

STATEMENT BY MR. MANJEEV SINGH PURI, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE,
ON AGENDA ITEM 63 – SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AT THE THIRD COMMITTEE OF THE
64TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON OCTOBER 06, 2009

Mr. Chairman,

Since I am taking the floor for the first time in this Committee, let me begin by conveying to you and to the members of your Bureau our warmest felicitations on your election and to you for chairing this important Committee of the General Assembly.

I would like to assure you of my delegation's full cooperation in the deliberations and work of this Committee. I wish to thank the Under-Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs for his statement in this Committee yesterday. My delegation would like to endorse the statement made by the Chair of G77.

Mr. Chairman,

The World Summit for Social Development of 1995 was amongst the largest gathering of world leaders where a pledge was made to conquer poverty, achieve full employment and foster just, social and stable societies. It is a sad realization that today, even after nearly 15 years, we still have a very long way to go.

The last one year has been particularly difficult for developing countries due to the ongoing economic and financial crisis. This crisis, which did not originate in the developing countries, has negatively impacted them and has not only stalled economic growth, but has further eroded the slow progress of the last few years. This adverse impact has been clearly reflected in the Secretary General's report which states that the global crises will most likely reverse, the decline in levels of poverty witnessed between 1981 and 2005.

Mr. Chairman,

We are still grappling with the adverse affects of this unprecedented crisis. There are, of course, some signs of recovery but the fact remains that even these point only to a slow and prolonged process.

Developing countries like India have been more resilient and are poised towards resuming growth, but it is imperative that assistance efforts to developing countries are continued and even enhanced. The Secretary-General's report has also clearly brought out the direct co-relation between resource availability and progress in achieving MDGs. This must spur us to provide greater investment in areas where we are not on track to achieve the MDGs.

Mr. Chairman,

We welcome the Secretary General report referring to India as one of the few success cases on social development amongst the developing countries. It has been our endeavour to take active steps to ensure that the most vulnerable sections of the society benefit from our economic policies. Inclusive growth is the dominant theme of our 11th Five Year Plan (2007-12).

Some of our major efforts include national schemes to ensure availability of food grains at concessional rates to all and guaranteed employment. In this context, I must make reference to the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), which was enacted in 2006.

The NREGA provides a legal guarantee of one hundred days of employment every year for adults at a statutory minimum wage. This programme provided employment to almost 45 million people last year with programmes covering rural development. Women and other marginalized sections of society have been particular beneficiaries of this programme. We are presently seeking to expand the scope of this programme to include more activities within the ambit of 'work'.

NREGA works in conjunction with yet another programme, namely, Bharat Nirman which focuses on building infrastructure in rural areas. We are also working towards providing better housing facilities for slum dwellers in India through the newly instituted Rajiv Awas Yojana scheme.

Mr. Chairman,

Education is an essential component of social development. This year the Government of India brought into force the Right to Education Act. This Act provides for each child the right to education upto the age of 14 years. The Act also has a special focus on disabled children and their access to education.

Notwithstanding this, from this year onwards, in order to further reinforce education of girls, we have launched a Female Literacy Mission, with the aim of reducing female illiteracy by half, in the next three years.

Mr. Chairman,

George Bernard Shaw very succinctly once said 'the greatest of evils and the worst of crimes is poverty'. Eradication of poverty and social integration is the overriding priority for developing countries. The global economic and financial crisis has exacerbated the problem. We must ensure that economic and social development does not just remain an aspiration for many. Let us work collectively so that we strengthen our efforts to translate this global aspiration into a reality.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.

[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)