



STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. MOHAMED BENNOUNA, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO TO THE UNITED NATIONS, CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77, IN THE THIRD COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON AGENDA ITEM 105: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OUTCOME OF THE WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, AND AGENDA ITEM 107: FOLLOW-UP TO THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF OLDER PERSONS: SECOND WORLD ASSEMBLY ON AGEING (NEW YORK, 6 OCTOBER 2003)

Mr. Chairman,

Please allow me, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, to warmly congratulate you on your election as Chairman of the Third Committee.

We are confident that your personal and professional qualities guarantee the success of our work.

I would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau for their election.

Let me assure you, Mr. Chairman that you can count on the full support and cooperation of the Group of 77 and China towards the smooth proceedings and the success of the work of the 58th session.

The Group of 77 and China will strive continuously, in accordance with what you said, Mr. Chairman, in your statement at the meeting on the organization of work, to contribute to our Committee's unity and to work with our partners to that end.

I thank the members of the Secretariat for their comprehensive presentations of the Secretary General reports.

Mr. Chairman,

The international community may legitimately wonder, several years after the Copenhagen World Summit on Social Development and the 24th special session of the General Assembly, if the commitments that were made, and which had given hope to millions of people, have been fulfilled or not.

It must be recognized that, although some progress has been made throughout the world in some areas of social development, a considerable amount of the world's population still lives in difficult conditions characterized by increasing poverty, unemployment, unsanitary housing, the spread of pandemics such as AIDS, etc.

In fact, even though most of the major United Nations Conferences and Summits in the economic and social spheres have endorsed the recommendations and commitments made in Copenhagen and Geneva, the mandated objectives and commitments are far from having been achieved.

Mr. Chairman,

The Secretary General's informative and insightful report presents us with a detailed picture of the recommendations included in the agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission for Social Development at its 41st session regarding its priority theme entitled "National and international

cooperation for social development". In this regard, it must be recalled that, for the first time, the Commission's agreed conclusions were approved by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) at its substantive session.

Policy coordination to promote social development is one of the important themes that have been considered by the Commission for Social Development.

In this regard, the Group of 77 and China wish to reiterate that, although ensuring the development of their people is primarily the responsibility of governments, developing countries imperatively need international assistance and solidarity to be able to meet the challenges of poverty, marginalization and under-development and thus ensure their social development.

Furthermore, we believe that creating a global environment conducive to overall development requires, inter alia, the mobilization of stable and adequate financial resources, facilitating developing countries' access to developed countries' markets, technology transfers, national and international good governance, respect for human rights, gender equality and the participation of developing countries in international economic decision-making.

Therefore, economic and social policies should be consistent in order to leverage the necessary means for growth and economic progress while focusing development on the well-being of the population and its social needs such as health, education and poverty eradication.

In this regard, as suggested by the Secretary General, we should encourage the Economic and Social Council, the Commission for Social Development and the various entities of the United Nations system to assess the manner in which economic and social policies are integrated.

Mr. Chairman,

In an increasingly globalized world, it is essential to enhance international cooperation and assistance in favor of developing countries so that they are able to face the negative effects of globalization.

It is true that globalization offers several economic, trade and financial opportunities; however, it also continues to raise obstacles that are hard to overcome for developing countries. In order for developing countries to also take advantage of globalization's economic and social benefits, a more consistent effort of international solidarity is indispensable to ensure their integration and full participation in the world's economy.

In this context, I wish to reiterate the Commission for Social Development's call to pay particular attention to the social impact of globalization. Such attention should result in a more in-depth consideration because globalization could lead to the marginalization of entire populations from productive sectors.

Mr. Chairman,

With respect to employment, it will be recalled that in Copenhagen, our Heads of State and Government declared their willingness to "place the expansion of productive employment at the center of sustainable development strategies and economic and social policies, which requires:

a. Promoting and pursuing active policies for full, productive, appropriately remunerated and freely chosen employment;

b. Giving priority at the national and international levels to the policies that can address the problems of unemployment and under-employment."

The Group of 77 and China believe that employment strategies should be designed to achieve social and economic objectives such as the eradication of poverty, social integration, the development of economic networks, the promotion of gender equality, the promotion and respect of workers' rights, and the increase of productivity in urban and rural areas. Obviously, cooperation and partnership with various civil society and private sector partners are necessary in this field. In addition, a more substantial international cooperation, the enhancement of technical assistance and an increase in technology transfers are factors that should enable developing countries to integrate employment policies into their economic and social goals and acquire a human potential whose qualifications enable it to contribute to sustainable development.

Mr. Chairman,

Undoubtedly, putting in place creative partnerships at the national and international levels contributes positively to achieving social development objectives. In this context, civil society and the private sector have an essential role to play alongside governments.

At the international level, in order to attain social development goals, setting up partnerships between developed countries and developing countries should result, inter alia, in a substantial increase of official development assistance, in order to fulfill the commitment of 0.7% of gross national product of developed countries. Such partnerships also require the enhanced participation of developing countries in international economic decision-making processes to increase transparency within international financial institutions.

In this regard, we fully endorse the recommendation of the Secretary General, who emphasized that developing countries' social development and their capacity to implement integrated socioeconomic policies require their effective participation in decision-making and standard-setting at the international level, including international financial institutions, and that those institutions must be called upon to take specific measures to this end.

Similarly, the Group of 77 and China welcome ECOSOC's adoption of a resolution on the realization of the social objectives of NEPAD and they hope that the General Assembly will follow suit, taking into account the importance of this new partnership for African countries and for the international community as a whole.

M. Chairman,

Two years ago, the international Community reaffirmed its commitments during the Second World Assembly on ageing held in Madrid, to work towards the establishment of a society for all ages and to take duly into account, in the development policies at the national and international levels, the needs and challenges facing older people.

Furthermore, many Commitments were taken in the Madrid plan of action which will reinforce the role of older persons in the society such as their full participation in development efforts, eradication of poverty in old age, empowerment of older persons, ensuring gender equality among older persons, full enjoyment of human rights of older persons, provision of health care and social protection.

For developing countries, population ageing will pose serious challenges which cannot be

overcome without a substantial support from developed countries in order to implement the Madrid plan of action.

Our Group is examining the modalities for the establishment of a follow up mechanism to the Second World Assembly on ageing and will present during this session its contribution in this regard.