



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR. VUSI MADONSELA, DIRECTOR GENERAL DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA, AT THE 44TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (New York, 09 February 2006)

Mr. Chairman,
Under-Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs,
Distinguished delegates,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China (G77 and China). Allow me first to express my sincere congratulations to you and the Bureau on your election to the 44th Session of the Commission for Social Development. The G77 and China wish to assure you of their support and cooperation during this important session, which follows the Tenth Year review of the Copenhagen Summit, which was held during February 2005.

During that session, the G77 and China highlighted the synergies that exist between the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the outcome of the Copenhagen Summit, regarding the targets to be achieved by 2015 in relation to poverty, hunger, literacy, health, infant mortality and gender. We consistently highlight challenges in the attainment of these targets as well as seek ways and means to overcome them in a manner that is comprehensive and practical.

Mr Chairman,

A critical aspect of the MDGs is the recognition that governments and the international development organizations take collective responsibility for the realization of these goals. Development cooperation across the wide range of priority areas addressed by the MDGs and their various targets requires an integrated, coordinated, comprehensive and balanced approach in a spirit of partnership for development.

As the G77 and China, we are indebted to the Secretary-General for his informative report, E/CN.5/2006/3 on the priority theme, entitled "Review of the First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006)". We noted the obstacles and challenges highlighted in the report, which affect developing countries in the main. Among the most prominent challenges are the adverse effects of natural disasters; the spread of infectious diseases including HIV and Aids, Malaria and other infectious diseases; increased security concerns including armed conflict, occupation, terrorism, unilateral coercive measures; the unequal opportunities created by globalization and continuing inequities in the global economic system.

We further noted with regret that the issue of strengthening the social capital that exists in poor communities has not been adequately captured. Social capital means the existence of formal and informal networks as well as the coping strategies upon which the poor base their livelihoods. These include the indigenous knowledge and practices that most communities have used as survival strategies. In this regard, consideration of more inclusive and participatory social research methods should guide assumptions made about the conclusions we draw on issues of poverty eradication.

For many developing countries, agriculture is a source of livelihood. The lack of access to markets and capacity to participate in the total value-adding chain is a major obstacle. Varying policy approaches need to be made with respect to different types of agriculture. Amongst these types of

agriculture farmers are the survivalist, subsistence and commercial that require different policy interventions. The opportunities of mentoring are lacking between the small and commercial farmers, largely due to sentiments driven by profits in the markets. As the G77 and China, we believe that these interventions should exclude subsidies due to the distortions that they bring to market prices, to the detriment of farmers. The discussion at the World Trade Organization (WTO) cannot be entirely delinked from poverty eradication. We also believe that the survivalist and subsistence farmers can, with better skills and access to appropriate technology, can contribute to economic growth.

Mr. Chairman,

Indigenous knowledge in farming also contributes towards food security as well as biodiversity management and sustainable livelihoods. There is a need to harness the strengths of this knowledge as well as ensure the proper follow-up to the outcomes and commitments from relevant major conferences and summits. The fundamental issue is the importance of international cooperation to assist developing countries to overcome the legacies of past injustices.

Social development commitments 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 honored their obligations and others that have set time-tables towards reaching the target by 2015. International cooperation is critical for the achievement of poverty eradication and therefore we expect all our developed partners to be faithful to these internationally agreed commitments. It will be important to review after this decade the activities that require follow-up, given the obstacles and challenges. The obstacles to achieving the Copenhagen goals are rooted in the lack of an enabling environment for social development.

The G77 and China believe that the Commission for Social Development and its annual sessions constitute the framework for the effective implementation of the outcomes of the Copenhagen Summit and the 24th Special Session of the UN General Assembly. It is incumbent upon us as member states to ensure that the Commission is focused on the follow-up to these outcomes. It is in this reason that we, as the G77 and China seek to ensure that the Methods of Work reflect one of the three important pillars of the Copenhagen Summit, which are full employment, social integration and poverty eradication. The G77 and China support the Commission's decision that future sessions of the Commissions should have alternating review and policy cycles. This ensures that appropriate attention is provided to the work of the Commission and its substantive follow-up. We believe that the future themes of the Commission and the Methods of Work are interlinked and should be addressed as a package.

We welcome the continued focus on the various social groups. i.e. family, youth, ageing, persons with disabilities. We hope that in the Methods of Work, social groups should not only continue to be part of the annual agenda but that the focus should be on time-bound Programmes of Action that promote social integration and cohesion. The traditional approach of families towards social integration also needs to be strengthened. We also welcome the recently-concluded negotiations of the Ad Hoc Convention on Disability and the progress made on some of the articles, especially on international cooperation. We further note the annual report of the Special Rapporteur on Disability, which focuses on the global survey on Government actions for the implementation of the Standards Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities. On both fronts, the issue of disability should be provided equal attention in order to address the challenges faced by persons with disabilities. The issue of social protection of these groups must be prioritized in the Work Programme for 2007-2008 to ensure their full integration into society.

The major challenge for the next decade for the Africa is to achieve the objectives of various policies and strategies aimed at eradicating poverty, which, amongst others include NEPAD. Critical towards the achievement of these objectives is the acceleration of human and financial capacity, particularly with regard to the “social dimensions of NEPAD” which is reflected in the annual resolution of the G77 and China.

We hope that during this session, ways and means to move forward the work of the Commission on the Copenhagen Commitments will be found. The Group of 77 and China (G77) will play their part in ensuring that we take meaningful decisions to make such progress.

I thank you.