



STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR STAFFORD NEIL, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77, ON AGENDA ITEMS: 61 & 63 - IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OUTCOME OF THE WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY & FOLLOW-UP TO THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF OLDER PERSONS: SECOND WORLD ASSEMBLY ON AGEING (New York, 3 October 2005)

Mr. Chairman,

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China in this debate today on agenda items 61 and 63 now under discussion.

At the outset we wish to congratulate you on your assumption of the Chairmanship of the Third Committee. We are confident in your ability to provide the guidance required to successfully steer the work of the Committee in this 60th Session of the General Assembly.

We also congratulate the other bureau members on their election and commit to you our support and cooperation.

Mr. Chairman, when our heads met at Copenhagen in 1995 and adopted the Copenhagen Declaration, it was a firm expression of our resolve to not only identify the obstacles to social development but to effectively tackle them in a comprehensive way, from a people-centred approach to development.

Five years later, the General Assembly convened its twenty-fourth special session to review our implementation of those pledges made. In the same year, the Millennium Summit adopted a set of practical measures towards development including the setting of a road map for their achievement. The goals of these endeavours are clearly mutually reinforcing and the determination to implement them remains high on the agenda of all our countries in the developing world.

Mr. Chairman,

The ten year review of Copenhagen which took place under the auspices of the Commission for Social Development at its 43rd Session this year, was a timely opportunity to assess the level of implementation and to see how we could overcome the obstacles. The outcome of the Copenhagen review is captured in the Report of the Secretary-General in document No. A/60/80.

The mutually reinforcing goals of the Copenhagen Declaration and the MDGs were strongly emphasized, especially in relation to the three core priorities of the Copenhagen agenda, that is, the eradication of poverty, the promotion of social integration and the attainment of full employment.

At the same time, for countries in the developing world, **poverty eradication** remains a most urgent objective, in the absence of basic needs such as food, safe drinking water and housing, among so many. The mixed results noted in the Report of the Secretary-General, as well as the Millennium Project Report on the status of poverty reduction programmes across the globe, both give us some indication of where the focus now needs to be concentrated. However, we are still convinced that the MDG target of reducing poverty by a half by 2015 is achievable. To do this the focus of international support on Africa, particularly the sub-Saharan region, is totally justifiable in the light of current trends.

Mr. Chairman,

The obstacles to achieving the Copenhagen goals are rooted in the lack of an enabling environment for social development. Among the most prominent challenges are the adverse effects of natural disasters; the spread of infectious diseases including HIV/AIDS and Malaria; increased security concerns including armed conflict, occupation, terrorism, unilateral coercive measures; the unequal opportunities created by globalisation and continuing inequities in the global economic system. You will note, Mr. Chairman that except for natural disasters, none of these is beyond our ability to change.

Globalisation continues to be a source of particular disappointment for us in terms of what it was heralded to offer in the creation and distribution of wealth. The Report of the World Social Situation 2005 has indicated that globalization has helped to accentuate inequalities. The wealthiest 20 per cent of the planet account for 86 per cent of all private consumption and the poorest account for just above 1 per cent. Very simply, the projected benefits for developing

countries have not been realized and there is clear need for fair and equitable policies to guide the process.

Mr. Chairman,

Social development goals cannot be achieved without adequate resources. The Millennium Project Report of 2004 showed how resources from ODA commitments of 0.7% of GDP could make a significant difference. We applaud those countries that have honoured their obligations and others that have set time-tables to reach the target by 2015. We continue to encourage all our developed partners to be faithful to this important commitment agreed to over three decades ago.

At the same time, Mr. Chairman, it is well appreciated that ODA cannot be the main source of funding for social development. Domestic resource mobilization for investment in social infrastructure is of the greatest importance. There is an important role for such mechanisms as cooperatives, not just in the area of poverty eradication but also in fostering social integration and for employment creation. Some elements are indicated in the Secretary General's Report on Cooperatives in Social Development in document A/60/138 and the useful recommendations contained therein.

Mr. Chairman,

The Programme of Action adopted at the World Summit for Social Development in 1995 has made it clear that productive work and employment are central elements of development as well as for upholding human dignity. However ten years later indications are that employment levels globally have fallen short of expectations. Estimated data included in The World Social Situation 2005 indicates that between 1993 and 2003 the number of unemployed rose from 140 million to an estimated 186 million, representing 6.2 per cent of the total working population. Youth unemployment constitutes a particular challenge and we welcome the convening this year of the Ten-year Review of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond which will take place later this week.

Mr. Chairman,

During the Copenhagen review in February, we welcomed the opportunity to interact with the World Bank and IMF and ILO representatives on their perspectives concerning social development and we see this as an important initiative for dialogue between the different stakeholders, with a view to ensuring that social development is comprehensively addressed. We feel that this kind of interaction will lead ultimately to useful tangible outcomes.

Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing

Mr. Chairman,

The fact that ageing "comes to us all, yea even unto kings" should provide added impetus to our zeal to implement the Madrid Plan of Action, which constitutes the model international framework for addressing the situation of older persons in our societies, especially taking into account the contribution of older persons to the achievement of the MDGs. The Report of the Secretary-General on the Follow up to the Second World Assembly provides useful information on the status of implementation of the Plan. We are encouraged at the positive indications on efforts at the national level to implement the Plan. At the same time, the Report also points to the common tendency to address the situation of older persons from a "humanitarian" perspective, while ignoring the potential of older persons to contribute to national objectives. It is therefore regrettable that the momentum gained in the immediate aftermath of the Meeting has lost ground to the extent that awareness of the Madrid Plan remains limited or non-existent in some respects.

Commitment at the national level as well as through international cooperation is paramount to the successful implementation of the Madrid Plan of action particularly in support of national capacity-building. In this respect Member States able to do so are encouraged to support the UN Trust Fund for Ageing, in order to enable the UN to respond to the needs of particular States, as needed.

Mr. Chairman,

The 10 year review of Copenhagen concluded with a number of useful points as captured in the Secretary-General's Report in document A/60/80 mentioned earlier. I will conclude by highlighting two that are of particular importance to the Group of 77 and China:

First, support for poverty reduction policies that tackle poverty by addressing the root causes and manifestations of poverty. In particular, we need global policies to support international and bilateral cooperation, including the transfer

of technology and the sharing of experiences and good practices, taking into account in particular the gender and age dimensions of poverty;

Second, efforts should be intensified to help countries achieve social development goals through resource flows, both technically and financially and to reduce the debilitating debt burden so as to free up resources for the funding of social programmes.

Finally Mr. Chairman,

We hope that during this Session, which should concentrate on implementation, that we will be able to identify the ways and means on moving forward to the goals we have established. The Group of 77 and China will play its part in ensuring that we take meaningful decisions to make such progress.

I thank you.

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