BIEN, the international network that was born in 1986 around the idea of an unconditional basic income will hold its biennial congress for the first time in Asia: in Seoul in July 2016. It is therefore a very timely pleasure for me to write this preface to the Korean edition of *Real Freedom for All*, the book in which I tried to offer a firm philosophical foundation to the plea for an unconditional basic income.

Two decades years after the publication of its original edition by Oxford University Press, I remain as convinced as I was at the time of the immense importance, for the Left of the 21st century, of formulating a radical vision that does not get trapped into defending equality over freedom but gives freedom paramount importance. It must be real freedom, however, not just formal freedom, the capacity to do things and not just the sheer right to do them. And it must be real freedom *for all*, not just for the rich and the powerful.

Two decades later, I remain also as convinced as I ever was that achieving a fair distribution of this real freedom, of this power to choose the life one wants to lead, requires the introduction of an unconditional basic income, a cash payment made to each individual member of a society, without means test or work requirement. Making such payments does not amount to transferring to some people the fruit of the labour of some other people. It rather consists in sharing more fairly part of the benefits bestowed upon us very unequally by nature, technical progress, capital accumulation and by the circumstances of our individual lives.

Just as I did at the time of writing *Real Freedom for All*, I also still believe that the state’s distributive mission does not reduce to distributing this cash income, that adequate education and health care are equally important, and also — I would emphasize this more now than I did then — urban public spaces that used primarily not for sustainable mobility but for pleasurable immobility. There are, however, certain aspects of the book that I would formulate differently. One of them is how justice as real freedom should handle the question of the fair treatment of handicaps. In the book, I imposed a constraint of “undominated diversity” on the sustainable maximization of the unconditional basic income, part of which is to be given in the form of universal education and health care insurance. Today, I would drop this constraint. Instead, I would invite to the following mental experiment: behind a hypothetical veil of ignorance that forces us to ignore whether or not we suffer from specific handicaps, how much of the highest sustainable basic income would we be willing to devote to an insurance scheme that would pay for targeted benefits and other provisions for people suffering from such handicaps.

Such a move would make the philosophical framework more elegant and consistent but would not greatly affect its institutional implications. In particular, it would not undermine the case for a modest unconditional cash basic income. What the next steps would be in this direction, *Real Freedom for All* does not say. And wisely so, because there is no general answer. Countries vary greatly in terms of how close they are to the implementation of a genuine basic income. Many of them already have a pretty general means-tested minimum income scheme. Some of them also have something very close to a universal basic income for children and/or for the elderly.
Moreover, countries vary greatly as regards the opportunities offered by the structure and problems of their current tax-and-transfer systems, as regards the current balance of political and social forces, and as regards the current mood of public opinion. Therefore, there cannot be a one-size-fits-all recipe for further progress.

However, one should not underestimate the importance of a clear vision that makes it possible to identify what counts as progress and thereby helps us seize opportunities as they arise and strengthens our struggles by giving them more than defensive purposes. At a time when “socialism” was on the rise, when in both Europe and North America countries were in the process of massively increasing the role of the state at the expense of the market, one of the main intellectual fathers of neo-liberalism wrote: “The main lesson which the true liberal must learn from the success of the socialists is that it was their courage to be Utopian which gained them the support of the intellectuals and thereby an influence on public opinion which is daily making possible what only recently seemed utterly remote.” (Friedrich Hayek, “The intellectuals and socialism”, 1949) It is the liberal utopia which Hayek was calling for and helped articulate that ended up making neo-liberal policies, long declared politically impossible, today’s daily reality.

We urgently need to take Hayek’s advice in order to provide a credible radical alternative to the neo-liberal world he helped create. We urgently need to regain the intellectual high ground by articulating a bold vision that goes far beyond short-sighted resistance, a vision that does not try to revamp discredited forms of socialism or social democracy, a vision that rejuvenates the utopian socialists’ emancipatory ambition and offers a powerful, attractive, freedom-friendly, mobilizing response to the challenges of our times. This is the collective and worldwide task to which this book hopes to contribute.

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