

STATEMENT BY MS. VIPLOVE THAKUR, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, ON AGENDA ITEM 23[A] – IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SECOND UNITED NATIONS DECDE FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY [2008-2017] AT THE SECOND COMMITTEE OF THE 66TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS ASSEMBLY ON OCTOBER 17,2011

Mr. Chairman,

Let me begin by congratulating you on your leadership of the Second Committee.

India aligns itself with the statement delivered by Argentina on behalf of the G-77.



The subject matter of the debate today – Poverty eradication and other Development issues - is critical to the attainment of our cherished Millennium Development Goals.

Though we may take satisfaction in the number of global poor living on US\$ 1.25 a day to have come down from 1.8 billion in 1990 to 1.4 billion in 2005 and that global poverty level is projected to fall below 900 million by the MDG target year of 2015, we all recognise that the work at hand is still a daunting one. Poverty eradication, therefore, must continue to be the foremost priority of the global development agenda.

The ongoing impacts of the global economic and financial crisis, and the faltering recovery, pose persistent impediments to combating poverty. High and volatile food and energy prices continue to erode the policy space developing countries have to advance their development process. In 2009 and 2010, more than 160 million people slipped back into poverty, reversing years of development gains. What is of deeper concern is that many more people are at the risk of falling into the poverty trap.

Ensuring economic growth is, therefore, fundamental not only to strengthen the economic recovery but equally for eradicating poverty.

Sustained economic growth in developing countries has been the principal instrument of poverty alleviation. In India, we have been singularly successful on this, notwithstanding the turbulence of the 2008 crisis and its aftermath. In spite of the global economic slowdown, we are projected to grow at 7.5% this year. As per estimate, India would have taken out 188 million people out of the poverty net by 2015 compared to the 1990 level, but would still be home to the largest number of global poor.

We do, however, recognise that growth in itself is not sufficient to distribute opportunities and resources and have, therefore, adopted policies to ensure inclusive growth. This is the overarching objective of our Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012) and without doubt would continue to be so for the future plans as well.

Mr. Chairman,

Recognising that poverty is multi-dimensional in nature, our Government has launched large scale socio-economic programmes and interventions to reduce poverty, fight malnutrition and hunger, reduce infant mortality and promote health and gender empowerment.

With a view to tackle poverty, enhance our food security and upgrade rural infrastructure, India has launched the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Scheme, the largest cash for work programme in the world. The programme guarantees 100 days of work annually to those willing. This pro-job strategy of poverty eradication is of particular relevance at a time when the world is confronted with job-less growth.

The National Rural Health Mission to ensure better healthcare; School Lunch Programme to fight malnutrition; Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan for universal education, Swabhimaan programme for financial inclusion for all, are some of the other targeted initiatives undertaken by India to combine equity with growth.

We have also kept women at the centre of all our development policies and programmes. We have been particularly successful in promoting participation of women in our local self governments. We have reserved 50% seats for women in our local bodies.

India deeply appreciates the work being done by UN-WOMEN to promote gender empowerment.

Mr Chairman,

Strategies for poverty reduction in developing countries must necessarily focus on agriculture and rural development as majority of the people in these countries are dependent on agriculture and allied activities.

Countries must also adopt policies tailor made to their needs to spur job enhancing growth, undertake social protection measures to assist the poor and induce larger domestic mobilisation of resources through financial inclusion and other policies.

Fundamental to job-creation, especially in developing countries, is to pursue skill development and training. In India, we have launched the National Skill Development Mission, a public-partnership initiative to build and upgrade employable skills with focus on the informal sector. The World Bank in 2008 initiated the Rural Migrant Skills Development and Employment Project to support transition of rural workers to urban areas. Such innovative programmes could be productive templates to follow.

Mr. Chairman,

Developing countries, constricted by the global economic slowdown, of which they have become the principal victims, need enhanced resources and policy space to pursue their development aspirations. With the MDG target year just four years away we need accelerated action by all stakeholders. The 0.7% ODA commitment of developed countries, with some honourable exceptions, still remains to be met. It is disconcerting that the global economic crisis is being made an excuse to get away from even the minimal commitment made.

Developing countries, in particular the Least Developed Countries, the Landlocked Developing Countries, the Small Island Developing States and countries in Africa are in urgent need of an enabling international environment that is conducive for meeting their foremost challenge- poverty eradication. In this context, it is imperative that we move forward on the Doha Development Round, on Climate Change Negotiations to seek an ambitious and comprehensive outcome and on a comprehensive reform of the Bretton Woods Institutions for equitable participation of developing countries.

South-South Cooperation in recent years has complemented global resources targeted at development agenda, but it cannot be a substitute for North South Cooperation.

India has been privileged to share its development experience with fellow developing countries. We remain committed to doing more in the coming years with our partners in the South and stepping up our support to South-South Cooperation.

Let our actions to fight poverty be worthy of our commitment.

I thank you.

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