Preface

The unequal relationship between North and South, or the centre and periphery of the world economy, which is the subject of this book, has many dimensions. We had to be selective in dealing with what we believe to be the most important of these dimensions. Other authors might legitimately make different choices. But underlying our whole book is a conviction that the present structure of the world economy makes for unequal relations – what has been called a ‘structuralist’ viewpoint. Few would deny that there is at present a very unequal distribution of economic power; and most would agree that it would be desirable to reduce this inequality. It is to this purpose that the arguments and proposals of this book are addressed and it is from this perspective that they should be judged. It seems to us an inevitable component of the now universally agreed goal of development: the reduction of poverty. After setting out the evolution of the present unequal global governance (Chapter 1) and the much debated question of terms of trade (Chapter 2), Chapters 3 and 4 survey the evolution of development thinking and policies with our perspective in mind. We then turn to the basic subjects of trade, aid and debts, with special emphasis on Lomé (EU/ACP relations), the currently (September 2000) particularly topical case of oil and OPEC, and the case of the Asian tigers. In a concluding chapter we present what we hope are positive proposals for a more equal world order, where people seem to matter again.

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