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Chair: Ms. Rebedea (Vice-Chair)..... (Romania)

Contents

Agenda item 23: Eradication of poverty and other development issues (*continued*)

- (a) Implementation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017) (*continued*)
- (b) Women in development (*continued*)
- (c) Human resources development (*continued*)

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In the absence of Mr. Diallo (Senegal), Ms. Rebedea (Romania), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 23: Eradication of poverty and other development issues (*continued*)

(a) Implementation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017) (*continued*) (A/68/183)

(b) Women in development (*continued*) (A/68/271)

(c) Human resources development (*continued*) (A/68/228)

1. **Mr. Zinsou** (Benin), speaking on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries, said that those countries were the most vulnerable to the multidimensional impact of poverty, since a large percentage of their populations lived in poverty or on its threshold. Overcoming the structural problems that plagued less developed nations was the central goal of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Decade 2011-2020, with the aim of allowing at least half of the countries concerned to graduate from the category of least developed countries.

2. The majority of least developed countries were not on target to achieve Goal 1 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which sought to cut in half the number of persons living in extreme poverty, to ensure full employment and provide decent work for all, including women and youth. A significant number of persons living on the threshold of poverty were at risk of falling into poverty. The current paradigm must be altered, as the forms of growth witnessed thus far had favoured rising social inequality.

3. The international community should display the necessary political readiness to ensure the mobilization of financial resources to achieve the MDGs. The most important interventions as outlined in the Istanbul Programme of Action should endow the poor with productive capacities so they could become effective actors in poverty eradication. In particular, access to energy was an essential factor.

4. The least developed countries should adopt industrial policies to improve their contribution to the global value chain by increasing productivity and added value. While employment was the best means to lift people out of poverty, agriculture in particular had

the potential to create many rewarding and durable jobs for the countries in question. However, mechanization of agriculture and local processing of its products were necessary to create added value. A social transformation of rural areas also required, recognizing and enhancing women's contribution to development. Unpaid work constituted a heavy burden for women and amounted to thinly veiled servitude; work must be remunerated and redistributed.

5. The Group had endorsed the International Labour Office's Global Employment Agenda and was targeting under- and unemployment of youth and the empowerment of women by means of more equitable income distribution, social protection schemes and public works programmes. The Group called on the developed countries to fulfil their commitments in the partnerships to be created to attain the MDGs. It was also open to South-South cooperation as a complement to traditional North-South cooperation and called for international coherence when establishing the post-2015 development agenda.

6. **Ms. Al-Hadid** (Jordan) said that women suffered disproportionately from the effects of poverty and the empowerment of women was thus crucial. Human resource development had been the cornerstone of her country's poverty reduction efforts. As Jordan had few natural resources, it had focused on developing the human resources required for productive employment and economic growth. A new strategy based on social welfare and gender mainstreaming, pro-poor employment and entrepreneurship, inclusive health and education services, pro-poor agriculture, environment and rural development, microfinance and transport and housing for the poor was designed to reduce poverty, vulnerability and inequality in Jordan and covered the period from 2013 to 2020.

7. Jordan recognized that environmental sustainability and poverty eradication were inextricably linked and that the difficult challenge of ending poverty required a balanced, integrated approach across the three dimensions of sustainable development (social, economic and environmental). Pro-poor policies encouraging small- and medium-enterprise emergence and growth, job creation, and increased productive capacities should enable those living in poverty to participate fully in the conceptualization and implementation of sustainable development policies.

8. **Ms. Myat** (Myanmar) said that, despite the MDG Goal concerning extreme poverty having been met at the global level, grave inequalities remained. National development efforts must be supported by a favourable international environment.

9. Her country agreed that employment and decent work were key drivers of poverty reduction. In addition, developing countries were particularly vulnerable to climate change, ecosystem degradation and natural disasters, which complicated poverty reduction efforts. Her Government had established eight tasks on which rural development and poverty alleviation should focus: agricultural productivity, livestock breeding and fisheries, small-scale rural productivity, microfinance institutions, cooperative tasks, rural socio-economy, rural energy and environmental conservation.

10. As national unity was crucial for a multi-ethnic nation such as Myanmar, its Government had chosen to focus on a policy of equitable development and access to basic social services for all. It also called on the United Nations system to strengthen system-wide policy coherence on poverty and employment issues, paying particular attention to the structural roots of poverty.

11. **Mr. Bamba** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that his country had witnessed a stark rise in poverty levels while emerging from its decade-long crisis. His Government had thus committed itself to sustainable development efforts in order to reduce poverty to 16 per cent by 2015. It had achieved improvements in areas including primary school education, maternal mortality and morbidity, HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, and access to potable water. Although gender was at the heart of the Government's policies and one of its pillars of development, progress had been slow with regard to attaining full equality, empowerment and representation of women in all sectors of society.

12. It had become apparent that a number of countries, in particular in sub-Saharan Africa, would not attain most of the MDGs and important work thus still remained to be done. In particular, the Doha Round must be concluded, resulting in a commercial system that was more fair and equitable and allowed farmers from many parts of Africa to legitimately profit from their labour. Foreign direct investment should also be encouraged, in particular to create jobs

for youth and spur economic growth. Finally, access to technology and quality education should be promoted.

13. Although any country's development, including the eradication of poverty, was the responsibility of its national leaders, official development assistance (ODA) remained essential for many countries such as Côte d'Ivoire. He thanked the members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) that had already allocated 0.7 per cent of their GDP to ODA and encouraged other countries to follow suit.

14. **Mr. dos Santos** (Brazil) said that it was possible that the positive results achieved concealed the enormous challenges still ahead, especially as the absolute number of individuals living in extreme poverty in many developing countries had not been reduced. Additionally, although middle-income countries had experienced relatively good macroeconomic conditions in recent years, they still comprised the majority of the world's poor. The middle-income countries could not achieve poverty eradication without the assistance of the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations.

15. It was essential for Member States to prioritize productive employment and decent work by strengthening skills and labour markets, improving job quality and extending support to vulnerable groups. The exclusion of the poorest from economic growth aggravated inequality and led to social instability. Social protection policies such as Brazil's conditional cash transfer programmes significantly supported poverty eradication and social inclusion. Such social policies must be complemented by macroeconomic measures fostering job creation and decent work, as only by fulfilling the basic needs of its poor population could a country unlock its potential and recover economically. Brazil encouraged the adoption of the International Labour Organization Global Jobs Pact as a general framework within which countries could pursue policies tailored to their specific needs and priorities.

16. **Mr. Raja Zaib Shah** (Malaysia) agreed that, despite positive developments in the realm of poverty eradication, much work remained, in particular in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. He supported the recommendations in paragraph 77 of the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of

the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017) (A/68/183), including the establishment of policy priorities.

17. Malaysia had achieved seven of the eight MDGs at the aggregate level and was confident of meeting the target on poverty eradication by 2015. The positive trend could be attributed to the successful implementation of various poverty eradication programmes at the national level, including the New Economic Model launched in 2010 that aimed to shift affirmative action from being ethnically-based to being need-based, thus becoming more competitive and market- and investor-friendly. Programmes targeted issues such as rural development, job placement, small business creation and agricultural growth in the context of a productive welfare system which struck a balance between providing direct aid and economic opportunities to ensure that individuals could become financially self-sustaining.

18. The empowerment of women was at the heart of the Tenth Malaysia Plan and the Government had taken measures to increase women's labour participation by providing more community-based nurseries and day-care centres, more flexible working hours, training and re-skilling opportunities, as well as gender sensitization programmes for public sector recruitment. However, pockets of hard-core rural poverty still remained. As poverty was a multi-dimensional phenomenon extending beyond mere income poverty, development programmes must be underpinned by political stability, inclusiveness and strong political will.

19. **Mr. Weisleder** (Costa Rica) said that his country already had legislation addressing gender equality, domestic violence, responsible parenting, violence against women, sexual harassment, commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking and that recent new legislation criminalized organ trafficking, sex tourism and exploitative labour. His Government's 2007 National Policy For Equality and Gender Equity had six major objectives for 2017, including measures in the areas of childcare, decent work, access to education, justice, political participation and institution-building.

20. It was essential to redistribute unpaid work and care and to ensure decent work, social rights and access to non-contributory pensions and free health care for women. Likewise, the political participation

and leadership of women should be strengthened. Early pregnancy was also an issue to be addressed, as it negatively affected the fight against poverty and full access to health services.

21. As gender equality and the empowerment of women were both human rights and necessary conditions for development and social inclusion, gender must be mainstreamed in the post-2015 development agenda, and a specific gender equality goal must be set.

22. **Ms. Hamid** (Sudan) said that there was a need for greater integration of domestic and international policies to reduce poverty and promote industry in developing countries. Genuine opportunities must be created for employment for all, with a particular focus on gender equality and vulnerable or deprived groups. Developed countries must fulfil their commitments, lift unjust unilateral economic sanctions and alleviate the debt burden of developing countries. The latter should receive support in formulating policies to promote local demand, education and innovation, all of which had a multiplier effect. Technology transfer was also essential; science and technology were key drivers of agriculture, and therefore helped to promote food security and sustainable development.

23. **Mr. Rahman** (Bangladesh) emphasized that women's contribution to the economy through both paid and unpaid work significantly shaped overall development. As many of the world's poorest were women and lived largely in rural areas, it was crucial to focus on them in the fight against poverty. Bangladesh had made considerable progress towards the empowerment of women and Millennium Goals 3 and 5 had already been achieved well ahead of schedule, although there still remained room for improvement. As women were important drivers for development and accounted for an increasing proportion of cross-border labour flows, attention must be focused on their employment opportunities in both skilled and unskilled work.

24. Human resource development was crucial, including increased investment in academic and vocational education and training. Unfortunately, the least developed countries would not be able to harness the full potential of science, technology and innovation unless they could increase their institutional and infrastructural capacities. More attention must thus be

paid to those countries in the creation, application and diffusion of knowledge, human capital and technology.

25. Poverty was an affront to human dignity and its eradication must continue to be the common endeavour of the global community. It was critical to support the countries that were lagging behind in implementing the goals of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017) and strengthen efforts to reach its ambitious targets.

26. **Ms. Pacheco** (Bolivia) said that it was necessary to effectively respond to the impacts of the global financial crisis by fulfilling development commitments in a timely manner. The prescriptions of liberalism, privatization and market-based economics had done nothing save generate poverty, exclusion, hunger and marginalization. Patterns of consumption and production must be changed. In order to attain the MDGs, developing countries should be supported by a favourable international climate governed by fair rules for all. The eradication of poverty, inequality and hunger was an ethical, social, political and economic imperative for all humanity.

27. Development should maintain a holistic focus seeking harmony between human beings and nature, simultaneously promoting the protection of rights and meeting the material, spiritual, individual and collective needs of all populations. Development should be based on the full realisation of human happiness for all, including women, youth, indigenous populations and rural communities. Development was a means and not an end to living well.

28. Bolivia's New Economic, Social, Community and Productive Model had achieved important progress in the domain of poverty eradication, as had the popularly-approved nationalizations undertaken during the previous six and a half years. Bolivia was poised to eradicate extreme poverty, extend basic services and attain food self-sufficiency for all its inhabitants by the 2025 celebration of the bicentennial of its independence.

29. **Mr. Gaumakwe** (Botswana) argued that regional disparities, different vulnerability levels and inequalities among key population groups made the task of poverty eradication especially urgent in sub-Saharan Africa. More attention should be given to the disproportionate burden of unemployment on young people. Eliminating poverty would remain impossible as long as the participation of women and youth in the

economy continued to be limited to low quality and/or informal jobs. The vulnerability of those two groups, which also represented the majority of the working poor, must be reduced.

30. There were no tolerable levels of poverty, as the world commanded enough resources to be mobilized for all. Initiatives must target in particular youth, the elderly, remote area dwellers, the destitute, women and children. His Government was working closely with the United Nations country team to implement the Delivering as One initiative.

31. **Mr. Bhattarai** (Nepal) said that global poverty, which bred injustice and jeopardized peace and security, remained antithetical to the global sustainable development agenda. Growing unemployment, social spending cuts and limited access to resources risked causing many individuals to fall back into poverty. Poverty eradication must be approached holistically, as poverty anywhere was a threat to prosperity everywhere.

32. The structural constraints facing Nepal (landlockedness, difficult mountain terrain and lack of access to productive resources) were widening the gap between rich and poor as well as between urban and rural communities. The social dimensions of poverty based on gender, ethnicity, culture and caste were becoming increasingly sensitive and complex. Women, children, the elderly, rural dwellers and Dalits must enjoy social protection and equitable distribution.

33. Finally, in order to enhance the economic contribution of migrant workers and protect their hard-earned income, their basic rights must be protected and their levels of financial literacy should be raised.

34. **Mr. Carvalho Pinheiro** (International Labour Organization) said that full employment and decent work for all were among the core concerns of the sustainable development agenda, in particular since decent work was the most sustainable route out of poverty. Countries that had attained equitable and inclusive growth had implemented ambitious labour and social policies. The decent work agenda must also focus on the youth employment crisis, or the world could face losing a generation. Finally, the extension of nationally-defined social protection floors was fundamental to ensure that no one would be left behind.

35. **Mr. de Looz Karageorgiades** (Observer for the Sovereign Military Order of Malta), enumerating a number of his organization's recent charitable interventions, said that the fight against poverty and exclusion, as well as the affirmation of humanity's dignity had been at the heart of his organization's activities for almost 900 years.

36. **Mr. Madiwale** (Observer for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies) said that his organization joined the call for the post-2015 agenda to go beyond income poverty and to consider data on health, nutrition, access to basic services, safe water and sanitation, as well as vulnerability to economic shocks, climate change and natural disasters, especially as large-scale disasters in least developed countries had nearly erased a decade of development gains.

37. The effect of shocks on the most vulnerable was not limited to developing countries. Red Cross National Societies had needed to respond to increasing needs in Europe. In times of crisis, everyone must be provided with sufficient, not reduced, health services, as the long-term cost of increased poverty and weakened health would otherwise be too great, including in financial terms.

38. **Mr. Richter** (Observer for the International Organization for Migration) said that, while the ability to migrate was generally empowering for women, migrant women were more exposed to exploitation, gender-based violence, and deskilling than other populations. Their dual status as women and migrants placed them at a double disadvantage and measures must be taken to protect them in all sectors, and to respect and promote international labour standards.

39. Migration was an important facet of human resource development. Robust policies could prevent brain drains and allow migrants to benefit both their host and origin communities, even when they were far from each other. Migration must be included in a new, transformative agenda that took account of the trends and challenges that had intensified since 2000.

The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.