



**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY STAFFORD NEIL PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77, AT THE HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY SESSION OF THE 43RD SESSION OF THE COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ON AGENDA ITEM 3(A): REVIEW OF FURTHER IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND OUTCOME OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 10 February 2005)**

Mr. Chairman,  
Mr. Under Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs,  
Distinguished Ministers of Government,  
Distinguished Delegates,

Allow me to express my congratulations to you and the bureau on your election. The work of the Commission could not be in safer and more competent hands. You can be assured sir, of our complete support and cooperation during this important session.

I am particularly honoured to address this 43rd session of the Commission for Social Development on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, in a significant year for the United Nations. This event is taking place at a time when a number of high level reports and reviews are being considered as a basis for action at the 60th Session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Chairman,

In this review year of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), we recognize the synergy that exists between the MDGs and the goals of Copenhagen, certainly in terms of the targets to be achieved by 2015 in relation to poverty, hunger, literacy, health and infant mortality. We are encouraged by the conclusions of the Millennium Project Report, which point to the possibility of achieving success in these areas, provided that agreed ODA obligations are met. We strongly urge our partners in the developed world to meet these commitments.

Progress towards the MDGs also signifies progress for the Copenhagen Programme, with its goal of comprehensively addressing social development, encompassing such areas as poverty reduction, the creation of an enabling economic environment, human rights, equality, peace, human dignity and ethical values, all of which form part of promoting the betterment of the human condition. For us in the developing world, the biggest challenge is the availability of resources to finance programmes for implementation.

Mr. Chairman,

The Copenhagen Declaration and Programme for Action adopted in 1995 and the outcome of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly in 2000, remain the central points of reference for action in the field of social development for the international community, as well as at the national level. Today, the Group of 77 and China, reaffirms its commitment to fulfilling all the goals agreed at Copenhagen, in particular those relating to the three core themes of poverty eradication, full employment and social integration.

We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his Report on the *review of the further implementation of the World Summit for Social Development and the outcome of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly*, contained in document E/CN.5.2005/6. This report provides a comprehensive and thoughtful analysis of the progress made over the decade since Copenhagen and directions that could be taken in ensuring that the goals and objectives are achieved. His overall assessment is one of mixed results. There have been advances, but there has also been stagnation and setbacks.

Mr. Chairman,

In relation to the first commitment of Copenhagen, that of creating an enabling political, social, cultural and legal environment for social development, there have been both positive and negative trends. In the political and institutional arena there have been increased moves towards democratization, a general awareness of the need for respect for human rights and increasing civil society participation and partnerships with governments for social development.

In principle there is now greater understanding with regard to the economic environment necessary for social development. From a philosophical point of view, there is now wider acceptance that market reforms and structural adjustment programmes must pay attention to their social impact, if they are to be sustainable. However, the institutional framework for policy-making at both the national and international levels still needs to be strengthened to fully integrate economic and social policies.

A crucial element of the economic environment is the undeniable reality of globalisation and interdependence. Significant gains have been recorded by many countries, particularly in the developed world. Yet for many countries in the South, the benefits of globalisation, of transfer of technology and improved access of goods and services for developing countries to international markets, are not being realized. Some also suffer from the imposition of punitive and discriminatory policies. Hence we continue to advocate for mechanisms to ensure a fair equitable process of globalisation, where all are given an opportunity to benefit.

Mr. Chairman,

With regard to the three main themes of poverty eradication, full employment, and social integration, successes have been recorded but in some critical areas, there is much left to be done.

Poverty reduction has assumed high priority for national governments and the international community since the Social Summit. National poverty reduction targets and the formulation of poverty eradication plans and strategies have produced uneven results across the regions.

It is notable that the level of extreme poverty in China fell from 33% to 18% of the population between 1990 and 1999, and that the transition economies have seen a reversal in the poverty rates in the 1990s. And while most of Asia and North Africa are on course to meeting the MDG target for poverty reduction, there has been little or no progress in sub-Saharan Africa and in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Poverty therefore remains a formidable challenge. 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.

Mr. Chairman,

The G-77 and China is deeply concerned, particularly with the situation of Africa and the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) which continue to face marginalisation and severe human suffering. There is an urgent need for international action through provision of substantial resources to meet immediate needs. We believe that long-term solutions should also be sought through such initiatives as external debt reduction, investment in infrastructure, capacity building and the removal of obstacles to market access and halting the spread of infectious diseases, particularly HIV/AIDS and malaria.

Mr. Chairman,

The goal of full employment is still a long way off. Since Copenhagen there has been a rise in unemployment levels, globally. It is estimated that in 2003, 186 million people were unemployed, as compared with 140 million in the previous decade. Job growth in developing countries in particular, has largely been in the informal sector and in marginal activities, with very low wages. And on one hand while it is noted that there has been an increase in the number of women employed, indications are that there is still marginalization in relation to wages and working conditions. While the overall trend in employment creation is negative, there are major variations across regions and economic groups. Among developed countries as a whole unemployment rates declined, whilst much of the developing world have experienced rising unemployment. 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 welcome the progress being made towards the development of an international convention for persons with disabilities.

Mr. Chairman,

The G-77 and China has used many opportunities to address its particular concern with such issues as the impact of diseases, and natural disasters. The tsunami, which devastated parts of Asia and Africa and the experience of the Caribbean with disastrous hurricanes, have served to highlight a critical dimension of the vulnerabilities of developing countries. We commend the tremendous show of solidarity and generosity on the part of the international community which reinforces the importance of strengthening global partnerships between rich and poor countries to promote development.

Finally, Mr. Chairman,

A people-centered approach to development should form the axis of our deliberations. As the Secretary-General has noted, this approach has not lost its relevance and appeal, but has been neglected in many quarters and has been threatened by recent developments on the international scene. Social and economic development cannot truly be accomplished if those to whom they should cater are ignored in the process. The strengthening of national and international mechanisms towards the full implementation of the Copenhagen Programme needs greater efforts of both national governments and the international community working together. To achieve this, the G-77 and China pledges and calls for support and strengthening of the Commission for Social Development as the primary institution for the follow-up and review of the Summit and for the promotion of implementation.

The Declaration to be adopted at the 43 rd Session of this Commission should reaffirm the political will of our governments to implement policies and programmes to achieve the goals of Copenhagen and make a valuable contribution to the strengthening of multilateral cooperation at the 60 th Session of the General Assembly.

Thank you.

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