

Notes of U8 meeting – 23rd January 2008

Dictatorship vs. democracy

Pro-democracy

- More genocide/human rights abuses under dictatorships
- Social/human/political development more likely under a democracy
- ‘Development’ is used as an excuse by dictators to justify human rights abuses/war etc.
- The development of individual rights should be prioritised over the development of the economy

Pro-dictatorship

- Elected dictatorships, e.g. effectively Putin in Russia can be beneficial and more appropriate to some national cultures
- Democracy is very much a Western ideal and not necessarily the objective best for all
- Hitler and Stalin achieved a lot for the economic and industrial development of Germany and Russia
- Benign dictatorships are possible/conceivable
- In democracies governments are restricted by a fixed term and therefore have to prioritise getting re-elected rather than long-term plans for development or environmental sustainability
- Dictators less accountable to the individual and his/her rights and therefore can focus more on the bigger picture
- Industrial/economic development more likely under dictatorships
- Direct democracy, e.g. referenda, might hinder the development of a healthy global environment as people think selfishly and short-term
- A government must sometimes make unpopular decisions for the greater good