



STATEMENT BY MRS. ARIEL BOWEN, PERMANENT MISSION OF JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA, GENERAL SEGMENT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (ECOSOC), AGENDA ITEM 14 (B) SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (New York, 22 July 2005)

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour, on this occasion, to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 14(b) - social development. In this regard I wish to thank the Secretariat for its two reports, namely - Report of the Commission for Social Development on its forty-third session contained in document E/2005/26 and the World Youth Report, 2005, contained in document No. A/60/61-E/2005/7.

Mr. Chairman,

The 43rd session of the Commission for Social Development concluded in February this year, presented the opportunity for the ten year review of progress made in the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit of Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995 as well as the further initiatives for social development adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-fourth special session.

The review acknowledged the mutually reinforcing link between the MDGs and the goals of Copenhagen, in terms of the targets to be achieved by 2015, in relation to poverty, hunger, literacy, health and infant mortality. It also concurred with the overall assessment of the Secretary-General in his report that there have been mixed results in that while there have been advances, there has also been stagnation and setbacks, indicating that there is much left to be done in some critical areas.

As poverty continues to be a formidable challenge for developing countries, reduction and ultimately eradication has assumed high priority for national governments and the international community since the Social Summit. But, Mr. Chairman, national poverty reduction targets and the formulation of poverty eradication plans and strategies have produced uneven results across the regions.

The Secretary-General's report indicates that as a result of low or uneven growth in 2000, more than 1.1 billion people worldwide are struggling to survive on less than \$1 a day, and more than twice as many on less than \$2 a day. It notes further, that in Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Western Asia and Eastern Europe the number of poor people increased by 102 million. In addition, in South Asia, home to almost 500 million poor, the total number has hardly changed from 1990 to 1999.

The situation of young people is also of serious concern. According to the World Youth Report 2005 an estimated 209 million young people or 18 per cent of all youth, live on less than \$1 a day. South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa together accounts for the largest number of youths living below the poverty line.

Mr. Chairman,

The goal of full employment is still a long way off. Since Copenhagen there has been a rise in unemployment levels, globally. Of particular concern is youth unemployment, with rates in the age group 15-24 on average two to three times higher than other groups.

Social exclusion remains a problem in many countries but there is evidence that significant strides have also been made in plans and programmes to improve the situation of vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities and older persons. We expect efforts to continue to strengthen modalities to implement the Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing and we look forward to further progress towards the development of an international convention for persons with disabilities, as the ad hoc committee re-convenes at UN Headquarters in early August.

Mr. Chairman,

The G-77 and China continues to be concerned about the impact of disease, and natural disasters, in particular the potential to undo years of progress towards development. We recall the special focus during the Humanitarian Segment of the Council this year, on the lessons learnt from the recent earthquake/tsunami Indian Ocean disaster of 26 December 2004, which devastated parts of Asia and Africa. The hurricane season which has only just begun, is

already wreaking havoc on the Caribbean and Latin American region. The critical dimension of the vulnerabilities of developing countries to diseases and natural disasters are of deep concern.

Mr. Chairman,

The importance of strengthening global partnerships between rich and poor countries to promote development is crucial. We need not overstate the importance of honouring internationally agreed ODA. The strengthening of national and international mechanisms towards the full implementation of the Copenhagen Programme needs greater efforts by both national governments and the international community working together.

Mr. Chairman,

As we did in the debate during the ten-year review this year, the G-77 and China today reaffirms its commitment to the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action and the further initiatives for social development adopted at the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. We look forward to the Summit's final outcome in this regard, in making a solid contribution to social development.

I thank you.

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