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**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the
twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: priority
theme: strategies for the eradication of poverty to achieve
sustainable development for all**

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The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

Sustainable development encompasses a series of actions designed to ensure that economic development meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to respond to their own needs.

The first development theories, which were of particular interest to many African, Latin American and Asian countries, emerged as recently as the 1940s and 1950s.

Development has been described as a series of stages that differ in the form of organization of production and trade, in the nature of the dominant sector or in the growth rate of investment and capital accumulation. These stages are: tradition, transition, take-off, maturity and mass consumption.

In the 1980s, the notion of development was humanized because of the failure (in many countries) of policies inspired by a macroeconomic vision of development that was based on the western world.

In this macroeconomic vision, the governments of African countries and developing nations in general received considerable capital from western donors. That capital was, however, used to build “white elephants” such as the Maluku steel plant that will never operate and the great Inga hydroelectric dam in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Such projects failed to have any real grass-roots impact or benefit the population, and poverty has only increased and intensified (thereby widening the gap between the richest and poorest).

As a result, countries interested in human and sustainable development have adopted a microeconomic and global vision that integrates economics, ecology, nature and culture.

Development NGOs, which proliferated to record levels between 1980 and 2000, have played a key role — particularly in our country that has experienced embargos and the withdrawal of bilateral and multilateral aid.

Against this backdrop, two decades of turmoil and global meetings were followed by a clear realization of the real problem of African countries: poverty and the widening gap between the rich (a tiny minority) and the poor (the vast majority).

As a result, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other countries signed up to the Millennium Development Goals in 2000, and in 2005 the country adopted its first growth and poverty reduction strategy paper with main pillars that were in keeping with the Goals. In order to measure accurately the progress made in the social sphere towards achieving the Goals by 2015 and to populate the database with socioeconomic information that could provide reliable and up-to-date indicators to draft the next generation growth and poverty reduction strategy paper, in 2010 the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo conducted its third multiple indicator cluster survey (MICS-RDC 2010).

The report drafted for this purpose in Kongo Central shows the progress made in improving the health and social situation of women and children in that province. The report highlights particularly striking indicators for which efforts must be continued if these trends are to be maintained or improved.

One example is the level of usage of health services, primary school attendance (with near parity among girls and boys), child vaccination coverage and the use of insecticide-treated bed nets.

The results of the survey are extremely important as they not only describe the health and social situation of women and children in Kongo Central but can also be used to make adjustments in order to achieve the Goals by 2015 while facilitating the drafting of local development plans.

One of the most important Millennium Development Goals is to reduce infant mortality and child mortality. More specifically, the Goals called for a two-thirds reduction in child mortality between 1990 and 2015. Survey data indicate that the child mortality rate in Kongo Central is estimated at 93 per 1,000 live births, while the probability of children dying before their fifth birthday is 151 in every 1,000. This means that mortality levels in Kongo Central are lower than for the country as a whole. One of the most urgent challenges for humanity in connection with the Goals is to combat inequalities in terms of mortality, morbidity, access to medical treatment and so on.

While we have limited ourselves herein to providing information on this single example of inequality, other inequalities in terms of food security, political representation/expression, and access to justice, drinking water and other assets could be the subject of a future statement.
