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PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD (PARTIAL)\* OF THE 18th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,  
on Wednesday, 4 July 2007, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. DAVIDE (Philippines)  
(Vice-President)

later: Mr. ČEKUOLIS (Lithuania)  
(President)

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\* The first part of the meeting is covered in E/2007/SR.18.

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In the absence of Mr. Čekuolis (Lithuania), Mr. Davide (Philippines),  
Vice-President, took the Chair.

The discussion covered in this record began at 6.15 p.m.

ANNUAL MINISTERIAL REVIEW: STRENGTHENING EFFORTS TO ERADICATE  
POVERTY AND HUNGER, INCLUDING THROUGH THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP  
FOR DEVELOPMENT (continued) (E/2007/71, E/2007/81 and E/2007/CRP.5)

General debate on the theme of the Annual Ministerial Review (continued)

Mr. SINGH (India), associating himself with the statement made by Pakistan on behalf of the Group of 77, said that the objective of eradicating poverty and hunger should be the guiding principle of all development strategies. Economic growth and poverty reduction in many developing countries had not benefited all regions and population groups. As the report of the Secretary-General (E/2007/71) highlighted, the linkages between economic growth and poverty reduction were complex and unique to each country. It followed that development assistance should be sufficiently flexible to allow recipient countries to frame their own development strategies in the light of their particular circumstances. In addition to official development assistance (ODA), international cooperation should include enabling trading conditions, technology transfer at concessional rates and reform of international financial institutions.

Official development assistance was an essential resource for developing countries since targeted public investment was required before private-investment-led self-sustainable growth could take place. His country was therefore concerned that, despite donor commitments, ODA fell during 2006 and was far lower than the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income (GNI). Moreover, as the debt relief component of ODA diminished with the progressive implementation of debt forgiveness, additional new funds would be required simply to maintain ODA at its current levels.

His Government welcomed the Secretary-General's statement that steps should be taken to ensure greater representation of the developing countries in international financial institutions. The role of the United Nations in providing the development dimension in economic policymaking needed to be reaffirmed, and there should be more effective interaction to that end between the Council and the Bretton Woods institutions.

Indian experience in efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger had highlighted the value of a “strategy of inclusive growth”, including greater investments in rural infrastructure and agriculture, increased availability of credit to farmers, programmes to promote rural employment, more public spending on health and education, investment in urban renewal, programmes to empower disadvantaged groups, food-for-work programmes, and schemes to make food available to households at affordable prices.

A strengthened Economic and Social Council had a crucial role to play in fostering international cooperation in support of the efforts of the developing countries to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the eradication of poverty and hunger.

Mr. NERITANI (Albania), associating himself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union, welcomed the fact that absolute poverty continued to decline globally but urged the need for concerted national efforts to address the crucial challenge of sub-Saharan Africa. His Government also believed that the eradication of poverty and hunger required simultaneous progress - with measurable goals and indicators - in all the areas corresponding to their multidimensional causes.

The experience of Albania had shown the value of donor countries and agencies working in complementarity with recipient countries in the framework of an integrated planning system corresponding to a global agenda (MDGs), a regional process (European Union and NATO integration) and a national development strategy. With regard to poverty reduction, Albania had been able gradually, with donor assistance, to transform the major problem of slums and extralegal settlements into a process of genuine urban development. It had done so by adopting an approach that combined the dimensions of economics and business, human rights and democracy through empowerment with considerations of law and order.

While it agreed that each country must have primary responsibility for its own development, his Government was committed to a process of dialogue implicit in the notion of global partnership. At the national level, it had made impressive strides to cement such a partnership in the areas of good governance, the fight against corruption and social justice. It had developed national action plans to reduce environmental degradation, contributing in that way to global efforts to address a challenge that knew no frontiers. Internationally, his country had

entered into a new partnership through the signing of the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union, and it had offered to be among the first to implement the One United Nations pilot project. His Government reaffirmed its commitment to continue to fulfil its national obligations with regard to the Millennium Development Goals while engaging in a constructive global partnership to the same end.

Mr. Čekuolis (Lithuania), President, took the Chair.

Mr. MAJOOR (Netherlands), associating himself with the statement by Portugal on behalf of the European Union, said that sustainable poverty alleviation was the overarching goal of development cooperation for the Netherlands. Poverty could not be addressed without addressing all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In some parts of the world extreme poverty was hardly declining despite impressive economic growth rates. It followed that more money for MDGs did not necessarily mean that the poor would be reached. Given that poor people tended to benefit less than middle- and higher-income groups from assistance, his Government had made pro-poor and inclusive growth one of its development cooperation priorities.

Noting that attainment of the MDGs as a whole was a responsibility shared by the developed and developing countries, he said that the Netherlands took very seriously the specific responsibility of the developed countries for a global partnership for development (MDG 8). The Netherlands was a substantial provider of development assistance, having for years contributed 0.8 per cent of its gross national income (GNI) for official development assistance (ODA). Recognizing that more international aid was required if the Millennium Development Goals were to be met in 2015, the Netherlands had called on all developed countries to increase their ODA contributions to meet the minimum target of 0.7 per cent of GNI. However, the growing contribution of the international community in supporting peace and security measures and providing humanitarian assistance should also be acknowledged. Stability and the absence of humanitarian suffering were preconditions for any long-term development effort.

It was not just the quantity but also the quality of aid that was important. The Paris Declaration provided the framework for his country's efforts to increase aid effectiveness. The Netherlands was committed to aligning its assistance with the policies of the recipient countries

and, to the extent possible, with their structures. Governments could not meet development goals alone, and the Netherlands would continue to involve a range of other partners in international cooperation, including civil society organizations, the private sector, trade unions and individual citizens.

A global partnership for development was not sustainable without wide public support in the donor countries, which could not be taken for granted. The Dutch public had become more critical, and there was increasing pressure on the Government to account for how the Netherlands's development assistance was spent. The importance of good governance as a condition for development aid could not be overemphasized, and development results management and accountability were increasingly important aspects of a global partnership for development. Such considerations guided his country's decisions on how and where to allocate necessarily limited development cooperation resources.

Mr. CABRAL (Guinea-Bissau) said that the spirit of change and renewal in which the substantive session was taking place was essential to preserving the credibility of the Council and ensuring that it played the role assigned to it by the Charter of the United Nations. The membership must assume its collective responsibility for making change effective so that the people who suffered the most in the world could reap the benefits of the Council's collective endeavours.

He shared the concerns and frustrations expressed during the debate concerning the situation in Africa and, more generally, the impoverishment and despair that characterized many countries in the world. While in global terms the planet had become a village in which growth was engendering considerable wealth and progress, that wealth remained unequally and unfairly distributed. The Ministerial Review offered a valuable opportunity to agree on measures and mechanisms, propose new ideas and, where necessary, call into question past practices.

The developed and developing world had shared responsibilities. As had just been pointed out, no country however generous was prepared to give assistance without guarantees of how the resources were to be used. The recipient countries had to earn the trust of donor countries through the rigour with which they formulated their plans and made themselves accountable for their implementation. They must recognize their shortcomings and past failures as the key to

innovation and progress. They must provide the foundations for genuine development by furthering democracy and the rule of law so that every citizen felt not only free but jointly responsible for the life of the community.

Observing that the Council's meeting was taking place on Independence Day, he paid tribute to the values of freedom and democracy embodied in the Constitution of the United States, which were widely shared throughout the world. It was in the name of those values that the United States should understand the aspirations of the developing countries, recognizing the complexity of the world in which we lived and the weight of the American economy on the global economy. Its prepotence entailed the responsibility of working constructively to promote the common good in an interdependent world in which we prospered or foundered together.

The developing countries for their part must not forget that they were ultimately responsible for their own development, which must stem from their own cultures while drawing on appropriate exogenous enrichment. Yet the developing countries needed the resources on which progress depended, and those could only come through the assistance provided by the developed world. He called on the donor countries to show understanding of the situation of the developing countries, recognizing their need for funding that was prompt, predictable and less complex in terms of procedures. He hoped that the new spirit apparent in the deliberations of the Council would be translated into a more inclusive and revitalized approach to development cooperation and reflected in an action-oriented Ministerial Declaration that went beyond the mere expression of intentions.

Mr. WEISLEDER (Costa Rica), associating himself with the statement of the Group of 77, said that the debates in the high-level segment, and in particular the Ministerial Declaration, should reflect a consensus not only on eradicating hunger and poverty in the world but also on the means of doing so as rapidly as possible. Unfortunately, while all were agreed on aims, agreement was lacking on means. As a result, excessive time and effort was expended on issues of lower priority. All concerned should set aside considerations of power and prestige and should focus on achieving a consensus based on the broadest possible range of experience. It was

inadmissible that someone who could be rescued from hunger and poverty should continue to suffer because members of the international community were unable to overcome petty obstacles.

The international community had been making headway in the fight against the evils of poverty and hunger. The agreement on the Millennium Development Goals represented a moment of enlightenment for humanity: a roadmap existed for achieving a set of goals leading to a better world. The achievement was significant, but it was not sufficient. In a world that enjoyed unprecedented wealth, it was inexcusable to condemn to a life of poverty and deprivation those born in societies that excluded or marginalized them or in countries where poverty was widespread because of the lack, overexploitation or plundering of resources or the failure to achieve forms of governance that turned to account the potential of all their inhabitants. Minds and consciences within the international community must be harnessed to the task of discovering or devising the means of ending those afflictions.

Costa Rica, a country without an army, had developed a social model that had enabled its citizens to enjoy a level of human development higher than that suggested by average income. Yet 20 per cent of its population still lived in poverty, half of them in extreme poverty. So he had not come to laud his country's achievements but to restate its commitment to work with others in a global effort to extend to those who were deprived what many enjoyed. Costa Rica hoped that the strengthened Council would be an effective instrument in redeeming the trust that people everywhere invested in the United Nations.

Mr. MUHAREMI (Observer for Croatia) welcomed the strengthening of coordination between the United Nations system and other multilateral financial, trade and development institutions in support of sustained economic growth, bearing in mind that progress could only be facilitated by harmonization of efforts at the international and regional levels.

Croatia, which had traditionally focused its cooperation largely within South-East Europe, had shown its readiness to participate more actively in the process of building peace worldwide and to support United Nations operational activities for development. Previously a recipient country, it had begun the transformation to a donor country both regionally and internationally. It was currently designing a specific development cooperation strategy, having in 2006 carried out development assistance projects amounting to US\$ 16 million.

Active participation in international development financing efforts was a responsibility shared by all, including Governments, the private sector and civil society. If the international community worked as one, it was still possible to meet the 2015 Millennium Development Goals deadline, to advance against poverty and hunger and to build a true partnership for development.

Mr. EGUIGUREN (Observer for Chile) said that revitalization of the main components of the United Nations system was important for enhancing the well-being of all peoples. Development presupposed the existence of strong and effective institutions, nationally and internationally. The launching of the Ministerial Review and the Development Forum restored the Council to the place where it rightly belonged, at the centre of global social and economic concerns.

The theme of the Ministerial Review could not have been better chosen. Hunger and poverty were phenomena of global scope, with environmental, cultural and social dimensions. It was impossible to conceive of a just society in which human beings continued to die from hunger. It was disturbing to think that almost 840 million people worldwide were affected by hunger and that some 25,000 died from that cause every day. In Latin America, 205 million people continued to live in poverty. The report of the Secretary-General was a challenge, which should unite all countries, regardless of their level of development.

The best way out of poverty was through coordinated public policies focused on increased wages, decent work, better access to education and basic services, protection of the most vulnerable groups in society, opportunities for young people and the empowerment of women. Such a multidimensional approach would not be effective without the assistance of the international community in a world in which external factors impacted crucially on national development. The full and fair development of all the peoples of the world called for a global alliance, including a commitment to increase official development assistance and identify new sources of funding.

With the return to democracy, Chile had managed to reduce poverty from 45.1 per cent in 1987 to 13.7 per cent in 2006. However, much remained to be done, and his Government would not rest until hunger and poverty were wholly eradicated. It had recently adopted ambitious additional development targets for 2015. It had been encouraged to do so by the



doubling of its economy in the space of two decades, with the consequent beneficial effects on employment and wages, linked to ambitious social programmes and the refocusing of social investment on human capital development.

In response to the challenge issued in the Secretary-General's report, Chile wished to renew its commitment to fight against hunger and poverty: by continuing to explore innovative ways of moving from words to action, exemplified in its participation in the International Drugs Purchase Facility (UNAIDS) initiative, which was combating AIDS/HIV, tuberculosis and malaria in the developing countries; and by strengthening South-South and triangular cooperation mechanisms to share its public policy experience in alleviating hunger and poverty. In turn, it called on all countries to strengthen the global alliance for development, to fulfil their commitments with regard to official development assistance and to implement public policies geared to eradicating hunger and poverty worldwide.

Mr. FERRER RODRIGUEZ (Cuba) said that efforts to eradicate hunger and poverty in accordance with the first Millennium Development Goal would not be fulfilled unless the eighth Goal of a global partnership for development was achieved, implying an open global trading and financial system. An increase of just one per cent in the participation of the developing countries in world export markets would take over 100,000 people out of poverty. The current global system discriminated against developing countries, and the chances that the Doha Round would be concluded successfully were slight, given that all the deadlines had so far not been met.

The main problem was the agricultural policies of rich countries, and their lack of political will to comply with the Millennium Development Goals and the Doha Round. They subsidized exports, distorting trade and flooding their products into developing markets, while limiting the access of the developing countries to their own markets. A majority of the populations in the developing countries depended on agriculture, and addressing the problem of distortions in world trade were essential to the eradication of hunger and poverty in the world.

The commitment by the wealthy countries to address the problem of debt in the developing countries had gone largely unfulfilled, much debt forgiveness having been counted as official development assistance. Agreements to facilitate technology transfer or access by the developing

countries to cheap drugs to help combat major epidemics had similarly come to little, while promises concerning official development assistance made over 35 years ago had been honoured by only five industrialized countries. More effective aid was important as well as an increase in volume, much aid being linked to the pursuit of geopolitical objectives or aimed at facilitating the exports of the rich countries rather than reducing poverty. Without an increase in development assistance and a change in the world economic order, the Millennium Development Goals would continue to prove elusive.

Words and verbal commitments were not enough to overcome the most pressing problems of humanity. What was required was greater humanity, sense of solidarity and political will to defend the principles of international cooperation, as Cuba had disinterestedly done despite being the victim for over 45 years of the cruel and iniquitous blockade imposed by the most powerful country on the planet. The rich countries spoke demagogically in international forums of democracy, good governance and accountability at the national level but resisted the application of such principles at the international level, which was the condition for the eradication of poverty and hunger in the world.

Mr. TOMASI (Observer for the Holy See) said that continued efforts to address the plight of people trapped in poverty and to search for new ways of freeing them from its destructive consequences remained essential if the international community wanted to achieve truly integral human development. The Holy See believed that the question of poverty should be given the highest attention and priority, for the sake of poor and rich countries alike. Globalization had created worldwide expectations of a more decent and humane lifestyle, and when such anticipations were frustrated peace was endangered for all.

While wealth had increased in recent decades lifting millions of persons out of poverty, the number of people living in absolute poverty had grown. In some regions of Africa and Asia, life expectancy was almost half of that in rich countries, and levels of illiteracy were high. Poverty elimination demanded integration between the mechanisms that produced wealth and the mechanisms for the distribution of its benefits at the international, regional and national levels. Absolute economic liberalization was socially and economically non-sustainable in the long run, and more systematic and comprehensive analysis was needed to understand how methods of trade and mechanisms of production should be modified.

The projects of multilateral institutions and developed countries aimed at reducing poverty and improving growth in poor regions had made some limited progress. However, there was a need for more targeted assistance that reached down into the basic infrastructure of communities, was directed through community-based institutions - including faith-groups - not only governments, and recognized that work was the only way for a community to generate its own added value that paid the way out of poverty. Education was a long-term economic investment for everyone, and health gave that investment a durable character.

Transnational corporations carried a particular responsibility to facilitate the transfer of technology, sponsor capacity-building in management, and enable local partners to provide more employment opportunities. Foreign investors should contribute to the overall development of the country in which they established operations. Governments for their part should ensure conditions favourable to ethical investment, including a well-functioning legal system, a stable system of taxation and protection of the right to property. Efforts to root out corruption were essential, and priority should naturally be given to building social capital over military expenditure.

The Holy See had repeatedly insisted that, while the Governments of poorer countries had a responsibility for good governance and the elimination of poverty, international partners had an unconditional responsibility for development cooperation, based on the unity of the human race. New international binding instruments to regulate the exploitation of natural resources, to limit the arms trade, to eliminate distorting subsidies in agriculture, and similar initiatives, would go a long way to translate into concrete decisions the often stated goal of solidarity. Eradication of poverty was a moral commitment that freed people from much suffering, helped them to live peacefully together, and gave them the freedom to actively contribute to the common good.

Mr. Davide (Philippines), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Mr. MCHUMO (Observer for the Common Fund for Commodities (CFC)) said that the thematic discussion was of crucial importance and relevance to the mandate of the Common Fund for Commodities. It was impossible to eliminate poverty and hunger and achieve sustainable development and attain the targets of the Millennium Development Goals without addressing the commodity problem and improving the conditions and prospects of commodity

producers. More than 70 per cent of the world's poor lived in rural areas and directly or indirectly depended on commodities for their livelihood; and some 55 developing countries depended on commodities for at least 50 per cent of their export earnings. Any discussion or subsequent policy recommendation relating to poverty and sustainable development should therefore bring to centre stage the issue of commodities.

To overcome the challenge facing the commodity sector, there were a number of key areas that should be addressed by national governments and the international community in partnership. Major investments were needed to improve infrastructures, including communications, technology, irrigation, roads and storage. A greater share of the profits deriving from commodity exports should be shifted down the value-added chain to the farmers who actually produced the crops. Resources should be mobilized to support diversification into non-traditional agricultural exports. Despite the current price boom, the constant decline and volatility in commodity prices needed to be addressed urgently, preferably through a price mechanism established under the auspices of the World Trade Organization. Distortion of the international trading environment through the imposition of tariff measures and domestic and export subsidies by developed countries made the successful conclusion of the Doha round essential to commodity-producing countries.

It was important for commodity-dependent countries that benefited from the current positive commodity market situation to use their rich natural resources to transform commodities into an engine of growth and development so as to escape from poverty and marginalization. Equally, it was the best time for the international donor community to seize the opportunity to increase their assistance to those countries so as to lay the strategy and basis for growth and sustainable development towards eradication of poverty.

Mr. OSMAN (Observer for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)) said that the International Federation was a strong supporter of the objectives contained in the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Its own Global Agenda, adopted in 2005, created a framework for action designed to support the achievements of the MDGs. The International Federation's work with other organizations included the eradication of poverty and hunger together with a number of

important health issues. The themes chosen for the 30th International Conference of the IFRC all had a bearing on efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger, since the major challenges confronting humanity had the greatest impact on the poor and the vulnerable.

The four main themes were: environmental hazards, including climate change, migration, violence in communities, and emergent and recurrent diseases. Diseases such as HIV/AIDS could only be tackled if Governments formed links with community-based organizations such as the IFRC. IFRC pursued such cooperation from global down to local levels. An example was its action under its Global Health and Care Strategy to respond to health and disease challenges, notably in Africa in association with World Health Organization. Empowerment of affected groups was an essential element in any programme to deal with poverty and other humanitarian challenges. It was important, for example, to listen to what communities were saying about climate change, such as the issue of desertification to which Governments tended to pay insufficient attention. The Red Cross and Red Crescent placed great emphasis on disaster preparedness and on alerting the global community to take action prior to the response stage.

International meetings were held with increasing frequency and too often produced no more than lofty promises. It was to be hoped that the Council's new format would lead to concerted action that linked promises to effective delivery.

Mr. DALL'OGGIO (Observer for the International Organization for Migration (IOM)) said that the focus on the first Millennium Development Goal was particularly significant for the IOM, which had repeatedly underlined that, while migration did not feature prominently in the original framework of the Millennium Development Goals, migration phenomena could significantly impact on their successful accomplishment, both positively and negatively. In order to maximize the development benefits of migration and minimize its negative consequences, IOM had consistently advocated for integrated approaches to assist developing countries in framing comprehensive migration management strategies and had encouraged development partners to pay more attention to the way migration and development interacted.

International migration could be a positive force for development both in countries of origin and destination, provided that it was supported by the right set of policies, including mainstreaming into national development agendas. Remittances already represented the largest

source of foreign exchange for many developing countries. On the negative side, when foreign workers found themselves in an irregular status, their rights were diminished and their economic potential limited. Both sending and receiving countries should do a better job of managing the operation of the global labour market.

In the fight against poverty, the international community should remain alert to new challenges. Recent reports indicated that by 2010 there would be an additional 50 million environmental migrants who had had to move from their habitual homes to temporary or durable new homes, either within their country or abroad. IOM, which had recently organized an expert workshop on the topic of Environment and Migration in collaboration with UNFPA and other United Nations partners, stood ready to continue its cooperation on that important issue.

Mr. WEIRD (Observer for the Mouvement International ATD Quart Monde) said that his movement stressed the need for the participation of the most disadvantaged in the fight against poverty and the link between poverty and human rights. The history of poverty, in the North and the South, demonstrated that economic growth did not automatically lead to the eradication of poverty and might actually serve to exclude the poor. The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty on 17 October would be the culminating point of a campaign being waged by ADT Quart Monde that saw the rejection of poverty as the path to peace. It invited diplomatic missions and intergovernmental agencies and their staff to play their part on that occasion, along with organizations and movements throughout the world, by lending their voices to the global campaign against poverty and hunger.

Ms. ALBUQUERQUE (Observer for the Legion of Goodwill (LGW)) said that for over 50 years the LGW had developed social and educational programmes to combat extreme poverty in Latin America, mostly Brazil. Poverty was not only a social and economical issue: overcoming the challenge involved education and, beyond that, re-education centred upon the values of peace, understanding and fraternal love. The LGW's programmes, based on the links between school, family and community, sought to form the individual as a citizen to play his or her part as a constructive agent for an altruistic and mutually supportive society. It was in the minds of men that the defences of peace should be constructed, and it was urgent to combine education of the mind with education of the heart to strengthen a global consciousness dedicated to a planet of justice and peace.

Mr. CLERC (Observer for Droit à l'énergie), saying that he spoke on behalf of a non-governmental organization grouping together 60 million people in 70 countries with the purpose of improving access to energy, observed that without energy there could be no Millennium Development Goals. Energy was an element that cut across the basic challenges of education, health and food, and energy had an enormous cost. His organization was waiting for countries to recognize access to energy as an essential need and to devise a strategy for sustainable development with the involvement of the private sector and civil society.

Mr. CUI Jianjun (Observer for the China NGO Network for International Exchange) said that it was vitally important to safeguard peace and stability in both the international and domestic arena since they were the basic conditions for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The United Nations had an essential role in facilitating North-South dialogue and South-South cooperation and promoting a global partnership for development. Developed countries should help the developing countries through debt relief, development aid, and technology transfer and by increasing investments and refraining from trade protectionism. Developing countries in their turn should rely on their own efforts and improve governance. Major international financial institutions should give more support to poor countries, not impose conditionalities or double standards and bring about an early conclusion of the Doha round. The private sector should fulfil its social accountabilities by increasing investments and making credit more accessible. Non-governmental organizations, which were a major force in poverty alleviation, should incorporate the Millennium Development Goals into their agendas and form partnerships with Governments, United Nations agencies and the private sector to push for pro-MDG policies.

The meeting rose at 8.10 p.m.