardless of which civilization systems they belong to, what cultural values they share, and what economic and socio-political systems they have. Hence, the development of contemporary international relations is characterized by a global geo-economic realignment, which, in the constellation of the creation of a multipolar world order, can to a certain extent follow the spirit of the previously proclaimed principles and objectives contained in the NIEO, for which the NAM and the United Nations have waged a persistent struggle for decades.

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