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**Economic and Social Council**  
**Substantive session of 2007**

**Provisional summary record of the 15th meeting (second part)\***

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 3 July 2007, at 9.30 a.m.

*President:* Mr. Čekuolis ..... (Lithuania)

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including through equitable macroeconomic policies (*continued*)

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\* The summary record of the first part of the meeting appears as document E/2007/SR.15.

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**High-level segment** (*continued*)

**Thematic discussion**

**Strengthening efforts at all levels to promote pro-poor sustained economic growth, including through equitable macroeconomic policies** (item 2 (a) of the agenda) (*continued*) (E/2007/51, E/2007/68)

*National voluntary presentations*

1. **Mr. Prescod** (Barbados) welcomed the establishment of the Annual Ministerial Review and the Development Cooperation Forum, which would enable the Council to assess progress in order to achieve goals set at the international level, including the Millennium Development Goals. The theme of the first ministerial review could not have been chosen better in the light of the importance for development of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger.
2. The Government of Barbados was in no doubt that it would meet the Millennium Development Goals, as its national strategic development plan, in place until 2025, shared the same economic and social targets, foremost of which was the eradication of poverty. Extreme poverty and hunger were not prevalent in Barbados, but there were pockets of poverty that the Government found unacceptable. Various instruments had been put in place to bolster the institutional framework, among them urban and rural development commissions, a poverty eradication committee and poverty alleviation bureau.
3. The most vulnerable people in society, such as the elderly and disabled, were generally the most likely to suffer social exclusion. A national disability unit had therefore been set up to draft policies and programmes aimed at safeguarding the rights of the disabled and ensuring that they had equal access to health care, education, employment and transport, and measures had been taken to improve the quality of life of the elderly and to provide them with a variety of social services and recreational activities. Barbados would welcome partnerships with the international community for the care of the mentally disabled.
4. Barbados had implemented universal education for children aged 5 to 16 years since the early 1970s and was currently aiming to provide schooling for those aged 3 to 5, and to put in place continuing education programmes. The country had also made considerable progress in the area of equality of the sexes and was currently concentrating particularly on the prevention of violence and human trafficking. In addition, infant and maternal mortality rates were especially low. The State had allocated US\$ 50 million in 2001 to a five-year plan to combat HIV/AIDS, which affected 1.8 per cent of the population of Barbados, but feared it would be unable to maintain that level of funding because the country's status as a middle-income country disqualified it from financial aid provided for under some bilateral and multilateral agreements.
5. Climate change threatened the development of small island developing States and obliged them to adopt targeted measures that would, however, prove fruitless in the absence of urgent global action. It was, therefore, imperative to begin negotiations as quickly as possible on an agreement to replace the Kyoto Protocol.
6. With regard to the uneven progress made by countries in meeting the Millennium Development Goals, he said that the needs of middle-income countries had not been taken sufficiently into account in the framework of the Monterrey Consensus. His country hoped that the follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development in 2008 would remedy that situation. He regretted that it was the small island developing States that had to bear the brunt of implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable

Development of Small Island Developing States and the Mauritius Strategy for its further implementation, given that those commitments had been undertaken by the entire international community.

7. **Mr. Rubin** (moderator) regretted that, in spite of the declared intentions of the developed countries, the amount of aid to Africa had still not been doubled. He asked the representative of Barbados how many human lives could be saved if all the targets established in Millennium Development Goal 6 on combating HIV/AIDS were met, in other words, if the necessary funds, expertise and medicines were made available to the relevant services in the region.

8. **Mr. Prescod** (Barbados) replied that, in that case, the mortality rate would fall considerably. He regretted that the income from tourism, upon which the economy of Barbados relied, was insufficient to fund HIV/AIDS programmes.

9. **Mr. Cabral** (Guinea-Bissau) said that the current discussion showed that poverty was not inevitable. Combating poverty was the responsibility not only of States but also of all citizens. Certainly, development aid needed to be increased but, above all, it was important to provide the recipient countries — the poor countries — with the means of ending their dependence and allowing them to assume primary responsibility for themselves.

10. **Ms. Veiga** (Cape Verde) said that she realized that islands faced numerous obstacles on the path to development. She asked whether the Government of Barbados had, with help from its partners, taken steps to slow the flight of human capital and if a cooperation framework to combat HIV/AIDS had been established in the region and, in particular, in Barbados.

11. **Mr. Rubin** (Moderator) said he wished to take the opportunity to ask the representative of the United States of America, Mr. Miller, if he could assure the Council that his Government would honour its development aid commitments in the period until 2010.

12. **Mr. Miller** (United States of America) said that such a question was more worthy of a press conference than discussion in the Economic and Social Council and hoped that dialogue would continue in a more constructive spirit. He had requested the floor not to answer the moderator's question but to congratulate the representative of Barbados on his country's report and progress made in combating poverty.

13. It appeared that the only Millennium Development Goal target that Barbados might fail to achieve was the one related to combating HIV/AIDS. Given that the spread of HIV/AIDS had a sociocultural aspect, with almost 70 per cent of births taking place outside marriage, it would be useful to run a prevention campaign in that area.

14. **Mr. Fernie** (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) asked in what manner the economic threat posed by climate change to developing countries manifested itself in Barbados and how the country would use extra funds potentially available from the international community.

15. **Mr. Prescod** (Barbados) said that several waves of emigration in the course of the twentieth century had left a greater number of women than men in the country, which explained the high rate of births outside marriage. It was true that the spread of HIV had a cultural aspect, but it should not be forgotten that tourism was well developed in Barbados and that, as a result, each year tourists outnumbered Barbadians on the island. The international community, therefore, had its share of responsibility in the spread of the virus.

16. The flight of human capital mostly concerned teachers and nurses. To alleviate the problem, Barbados was cooperating with various countries, including Nigeria and the Philippines, and had thus managed to make up the shortfall of staff in those areas.

17. **Mr. Sealy** (Barbados) said that prompt action was needed at the international level to combat climate change, especially to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and that small countries such as Barbados needed help from the international community to implement policies of economic adjustment. The rising sea level and the resulting erosion of beaches constituted the biggest threat to the economy of Barbados, as they endangered the country's main resource, tourism. Another challenge for the Government of Barbados was the poor quality of drinking water arising from flooding and storms. Support from the international community would be welcome in those areas.

18. **Mr. Hackett** (Barbados), speaking as a representative of civil society in Barbados, said that social partnership had been established between the Government and those involved in the world of work in the 1990s, which had stabilized the economy and reined in inflation. The Government of Barbados had realized that it was in its own interest to make the most of its limited resources and had included all the stakeholders — young people, workers, the private sector, community groups and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) — in the preparation of national policy on sustainable development, energy and the disabled. Nonetheless, the private sector felt that, in general, the Government was motivated more by profit than social awareness. It provided inconsistent funding to NGOs and other community groups, even though their survival depended on such funding. There was no doubt that those organizations needed to find independent sources of funding for their work.

*The meeting rose at 1.35 p.m.*