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Chairman: Mr. Park In-kook (Republic of Korea)
later: Mr. Mičić (Vice-Chairperson) (Serbia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 58: Operational activities for development (*continued*)

(a) Operational activities for development of the United Nations system (*continued*)
(A/C.2/64/L.2)

Draft resolution on operational activities for development of the United Nations system

(b) South-South cooperation for development
(*continued*) (A/C.2/64/L.3)

Draft resolution on South-South cooperation

1. **Mr. Daoud** (Sudan) introduced draft resolutions A/C.2/64/L.2 and L.3 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Agenda item 57: Eradication of poverty and other development issues (A/64/65 and A/64/133)

(a) Implementation of the second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017)

(b) Women in development (A/64/93 and A/64/162 and Corr.1)

2. **Mr. Gonnot** (Acting Director of the Division for Social Policy and Development) introduced the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Legal empowerment of the poor and eradication of poverty" (A/64/133).

3. He then briefed the Committee on progress made in the implementation of efforts related to the theme for the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017), pursuant to General Assembly resolution 63/230. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in close collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO), had submitted to the seventeenth session of the High-level Committee on Programmes (HLCP), held in February 2009, a note containing a proposal that HLCP should develop a coordinated and coherent system-wide plan of action for poverty eradication with a focus on employment and decent work. On the basis of that note, HLCP had agreed to establish a cluster group of HLCP members, co-led by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and ILO, to prepare a draft plan of action for review at its next meeting. The focal points from 21 agencies, funds, programmes and regional commissions had collaborated in formulating

the plan of action. Several meetings had been held to discuss joint initiatives, the timeline and a coordinated approach to implementation. In September 2009, HLCP had reviewed and endorsed the framework of the system-wide plan of action.

4. The plan of action covered four types of joint activity: raising awareness about employment and decent work as an effective development strategy for poverty eradication; strengthening capacity-building; sharing good practices in promoting employment and decent work nationally and internationally; and supporting the integration of decent work towards poverty eradication into national and international policies and programmes. It focused, in particular, on youth employment, the working poor, social protection, support for sustainable enterprises, gender equality, standards and rights at work, and social dialogue. In implementing such activities, the United Nations system would work closely with social partners, civil society organizations and other actors with a view to supporting Governments in implementing internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), related to poverty eradication.

5. Given the emphasis on system-wide coherence, the plan of action was built around activities where synergies would lead to substantial increased benefits. The framework and platform developed in support of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work, was an invaluable basis on which to build that policy application.

6. Unemployment, working poverty and inequality were expected to increase over the next few years. A prolonged and severe job crisis was likely. Indeed, past financial crises showed that employment recovery was usually four to five years behind economic recovery. The Global Jobs Pact recently adopted by ILO aimed at shortening that lag time and putting employment and social protection at the heart of national and international recovery policies.

7. The HLCP cluster group would liaise with those CEB member organizations that led United Nations system joint crisis initiatives with a view to exploring synergies and avoiding duplication, seeking inputs to the cluster group's work and lending mutual support. A report of the Secretary-General detailing the United

Nations system's response would be submitted to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session.

8. Following consultations with the Director-General of ILO, the Secretary-General had decided to appoint Mr. Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, as United Nations focal point for the implementation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017). He invited Member States to address the issue in their interventions.

9. **Ms. Brautigam** (Officer-in-Charge of the Division for the Advancement of Women) introduced the reports of the Secretary-General entitled "Integrating a gender perspective into national development strategies" (A/64/162 and Corr.1) and "World Survey on the Role of Women in Development" (A/64/93).

10. Her Division hoped that the *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development* would help improve understanding of the gender equality implications of economic development and would guide the design of gender-sensitive policy measures. If adopted, its recommendations would facilitate women's access to, and control over, economic and financial resources. In addition to the fascicle version, the *World Survey* would be issued as a United Nations publication. It would be officially launched on 26 October, and by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) at the end of the month. In addition, it was hoped that the regional commissions would organize regional launches.

11. Lastly, a number of intergovernmental events taking place in 2010 would provide important opportunities to strengthen the global policy agenda and national-level action on gender equality and women's empowerment. They included the fifteen-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, to be held in March; the Economic and Social Council's annual ministerial review, to be held in July; the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly to review the progress made on the MDGs, to be held in September; and the Security Council review of progress made since the adoption of its resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, to be conducted in the autumn.

12. *Mr. Mičić (Serbia), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.*

13. **Mr. Md. Tauhedul Islam** (Bangladesh) expressed appreciation of the information provided concerning the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty and welcomed the appointment of Mr. Sha Zukang, as United Nations focal point for its implementation. However, he regretted that no information had been provided concerning the First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006), as such information would have been a useful input to the drafting of Committee resolutions on the subject.

14. **Mr. Rajabu** (United Republic of Tanzania) also expressed appreciation of the information provided concerning the Second Decade and encouraged the United Nations system to work to ensure that its objectives were achieved. In that connection, he wished to know which agency, fund, programme and regional commission focal points had collaborated in formulating the system-wide plan of action for poverty eradication and whether the Secretariat was planning to organize a meeting to examine specific plans and policies for implementing the Second United Nations Decade.

15. **Ms. Loza** (Nicaragua) expressed disappointment that the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Legal empowerment of the poor and eradication of poverty" (A/64/133) focused exclusively on developing countries and the national dimension and failed to mention such key issues as the need for a more equitable international system. In addition, the report seemed to suggest that legal disempowerment alone was responsible for poverty. There were many other causes of poverty, including colonialism and slavery. Lastly, in discussing national and regional experiences, the report failed to mention the radical change that had taken place in certain Latin American countries, such as, the rise of participatory democracy in countries such as Nicaragua and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

16. **Mr. Rangel** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that the report of the Secretary-General focused too narrowly on the legal empowerment of the poor while overlooking such other issues as countries' efforts to establish viable national programmes; the importance of integrating developing countries into the global economy; the need for a fairer distribution of global wealth; and the right to development, all of which were key to eradicating poverty and promoting development.

17. **Mr. Gonnot** (Acting Director of the Division for Social Policy and Development) said that a comprehensive report on the implementation of the First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) had been submitted to the Commission on Sustainable Development in 2007, and had been the basis for the General Assembly's decision to proclaim the Second Decade. The First Decade had sought primarily to raise awareness about poverty and had not had a specific theme. Furthermore, empowerment had not even been mentioned in the context of poverty eradication until the 2005 World Summit.

18. He could not say which focal points had collaborated in formulating the system-wide plan of action for poverty eradication. He did know, however, that those that had collaborated included focal points from entities with a country-level presence. Soon, a website providing that and other information about the Second United Nations Decade would be created. Member States would be kept informed in that regard.

19. The Secretariat was planning to organize a meeting to examine specific plans and policies for implementing the Second Decade for the Eradication of Poverty but had not yet finalized the modalities of that meeting. Since the theme for the Second Decade had been decided well before the advent of the global economic and financial crisis, the Secretariat would be seeking Member States' views before making any decisions in that regard.

20. The report of the Secretary-General entitled "Legal empowerment of the poor and eradication of poverty" (A/64/133) concerned itself primarily with how different United Nations system entities interpreted the relatively new concept of legal empowerment and what they were doing to promote it. The concerns of Member States had, however, been heard and would be conveyed to the United Nations system as a whole. As the title suggested, the report's very focus was the relationship between legal empowerment of the poor and eradication of poverty. There were, of course, many other causes of poverty. Since they did not relate to lack of legal empowerment, however, they were not discussed. Lastly, he hoped that ongoing national-level initiatives and actions could be addressed in the next report.

21. **The Chairperson** invited the Committee to engage in a general discussion on the item.

22. **Ms. Osman** (Sudan), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the modest gains of the First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty were threatened by the global economic and financial crisis. Even though the world had the resources and know-how to end poverty, most countries would not achieve goal 1 of the MDGs by 2015. Poverty eradication must be made an overarching theme of all global summits and conferences and must be placed at the core of the United Nations development agenda. Furthermore, developed countries must not only fulfil their existing official development assistance (ODA) commitments, but also provide new and additional resources to help developing countries mitigate the effects of the crisis.

23. The international community should build on the lessons learned from the First Decade for the Eradication of Poverty and should continue to take a holistic approach to poverty eradication, including by aligning ODA with goal 1 of the MDGs and the corresponding targets; by investing in education and training, human resources development, science and technology, and agriculture for development; and by promoting productive employment and decent work for all. In addition, the United Nations development system should give the highest priority to poverty eradication in its work programmes and should harness the potential of existing mechanisms to improve integrated approaches to implementing the Second Decade. The Group welcomed the idea of a pragmatic plan of action in support of that Decade. Such a plan should include the points she had mentioned. In that connection, she stressed the importance of sustainable industrial development and industrial development cooperation for the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs, and requested the international community's full support in that regard.

24. Poverty eradication required concrete political will and guidance, particularly from development partners. In that regard, the Group looked forward to participating at the highest level in the meeting to be convened during the General Assembly's sixty-eighth session to review progress made in implementing the Second United Nations Decade. That said, the causes and challenges of poverty must be addressed in an integrated, coordinated and coherent manner. To that end, all Member States must participate in discussions

on a new international economic and financial system and architecture.

25. Unless women were integrated into the development process, meaningful development and poverty eradication would remain a pipe dream. As acknowledged in various international instruments, gender equality and women's empowerment were essential to eradicating poverty, combating disease and achieving sustainable development. Women and children were the hardest hit by the global economic and financial crisis, owing to dwindling resources for education and health. Noting that most women worked in agriculture, she said that agricultural policies and strategies must be reviewed to ensure food security. Long-standing inequalities in the gender distribution of resources and gender-specific constraints relating to productive assets and access to education, skills and paid employment should be removed to ensure women's full participation in development processes. In addition, women should be better represented in economic decision-making. Lastly, she agreed that the international community must strengthen efforts to implement the gender mainstreaming strategy by identifying and addressing gender perspectives in relation to all economic and financial resources, and develop social protection schemes. Developing countries would require international assistance in that regard.

26. **Ms. Ornbrant** (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia; and, in addition, Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that poverty eradication was one of the greatest challenges facing the world today. The significant progress made since the decision by world leaders to set poverty eradication targets now risked being halted or even reversed. The global economic recession, volatile food and energy prices, and climate change had weakened the prospects for social and economic development. Signs of recovery were tentative and did not apply to all regions and countries. The international community must focus on responding to the crisis and its impact on low-income countries.

27. The European Union's primary objective was to eradicate poverty in the context of sustainable development and through coherent policies and

actions. Too many people still lived in extreme poverty. While goal 1 of the MDGs seemed within reach, current projections suggested that about 1 billion people would be living in extreme poverty in 2015. The European Union was committed to helping developing countries attain the MDGs and to meeting its ODA targets, including the collective ODA target of 0.56 per cent of gross national income (GNI) by 2010 and 0.7 per cent of GNI by 2015. In that connection, each country must assume primary responsibility for its own development. The role of national poverty reduction and development policies and strategies could not be overemphasized.

28. The report of the Secretary-General entitled "World Survey on the Role of Women in Development" (A/64/93) was very timely and would feed important findings into the discussion under the sub-item on women in development. As noted in the report, there was a powerful body of evidence that suggested that gender equality in the distribution of economic and financial resources not only contributed to women's well-being and empowerment, but also had positive multiplier effects for a range of key development goals, including poverty reduction and economic growth.

29. Participants in the commemoration of the fifteenth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development, held on 12 and 13 October 2009, had stressed the linkages between women's empowerment, population and development. In the countdown to 2015, the European Union would accelerate action to guarantee universal access to reproductive health and reproductive health commodity security. Moreover, it would continue to work closely with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Governments, civil society and other partners to promote sexual and reproductive health and rights, women's empowerment and gender equality with a view to achieving the goals agreed at the relevant international conferences, including the International Conference on Population and Development.

30. The European Union welcomed the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Integrating a gender perspective into national development strategies" (A/64/162 and Corr.1); looked forward to the Economic and Social Council discussion on gender; and supported the establishment of a new gender entity within the United Nations system.

31. Many children around the world experienced difficulties accessing health care and education. Underdeveloped health-care systems and a lack of skilled staff were obvious obstacles. Moreover, 70 per cent of children in the least developed countries lacked a legal identity. Without documentary proof of their existence, the doors to health and education might remain closed.

32. The important links between living conditions and health had been analysed in depth by the World Health Organization (WHO) Commission on Social Determinants of Health, which noted that the dramatic and growing disparities in health and life expectancy were closely linked to differences in the way in which people lived and worked, thus confirming what ILO had stressed in its Decent Work Agenda.

33. Women owned 10 per cent of the world's property but produced 80 per cent of food in developing countries. Women's empowerment through access to assets and secure property and inheritance rights could significantly reduce poverty and malnutrition and could therefore form the basis for sustainable economic and social development.

34. The European Union welcomed the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Legal empowerment of the poor and eradication of poverty" (A/64/133). The linkages between legal empowerment of the poor and poverty eradication were clear. Individuals who could not access State services or defend their rights through formal or informal justice found it much harder to escape poverty. States must adhere to the rule of law and respect and protect human rights. In many developing countries, informal systems handled an estimated 80 per cent of cases. The role of non-State providers of justice must therefore be recognized. The United Nations system could play an important role in promoting a rights-based approach to addressing obstacles in that regard and in the sharing of national best practices. Legal empowerment of the poor was a necessary and effective process for strengthening the capability of individuals and groups experiencing poverty and exclusion and could break the vicious circle of poverty.

35. Lastly, she said that the 2009 observance of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty — the theme of which had been "Children and Families Speak Out Against Poverty" — had demonstrated that to eradicate poverty it was important to listen to children.

36. **Mr. Oemar** (Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that the Association associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Sudan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Progress towards goal 1 of the MDGs since had been uneven. According to a report by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), the 2009 Global Hunger Index had fallen by only one quarter from the 1990 Index, remaining particularly high in Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. The global economic crisis had also further derailed the fight against poverty: the number of people living in extreme poverty in 2009 was expected to be 55 million to 90 million higher than anticipated before the crisis.

37. At its fourteenth summit earlier in 2009, ASEAN had set out the Blueprint for an ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (2009-2015) which included, with respect to poverty alleviation, working towards the establishment of a data bank of poverty reduction programmes and sharing of experience and best practices through regular workshops and seminars on poverty alleviation.

38. Under the ASEAN Plus Three Cooperation Work Plan for the period 2007 to 2017, participating countries' markets would be opened to the products of ASEAN's poorer citizens and assistance would be provided with education, skills training, public health, work environment protection and creation of effective national and community institutions. The Work Plan would entail closer cooperation in capacity-building for government officials and experts in rural development and poverty eradication, the effects of trade liberalization and economic integration on rural development and poverty alleviation programmes would be monitored, and information and communications technology would be used as a tool for rural development and poverty alleviation.

39. As a result of clear and coherent poverty-alleviation strategies and mutual cooperation among ASEAN members, the proportion of people in South-East Asia living on less than \$1.25 a day had decreased from 39 per cent in 1995 to 19 per cent in 2005. The same spirit of cooperation and mutual assistance should apply in the global community. Fulfilment of the developed countries' ODA pledges of 0.7 per cent of GNI to developing countries and 0.15-0.2 per cent to least developed countries, and of duty-free, quota-free market access, would go a long way towards the

eradication of poverty and the achievement of the MDGs.

40. **Mr. Sharma** (Nepal), speaking on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries, said that the Group aligned itself with the statement made by Sudan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The food, fuel and financial crises, coupled with climate change, were destroying the living conditions of the world's poorest people. While the percentage worldwide of those living in extreme poverty had seemed to be declining, many least developed countries were lagging behind.

41. The achievements of the least developed countries during the First Decade for the Eradication of Poverty had not been matched by a commensurate flow of external resources and support; indeed, ODA had been declining.

42. The Second Decade for Poverty Eradication should focus on implementation and monitoring of initiatives to generate greater momentum for global action to eradicate poverty, including strengthened national ownership; partnership among Governments, civil society and the private sector; and alignment of United Nations country programmes with national development objectives. The eradication of poverty was not only a development goal but also a human rights challenge. The complexity of the task of poverty reduction demanded comprehensive action and a better understanding of the deep-rooted causes of poverty, which were intimately linked to lack of access to or loss of control over resources including land, skills, knowledge, capital and social connections.

43. **Mr. González Segura** (Mexico), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, said that the recent celebration of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty made it paradoxical that the number of people living in conditions of extreme poverty in 2009 was estimated to be between 55 and 90 million higher than the number that had been expected before the onset of the world financial and economic crisis. That fact rendered it essential to make the eradication of poverty a top priority in the international agenda.

44. During the First Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, important intergovernmental agreements had been reached, including the Millennium Declaration, with its commitment to eradicate extreme poverty and to halve by 2015 the number of people whose income was below one dollar per day and the number of people suffering from hunger. The heads of State and

Government meeting at the Latin American and Caribbean Summit on Integration and Development had reaffirmed their determination to undertake a vigorous social agenda for the region in line with the commitments in the Millennium Declaration.

45. The Rio Group stressed the essential role played by education in the promotion of respect, participation, equality and non-discrimination in society; the Group was committed to Goal 2 of the MDGs, and emphasized the importance of the Dakar Plan of Action and the outcomes of other international conferences in mobilizing the necessary financial resources to help the neediest countries achieve their goals relating to education for all. The 2010 high-level plenary meeting on the MDGs should bring together Heads of State, as that level of political support was necessary to achieve the goals that the international community had set itself.

46. Poverty was having a grave impact on women, who were more vulnerable than men in most countries of the Group, and according to ILO estimates women's unemployment would continue to rise faster than that of men. Even though there was a growing presence of women in the public life of many countries, continued efforts would be necessary to ensure that they were sufficiently represented in all areas, particularly in economic decision-making.

47. **Mr. Benfreha** (Algeria), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that Africa was acutely conscious of the crucial need to tackle the region's food security concerns and had already taken important steps to speed up poverty reduction measures. Africa also recognized the centrality of a green revolution to the achievement of its long-term development aspirations. The progress made towards achieving food security in Africa during the last few years had been adversely affected by the recent food, energy and financial crises. Moreover, it was estimated that as a result of climate change, up to 600 million more people in Africa could face malnutrition as agricultural systems broke down and an additional 1.8 billion people could face water shortages.

48. While the African Group found some merit in the new concept of legal empowerment of the poor, its legal and social aspects needed to be deeply and broadly discussed in order to take into account its multidisciplinary aspects.

49. Another negative factor impacting the level of poverty in the continent of Africa related to successive epidemics, in particular that of HIV/AIDS. Although global data indicated that the HIV epidemic was stabilizing on a global scale, the figures for old and new infections remained high, especially in Africa. That situation called for additional and urgent initiatives, individually and collectively, to reverse the progression of HIV/AIDS worldwide.

50. The crucial role of predictable and adequate financing in addressing the development needs of developing countries, in particular African countries, could not be overemphasized. Immediate steps must be taken to make a reality of the international community's pledges to increase ODA, including those related to the enhancement of the role of the United Nations operational activities for development. The African Group reiterated its call to developed countries that had not yet done so to make concrete efforts to reach the target of 0.7 per cent of their GNI for ODA to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent to least developed countries.

51. **Ms. Blum** (Colombia) said that poverty reduction constituted a fundamental basis for the construction of more equitable and democratic societies. Colombia's experience indicated that implementation of policies to favour sustained economic growth was vital, along with job creation, enhanced citizen and investor confidence and wider opportunities for entrepreneurship. Her Government had taken steps to strengthen the social protection system, increase the provision of education and health, improve the quality of urban life and enhance access to credit, property and housing. Securing the well-being of the most vulnerable sectors of the population was one of the core elements of its Colombian Government policies.

52. The failure to reach agreement at the General Assembly's previous session to request a report on implementation of the Second Decade for the Eradication of Poverty meant that the Committee did not have updated information to guide its discussions. An overview was needed of the main challenges involved in countering the effects of the economic crisis on the global fight against poverty, along with recommendations on how to make the best use of the strategies to be applied during the Second Decade.

53. With regard to the Secretary-General's report on the legal empowerment of the poor (A/64/133),

Colombia stressed the need to maintain the development perspective in the analysis and negotiations of the Second Committee, as well as avoiding discussions that might divert the Committee from the valuable and action-oriented consensus that had been reached in the past. A comprehensive approach must be taken to empowerment of the most vulnerable, including their economic and social empowerment and a greater participation in decision-making.

54. The key factor in efforts to identify new approaches to overcoming poverty would be to focus on consolidating strategies for overcoming existing gaps in the implementation of intergovernmental commitments, so as to work together for poverty eradication.

55. **Mr. Carbajal** (United States of America) said that the international community had long recognized that a sustainable path to prosperity had to be based on a foundation of good governance, rule of law and an enabling business environment. Progress on meeting the MDGs had been uneven. Sub-Saharan Africa, despite considerable progress made in the 1990s, was estimated to be falling behind the schedule for the 2015 deadline. The United States strongly supported the many international efforts under way to accelerate development in Africa, many of which were built on commitments the African nations themselves had made.

56. The United States would continue to commit its resources and work with others to address global poverty and promote economic and social development. Even in the midst of a global recession, trade and investment with the United States continued to be powerful forces for poverty eradication for many developing countries.

57. However, the Monterrey Consensus and the Doha Declaration both recognized that more than a transfer of resources through ODA was necessary to achieve the MDGs. Private financial flows through trade, investment and remittances, as well as domestic sources of revenue, were crucial to development. Transparent, accountable Governments committed to creating enabling environments, implementing sound policies and institutions and engaging with local people — including women farmers and entrepreneurs — had more broad-based opportunities to foster inclusive sustainable economic growth and reduce poverty.

58. In addition to the steps the United States was taking alone and with other countries to stabilize the world economy and promote broad-based economic growth, it was focusing its governmental resources on two key areas of concern: food security and health. At the London Summit of the Group of 20 (G-20), President Obama had underscored the commitment of the United States to assist the world's poorest by pledging to double funding for agricultural development, and in May 2009 he had announced a six-year, \$63 billion, comprehensive global health strategy.

59. **Dr. Li Kexin** (China) observed that despite the progress made over the years in formulating strategies for poverty reduction, poverty persisted, and the MDG of halving the population living on less than one dollar a day remained elusive in a number of countries. Moreover, the financial crisis of 2008 had plunged the world into an economic recession from which the international community was still struggling to recover.

60. Poverty had multiple causes, economic, social, historical and other factors among them. It had been further aggravated by the inequitable international political and economic order and the unbalanced development of globalization. Developed countries had the obligation and responsibility to provide help to developing countries by honouring their commitments regarding financial assistance, technology transfer, debt relief and trade. Developing countries for their part should continue to pursue their own efforts towards economic development, while the United Nations should play a leading and coordinating role and designate specific mechanisms to promote, finance and monitor the implementation of the Second Decade for the Eradication of Poverty.

61. The economic development of its people had always been the focus of the work of the Chinese Government. Through its integration of natural resources exploitation with human resources development, and poverty reduction and development efforts with environmental protection, remarkable results had been achieved, with the rural population living in extreme poverty reduced from 250 million in 1978 to 14.79 million in 2007, and the low-income population from 62.13 million in 2000 to 28.41 million in 2007. China had thus achieved the MDG of poverty reduction ahead of schedule, but it was well aware of the enormous challenges it still faced if it was to eliminate poverty and achieve prosperity for all its people.

62. There was broad consensus within the international community regarding the advancement of women, the safeguarding of their rights and interests, and gender equality. Consequently, countries should effectively implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and should safeguard the rights and interests of women by all means, including necessary changes in the law.

63. The Chinese Government encouraged women's participation in political, social and economic fields and had used legislative, judicial and administrative means to safeguard their rights and promote their development. The Programme for the Development of Chinese Women (2001-2010), containing specific targets and measures for women's participation in political life, employment, education, health care, poverty reduction and for the elimination of violence against them, had helped Chinese women to play their full role in all spheres of social life.

64. **Mr. Eat** (Cambodia) said that poverty eradication was the key element in Cambodia's development agenda. Over the past decade, the Government had taken conscientious measures in its approach to poverty reduction and had implemented a series of policies resulting in remarkable progress. A recent World Bank study had placed Cambodia among the 10 developing countries with the highest economic growth rate from 1998 to 2007, but growth had slowed in 2008 to around 7 per cent, although that was still relatively high by international standards. At the same time, Cambodia had reduced the rate of poverty from 45 per cent in 1994 to around 30 per cent in 2008.

65. Developing countries' progress in reducing poverty had been uneven, with the number of people living in poverty in some countries continuing to increase. The global financial and economic crises along with food insecurity had made it immeasurably difficult for developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, to live up to the international commitment to eradicate extreme poverty and to halve by 2015 the proportion of people whose income was less than one dollar a day and the proportion suffering hunger.

66. In order to help mitigate the impact of the economic and financial disaster on developing countries, everything possible should be done to set the

Doha Round negotiations back on course, so as to break down barriers to trade and reduce agricultural subsidies. Cambodia greatly appreciated the commitment of the G-20 made in Pittsburgh to bring the Doha Round to a successful conclusion in 2010. At the same time, the Monterrey Consensus should be revived in order to help developing countries alleviate poverty and attain the MDGs.

67. Climate change was another most serious threat to humanity. Global warming had triggered increasingly frequent cyclones, typhoons, extreme floods and droughts. As an agrarian country with more than 80 percent of the population dependent on farming for its livelihood, Cambodia was very vulnerable to weather-related disasters. Its Government was fully aware of the serious consequences of climate change and global warming for the well-being, livelihood and development of peoples around the world, and was hopeful that all countries and all actors would work together to reach agreement in Copenhagen.

68. Cambodia welcomed the firm commitments made by many developed countries to achieve by 2015 the target of 0.7 per cent of their GNI as ODA to developing countries and 0.15 per cent to 0.2 per cent to least developed countries; to provide duty-free and quota-free market access; to offer a durable solution to the debt problems of developing countries; to provide technologies and technical support; and to reform the international financial architecture.

69. **Mr. Al-Fayez** (Saudi Arabia) said that his Government was particularly concerned to address the problem of poverty, and therefore emphasized the importance of concerted international and regional efforts to attain global economic and financial solutions and to enable developing countries to maximize the advancement of their economies. Those goals could be achieved by improving economic systems and financial markets, urging developed countries to honour their responsibilities towards developing countries and opening markets to all the latter's products.

70. The Saudi Fund for Development administered several grants to help friendly countries in some of their development projects and to fight against poverty. Moreover, the Kingdom contributed to the initiatives administered by the International Monetary Fund in the area of debt relief for poor countries, re-scheduling loans, writing off some developing country debts and

providing new loans to countries affected by unforeseen circumstances. The report of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs confirmed that the Kingdom had topped the world in contributions to humanitarian relief operations in 2008.

71. The persistence of poverty was unacceptable, especially in the current stage of technological progress and agricultural production. The international community must make a serious effort to make the issue of hunger and poverty a central focus, raise levels of assistance, and improve its effectiveness through greater coordination among donors.

72. **Ms. Vyas** (India) said that, coupled with the impacts of the food and energy crises of the previous year, the ongoing financial and economic crisis had pushed millions back into poverty and threatened to reverse years of development gains. Against that background, it was imperative that poverty eradication continue to receive the highest attention of the United Nations and the international community. The First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty had played an important role in anchoring poverty eradication at the core of the United Nations development agenda, and India looked forward to taking that momentum further in the implementation of the Second Decade, with the important theme of employment.

73. The United Nations must be proactive in creating an international environment that assisted developing countries to implement their national development strategies. In addition to increased financial and technical assistance by the international community, improved market access, debt relief and technology transfer were crucial to creating an international environment conducive to development. International governance structures must be reformed, with greater participation by the developing countries.

74. There was no "one-size-fits-all" answer to the complex problems of poverty eradication. Each country must therefore have the policy space to formulate and implement its own development strategy, based on its unique challenges and conditions. In the current economic environment, developing countries must be assisted to implement countercyclical measures for social sector investment and economic revival. That meant that the global partnership for development to which all countries had committed must be fully

implemented. The Development Cooperation Forum of the Economic and Social Council should play a central role in international development cooperation.

75. Women had a key role to play in the development process. Gender equality and women's empowerment were vital, particularly because of their multiplier effect on socio-economic growth. Policy approaches must encourage active involvement by women in planning and decision-making, women's education, improved access of women to productive resources and opportunities and greater investment in women's health and nutrition. Progressive legal provisions, efforts to reduce the gap between de jure and de facto equality, gender mainstreaming and gender-disaggregated information were crucial tools in those efforts. The international community must provide greater financial and technical resources to assist developing countries to implement gender-sensitive national development strategies.

76. Over one million Indian women at the grass-roots level had been brought into political decision-making following the reservation 13 years before of one third of all urban and local self-government posts in India for women. A similar quota for women in the Indian Parliament remained under consideration. India's Joint Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women independently monitored equality and empowerment of women and ensured that legislation was gender-responsive. More than 2 million women's self-help groups were supporting more than 10 million rural families, and the Government was also encouraging women entrepreneurs through special assistance schemes.

77. India was strongly committed to the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and to the concept that women's rights, as human rights, should be extended to freedom to choose one's vocation and to the right not to be discriminated against or exploited.

78. **Mr. Bachmann** (Switzerland) said that poverty eradication remained one of the greatest global challenges of the day. Progress towards the realization of the MDGs and other internationally agreed development goals had been slowed by the world's financial and economic crisis. All countries had to reinvigorate their efforts to tackle poverty in the spirit of the global partnership for development. With only about five years to go to 2015, innovative approaches

that could catalyse the achievement of the MDGs had to be intensified.

79. One of those approaches was legal empowerment of the poor. The exclusion of poor people from the legal system hindered their ability to secure their livelihood, entitlements and rights, and to leverage their assets. Legal insecurity impeded sustainable economic development and prevented poor people from accessing more ambitious markets for their products, thereby discouraging them from investing in their future. Convinced that the link between economic opportunity and legal protection deserved greater attention in poverty eradication strategies, Switzerland had supported the work of the Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor.

80. Legal empowerment of the poor was a comprehensive reform agenda with four interlinked pillars: access to justice, property rights, business rights and labour rights. The rule of law and human rights principles, in particular access to information, non-discrimination and participation, were important elements of the legal empowerment of the poor. It was crucial to enhance not just the economic but also the social and political capacity of poor people in order to enable them to take part in decision-making, paying special attention to women and indigenous people. While all pillars of legal empowerment of the poor were crucial, some issues were of particular importance. For example, often poor people did not exist as citizens because they were not recognized before the law; it was therefore crucial to improve registration and birth-records systems.

81. While improving formal justice systems was very important, traditional informal justice mechanisms could play a complementary role. They often had the advantage of being "culturally accessible" to the poor; they were low-cost and could help to unburden overstretched formal justice systems. They must, however, be non-discriminatory, respect basic considerations of due process, and be coherent with the formal system.

82. Bringing informal businesses and work force into the formal sector was not a prerequisite for granting protection to informal sector workers. A minimal package of protection going beyond the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work applicable to workers in both the formal and the

informal sectors could be implemented relatively quickly.

83. **Ms. Loza** (Nicaragua) said that Nicaragua, like the rest of the world, was going through an extremely difficult time as the result of the world economic and financial crisis. Nevertheless, its Government was determined to continue with its plans, which so far had freed the country of illiteracy, provided its population with free education and health services and opened the way to microcredit, with particular emphasis on the empowerment of women, especially in the agricultural sector, in which Nicaragua was a leading exporter of cereals.

84. Historically, the Sandinista revolution had assigned a leading role to women in all development. At the present time, the great majority of social projects were particularly directed towards Nicaraguan women, and the Government was implementing its commitment to assign to them 50 per cent of all government posts, including at decision-making level.

85. Those modest but significant advances were a further manifestation of the new values with which Nicaragua was heading towards the future. Ironically, though, that march towards a new economic and social order had brought her country not only friends and major alliances but also in some cases a regrettable abandonment by the standard-bearers of human rights.

86. The question must be asked what exactly the recent International Day for the Eradication of Poverty had been celebrating. Was it the 1.4 billion people living in poverty, 550 million of them in extreme poverty? Or was it the \$18 billion spent to save private banking, 150 times more than had been spent on combating poverty in the whole of 2008 and 20 times spending for that purpose over the past 50 years? Under a system that promoted the concentration of capital in a few hands, the fact that the combined gross domestic product of the 40 poorest countries was less than the total wealth of the seven richest individuals in the world was one of the most conclusive proofs that the system served just a few select interests.

87. It needed to be emphasized that poverty existed not only in the developing countries, but there were afflicted millions in the developed countries as well. Worldwide, some 40,000 people a day died as a result of the neoliberal policies imposed on them, but their deaths were considered just nameless statistics, which consequently many people absorbed without remorse,

although in essence they were collectively responsible for those deaths.

88. The long and hard negotiations on the resolution on the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty at the Assembly's sixty-third session had resulted, purportedly for financial reasons, in inadequate language, supported by the developed countries, regarding the holding at the sixty-eighth session of a meeting on poverty eradication. If that attitude still persisted, then many millions more were destined to die in order to safeguard the enrichment of a few. Nicaragua trusted that a new spirit of solidarity and equality would guide the work of the Second Committee at the current session.

89. **Mr. Tarawneh** (Jordan) said that poverty was the principal challenge to development efforts and the world's greatest moral challenge, for it usurped human freedom, rights and dignity. In many societies the poor could not enjoy their fundamental economic, legal and social rights because they could not afford it. Despite the opportunities offered by globalization, the current distribution of its costs and benefits was unfavourable to developing countries. Poverty was a global problem that required joint efforts.

90. Jordan's Constitution stipulated equality and non-discrimination among all Jordanians, men and women, and emphasized the Government's fundamental responsibility to ensure work, education and equal opportunity for all. It forbade the appropriation of private land except for the public good, and then only with just compensation, and guaranteed workers' rights. The Constitution provided that the courts of law were accessible to all without discrimination and that no other authority could interfere with their operation. Jordanian laws favoured the poor, the marginalized, women and children. The Government had recently established an Office of Ombudsman to look into complaints of any citizen, rich or poor, man or woman.

91. The Government had recently passed a law against trafficking in human beings, a scourge that primarily affected the poor, the marginalized, women and children. Jordan was a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child and had recently acceded to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized

Crime. It was a member of ILO and the Human Security Network.

92. **Mr. Meñez** (Philippines) said that the protection of legal rights of the poor and vulnerable, including women, who were indispensable partners in development, was the foundation upon which the eradication of poverty must be built. In the specific case of women, the Constitution of the Philippines explicitly provided that “The State recognizes the role of women in nation building, and shall ensure the fundamental equality before the law of women and men”. The latest expression of that tenet was the passage of the Magna Carta of Women in August 2009 that sought to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women by recognizing and promoting their rights, especially those in the marginalized sectors, in all spheres of life — political participation, economic development, justice, peace and security, as well as in domestic and private life. It also protected women from all forms of violence, ensured mandatory training on human rights and gender sensitivity for all relevant government agents, and increased the legal accountability of violators.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.