

**Economic and Social Council**

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High-level segment

Provisional summary record of the 10th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 3 July 2002, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Šimonović (Croatia)
later: Mr. Rosenthal (Vice-President) (Guatemala)
later: Mr. Buallay (Vice-President) (Bahrain)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

The contribution of human resources development, including in the areas of health and education, to the process of development (*continued*) (E/2002/13, 46, 50 (chap. I), and 73; E/2002/L.9; E/2002/CRP.2)

1. **Mr. Malitikov** (Chairman, Inter-State Committee, Commonwealth of Independent States) said that many international declarations adopted by high-level forums, summit meetings or conferences had been ineffective or had remained on paper, because of lack of communication after such events and the pressure of domestic problems. The international community was not making use of modern means for implementing decisions and synchronizing the results, even though both technology and technological resources were already at its disposal, in particular, satellite communications. The problem lay in the mental inertia and conservatism of managers. Global problems were constantly evolving, while knowledge was being disseminated far too slowly and its utilization was constantly lagging. That lag was very costly.

2. The role of education in sustainable development could not be limited to higher education. However, constitutions, laws and budgets were not capable of creating the conditions for the necessary changes in education and information. What was needed was not "education for life" but "education throughout life", which must be a priority of State policy and a component of laws and constitutions. Traditional education had left 880 million people completely illiterate, and there was a deficit of 15 million teachers. Progressive science and practice already had the means to help mankind deal with the deficit in education, in a much less costly and much faster manner. So far, distance technology in education, in particular satellite technology, had not been a priority for Governments, but had been promoted by the private sector and non-governmental organizations. Cooperation between non-governmental organizations and Governments was the key to the future.

3. Since 1997, non-governmental organizations and Governments had been working in the Inter-State Committee on the Dissemination of Knowledge and Adult Education in the Commonwealth of Independent States. The Modern University for the Humanities, the fifth largest university in the world, had been founded through joint efforts and now had 372 branches in 328

cities in different countries and its own satellite teleport; over 2,000 governmental and non-governmental bodies were using the teleport, which was also available in conflict areas and in post-conflict areas like Chechnya, and would soon be available in Afghanistan.

4. **Ms. Cromer** (Soroptimist International) said that Soroptimist International was a worldwide organization for women in management and the professions with members in 123 countries working through service projects to promote human rights and the advancement of the status of women. Soroptimist International recognized that it was only through the development of human resources that it would be possible to ensure equality, development and peace among and within nations, and believed that it was essential for human beings to have access to quality health care and education if they were to achieve their full potential and be able to participate in decision-making and development.

5. Soroptimist International was particularly concerned about the persistence of various forms of slavery all over the world, especially traffic in persons, sale of children, child prostitution and exploitation. Such practices were a stark barrier to economic growth and development. Trafficking in women and children, made easier by globalization, was the fastest-growing and third largest source of profit for organized crime. The commercial sex industry was a major contributor to the spread of HIV; many young women, forced or coerced into prostitution, became infected and then passed on the HIV virus to clients and their future husbands and children.

6. The way to combat that downward spiral was to provide education, human resource development and job creation. In 1999, Soroptimist International members had donated over US\$ 300,000 to fund partnerships with the MiraMed Institute, to help victims of trafficking in countries of the former Soviet Union, and the United Nations Development Fund for Women, to establish an anti-trafficking centre in the heart of the red light district in Mumbai, India. Soroptimist members had endorsed a Soroptimist International AIDS Mediation project for 1995-1999 to help young women in the northern part of Thailand and curb the HIV/AIDS pandemic, providing alternatives to the commercial sex industry through occupational training and income-generating activities. The success of those projects demonstrated the importance of the

development of human resources, including health and education, to the process of social and economic development.

7. Soroptimist International urged Governments to fulfil their commitments under the Beijing Platform for Action and to implement legislation to halt and prevent all forms of violence against women and girls. It called upon government departments and law enforcement agencies to monitor closely the falsification of passports, visas and educational visas. It encouraged United Nations agencies, Governments and the corporate sector to work with non-governmental organizations to combat those issues which thwarted the development of human resources, particularly women and girls.

8. **Mr. Hirono** (Chairman, Committee for Development Policy) said that in response to the Council's request in resolution 2001/43, the Committee for Development Policy had analysed the theme under consideration and taken it up in plenary session in April 2002. An extract from its report was available in document E/2002/L.9.

9. Summarizing the Committee's findings, he said that the enhancement of human and social capabilities was essential to the development process. Two pivotal areas were health and education. Although general progress had been made, sub-Saharan Africa and South Asian countries were lagging behind in both areas, and in recent years Central Asian countries had experienced varying degrees of deterioration. If that situation persisted, those countries would miss out on the opportunities offered by globalization and fall behind in their development efforts. A redefinition of policy goals in education and health was required. Educational systems had changed their focus from the passive acquisition of skills and knowledge to active enhancement of the ability to analyse and synthesize information and adapt to rapid changes in society, while learning to live together in harmony, with respect for diversity. Education was no longer a monopoly of schools, but was part of life-long capacity-building efforts. In the health area, there was a shift from curative to preventive approaches through the development of individual and collective capacities. Health education was becoming an important part of education. New global environmental and health risks required a revision of the concept of human resources development; traditional educational and health

services were becoming inadequate to fulfil current and future development goals.

10. The Committee recommended that Governments, in cooperation with international organizations and civil society organizations, should revamp and improve educational and health systems by developing synergies between education and health, providing universal access through increased community-based schools and health services, ensuring high quality and flexibility and reinforcing social capabilities to enhance societal capacity to achieve development at all levels, particularly at the community level; draw on the structural support of innovative institutional frameworks with the participation of all stakeholders, private sector participation and a strengthening of the regulatory and coordinating role of Government, and on opportunities offered by new tools, such as information and communication technologies, to expand coverage, improve quality and reduce costs; and seek financing through innovative financing schemes and local, regional and global partnerships in order to take advantage of economies of scale.

11. **Ms. Brizuela de Avila** (El Salvador) said that her Government fully agreed that development and poverty eradication were the major ethical and human imperatives of the era, and that there was therefore an urgent need to work together to ensure the right of all persons to education and the highest levels of physical and mental health. In order to promote an integrated development policy, including poverty eradication, increasingly skilled human resources were needed, with an awareness of their important contribution to the development process. El Salvador had therefore initiated a broad process of institutional and educational reforms with a view to training human resources by expanding basic education, ensuring quality and sustainability, establishing partnerships with various public and private sectors, and increasing the share of expenditure on education. It was aware of the need to reduce inequalities between regions and socio-economic groups, which required new initiatives in infrastructure, health and education, and information and communications. El Salvador was also promoting broad reforms in the health sector, focusing on training and the incorporation of a gender perspective in all plans and programmes in the areas of education and health. The Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance was implementing a strategy of integrated health care, which accorded priority to women and

children and provided for free primary health-care services.

12. Her Government recognized the importance of including health and educational policies in poverty eradication strategies in order to achieve the goals of the Millennium Summit. In that respect, the Council should have increased powers to ensure effective coordination and coherence in the activities carried out by the United Nations system, and the international financial institutions. At the same time, true international trade liberalization was the best framework for sustainable human development, and growing cooperation between the public and private sectors and greater participation of civil society in the development process were called for.

13. Her Government reiterated its commitment and political will to continue its efforts to strengthen strategies and programmes for the training of human resources to contribute to the development process. El Salvador had overcome the devastating effects of more than a decade of conflict and various natural disasters and had achieved a relatively high level of economic development; it continued to need international support as a complement to national efforts to reach the internationally agreed development goals, including those of the Millennium Declaration.

14. **Mr. Dompok** (Observer for Malaysia) said that his Government believed that growth was not an end in itself but must be accompanied by equitable distribution so that all segments of society benefited from the development process. Economic and social initiatives must be coordinated. Malaysia had experienced rapid economic growth over the past four decades. Human resources development had been recognized as a critical input in the economic and social development of the country and for the development of the health and education sectors.

15. His Government agreed that the Council had a pivotal role to play in maintaining the focus on financing for human resources development as part of its role in the follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development, and also that new mechanisms for transferring resources from developed to developing countries should be explored. It was essential that the Council should consider the proposal to establish a dedicated pool of international financing for the development of infrastructure in developing countries, as a prerequisite to sustained economic

development, poverty eradication and improvement of the quality of life. There was a need for greater cooperation and collaboration in addressing the problem of resources for the purpose of development in a more comprehensive and efficient manner.

16. Malaysia firmly believed that knowledge was the domain of all citizens of the world, in both developed and developing countries, and played a key role in all strata of economic activity. It had therefore embarked on an agenda for the intensification of knowledge in all sectors of the economy, new and traditional. The speed of developments in information and communication technologies would result in an ever-increasing gap between the developed and developing countries. Concerted efforts needed to be undertaken to ensure that developing countries had affordable access to those technologies and the opportunity to participate actively in the knowledge-based economy. The development of communications infrastructure to increase connectivity and the continuous upgrading of human resources through new approaches, such as open universities, were of crucial importance. Concerted and complementary efforts should be undertaken at national, regional and internal levels, and the Council must continue to address the issue of the digital divide with the utmost urgency.

17. **Mr. Butime** (Uganda) said that his Government welcomed the inclusion of HIV/AIDS in the world political agenda and the decision of the Security Council to classify it as a threat to international peace and security. In Uganda, awareness of the disease was almost universal, and 78 per cent of the population had some knowledge of preventive methods. The prevalence rate had declined, reflecting a positive change in behaviour: abstinence was the key element, which had also greatly contributed to reducing the number of pregnancies among unmarried adolescent girls. There had been a great improvement in the management of sexually transmitted diseases, and blood safety was almost completely assured through careful screening of blood for transfusion. Prevention of mother-to-child transmission through the use of anti-retroviral drugs had been introduced in five major hospitals.

18. The major barrier to prevention was ignorance: there was a high relationship between lack of education and poor knowledge of methods of prevention of HIV/AIDS. Effective prevention programmes depended on sustained political will and commitment at the

highest level to mobilize the population against the epidemic. At the same time, poor health services had greatly affected the delivery of education services.

19. His Government accorded the highest priority to education. In the immediate post-conflict period, the education sector had been in a dire situation. Ugandans had reached consensus that comprehensive and systematic reform was necessary, particularly in primary education, with the objective of increasing access and achieving education for all, improving quality and promoting equity and the relevance of education. Since 1992, his Government had progressively introduced policies which had resulted in a dramatic increase in primary school enrolment. Girls were being encouraged to enrol in schools through incentive schemes. Pupil/teacher and pupil/classroom ratios had improved, and an education standards agency had been established to oversee the overall quality of primary and post-primary education. Uganda's development partners had expressed considerable satisfaction with the progress made.

20. Government resources alone were not adequate to provide education for all. It was therefore important to strengthen partnerships with stakeholders, the donor community and non-governmental organizations. Since education for all continued to face many challenges, Uganda continued to use sector-wide approaches, which had led to improved donor coordination and an increased flow of resources to the various sectors that were integrated with an education component.

21. Many African countries, including Uganda, had made tremendous efforts to promote sustainable development through the implementation of economic and political reforms over the past two decades. However, all their achievements would be eroded if critical issues of health and education and, above all, poverty eradication, were not effectively and urgently addressed.

22. **Mr. Raby** (Australia) welcomed the focus of the Council's high-level segment, a challenge which required a coordinated partnership between national and international communities, based on sound economic management, open markets, free trade and good governance. He said that he would limit his remarks to the key issues of HIV/AIDS, the digital divide, financing for development and the development needs of the Asia-Pacific region, although the full text

of his speech also covered health-care reform, gender issues and the link between poverty and conflict.

23. Improved health and education were not just important in their own right. They were interrelated and essential to economic growth, poverty alleviation and sustainable development. The HIV/AIDS epidemic had threatened to reverse hard-won development gains in recent years, and was an illustration of the link between health and economic growth. As one of the few donors in the Asia-Pacific region, Australia directed much of its HIV/AIDS assistance to that region. It had strongly advocated political commitment to taking action and had itself allocated A\$ 200 million over six years to an HIV/AIDS initiative, convened the Asia-Pacific ministerial meeting on HIV/AIDS and development in October 2001 and suggested to the United Nations that regional envoys on HIV/AIDS should be appointed to encourage Governments to take effective action against the epidemic. It welcomed the appointment of Dr. Sadik as the United Nations Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Asia.

24. Information and communication technologies held enormous development potential, but risked passing the developing countries by altogether unless they were harnessed to serve those countries' needs. In 2001, the Australian Government and the World Bank had together launched a major new policy initiative, known as the Virtual Colombo Plan, to use those technologies and Australian expertise to improve education and access to knowledge in developing countries through distance education and support for policy development. One example was the funding of an African Virtual University project with up to 100 virtual business-studies courses and 66 virtual scholarships for courses relevant to Africa's development needs.

25. Although the report of the Secretary-General in document E/2002/46 called for large increases in official development assistance (ODA), Australia emphasized that aid was only one of the resources available for development. The Monterrey Consensus had listed the other possible resources: trade liberalization, foreign direct investment and good governance. Governments had a responsibility for development, setting priorities, sound economic policy, strong institutions and good governance. Donors could assist with transfers of resources, but Governments retained responsibility for national development policy, universal basic education and primary health care. It

was welcome news that most countries were allocating more resources to education and health.

26. If international goals were to be met, continued attention needed to be paid to the development needs of the Asia-Pacific region, which was home to some 800 million of the world's poor. Although the needs of Africa and Afghanistan were pressing, it needed to be remembered that the Asia-Pacific region had to cope with serious poverty and faced risks of political and economic instability.

27. **Mr. Muñoz** (Chile) said that improved access to, and provision of, medical services was essential to achieving the common aim of more equitable and sustainable development. Chile had embarked on comprehensive reform of its health care, focusing on greater fairness and solidarity in funding, setting long-term objectives, guaranteeing financial protection and quality of treatment in public and private systems alike and promoting efficient use of national resources by emphasizing results. In The World Health Report 2000, Chile had received praise for the impact of its health services but had been criticized for lack of fairness in the financing of health care. Although Chile's expenditure on health care was similar to that of other Latin American countries with comparable income levels, its private care system covered only 25 per cent of the population, yet accounted for the bulk of expenditure.

28. The World Health Organization had recognized that spending on health care was essential to sustainable development. Similarly, sustainable development was impossible without investing in human resources. Such investment had to be fair, as sustainability depended on care reaching the poor, the most seriously ill and those most at risk.

29. Health care was, however, only one of the means to cope with the major ills of modern life. Chronic and emerging diseases required changes in lifestyle, and sound education, housing, transport and employment policies. They also required improvements in the structure, financing and delivery of health-care services. That explained why the health-care objectives that Chile had set were achievable only in the longer term. The Government was in the process of establishing a system of universal and fair access, which involved increasing the public-health budget, stepping up regulation of public and private health insurance and raising the level of autonomy at public

hospitals. Because human resources were at the centre of all health-care systems, the radical changes being planned had to be agreed with the health workers.

30. **Mr. Fust** (Observer for Switzerland) said that sustainable development in general, and the development of health and education in particular, required domestic security, the absence of violence and properly functioning government. Those requirements were lacking in an increasing number of countries, and a sustained, multidimensional and coordinated effort would be needed to improve the situation. Education for peace was vital, not just in post-conflict societies but in all countries in which violence in schools, families and groups threatened social cohesion. He could only speculate with some sadness what the situation of many African countries would have been if half the money they had spent on arms had instead been invested in improving health and education services.

31. The various parts of the United Nations system would need to work together much more closely, for example by adopting the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). That would also place the United Nations in a better position to play a role in broader cooperation arrangements, such as poverty-reduction strategy papers and sector-wide approaches. However, it was clear that more resources would have to be allocated to the United Nations system if it was to help to achieve the Millennium development goals. Over the last decade, United Nations funds and programmes had regularly been entrusted with new tasks and roles without receiving more resources, and additional contributions had been strictly voluntary. That was a contrast to the International Development Association (IDA), among other financial institutions, which had regularly been given additional resources and which received negotiated multi-year commitments.

32. Switzerland wished to maintain a distinction between the development banks, which were financing institutions, and United Nations funds and programmes, which provided technical cooperation, and it was thus against converting IDA loans into grants. While it was not opposed to IDA receiving increased resources, it thought that the core resources of United Nations funds and programmes should at least keep pace with such increases. The United Nations should focus on policy development, capacity- and institution-building, and leave the international

financial institutions to finance major investment programmes involving large-scale infrastructure and equipment.

33. As no other multilateral forum regularly reviewed development aid coming from all sources — bilateral, multilateral, public and private — he suggested that the Council should be asked to make a periodic analysis of developments and trends in aid, including humanitarian aid. The Council should consider such issues in an open, participatory and proactive manner, without waiting for a small group of influential countries to set the agenda.

34. **Mr. Pigot** (Suriname) welcomed the current focus on human resources development, in the light of his belief that development was for men and women and for young and old alike. The full participation of international organizations and multilateral institutions was important in that regard. He hoped that they would transfer the experience of the new emphasis on improving such resources to the developing countries' central banks, ministries of finance and other entities, and that that practice would lead to a more balanced method of performance assessment.

35. To Suriname, sustainable development meant poverty reduction, and an equitable distribution of income within a democratic environment. Performance assessment parameters needed to be broader in that context. He hoped that the Council would be able to play a central role in bridging the gap that frequently opened up between developing countries and the international financial institutions when determining those parameters. Although there was a welcome trend towards more direct budgetary support, Suriname knew from experience that developing countries often had to make considerable efforts to satisfy donors that their macroeconomic position was good enough to attract such aid, even if their standards of governance and the rule of law were acknowledged to be sound. Direct funding had already been provided to cope with emergencies such as the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and Suriname hoped that more funds would be made available.

36. Benchmarks reflecting the new, comprehensive approach needed to be developed. In line with the Monterrey Consensus, donors needed to emphasize outcomes rather than processes. The experience of such agencies as UNESCO, WHO and UNICEF in designing and implementing target-oriented programmes could be

valuable, and such programmes could be better integrated into financial and economic development programmes.

37. Developing countries faced a challenge when it came to public-sector reform. His Government saw that less as a burden than as an opportunity and was seeking to improve performance using a sound and equitable human resources framework, modern technology and financing and vocational training arrangements.

38. *Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

39. **Mr. Kuchinsky** (Ukraine) welcomed the report in document E/2002/46, believing that it provided a clear picture of the importance of human resources development and the role which the Council should play in helping countries to achieve their development goals and cope with globalization.

40. At the 6th meeting, the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe had drawn attention to the significant development potential of countries with economies in transition. Ukraine was one of the leaders, with a growth rate in 2001 of 9.1 per cent. The President of Ukraine had described the Government's long-term strategy as being to build a democratic State based on the rule of law, with a highly developed economy and the ultimate geopolitical goal of joining the European Union.

41. In that connection, Ukraine fully recognized the essential role of expenditure on human resources development, particularly health and education. Education was the key to social and economic development, peace and stability and democracy. Higher education in particular was acquiring growing importance at a time when the development of human resources had to keep pace with the dictates of globalization. Ukraine was conscious of that fact and of the role of education in promoting democratization.

42. Public health issues were of major concern in Ukraine. A comprehensive programme was aimed at improving the health of the population, particularly children and those suffering the long-term effects of the 1986 Chernobyl disaster. Despite those efforts, the country's health-care system remained underfunded. HIV/AIDS had not spared the country, and scarce resources were being focused on combating it. The year 2002 had been declared the year of fighting AIDS, with efforts concentrated on prevention, "vaccination

by education” and treatment for those infected with HIV.

43. One of the main goals of the Government was to make economic growth sustainable for the benefit of the entire population. It hoped to do so by using the catalyst of outside investment and by gaining access to European and world markets. A non-discriminatory international trade system would considerably expedite the processes of economic and human development. Ukraine believed that its accession to the World Trade Organization would give added impetus to the development of health and education services.

44. Partnership and coordination within the world community were vital if a climate favourable to developing human resources was to be created. The role of the United Nations was important because of the need for a multisectoral approach. The current session of the Council could promote accelerated progress towards achieving the Millennium development goals, as well as encouraging national and international efforts to improve health and education.

45. **Mr. Fonseca** (Brazil) said that the struggle against poverty required a comprehensive approach combining economic and social policies and giving high priority to education and health. In Brazil, poverty eradication strategies were based on the principles of partnership, solidarity and decentralization. Special attention was given to reducing child mortality, improving nutrition in public schools and among low-income families, promoting family agriculture and the settlement of rural workers, improving access to basic education, providing adequate sanitation and improving training. His Government was committed to overcoming the historical legacy of social inequalities.

46. Significant progress had been achieved in education, with 97 per cent of children aged 7 to 14 attending school. In 1992, 3 million children in that age group had been unable to attend school, but in 2001 that number had been reduced to 800,000. An initiative whereby mothers were paid a monthly stipend to encourage them to keep their children in school was a good example of how a project aimed at improving school attendance could have positive impacts in other areas. The programme involved resources of over US\$ 700 million per year. Since its launching in February 2001, 9 million children had been helped and it was hoped to reach another 3 million in the near future. The programme was empowering women by

giving them direct access to family income and encouraging them to become involved in their children’s education. It was also a means of taking children out of the streets, thereby contributing to the progressive elimination of child labour.

47. A draft resolution on the right to health submitted by his delegation during the recent session of the Commission on Human Rights had been adopted by consensus, and he hoped that the Council would ratify it during its current session.

48. Since 1981, Brazil had significantly changed its health strategy, undertaking large investments in primary health care through prevention-oriented initiatives. A reduction in the infant mortality rate had been achieved during the past decade, prenatal care coverage and the use of contraceptive methods had increased, and better access had been provided to affordable and effective treatment and medicines. In 1992, the World Bank had estimated that Brazil would have 1.2 million cases of AIDS by the year 2002. The current figure was actually 600,000, the stabilization of the epidemic being due to a programme combining prevention with treatment. The Government’s strategy against HIV/AIDS had been paying off, with steep falls in hospitalizations and the death rate from AIDS. The process of ensuring free and universal treatment encouraged the population to accept voluntary and confidential testing, improving notification of AIDS in earlier stages. Moreover, people living with HIV/AIDS were kept in close contact with the health system, having access to information, counselling and preventive supplies. Brazil produced eight generic versions of non-patented anti-retroviral drugs, the high quality of which was assured through the application of international standards. His Government was combating not only the stigma which unfortunately was still associated with HIV/AIDS but also other forms of discrimination that contributed to the spread of the epidemic. It was convinced that access to medication was fundamental for the full realization of the human right to enjoyment of the highest standard of physical and mental health. The role of education in the implementation of that approach could not be overemphasized.

49. Health and education programmes were having a real impact in terms of improving general well-being and providing solid ground for a more just and participatory society. A favourable international environment was essential in order to overcome the

remaining obstacles so that Brazil, as a developing country, could fully realize its potential. The international community, multinational institutions and all interested stakeholders must assist developing countries in building their human resources. The evidence showed that even with appropriate policies and efficient use of existing human and financial resources, many developing countries could not afford to provide to their population the basic health and education services necessary for their minimum needs. New partnerships needed to be developed and the role of the United Nations system must be strengthened.

50. **Mr. Nambiar** (India) said that the eradication of poverty was the foremost challenge facing developing countries individually and the international community as a whole. The achievement of that goal would require firm political commitment to socio-economic development of all sections of society through multidimensional action in the areas of health, nutrition, education, housing and sanitation, physical infrastructure and institutional and human capacity-building. Human resources development was the key to economic growth and the eradication of poverty.

51. Investment in health and education in India had accelerated economic growth. Steady progress had been made towards achieving a higher level of literacy, which currently stood at 65.3 per cent, and the gap between male and female literacy had been reduced. A constitutional amendment had been proposed by the Government enshrining free and compulsory education for all children from 6 to 14 years as a fundamental right. India also placed importance on investment in secondary and tertiary education as well as vocational and technical training. The availability of large numbers of highly trained technical professionals was contributing to the progress of the country, and vocational training centres were playing a pivotal role. The development of such skills and capabilities helped to attract investment, which, in turn, contributed to economic growth and poverty reduction. The growth of the information technology industry in India owed much to the availability of a large pool of skilled manpower. He called upon developed countries to make available new technologies on concessional terms that would help the developing countries to leapfrog stages of development.

52. His Government's new national health policy, announced recently, sought to increase public health expenditure, improve infrastructure, expand access to

care, enhance training and medical ethics, encourage private-sector participation and use the potential of telemedicine. His Government, was, however, aware that the health needs of the population were enormous and the available resources fell far short of requirements. It was a matter of great concern that less than 10 per cent of worldwide expenditure on medical research was directly relevant to curing the diseases that currently afflicted 90 per cent of the population living in developing countries. That imbalance must be corrected. There was also the global challenge of making essential medicines available at affordable prices.

53. His delegation strongly supported the recent recommendation by the Secretary-General that development assistance in the health and education sectors must be massively increased to provide adequate and sustained resources for effective programmes and strengthened delivery systems. If such issues were not dealt with urgently, it would take almost 90 years to achieve the internationally agreed health and education goals. The obligations and commitments recently undertaken must be fulfilled, otherwise future generations would face a world where poverty, hunger and disease would continue to plague them despite the existence of sufficient resources and know-how in the world to address those problems, and the international community would have little justification for its failure.

54. **Mr. Al-Nasser** (Qatar) said that the international community was fully aware of the importance of developing human resources, an essential factor in the development process in view of its contribution to the elimination of poverty and the achievement of long-term economic growth. However, AIDS, malaria and other deadly diseases were still on the rise and claiming the lives of millions of people, especially the poor. If those diseases continued to spread they would undo the gains achieved in recent years, reflected in the increase in life expectancy at birth, and have devastating effects on the future of sustainable development. It was also paradoxical that ignorance, illiteracy and underdevelopment still plagued a large segment of the population of the developing world at a time when mankind had begun to conquer space. Progress in health and education was still uneven and inadequate. Universal attainment by 2015 of the objectives agreed at the Millennium Summit would be

extremely difficult unless the international community made intensive and concerted efforts.

55. Before the discovery of oil, the people of Qatar had depended on fishing for pearls as its sole source of income and at that time education and health services had not been accessible to all and had been very primitive. Once resources had become available, the State of Qatar had striven to promote education among its people, using subsidies to encourage parents to enrol their children and conducting awareness campaigns. Subsequently, it had gone on to promote education among people of all ages, opening evening literacy schools in 1954 to offer education to the older generation. The literacy programme consisted of two stages, each lasting one school year. Education had later expanded to include all population groups, both sexes and all educational levels. Technical and vocational schools and a university comprising a number of faculties had been opened, and a significant role was being played by private education, including both Arab and foreign schools which maintained the highest educational standards. Numerous renowned foreign colleges and universities had also opened branches in Qatar.

56. Health care had also initially been primitive, with high levels of maternal and child mortality. Once the resources had become available, Qatar had sought to promote health care simultaneously with education, developing the two fields in parallel. Clearly, the availability of resources was a basic factor in the elimination of disease, illiteracy and poverty, the achievement of sustainable development and the promotion of cooperation with international organizations and relevant stakeholders including the private sector. He reaffirmed that the mobilization of financial resources and the enhancement of their effective utilization by upgrading the effectiveness of development assistance constituted the first major step towards guaranteed development for all.

57. **Mr. Bennouna** (Observer for Morocco) said that the strengthening of human resources was an essential aspect of the development process, contributing to the fight against poverty, the promotion of economic growth and improvements in health and education. The Millennium Declaration had set out clear and concrete goals in those two areas, the realization of which required a redeployment of efforts and a concentration of energy and resources.

58. It would be difficult to face the challenges of the twenty-first century with a population that was deprived of the most basic services and received only rudimentary health care. The situation of the countries concerned must be taken into consideration. There was a need for mobile health services which would bring care, including preventive care, to the people and provide families with the necessary basic services. Consequently, the involvement of the public sector and the State was indispensable, particularly in areas where the people could not afford to pay for health care.

59. Improvements in health and education were interdependent, and investment in those two sectors had an undeniable multiplier effect for human development and the fight against poverty. The realization of development goals required effective and adaptable educational systems, integrating girls and women, who continued to be the objects of exclusion and discrimination in many regions in the world and whose education was a socio-economic investment that the developing countries must undertake. In Africa, the education of girls and women was probably the best way of effectively combating epidemics such as HIV/AIDS and of improving women's participation in economic and social development. Priority must be given to the fight against illiteracy.

60. The pace of globalization required the establishment of modern educational and training systems responsive to the needs of society and the labour market. The extension of education in rural areas was also vital for the success of socio-economic development models, and massive use of information and communication technologies was needed in order to modernize education and training in the developing countries. Partnerships with the private sector and civil society organizations could contribute to the success of educational systems at all levels.

61. Morocco had undertaken a broad programme of educational reform. On 13 September 2000, his Government had proclaimed a national decade for education and training, covering all levels of education, and including the establishment of regional academies and a national centre for scientific research. His Government considered that education was fundamental for the reinforcement of social values and the best protection against extremism and fanaticism, and had decided to open the country's mosques for literacy programmes, the objective being to provide instruction to 600,000 people each year.

62. The five-year plan for economic and social development for 2000-2004 gave health a central place in the development process. The development of human resources and the adoption of complementary policies in the health and education sectors represented a major challenge. Involvement by the international community was very important to help the developing countries to fight poverty and realize the development goals agreed in the Millennium Declaration. He expressed support for the recommendations of the Secretary-General on the catalytic role of the Economic and Social Council, and called for the strengthening of the Council as coordinator of the efforts of the international community in the economic and social fields.

63. **Mr. Loizaga** (Observer for Paraguay) said that, in order to make progress across the board and strengthen their social, political and legal institutions the developing countries needed skilled human resources, which would enable them to achieve decent living conditions for their peoples and narrow the gap separating them from the industrialized countries. Such human resources could not be developed in the absence of the necessary economic resources. Governments must give priority to capacity-building and must devote the necessary funding to it. But, in addition, the developing countries needed a firm commitment from the industrialized nations and from international financial bodies to provide in a timely manner the necessary additional resources. The involvement of the private sector, non-governmental organizations and civil society was also called for.

64. Effective development of human resources would lead to significant improvements in production, which in turn would contribute to sustainable progress towards the eradication of poverty. To that end, the commitments contained in recent international declarations must be put into practice. Economic and social growth required the right combination of productive, administrative and human resources against a background of international participation and access to international markets. Human resource development would serve no purpose if unfair trade practices, including tariff barriers, agricultural subsidies and protectionist trade practices, continued to exclude the developing countries from the supposed benefits of free trade. Differing rates of economic and social progress, the debt problem, international financial crises and the technology gap were also obstacles to the integration of

the developing countries into the world economy. Those problems could be overcome only with help from the international community, pursuant to the goals contained in the Millennium Declaration, in order to enable the peoples of the developing world to attain a standard of living compatible with human dignity.

65. He hoped that at the end of its current session the Council would produce a document in which Member States would commit themselves politically to fulfilling their commitment to the developing and least developed countries.

66. *Mr. Buallay (Bahrain), Vice-President, took the Chair.*

67. **Mr. Ling** (Observer for Belarus) regarded the choice of subject matter for the high-level segment as evidence of the Council's coordinating role in helping to achieve the implementation of the Millennium development goals. He saw the Council's discussions in the context of the International Conference on Financing for Development, the General Assembly sessions on children and HIV/AIDS and the forthcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development. He expressed support for the call made in document E/2002/46 for a comprehensive examination of the issue of developing human resources, as part of the effort to achieve sustainable economic and social development. Belarus had long had a National Commission on Sustainable Development, in which the ministers for health and education were key players. The fact that Belarus had maintained its ranking in recent human development indexes was proof of the effectiveness of that approach.

68. In order to accelerate the development of human resources, many countries relied on support from the international community and above all from the United Nations system. Continued interaction between international organizations and national bodies was essential. He echoed the appeals from the representatives of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank for greater coordination of international aid, rejection of the "one-size-fits-all" approach and tailoring of aid for economic and social development to national priorities.

69. **Mr. Pradham** (Bhutan) said that the Millennium development goals were a summation of the international community's work during the final decades of the twentieth century. No country or region could remain isolated from problems such as the

deteriorating environment, HIV/AIDS and poverty in the developing world.

70. He urged donor countries and the private sector to make larger contributions to the Global Fund for HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Current ODA levels must be substantially increased and special measures must be taken by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization (WTO) in order to address the problems of the least developed countries, landlocked countries and island developing States. The Council should monitor the situation and cultivate an atmosphere that would promote the necessary political will on the part of developed countries.

71. With the help of its development partners, Bhutan was on its way to achieving the Millennium development goals. "Gross National Happiness", the compassionate, people-centred policy laid down by His Majesty the King of Bhutan, was designed to conserve the nation's rich flora and fauna as well as provide free health and education services. Over 85 per cent of the population had access to primary education, nearly half of all schoolchildren were girls, primary health coverage stood at 90 per cent and 78 per cent of rural dwellers had access to safe drinking water.

72. Bhutan was a landlocked, least developed country. While its mountainous terrain offered breathtaking vistas, it also made the construction and maintenance of communications infrastructure and, in particular, roads, expensive and difficult. That situation, in turn, made it difficult for health, education and other development programmes to reach all segments of the population. His Government appreciated the contributions made by its development partners, including the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Capital Development Fund and the United Nations Population Fund. However, it was alarmed at recent cuts in the assistance programmes and hoped that they were merely a short-term measure and that the decline in ODA would be reversed. The Council's responsibilities under the Charter must not be further undermined.

73. **Mr. Laurin** (Observer for Canada) said that the Council's role under the Charter was to coordinate and make recommendations, rather than undertake

programmes in its own name. It would do its best work in cooperation with other United Nations institutions.

74. He welcomed the Secretary-General's recognition that health, education and human resources development were mutually reinforcing and that integrated strategies were called for if progress was to be achieved; for example, a child who was not hungry was better able to learn. Reduction of the burden of illness and death in developing countries, control of communicable diseases and improved maternal and child health, including in the areas of sexuality and reproduction, must remain key public health priorities. He commended the World Health Organization and the Commission on Macroeconomics and Health for their work in those areas.

75. However, such goals could not be achieved without human, technical and institutional capacity-building. Integrated health systems must be developed by mobilizing domestic resources, removing non-financial constraints, strengthening regulatory capacities, ensuring access to services and medications regardless of the recipient's ability to pay and narrowing the global health research gap where 90 per cent of diseases received 10 per cent of funding. Real change required a genuine commitment to strategies that addressed broader social and economic factors such as employment, gender, culture and the social and physical environment. Women and men, girls and boys must participate in the decision-making process in order to ensure that solutions reflected the diversity of the community's needs.

76. At the recent meeting of the Group of Eight in Alberta, Canada had submitted an Africa Action Plan that would reinforce the New Partnership for Africa's Development. It had also announced a commitment of Can\$ 6 billion in new and existing resources over a five-year period for implementation of the Plan. The importance of development assistance was universally recognized, but assistance alone could not create the kind of growth that led to meaningful development. Developing countries must create a facilitating framework for sustainable economic growth and encourage private sector investment. He therefore welcomed the commitment to good governance, the rule of law, sound fiscal and monetary policies and improved transparency that the leaders of developing countries had made at the International Conference on Financing for Development and elsewhere.

77. The Monterrey Consensus stressed the need to improve coherence in the development work of the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions and WTO and proposed a significant role for the Council in that regard. Member States could promote such cooperation through coordinated treatment of relevant issues in the Council and other bodies. The Council should ensure that health, education and human resource development perspectives were incorporated into the Organization's policies and programmes, that its work supported country-led processes and that new initiatives built upon existing structures and processes.

78. **Mr. Mmualefe** (Observer for Botswana) said that, in view of the Council's broad agenda and the many challenging issues of a globalizing world, it was appropriate to pause and reflect on issues such as health and education, which were the foundation of human development. The importance of human resources as a component of development was a well-established fact. It was the Council's current task to consider how the United Nations system and the international community could best assist developing countries' efforts to meet their basic health and education needs.

79. Since gaining independence, Botswana had reached middle-income status through prudent resource management and commitment to democracy and good governance. The Government's strategy was to ensure universal access to essential health care services, and by the 1980s the State had surpassed several of the agreed global targets. However, significant resources had been diverted to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Multisectoral responses, including the provision of anti-retroviral drugs, placed a heavy burden on the nation's resources and substantial international assistance was needed if the pandemic was to be halted and Botswana was to realize its full development potential.

80. In the area of education, 10 years' schooling was provided free of charge, and the ultimate objective was to achieve universal access to full secondary education by 2016. Vocational training had been expanded and a technical education programme had been introduced at the junior secondary level. Since, it might prove impossible to sustain those investments, the Government was engaged in national consultations on, inter alia, whether to introduce cost-sharing with parents.

81. Health-care and education financing must be viewed in the context of sustainability in African countries. A myriad of issues relating to trade and market access, ODA and technology transfer must be addressed so that developing countries could generate resources for their development. The Monterrey Consensus provided a clear framework within which development financing should be pursued. Development assistance should be broadened to include grant financing for health, education, human resources development and capacity-building. He therefore welcomed the Bretton Woods institutions' apparent shift from purely economic considerations to development agendas that took other social factors into account.

82. The Council should ensure adequate follow-up to the agreements reached at the major United Nations conferences of the 1990s, which were related to the theme of the high-level segment. African countries would never reach the Millennium development goals unless they were helped to equip their people with knowledge, skills and an innovative spirit so that they could take charge of their own development. The New Partnership for Africa's Development had selected human resources development as one of its strategic areas, and he appealed to all development stakeholders to partner with African countries in their pursuit of truly sustainable development.

83. **Ms. Chassoul** (Observer for Costa Rica) said that Governments had the obligation to provide their citizens with the best possible quality of life so that they could fully enjoy their civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights; the right of all nations to development was closely linked to the right of all peoples to live in dignity.

84. In order to bridge the gap between rich and poor, it was essential to meet basic needs in the areas of food, health, housing, drinking water, education, job training, employment, decent wages, productivity, competitiveness and equal opportunity and to eliminate structural barriers such as financial imbalances, lack of capital for productive and social investment, restricted access to international markets, and natural disasters, all of which had a devastating effect on the poorest, most vulnerable economies. Uneven growth threatened to widen the gap between rich and poor; hence, measures must be taken to create fairer, more equitable societies.

85. Achievement of those ambitious goals would require systematic investment in human resources, education and health. Only an educated people could live in freedom; only a healthy people could work for development; and only a cultured people could take its place in the modern world of globalization. The role of the family as the basic element of society must be consolidated. Women's leadership capability must be strengthened so that women could participate fully at the highest levels of decision-making. Their access to more and better job opportunities must be encouraged.

86. Unfortunately, a lack of resources hindered investment in education and health at the national and international levels; developing countries must give top priority to human resources development. Over 50 years previously, Costa Rica had learned that defence spending placed a heavy burden on the national economy. Developing countries could not afford to continue wasting US\$ 191 billion per year on weapons and soldiers; rather, they should focus on economic development, social justice and democratic institutions. Similarly, the US\$ 22 billion spent annually on arms transfers to developing countries would be better allocated to education.

87. It was essential to create a more equitable economic system that would allow everyone to reap the benefits of globalization and to acquire the financial resources needed for the promotion of sustainable development through trade and investment. Rather than waiting passively for increasingly limited international assistance, developing countries must take a leadership role by investing in education, health, housing and culture.

88. **Mr. Djumala** (Observer for Indonesia) said that the purpose of development was to improve lives, especially those of the poor. The three pillars of sustainable development — the environment, society and the economy — were closely related to human resources development; however, it was important not to focus on one of those elements at the expense of the others. A healthy environment, safe water and proper sanitation were critical, but social and economic development must not be forgotten.

89. Human resources development included the eradication of poverty and illiteracy and universal primary education with gender equality. Health and education were both a means to, and an end of, sustainable development. Families with a higher

standard of living would focus on educating their children for the future rather than on their immediate value in the job market. A healthier, better-educated workforce was more productive, adaptable and likely to attract investment.

90. An integrated package of basic social services, covering education; health, including reproductive health; nutrition; water and sanitation, was required. If the Millennium development goals were to be met by 2015, much remained to be done in the areas of universal primary education and improved health care, both with gender equality. Until those objectives were achieved, other goals might well be unreachable. Such issues should be addressed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

91. Traditionally, it was the poorest countries which had been slowest to achieve their goals. The amount needed for that purpose, an additional US\$ 50 billion per year, was approximately twice the current level of ODA, which was US\$ 125 billion less than the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product. He called on donor nations to live up to their commitments in that regard.

92. Lack of access to information and communication technologies was another obstacle to human resources development. The developing world needed technology transfer in order to reap the benefits of the information revolution and to give its students a truly modern education in preparation for the rapidly changing global economy of the future.

93. The current shortage of professionals in the fields of health and education was expected to worsen unless the proper measures were taken. The situation was most acute in the poorest countries owing to a lack of training facilities and to the migration of professionals to the developed countries. An estimated 10 to 15 million teachers worldwide would be needed in the next 10 years and the current pool of teachers would require additional training, particularly in information and communication technologies. Developed countries must step up efforts to meet their own growing need for health-care and teaching professionals without draining those vital and scarce resources from poorer countries.

The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.