Objectives of the Conference: Extending human rights opens opportunities to those traditionally excluded from the economic and political mainstream and helps build the human capital in a country. Entrepreneurship is the key to bringing the nuts and bolts of physical capital together with workers' human capital to create jobs and achieve sustainable broad-based economic development.

The Schools of Arts and Sciences, Law and Business at Fordham University and Universidade Iberoamericana are hosting this conference to bring together all those who are interested in these issues under one roof. Opening doors for the poor and disadvantaged has long been part of the Jesuit tradition at both Universities.

The entrepreneurs are employers or managers, not workers. The advocates for entrepreneurship in the business world, such as the Wall Street Journal or Chambers of Commerce, belong to the right wing of the political spectrum. By contrast, the human rights advocates belong to the left wing, as they are concerned with all oppressed groups, including some workers and the poor. This ideological division between the two groups is false, and has prevented potentially useful cooperation between the two advocacy groups.

For example, infrastructure and access (to education, credit, security, due process, public information, etc.) are essential to both groups. Hence both should jointly oppose all entrenched monopolists or corrupt entities that block better infrastructure or easier access. Prof. Vinod's theme paper for the conference entitled "Common Ground in Promotion of Entrepreneurship and Human Rights," provides details about the rationale for the conference, including statistical arguments for cooperation based on data. (URL: http://www.fordham.edu/economics/vinod/docs/hd-pap-ehr.pdf)

In short, this conference hopes to: (i) promote further research and dialogue to move the human rights-entrepreneurship nexus out of the realm of platitudes and into the mainstream of development policy, (ii) help the advocates for human rights and private business to view each other as allies, (iii) discuss 'social entrepreneurship,' role of multinationals and US-Mexico immigration issues, (iv) send a report to the World Summit of heads of state at the United Nations headquarters in New York, September 14-16, 2005, and (v) plan the next conference.

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