

STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR M. H. JABIR OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA, ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA, IN THE U.N. GENERAL ASSEMBLY DURING ITS 52ND SESSION ON ITEM 46: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OUTCOME OF THE WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

New York, 16 October 1997

Mr. President,

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for the report entitled "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development", contained in document A/52/305, and the report on poverty eradication contained in document A/52/315. We also welcome the Human Development Report for 1997, which includes the analysis of global poverty and provides suggestions on new ways to measure and combat poverty.

I wish, at the outset, to reaffirm our full commitment to the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development contained in the Copenhagen Declaration and the Programme of Action.

Mr. President,

There has been considerable efforts by the developing countries to act on the specific areas of both the Declaration and the Programme of Action, focusing, *inter alia*, on policy formulation, elaboration of programmes and strategies, setting of time bound targets for poverty eradication and employment. Particular attention has been paid to the needs of special groups as well as to the participation of the civil society. Similarly, mechanisms and focal points have been established. While these initiatives are at different levels of implementation, and according to the priorities and capabilities of individual countries, the fact still remains that, they need to be supported, strengthened, and sustained.

At the regional level, it is encouraging to note that the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) organized the First Regional Conference in Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development at Sao Paulo in Brazil from 6-9 April 1997. We welcome the Fifth Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference on Social Development to be held in Manila from 5-11 November 1997 to review national progress achieved and regional actions taken in the implementation of the Agenda for Social Development in the ESCAP region, and encourage other regional groups which have not yet convened similar forums to do so. In this regard, we request the international community to support such endeavours by providing the necessary financial resources including support in the implementation of the outcome of these meetings.

Mr. President,

Eradication of poverty remains a priority goal of all developing countries. However, despite increased efforts to eradicate poverty, the total number of people living in poverty is increasing. The majority of the population in these countries continue to live in extreme poverty, unable to access basic human needs such as nutrition, health, water and sanitation, education, employment, housing and participation in cultural and social life.

We acknowledge the fact that high and productive levels of employment are fundamental means of combating poverty, of ensuring equity, of meeting peoples aspirations for participation in economic and social life and enhancing social cohesion. However, we are concerned with the negative impact of the globalization of the world economy and trade liberalization on social development, particularly in developing countries. The development efforts of developing countries, in particular for the provision of essential social and economic services, are severely hampered by the inadequate flow of financial resources to these

countries. The burden of external debt continues to be one of the major concerns of developing countries. The Group of 77 and China urges the international community to work for a durable solution of the debt problem of these countries, particularly those of Africa and the Least Developed Countries. The other element of priority to our Group is the necessity to evaluate the negative impact of structural adjustment programmes on economic and social development and to assist those adjusting countries in creating conditions for economic growth, job creation, poverty eradication and social development.

The Group of 77 and China, while recognizing that social development and the implementation of the Programme of Action of the World Social Summit are primarily the responsibility of governments, stresses that mobilization of resources, at both national and international levels, remains one of the major constraints to developing countries. In this regard, I recall that in Resolutions 50/161 and 51/202 the General Assembly recognized that the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and the Programme of Action in developing countries will need additional financial resources and more effective development assistance. The Group, therefore, reaffirms the urgent need to reverse the trend of decline in Official Development Assistance (ODA) which remains the principal source of development financing for most developing countries. We urge the developed countries to fulfil the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of their Gross National Product for overall official development assistance as a matter of priority.

We recognize that micro-credit programmes are a key strategy in promoting self-employment, income generation, eradication of poverty and empowerment of people particularly women, and enhancement of social integration through facilitating access for credit to the poor. In this regard, we welcome the outcome of the micro-credit Summit held in Washington D.C., from 2-4 February 1997, which launched a global movement to reach 100 million of the world's poorest families, especially women, with credit for self-employment and other financial services by the year 2005. In order to reach that goal, we need to establish new micro-lending institutions and/or strengthen existing ones in order to facilitate access of credit to people living in poverty. We call upon all regional and international institutions, including the specialized agencies working to eradicate poverty to come forward to help attain the goals of the micro-credit summit.

Mr. President,

The Group of 77 and China reaffirms the importance and urgent need to ensure that employment growth is placed at the centre of economic and social policy making in conjunction with other important goals. We also recognize the need for improvement in the design of policies and programmes to enhance employment opportunities for groups with special needs comprising of women, youth, older persons and persons with disabilities so as to combat exclusion from the labour market. In this connection, we emphasise the importance of mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes aimed at employment creation and the need to include gender impact analysis as a regular feature in all stages of the overall policy-making process. In the same vein, the Group recognizes the need to effectively address the challenge of modifying employment policies in order to ensure increased participation of disabled persons in the labour market.

We also attach great importance to the implementation of the World Programme for Action for Youth to the year 2000 and beyond, and call for participation of all relevant organs and specialized agencies of the UN and related international organizations to assist developing countries in their efforts to implement the Programme of Action. The Group welcomes the holding of the World Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth to be held in Lisbon, Portugal, from 8-12 August 1999 and request the United Nations to facilitate the participation of developing countries, particularly those from Africa and the Least Developed Countries.

Mr. President,

The International Year of Older Persons in 1999 will provide the opportunity to shed a global spotlight on the

longevity revolution that will be one of the greatest challenges that our developing countries will have to face in the next century. The world population is aging dramatically. A steady stream of 1 million persons a month now cross the threshold of age 60, and 80 per cent of these are in developing countries. By the year 2025 the total number of persons aged 60 and above will be 1.2 billion - and 70 per cent of them still be living in our developing world. It was the recognition of this demographic revolution and its implications to our developing countries that led the G-77 and China to submit a resolution to the General Assembly entitled: "Implementation of the International Plan of Action on Aging: integration of the elderly in development." This landmark resolution, adopted by consensus on 29 December 1985 emphasized that older persons must be considered an important and necessary element in the development process at all levels within a given society.

The Group of 77 and China reaffirms the importance of the Commission for Social Development, as the functional commission of the Economic and Social Council with the responsibility to follow-up the Social Summit and in this regard looks forward to the Thirty-sixth session of the Commission which will be held in February 1998, with the priority theme of "Promoting social integration and participation of all people, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons".

We welcome the convening of the Special Session of the General Assembly in the year 2000 for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit. We support the establishment of the Preparatory Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly which will start its activities in 1998 as was decided by General Assembly Resolution 51/202. The Group endeavours to take all necessary measures to ensure the success of the Special Session.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, namely poverty eradication, enhancement of productive employment and social integration, calls for concerted international action to integrate the economies of developing countries into those of the developed countries. Promotion of equal terms of trade, increased production capacities and financial flows, technology transfer and acquisition, are among the major steps towards the achievement of high productive employment and sustainable livelihoods, hence poverty eradication. As we prepare for the Special Session of the General Assembly in the year 2000 for the overall review of the outcome of the World Social Summit, let us bear in mind the realities in the developing countries and honour our commitments made in Copenhagen. We call upon our development partners, the developed countries, to support the developing countries through technical and financial cooperation in their efforts to improve the ability and the competitive capacity to participate in the global economy on an equal basis.

I thank you.