



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR. HASSAN ABOUTAHIR, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 98: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FIRST UN DECADE FOR ERADICATION OF POVERTY (New York, 9 October 2003)

Mr. Chairman

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I would like to thank the Secretariat for its report on the implementation of the first UN Decade for the eradication of poverty, which responds to the GA resolutions 57/266 and 53/197. The report presents a very useful overview on the progress made in reducing poverty around the developing world.

The first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) has to contribute to achieving the targets of halving, by 2015, the proportion of the world's people whose income is less than one dollar a day and the proportion of people who suffer from hunger, through decisive national action and strengthened international cooperation.

We have noted with great concern that the progress is mixed and uneven at national and regional levels. We have taken note of the progress made in the achievement of the developmental objectives contained in the Millennium Declaration and in the major UN Conferences and Summits, in particular the objective of halving, by 2015, the proportion of the world's people whose income is less than one dollar a day. However, the prospects for the big part of the developing world and in particular the African Continent remain a source of concern.

Indeed, the number of people living in extreme poverty is expected to decrease in all regions of the world except in Africa where the expected population increase will not help control the spread of poverty and therefore hinder the efforts towards the attainment of sustainable development.

The devastating effect of the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) epidemic on human development, economic growth and poverty reduction efforts in many countries, in particular sub-Saharan African countries,

Mr. Chairman,

We should keep in mind the multidimensional nature of poverty to which special attention should be given within the context of overall action for the eradication of poverty. Eradicating poverty is the greatest global challenge facing the world today and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development in developing countries.

The problem of poverty and hunger has more than economic and social dimensions. The deep fault line that divides human society between the rich and the poor and the ever-increasing gap between the developed and developing worlds pose a major threat to global prosperity, security and stability.

Mr. Chairman,

It is true that further efforts are needed at the national level if the reduction and eradication of

poverty is to be achieved. But it is also true that without an international environment conducive to development and a strong and resolute international support, developing countries efforts can not succeed in achieving development goals and eradication of poverty.

The attainment of sustainable development, eradication of poverty and hunger is a process, which depends on a number of factors; particularly the reinforcement of financing for development (through, debt relief and ODA increase) as well as market access for products of export interest to developing countries.

The continuing debt and debt-servicing problems of the heavily indebted poor developing countries and of the low-income developing countries as continue to constitute an element that adversely affects their sustainable development efforts and harm their social programmes and national poverty eradication strategies.

The stagnation of the ODA flows, necessary to assist national efforts to eradicate poverty, is another source of concern. We noted the recent increase of ODA and hope that this trend will be confirmed in the near future.

We share the Secretary General's view, expressed in its report on the follow up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit, that a reinforced, balanced and equitable international trade is one of the means to assist the developed countries, particularly the LDCs, to eradicate poverty and famine and to achieve the Millennium goals. Trade can play a major role as an engine of growth and development and in eradicating poverty.

In other words, for the poverty eradication efforts to be effective, it is imperative that developing countries be integrated into the world economy and share equitably in the benefits of globalization.

Mr. Chairman,

The need for the empowerment of women and sectoral strategies in such areas as education, development of human resources, health, rural development, productive employment, access to water and sanitation and food are crucial if we are to achieve poverty eradication goal.

Mr. Chairman,

We noted with great interest the draft programme of action for the observance of the international Year of Microcredit, 2005. We encourage the Secretariat to continue these efforts towards the objectives set in the report of the Secretary General.

In fact, the role of microcredit is important as an anti-poverty tool that promotes production and self-employment and empowers people living in poverty, especially women. We encourage bilateral and multilateral donors to assist developing countries to implement their policies that support microcredit schemes and the development of microfinance institutions and related capacity building.

Mr. Chairman,

The primary objective of the New Partnership for Africa's development is the eradication of poverty and promotion of sustainable development. We call on the developed countries and the United Nations system to support the Partnership and complement the efforts undertaken by Africa to overcome the challenges it faces and reduce poverty.

Mr. Chairman,

The goal of halving the proportion of people living on less than one dollar a day by 2015 will not be achieved without serious efforts to address the development needs of the least developed countries and to support their efforts to improve the lives of their people. The development partners should honor their commitments contained in the Brussels Declaration and the Programme of Action if we are to contribute to the eradication of poverty in this vulnerable group of countries.

Let me conclude by reaffirming that the objective of poverty eradication should continue to be at the centre of the United Nations System. In this regard, we believe that the World Solidarity Fund is one of the tools that could contribute to the achievement of the objective of poverty eradication. Therefore, its operationalization is crucial and matter of urgency.

Thank you.