

Informal Consultations of the Plenary on Agenda Item 182: Follow up to the Millennium Summit

Intervention by Mr. Kamallesh Sharma, Permanent Representative on October 27, 2000

Mr. President,

Thank you for convening this most important Informal consultations of the Millennium Assembly. May we also thank you for the non-paper prepared by you to facilitate inter-governmental dialogue. I will make only eight points and attempt to do so in as concise a manner as possible.

First, the challenge before us has been presented in very sombre terms by the Permanent Representative of Singapore. The task is challenging, sombre and sober and will require major efforts on our part. At the same time, if there is a place for hope it is here at the United Nations. Our leaders have reposed a vision in the United Nations and expressed confidence in the UN as a vehicle for advancing human aspiration. While recognising that our goal must exceed our grasp, we have to think practically to give concrete meaning to the Declaration, through specific and targeted actions to implement the Declaration in a comprehensive, holistically and in an integrated and composite manner. We, therefore, welcome and fully support your idea, content in paragraph 4, that our aim should be to achieve a comprehensive and balanced approach, both in substance and procedure, during the follow-up to the Millennium Declaration. On entering a new century, our effort should ensure development focus on large sections of humanity that have fallen behind and on items of the Declaration that have a bearing on it. Halving poverty and all forms of social deprivation in fifteen years, as outlined in the Millennium Declaration, and the credibility of the UN agenda will depend on our achievements in this sphere. The work of the UN in other sphere may be hostage to the progress in area of development.

Second, we have always stressed that existing structures and planned upcoming events should be utilised to the maximum extent possible in our endeavour to implement the Millennium Declaration. We are, therefore, generally supportive of paragraphs 7, 9 and 10 to 14 of the non-paper. We should not give the impression that new tools are required for the institution to implement the Declaration. It would be preferable to avoid creating new structures and modalities, which may only detract, and be an unnecessary drain on precious resources of time, money and our capacity for application, which could otherwise, we hope, be more fruitfully utilised in actual implementation.

Third, we specifically commend the initiative contained in paragraph 13 to make a request to, inter alia, the World Trade Organisation to ensure that the commitments of the Millennium Declaration are reflected in the upcoming debates and discussions at the WTO. As the developing countries gradually embark on a market-based model of development, it would be essential for WTO to give meaning to its own objective of ensuring that trade promotes increased social and economic welfare. The agenda of the WTO is sought to be expanded to include even issues of educational services and health, even though we have yet to digest the agreements of the Uruguay Round, which were far-reaching in scope, including TRIPS, TRIMS, Agriculture and as a result some of the main issues such as special and

differential treatment for developing countries are being marginalised from the trade agenda. WTO, must of necessity be encouraged by the United Nations to reflect in its work, the guarantees of and full operationalisation of special and differential treatment for products and services of export interest to developing countries; to ensuring that the TRIPS provisions also subserve the objective of increasing human welfare; to take fully into account the special requirements of large pre-dominantly agrarian economies during the negotiations on Agriculture; and paying due attention to the freer movement of natural persons, as a factor of production in a global economy. Unless specific actions on these issues are taken, balance and equity in global trading relations will remain a mirage. Full implementation of the Millennium Declaration can only be achieved through effective actions that promote the development of developing countries, and development of export capacity of developing countries is integral to development.

Fourth, it is said that there has been a mismatch between the availability of technologies in the North and their requirement in the South. We should not underutilize this most significant asset of technology. Transfer of technology to developing countries is essential to meet the goals of the Millennium Declaration. The UN has an important facilitating role and it must work actively to promote transfer of technology and knowledge to developing countries to assist in their implementation of the Millennium Declaration.

Fifth, the Millennium Declaration had clearly endorsed the need to “take concerted action against international terrorism, and to accede as soon as possible to all relevant international conventions”. The fight against international terrorism is a collective one to be waged by all countries together. None can stand alone in the face of this menace, except at the risk of being engulfed by it. The Sixth Committee is seized of a comprehensive convention against international terrorism, and we look forward to its expeditious finalisation, keeping in view the clear call emanating from the Millennium Summit.

Sixth, we have stressed from the very beginning of this process, the need to eliminate all weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. As a nuclear weapon State, India is prepared to enter into constructive negotiations for eliminating all nuclear weapons under a comprehensive universal non-discriminatory Nuclear Weapons Convention. Realising that this objective is not imminent or round the corner, we hope that the possibility of convening of an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear danger, outlined in the Millennium Declaration would soon become a reality, and would suggest that this proposal be included in the table annexed to the President’s Non-Paper.

Seventh, Mr. President, we support the gains that could arise from relations between the United Nations and the civil society. However, as we constantly search in this body for that enigmatic and elusive entity, the political will, we feel that paragraphs 22 and 23 could have referred specifically to cooperation with national parliaments through their world organisation, the IPU, as contained in the Millennium Declaration and would suggest that this be accorded high priority as we move further in our deliberations. After all, political will that we require to implement the Declaration rests with the legislatures. An additional point, Mr. President, collaboration with civil society should not be restricted to the areas of development and poverty eradication alone, but must be expanded to include all areas of the work of the United Nations, including those of the work of the Security Council, disarmament and the Bretton Woods Institutions.

Lastly, Mr. President, we demur somewhat from paragraph 26. The Millennium Declaration had not provided any specific mandate for strengthening the capacity of the United Nations to gather and analyse information and to develop indicators. These days, when governments, moving away from being centralised operationalistic controlling bodies to becoming a facilitator and an enabler, we should not project the UN as moving in the opposite direction. We would suggest that paragraph 26 should be deleted.

Mr. President,

These were our preliminary and hopefully concise comments. We look forward to working, in a spirit of shared responsibility and partnership with all, in this global grand task and endeavour of creating a new world which will enable the full development of the inherent potential of every human being, and thus advance the cause of humanity in its totality.