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## Second Committee

### Summary record of the 21st meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 5 November 2012 at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Islam ..... (Bangladesh)

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*In the absence of Mr. Talbot (Guyana), Mr. Islam (Bangladesh), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.*

**Agenda item 24: Eradication of poverty and other development issues (A/67/228) (continued)**

**(a) Implementation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017) (A/67/180) (continued)**

**(b) Industrial development cooperation (A/67/223) (continued)**

1. **Mr. Landveld** (Suriname), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that the adverse impacts of the prolonged economic crisis might affect his region's ability to reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on time. Agriculture was the main source of livelihood for poor people and agricultural productivity and rural development were vital for poverty reduction and sustainable development. With support from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), CARICOM's Council on Trade and Economic Development had endorsed the Caribbean Regional Policy for Food and Nutrition Security (policy framework 2011-2025 and was currently developing an early warning system for food and nutrition security throughout the Caribbean region. The renewed emphasis on agriculture was critical for countering rising food prices and to ensure that the region ate what it produced. Food security was also linked to reversing the region's high incidence of chronic non-communicable diseases.

2. The greatest weapon of the poor against poverty was their ability to work, which required full and productive employment for all. Despite some progress, steep challenges remained across the Caribbean in the context of the current global crises, including increased competition for scarcer jobs, an increase in the overall number of working poor, the disproportionate impact of the crisis on young people, and rising food prices. Poverty tended to increase when food prices rose, since poor people spent larger shares of their income on food. In addition, the current situation negatively impacted investments in health, education and capacity-building, which were crucial for helping people secure decent work and escape poverty as well as for promoting social inclusion and greater social equity.

3. With the exception of Haiti, all States in the region had been classified as middle-income countries based on criteria such as per capita income. The recent damage caused by hurricane Sandy was evidence that such criteria needed to be adjusted to take the region's natural vulnerabilities into account.

4. Finally, poverty eradication should be the top priority of the United Nations development agenda within the overall framework of the MDGs. Donor countries, multilateral organizations and other development partners needed to intensify assistance to developing countries to implement the Chief Executives Board 2009 Global Jobs Pact and the Social Protection Floor Initiative. Similarly, other United Nations development agencies, in partnership with member States and other stakeholders, should give priority to the system-wide plan of action for the Second Decade.

5. **Mr. Khan** (Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that to ensure achievement of the MDGs by 2015 ASEAN had implemented a five-part road map focusing on advocacy and linkages, knowledge, resources, expertise and regional cooperation and regional public goods. The organization had also adopted a Framework Action Plan on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication (2011-2015), which focused on sustainable rural development and economic growth, food security and food sovereignty amid climate change, social protection and safety nets, development of infrastructure and human resources in rural areas, constituency-building for rural development and poverty eradication, and monitoring and evaluation of poverty reduction in the region.

6. Both food price volatility and enhanced food productivity required improved risk management coordination among institutions through greater and more responsible investment, as well as through enhanced agricultural innovation, knowledge management, technology transfer and human resources development, with a focus on small-scale farmers. He also stressed the need to strengthen the region's network of social security systems by sharing best practices along with research and information on viable social security measures for vulnerable groups.

7. He called for improved coordination among all stakeholders, including the public and private sectors as well as United Nations agencies, with a view to

implementing the MDGs. In that regard, he recalled the Secretary-General's report on the Implementation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017) (A/66/221) and stressed the need for continued regional and international efforts to provide adequate employment opportunities and decent work for all, which should be a central part of States' policy frameworks for sustained, inclusive and equitable growth.

8. Adequate resources should be invested to help developing countries meet the MDGs by 2015. Developed countries needed to meet their ODA commitments in order to achieve poverty eradication.

9. **Mr. Elmajerbi** (Libya) said that poverty eradication was the sine qua non for achieving sustainable development. But uneven gains in economic growth and agricultural development meant that the MDGs might be difficult for many developing countries to achieve. The technological exclusion of the countries of the South demanded urgent attention and partnerships to help them, especially the least developed countries. The international community should harness the necessary political will, bringing together the United Nations and the private and public sectors.

10. Libya's socialist regime had negatively impacted the standard of living of its citizens, most of whom depended on State salaries to survive. After the successful revolution of February 2012, the Transitional National Council had issued a decree to raise salaries, in order to provide decent living conditions and to eradicate poverty and want. There were also programmes aimed at achieving political stability by emphasizing investment in both the public and private sectors.

11. **Mr. Deepka Dhital** (Nepal) said that, despite the global crisis, extreme poverty had continued to decline in most developing countries. However, the gains were extremely fragile and could be vulnerable to reversal without continued and enhanced support. The remaining pockets would be more difficult to tackle, because they were largely in backward, rural areas across the world. The sustainability of poverty reduction efforts was thus a priority both for the review of the Millennium Development Goals and for the post-2015 development agenda.

12. Although Nepal had reduced the proportion of its people living in extreme poverty from 42 per cent in

1995-1996 to 25.2 per cent in 2008-2009, there were still some 7 million people living below the poverty line and several million others near it. As a mountainous, landlocked least developed country emerging from conflict, Nepal faced multiple constraints that had hindered its efforts to eradicate poverty, including the lack or loss of control over resources such as land, capital, skills, knowledge and social connections. His country also had to contend with the ongoing effects of the global economic crisis, such as limited productive capacity, increased vulnerability to internal and external shocks, supply side constraints, and low levels of investment and job creation. It was critical for Nepal to build productive capacity and to develop its resilience to multiple shocks, including the disproportionate impact of climate change.

13. Nepal was committed to fighting poverty, inequality and social exclusion and had launched a number of initiatives for reaching the most vulnerable sectors of society, including women, children, older people, dalits and those in backward areas of the country. More support from development partners and non-governmental organizations was required to complement the Government's efforts in that regard. Lack of employment had spurred a rise in migration and remittances had become an important contributor to the economy as well as a means for alleviating poverty. He stressed the need for concerted efforts to protect the basic rights of migrants in receiving countries.

14. **Mr. Momen** (Bangladesh) said that progress in reducing poverty had been less than expected and uneven. National efforts could not be sustained without commensurate external support. With a decline in ODA and stalled negotiations for a new international trade regime, debt relief had not released sufficient resources to counter the effects of the current global crises, which had compounded the climate of uncertainty and helplessness for the world's poorest people. The impact had been greatest on the most vulnerable countries, especially the least developed countries and sub-Saharan Africa, and on the most vulnerable groups within them, in particular women and children, dimming the prospects for meeting the MDGs on time.

More than one billion people now lived in extreme poverty and hunger worldwide. Soaring food prices and rapid climate change would push millions

more into extreme poverty, and climate change would put another 50 million at risk of hunger by 2020.

15. Bangladesh supported the Secretary-General's recommendation for a comprehensive plan of action for the Second Decade for the Eradication of Poverty and urged that the top priority should be capacity-building to enable the least developed countries to achieve economic emancipation through an expanded safety net. The Istanbul Programme of Action could help those countries to develop badly needed infrastructure to advance that goal.

16. Along with reversing the declining flow of development assistance, the international community should step up efforts to address unemployment and the job crisis while promoting productive capacities and strengthening agricultural development. Initiatives to promote trade expansion, including the removal of trade barriers and agricultural subsidies, as well as improved market access for agricultural products and goods and services from least developed countries, would promote poverty eradication and economic growth. Developed countries should fulfill their commitments to offer 100 per cent duty-free and quota-free market access to all products of least developed countries, as agreed under the so-called early harvest measures of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Bangladesh also supported the Global Jobs Pact and called for United Nations agencies to provide core financing to assist Governments with projects to advance employment opportunities for youth and women.

17. **Ms. Assaf** (Brazil) said that her country shared the sense of urgency expressed at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) with respect to freeing humanity from hunger and poverty. However, Brazil also shared the Secretary-General's concern that the positive results achieved so far might conceal the enormous challenges that lay ahead. Progress to date had not reduced the absolute number of people living in extreme poverty in many developing countries; in addition, middle-income countries, even those enjoying relative prosperity, still comprised the majority of the world's poor. United Nations agencies should bear in mind that countries in that category still needed assistance with poverty eradication.

18. The focus should be on social protection schemes and the promotion of job creation and decent work. In

Latin America and the Caribbean, initiatives in non-economic areas had significantly helped to reduce poverty despite the economic crisis. Brazil had adopted social protection policies designed to enhance the inclusion of the poorest sectors of society, but social initiatives needed to go hand in hand with macroeconomic programmes favourable to job creation and decent work.

19. The choice of orthodox fiscal policies in response to the recession had actually worsened the effects of the crisis in developed economies and exacerbated the situation for emerging countries. There were alternative and more effective means to promote job creation and decent work. The Global Jobs Pact of the International Labour Organization (ILO) allowed countries to formulate approaches tailored to their specific needs and priorities.

20. Recalling paragraph 23 (b) of the MDG outcome document, he said that industrial development was crucial as a multiplier for job creation and for breaking the poverty cycle, especially among unemployed youth, and should be promoted as a tool for accelerating progress towards the Goals. Industrial development could play a decisive role in a range of social and economic spheres and did not apply only to manufacturing but also included agroindustry, energy and mining. It was regrettable that there had been so little reference to industrial development at the national level in recent United Nations debates. While that might be explained by fear that recognition of the role of industrial development could lead to protectionism, member States would need to formulate new national industrial policies as part of their follow-up to the recommendations of the ministerial declaration adopted at the 2012 High-level Segment of the Economic and Social Council. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) required more support from stakeholders for industrial development as one of the most effective means to promote job creation and decent work for all in the context of sustainable eradication of extreme poverty worldwide.

21. **Ms. Leshkova** (Belarus) said that efforts to further industrial development and its transition to a green economy were important to ensure economic and social stability and to preserve the planet for future generations. Her country wished to commend UNIDO and its Director-General for promoting renewable energy and fully agreed that the idea of sustainable

energy should be central to efforts to develop the global economy, with particular focus on vulnerable groups such as women and youth. Both developing States and middle-income countries, which depended to a large degree on their industrial sectors, should have real access to new sources of sustainable and green technology.

22. Belarus particularly welcomed the Green Industry Platform, a joint initiative of UNIDO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) announced in June 2012, which could serve as a catalyst for the development of green industry. The establishment in 2009 with UNIDO support of the Regional Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency of the Economic Community of West African States could serve as one model for such forward-looking projects.

It was also imperative to establish a broader United Nations energy agenda for sustainable development that took into account the interests of all member States.

23. **Mr. Waheedi** (Afghanistan) said that the impressive gains in poverty reduction had been inconsistent, with most of the successes concentrated in East Asia. His country was among those that had not kept pace with poverty reduction. Recent food price volatility had hampered sustained economic growth, resulting in year-round food insecurity for 20 per cent of the population, seasonal food shortages for another 20 per cent, and lack of access to improved water for 58 per cent of urban residents. The average life expectancy for an Afghan baby born today was under 50 years.

24. That dismal panorama had been compounded other factors, including his country's landlocked status and decades of conflict that had destroyed transportation and irrigation systems. That had intensified the consequences of the severe droughts of 2008 and 2011 for the agricultural sector, which employed 80 per cent of the working population. The country's susceptibility to flooding and drought had been exacerbated by both climate change and the Government's limited ability to provide emergency relief, making the Afghan people ever more vulnerable to the effects of recent disruptions such as the food, energy and financial crises or the previous year's spike in food prices.

25. Faced with such challenges, along with a low level of education and few outlets for employment,

poor Afghans were drawn into work for criminal organizations or militias, creating a self-reinforcing situation of insecurity and making poverty a vicious cycle. However, development efforts could themselves become a virtuous cycle, with infrastructure projects such as better highways enabling further development projects as well as improving the ability of Afghans to sell their goods abroad. Similar efforts in agriculture would improve the employment situation while also ensuring sustainable land use that preserved natural resources over time.

26. Afghanistan was committed to a national development strategy based on a strong, private sector-led economy aimed at fostering good governance, economic and social development, the rule of law and human rights. After the withdrawal of international forces, the support of the international community, as encouragingly affirmed at the Tokyo Conference in July, would be critical. He also stressed the importance of respecting the principles of country ownership and nationally determined development priorities established at the Fourth High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, held in Busan.

27. **Ms. Bielkina** (Ukraine) said that the world currently faced a host of issues not reflected in the original MDGs, such as development of national productive capacity and energy efficiency, access to adequate food and rural development. Cooperation must involve all countries in development decision-making and action, with an increasing role for middle-income States.

28. The eradication of poverty was an absolute priority for Ukraine and was reflected in numerous proclamations, legislation and programmes aimed at promoting higher standards of living, enhanced employment opportunities, better wages and pensions, social security and health care, social support for young people and families, protection of children's rights, and the investment climate. Current figures were encouraging. The population living below the national poverty threshold had decreased but a quarter of working families with children were still classified as poor. Ukraine's industrial development growth rate was one of the highest in the Commonwealth of Independent States. Along with increased State support to the agricultural sector, that had increased agricultural production by 18.1 per cent from 2010 to 2011.

29. Technical cooperation between Ukraine and UNIDO continued to develop in full compliance with the Government's priorities. Ukraine welcomed UNIDO's contribution to promoting economic growth in Eastern Europe as well as worldwide and its unique role in industrial development cooperation and had joined that organization's Green Industry Platform, with preparations under way to begin a feasibility study on developing a resource-efficient green economy road map for the country by 2020.

30. **Mr. Monthienvichienchai** (Thailand) said that his country was strongly committed eradicating poverty. Looking beyond 2015, the challenge of poverty needed to be tackled concurrently with environmental and social issues, with priority given to better access to quality education and universal health care. Meanwhile, the international community needed to implement short-, medium- and long-term measures to cushion the impact of the global economic crisis on the poor. In that context, Thailand had earmarked some 90 per cent of its ODA budget to assisting its neighbouring countries through education and public health programmes.

31. Echoing the Secretary-General's report, he said that manufacturing was an important driver of economic growth and that UNIDO had a vital role to play in promoting exchanges of best practices as well as technology transfers, especially those related to clean energy. Other United Nations agencies should step up their assistance to developing countries in the areas of capacity-building and awareness of environmental issues, and should provide policy advice that would synergize those countries' efforts to support the use of renewable energy.

32. **Mr. Bame** (Ethiopia) said that the global economic slowdown and highly volatile food prices were complicating poverty reduction, especially in Africa. Although the proportion of people living in extreme poverty had been halved in certain regions, the adverse impact of climate change, low investment in productive sectors, acute infrastructure bottlenecks and lack of fair trade opportunities posed a threat to African development gains of the previous decade. In absolute numbers, poverty was still on the rise in sub-Saharan Africa. Three years before the target date for the Millennium Development Goals, it was essential to scale up international efforts in line with the outcome documents of major United Nations conferences and summits on economic and social issues. The United

Nations development system and the Bretton Woods institutions should play a central role in planning and implementing the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017).

33. Ethiopia had a five-year development plan aimed at rapid economic transformation and at facilitating the country's reclassification as a middle-income country by 2020. It was determined to end poverty by promoting rapid and equitable economic growth, developing sustainable agriculture, creating favourable conditions for industry, enhancing infrastructural and social development, improving capacity-building and good governance and empowering youth and women.

34. Results thus far were encouraging, with a substantial decline in poverty. Despite remaining challenges, Ethiopia was on track to achieve most of the MDGs and was grateful to its partners from both developed and developing countries for their cooperation.

35. **Mr. Llorentty Solíz** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that the consequences of the global financial economic crisis were continuing to affect employment and decent work, particularly for young people, women and indigenous peoples. The economic policies imposed by the Bretton Woods institutions were impacting the developing world, increasing unemployment and hunger and undermining the sovereignty of certain States over their own resources. The International Labour Organization had recently estimated global unemployment at 207 million, an alarming figure that underscored the critical need for the international community to support the policies adopted by developing countries and for the developed countries to fulfil their pledge to devote 0.7 per cent of their GDP to ODA.

36. The action plan for the Second Decade would allow member States and the United Nations system to make employment and decent work a global priority in order to eradicate poverty. It was also crucial for the Committee to discuss the root causes of poverty and not just its consequences. The policies of the Bretton Woods institutions had violated social, economic and cultural rights. In that context, the international community needed to firmly support the policies implemented by developing countries.

37. Despite the many concurrent crises, Latin America had maintained a faster economic growth rate than the developed countries, which had allowed it to

reduce poverty and hunger. In his country, according to the report on the State of Food Security in the World 2012 compiled by FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Least Developed Countries Unit, one million people had emerged from malnutrition between 2009 and 2012. That shift could be attributed to the Government's public policies and job creation initiatives but also to the implementation of its five-year National Development Plan which, like the Hunger-Free Latin America and the Caribbean 2025 Initiative, sought to eradicate hunger within a generation. His country had also raised its minimum wage, nationalized its strategic natural resources and achieved a GDP growth rate of 4.5 per cent and a significant drop in unemployment. One million people had moved from poverty into the middle class.

38. Finally, with the failure of financial capitalism, a new formula had emerged: green capitalism, which used the idea of a green economy and environmental services as a way to monetize the role of nature. In practice, that would create new financial bubbles that would have a drastic impact on the developing world.

39. **Ms. Annu Tandon** (India) said that, despite the 2008 global crisis and its aftermath, India had been quite successful in achieving sustained economic growth, with 188 million people projected to have been removed from poverty by 2015. Even so, her country would still be home to the largest number of global poor, numbering more than 300 million. Growth alone was not sufficient; it had to inclusively distribute opportunities and resources. Since poverty was multi-dimensional, programmes to combat it needed to address multiple challenges, including malnutrition and hunger, infant mortality, food security and rural infrastructure. Growth also needed to be equitable. Women were at the centre of her country's development policies and programmes, and 50 per cent of seats on local governing bodies had been reserved for women.

40. Since agriculture remained the principal livelihood for people in rural areas, more investment was needed in irrigation, roads, cold storage and energy access. At the same time, skills development and training were fundamental for job creation, especially in developing countries. India was implementing innovative programmes in that area which might serve as templates for the future.

41. The majority of developed countries had not met their 0.7 per cent commitment for ODA, which had declined globally in 2011 by almost 3 per cent to \$133.5 billion, the first such drop since 1997, and by 9 per cent to least developed countries. In that context, it was essential to move forward on the Doha Round, on climate control negotiations and on comprehensive reform of the Bretton Woods institutions to ensure the equitable participation of developing nations.

42. India remained committed to sharing its development experience through South-South cooperation, but such cooperation could not be a substitute for North-South cooperation and should be allowed to grow within its own space and in accordance with its own principles.

43. **Mr. Tawlah** (Saudi Arabia) said that development and the eradication of poverty were a moral responsibility that required collective effort to explore the causes and the consequences of crises. Saudi Arabia had made great strides towards the Millennium Development Goals and had eradicated poverty before 2015. It had contributed to development efforts in both developing and least developed countries through national, international and regional programmes, and by participating in initiatives of the International Monetary Fund, in particular with respect to debt relief. It had donated \$500 million to the World Food Programme and had participated in the international development fund of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries with an agreement to contribute \$100 million to the World Bank project promoting trade and alleviating poverty in all its forms.

44. Saudi Arabia attached great importance to eradicating poverty and would continue to implement the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20).

45. **Ms. Li** (Singapore) said that, while much remained to be done, her country had made good progress in improving its economic and social infrastructure, with the help, cooperation and expertise of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other United Nations agencies.

46. Rapid economic growth was necessary for poverty reduction. To that end, the policy framework for sustained, inclusive and equitable growth should focus on productive employment, as job creation was the most sustainable way of raising wages and helping lower-income populations. Singapore's economic and

tax strategies included a jobs credit scheme giving employers cash rebates for each local worker kept on their payroll. The Government had decided actively to intervene in order to promote social cohesion and well-being, as income and opportunities would continue to bypass poorer populations if left purely to a free market. Instead of providing entitlements, Singapore focused on providing opportunities, subsidizing education and home ownership and supporting employment through workfare and not welfare. A progressive fiscal system, combined with the transfer system, meant that for every dollar a low-income household paid in taxes, it received more than \$4 in transfers and benefits.

47. Effective implementation of strategies was crucial for countries where Government taxes and expenditure were relatively low as a percentage of GDP. Consequently, the Government targeted its spending, kept administrative costs low and occasionally sacrificed comprehensiveness for efficiency, while still ensuring effectiveness and timeliness. Singapore also faced the challenges of increasing inequality and stagnation in lowest incomes, along with a rapidly ageing population, which would inevitably place pressure on infrastructure and spending. It was committed and looked forward to supporting international efforts in helping partner countries attain the MDGs.

48. **Mr. Haniff** (Malaysia) said that cohesive action was urgently needed to boost productive capacities and investments, create more jobs and sustain the incomes of working families and the poor and vulnerable. Malaysia had reduced poverty to about 2.8 per cent of the population and expected to reduce the figure further. A national poverty databank helped to ensure the effectiveness of the country's poverty eradication programme. Poverty eradication initiatives included a land reform programme which had brought citizens involved in the land distribution scheme out of poverty.

49. The Government had embarked on structural economic and political reforms through a variety of programmes aimed at achieving high economic growth in a sustained, inclusive and equitable fashion and enabling Malaysia to become a developed nation by 2020. To ensure social justice, it promoted universal participation in the economy, according to own needs, and equitable access to health, education and basic infrastructure for disadvantaged groups. Malaysia had launched many initiatives promoting national unity and

a fair and just society, which provided various forms of cash and other assistance for low and middle-income earners. The focus was on women, youth and indigenous populations.

50. Regionally and globally, Malaysia would continue to share its experience with other developing countries via its Technical Cooperation Programme. Combining resources, experience and expertise was the best way forward, particularly in view of the multifaceted nature of poverty eradication and the need to involve a whole range of stakeholders both nationally and internationally.

51. **Ms. Feng Xin** (China) said that, while significant progress had been made towards the MDG target of halving absolute poverty by 2015, more than 1 billion people across the world remained in extreme poverty, primarily in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa; there were still large numbers of poor people in middle income countries; and poverty reduction efforts had been severely hampered by the international financial crisis. As spelled out in the Rio+20 outcome document, the eradication of poverty was an indispensable requirement for sustainable development and should therefore remain at the core of the post-2015 development agenda.

52. To that end, job creation should be stimulated through appropriate policies and developing countries should incorporate poverty reduction strategies and targets into their overarching national economic and social development plans. They should strive to lift their people out of poverty through productive employment and decent work, focusing on young people and women, and through redistribution and restructuring initiatives to narrow the gap between rich and poor and to strengthen their social safety nets.

53. Poverty in developing countries should be tackled through the strengthening of international cooperation, the enhanced coordination of macroeconomic policy, reform of the international financial system, and promotion of the Doha Round with a view to creating a favourable external environment for the development of developing countries. The developed countries should honour their ODA commitments and open their markets to developing countries, providing debt relief and supporting other poverty eradication efforts. For its part, the United Nations system should strengthen its interagency coordination, to ensure the effective implementation of the action plan for the Second



United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, through such measures as training, skills development and information sharing.

54. Since 1978 China had lifted more than 200 million people out of absolute poverty, accounting for 75 per cent of such poverty reduction in the developing world. Glaring disparities remained, however, between urban and rural development in China and further sustained and long-term efforts were needed to close that gap. Applying the new United Nations standards, 128 million Chinese remained below the poverty line, constituting about one tenth of the world's total of poor people. Accordingly, China remained committed to the eradication of absolute poverty by 2020, in full implementation of the country's poverty eradication programme for 2011–2020. At the same time, it would also continue its efforts, in the framework of South-South cooperation, to assist other developing countries in their poverty eradication efforts.

55. Sustainable industrial development was the main driving force for the eradication of poverty and attainment of economic growth in developing countries, in the current global context of population growth, climate change and growing inequality. In that endeavour, UNIDO had an indispensable role to play in assisting developing countries through its technological expertise and by promoting South-South cooperation.

56. **Mr. Al-Durra** (Iraq) said that poverty had not featured prominently in his country's development efforts due to the political situation over the preceding 40 years, various crises and terrorist attacks. However, some progress had been made, including increasing the private sector's contribution to GDP, balance of payments and job creation. The legacy of the former regime continued adversely to affect human security, the economy and employment and poverty was a key development challenge. The Government had adopted a five-year plan to promote a free market economy, control inflation and achieve currency stability, thereby visibly improving the income of individuals.

57. The Government was striving to meet poverty reduction targets and the MDGs. It focused on increased productivity, job creation and concessional lending to the poor by stimulating agricultural work; lending to income-generating activities; reviewing minimum wages on a daily basis in accordance with the national poverty line; supporting civil society efforts to help the poor; and by improving health care,

preventive and treatment services, access to clean water, education of the poor and post-primary enrolment. It also stressed good governance as a means of facilitating strategy implementation, reducing fraud and improving political, economic and social structures. Effective social protection and broader construction of infrastructure was also important, as was implementing appropriate technologies and cooperating with relevant technology and research organizations and institutions. However, the scheduled implementation of aid commitments, particularly ODA, was crucial and should not be undermined by the global financial crisis.

58. **Mr. Nay** (Cambodia) said that the global financial crisis should not divert attention from the new and emerging challenges and obstacles to sustainable development. Least developed countries and their MDG attainment efforts were particularly susceptible to the crisis and suffered on account of debt burdens and unmet ODA commitments. The MDGs should remain firmly on the development agenda and the adoption of the Rio+20 outcome document, the Istanbul Programme of Action 2011-2020 and the commitments contained therein were welcome

59. Despite its limited resources, Cambodia expected to attain the MDGs by 2015 and reduce poverty by 20 per cent in 2012. Its national strategy for the period 2011-2015 promoted growth among and development flow to the poor and vulnerable and sought to remove them from poverty via local community development, job creation, livelihood enhancement and access to health and nutrition.

60. Cambodia was strongly committed to fighting the diseases mentioned in MDG 6. The mortality rate of people living with AIDS aged between 15 and 49 had decreased. Cambodia had undertaken a reform relating to food security and adequate nutrition with a view to improving health, nutrition and food security in rural areas. Enhancing food security required close and effective cooperation among all stakeholders. Cambodia was strongly committed to eradicating poverty and hunger, while addressing food security, climate change and gender considerations by balancing ecological conservation and safety with sustained socioeconomic development. However, overcoming existing obstacles required the full, effective implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action and financial and technical assistance from the international community.

61. **Ms. Al-Hadid** (Jordan) said that the ultimate goal of the post-2015 development agenda was to adopt an approach to poverty eradication involving the three pillars of sustainable development and fostering inclusion and empowerment. Jordan prioritized human resource development, as social capital was critical for poverty alleviation and sustainable human and economic development, particularly with 20 per cent of its population living in rural areas where poverty was more prevalent and the environment significantly degraded and susceptible to erosion and desertification.

62. The Government's new poverty strategy sought to protect at-risk groups and support their active participation in economic activities. A national programme made microfinance more accessible and affordable and had proved effective in reducing poverty. Nevertheless, poverty still persisted and its eradication required the commitment and coordinated efforts of all stakeholders, individuals and communities.

63. **Mr. Aliyev** (Azerbaijan) said that the Second Decade's theme of decent and productive employment was welcome, given the link between employment and poverty eradication. Azerbaijan's shift to a market economy focused on people-centred development and inclusive policies, with sustained growth allowing the adoption of strategies and regulatory frameworks to stimulate regional growth and promote private sector development and investment. Azerbaijan's refugees and internally displaced persons, victims of Armenian aggression, were recognized as the most vulnerable to poverty. The Government had adopted reintegration measures to provide various forms of assistance, but such comprehensive measures had been an economic burden for over 20 years. Since 2004, poverty had fallen, a total of 1.1 million jobs had been created and population income had grown by 12 per cent, with inflation at only 1.5 per cent.

64. With agriculture a key industry and 49.3 per cent of people residing in rural areas, promoting rural and agricultural development was crucial; thus, FAO assistance, particularly in institutional and human capacity-building, was welcome. Similarly, ILO played an important role in advancing youth employment in Azerbaijan. Full and productive employment was crucial to poverty eradication. In that regard, the exchange of best practices and continued support of the United Nations system would be instrumental, especially post-2015.

65. **Mr. Zan** (Myanmar) said that the number of poor continued to rise in least developed countries. Efforts needed to be redoubled to achieve equitable development, focusing on creating full employment and decent work. In Myanmar, the Government had formed various committees and programmes to bring equitable development to its large rural population, including encouraging farmers to use marketable and high-yielding rice varieties, while integrated farms were being set up as a way of generating secondary income. Furthermore, the Government encouraged foreign direct investment in downstream industries and prioritized vocational and technical training as ways of creating jobs and building capacity for the rural population.

66. According to UNDP data, poverty in Myanmar had fallen from 32 per cent to 26 per cent, but needed to reach 16 per cent by 2014-2015. With the increased support of the international community, Myanmar hoped to achieve greater success in its development efforts and surmount the challenges ahead. It appreciated the financial assistance of the World Bank for community-driven rural projects as part of a strategy focusing on reforming institutions to deliver better services to the Myanmar people. That would not only raise confidence in Myanmar's poverty reduction programme and reform measures, but also facilitate Myanmar's access to international development assistance and resumption of a full country programme. Integrated, coordinated and coherent cooperation was required from all relevant partners to reach internationally agreed poverty eradication targets, including the MDGs. While poverty eradication should be prioritized in the post-2015 development agenda, the United Nations should continue its support by implementing the system-wide plan of action for the Second Decade in collaboration with Member States and all other stakeholders.

67. **Mr. Tarahashi** (Japan) said that Japan prioritized poverty eradication in its ODA policy and actively supported human and social development in developing countries. Monitoring poverty reduction annually was important, as progress in reducing the number of people in extreme poverty had been uneven around the world and slow in terms of reducing the number of people on the edge of poverty.

68. Only three years before the MDG target year, discussions on the post-2015 development agenda should centre on poverty eradication with a great

variety of issues needing to be addressed. However, all partners had to be involved and aligned under the ownership of the programme countries. Public-private partnerships and South-South and triangular cooperation would greatly contribute to the efforts of programme countries. Policy coherence and partnerships across the United Nations system were expected. Furthermore, youth participation should be emphasized. Japan was committed to such efforts, particularly bearing in mind human security and against the backdrop of the economic crisis, which left people in poverty the most vulnerable.

69. **Mr. Souissi** (Morocco) said that poverty eradication risked being undermined by the combined effects of the global financial crisis, food price volatility and rising energy costs. Progress had been uneven, including within Africa, which remained particularly affected by poverty with weather events exacerbating the situation. The international community must take forceful action.

70. Poverty reduction required multisector strategies. Improving poverty indicators would ensure a more accurate reflection of the situation. Strategies prioritizing income-generating activities and the creation of decent employment, particularly for women and young people, were needed. Ecotourism offered many economic advantages and had a direct impact on local employment. Technology transfer could also reduce poverty in developing countries.

71. Morocco had made great strides in poverty eradication in recent years with more than 5 million people benefiting from the first phase of Morocco's national human development initiative involving 22,000 projects. The second phase, which had begun in 2011, sought to consolidate gains, create stable jobs and improve the quality of life of the population by building human capacity, improving the education system and providing universal access to social security, particular among the most disadvantaged.

72. While there had been positive progress in the fight against poverty, it risked being undermined by the effects of the global economic crisis and climate change. The Second Decade, which stressed the importance of mobilizing development resources, represented a real opportunity to consolidate gains and progress. However, resources must be mobilized to promote sustained growth and investment in developing countries. Improving coordination among

the different United Nations agencies and developed and developing countries would be a major factor contributing to success.

73. The post-2015 development agenda should focus on the three pillars of sustainable development. South-South cooperation should be strengthened in the fight against poverty and against the backdrop of the economic and financial crisis. However, it was time for poverty to receive due attention and for bold and brave strategies to counter that scourge.

74. **Ms. Vu Minh Thuy** (Viet Nam) said that the central role of the United Nations in development activities and their coordination were crucial and had been reaffirmed by the success of many countries in halving poverty rates. However, the international community needed to remain committed to diverse poverty eradication efforts. Viet Nam had seen the number of people in extreme poverty decrease by 75 per cent between 1990 and 2010, reflecting its strong political will and development policies. Its new lower-middle-income status, declining ODA and economic outlook posed numerous challenges. In the evolving landscape, Viet Nam had devised a poverty reduction strategy for the period 2011-2020 focusing on the most vulnerable population groups. Measures included infrastructure investment in poor areas, agricultural assistance, preferential credit for the poor and housing provision for low-income urban families. Despite economic difficulties, Viet Nam maintained high social welfare spending and poverty had declined by 2 per cent in 2012. As the basis for sustainable poverty reduction, it would promote social protection and create stable and decent work while stimulating economic growth. In that regard, the support of ILO in improving access to decent work and income opportunities had been welcome, as was the United Nations help. Viet Nam stood ready to share best practices and cooperate internationally on common poverty reduction efforts.

75. **Ms. Ben Dor** (Israel) said that the key to poverty eradication was empowering people, especially women and young people, to sustain themselves; decent jobs and secure income were crucial. Despite also being affected by the current crisis, Israel had worked to promote workforce participation, access to education and entrepreneurship at home and abroad. The Government provided tax credits for working parents and subsidized childcare and after-school programmes to meet the needs of the middle classes, who were key

to social cohesion, while remaining mindful of the least privileged. Technological training, leadership skills and empowerment workshops were also provided, particularly among Orthodox Jews and Arab-Israeli populations.

76. Israel promoted entrepreneurship throughout society, including by a technology incubator which supported some twenty start-up companies. Bedouin and Arab-Israeli women were encouraged to set up microenterprises by a national development fund, which had lent more than \$206 million to 8,000 small and microenterprises in 18 years, thereby creating more than 40,000 jobs.

77. Access to education and health care was vital to break the poverty cycle. Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation, MASHAV, was active around the world, including by helping to teach entrepreneurial skills to young people in Latin America and through various health and agricultural projects across Africa. Agricultural productivity and rural development were vital to improving food security and promoting more shock-resistant markets. Indeed, sustainable agriculture encompassed so many development areas that it was a key component of poverty eradication. MASHAV had signed a cooperation agreement with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) on agricultural technology capacity-building, support to small and medium-sized industrial enterprises, rural entrepreneurship and women's empowerment. Israel encouraged all States to follow suit.

78. Israel's development work placed special emphasis on women. When empowered economically, women reinvested 90 per cent of their earnings in their family, which then had positive effects on the entire community. Thus, women must be given the tools to prosper, including the ability to decide about reproduction. To that end, MASHAV had organized a symposium for women entrepreneurs in South-East Europe, where participants had gained valuable knowledge on a range of topics, and had arranged an international workshop on the empowerment of rural women through agricultural entrepreneurship.

79. **Mr. Zinsou** (Benin), speaking on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries, said that the Istanbul Programme of Action was important, with the situation of least developed countries worsening and many gains being lost following crises and adverse

weather events. Poverty figures were alarming and required urgent, substantive and tangible progress. Ensuring sustained, inclusive, equitable economic growth and development required the removal of constraints, increased productive capacity and long-term resilience.

80. Without basic social protection, neither progress nor a socially sustainable economic recovery could be ensured. Consequently, the Group called for expansion of the Social Protection Floor Initiative to help poor and least developed countries to establish sustainable mechanisms as a necessary component of development and poverty eradication strategies. In that regard, universal access to social services and social protection floors should be a sustainable development goal.

81. The Group looked forward to the report requested by the General Assembly in the outcome document of the United Nations High-level Meeting on Youth, particularly regarding a global strategy to address youth unemployment. Youth potential should be maximized through, *inter alia*, access to adequate education meeting the economic needs of least developed countries in order to access productive employment. Creating opportunities for self-employment and entrepreneurship required the mobilization of substantial resources to implement education reforms and ensure job creation. Promoting productive capacity was directly linked to youth employment. Ecotourism was of high interest and should be further integrated into world tourism channels, particularly as it enabled least developed countries to involve poor populations in income-generating activities which could be supported by microcredit and microfinance programmes.

82. Cooperation for industrial development was also relevant to least developed countries, yet they had not been mentioned in the report in document A/67/223. Their economic structures had been largely stagnant in past decades, with several countries experiencing deindustrialization, thus impeding economic diversification, productive capacity-building and manufacturing. Least developed countries were affected by the sharp drop in exports of industrial materials, machinery and equipment and its impact on productive capacity-building and the ability of Governments actively to support small and medium-sized enterprises and to offer young people self-employment opportunities. Least developed countries needed strong and steady partnership with development

partners to address constraints and finance development efficiently. In that regard, the Group called for an integrated approach to measures accelerating poverty eradication and promoting empowerment of the poor and vulnerable, while addressing the composite challenges and constraints of least developed countries. Those issues should feature prominently on the post-2015 development agenda and the United Nations system should continue to implement the system-wide plan of action for the Second Decade, in collaboration with Member States and all other stakeholders.

*Statements made in exercise of the right of reply*

83. **Mr. Sahakov** (Armenia) said that the statement by the representative of Azerbaijan was misleading in its reference to Armenian aggression against his country. In fact, there had been a war unleashed by Azerbaijan, which had been first to use tanks, rockets and missiles, in an attempt to suppress the people of Nagorno-Karabakh in the peaceful exercise of their right to self-determination.

84. **Mrs. Mammadova** (Azerbaijan) said that documentation proved that the war had been unleashed by Armenia, resulting in the occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh and seven adjacent regions, mass ethnic cleansing and the establishment of the ethnically constructed subordinate separatist entity. The so-called "right to self-determination" had been qualified by the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly as illegal use of force against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. Furthermore, it was hypocritical for Armenia to advocate the cession of ethnic minority groups from sovereign States when it had itself purged its own territory and the occupied territory of all non-ethnic Armenians. Besides, the discussion had concerned poverty eradication and her delegation had been stressing the reference made to vulnerable groups in the Secretary-General's report. It believed that its refugees and internally displaced people expelled from the occupied territory by Armenia were in that category.

85. **Mr. Sahakov** (Armenia) said that the Second Committee was not the appropriate forum for raising internal political issues. However, he reiterated that Armenia had acted only in self-defence to protect the people of Nagorno-Karabakh in their exercise of the right to self-determination and to avoid a massacre and

mass deportation. Armenia attached great importance to peace, security and human rights, which were prerequisites for development in the region.

86. **Mrs. Mammadova** (Azerbaijan) said that the Armenian occupation was a documented fact and not open to interpretation. Armenia could not continue to occupy the territory and claim self-defence. It had resorted to an unlawful use of force and had committed war crimes, crimes against humanity and even genocide. Armenia's actions against a multiethnic society were contrary to and unsustainable under international law and therefore doomed to failure. Azerbaijan called on Armenia to take that into account and to refrain from factually incorrect statements in the future.

*The meeting rose at 6.25 p.m.*