

STATEMENT BY MR. SWASHPAWAN SINGH, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE,
PERMANENT MISSION OF INDIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, GENEVA, ON ANNUAL
MINISTERIAL REVIEW, HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF THE
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL 2007, GENEVA ON JULY 04, 2007

Mr. President,

Last year, we agreed to strengthen the Economic and Social Council in fulfilling its crucial role, and incorporate new mechanisms and systems to achieve that objective. We believe that the Annual Ministerial Review, as part of the high-level segment of the Substantive Session of ECOSOC, is an important component of the changes put in place, and we are happy to participate in its inaugural session. This high-level interaction provides a useful opportunity to review progress made towards the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals from a holistic perspective. We broadly associate ourselves with the statement made by the Pakistan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

We believe that the objective of eradication of poverty and hunger should be the guiding principles of all development strategies at all levels. We also believe that national development strategies need to be supported by a conducive international environment. We, therefore, feel that the theme of the Annual Ministerial Review 'strengthening efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger, including through the global partnership for development' is appropriate for this inaugural Annual Ministerial Review. We thank the countries that have made national voluntary presentations this year to share their unique experiences in their efforts towards eradication of poverty and hunger, and the role of the international community in such efforts. We hope that the deliberations in this forum will provide the necessary impetus and direction for achieving progress towards the goals of eradication of poverty as part of a global development partnership.

Efforts towards eradication of poverty and hunger must be seen in the context of developing and implementing targeted policies that benefit the poor and disadvantaged. The theme of this AMR is, thus, intricately linked to the overall theme of this high-level segment "Strengthening efforts at all levels to promote pro-poor sustained economic growth, including through equitable macro-economic policies." Despite recent economic

growth and reduction in poverty in many developing countries, the economic benefits have not reached all, and inequalities and imbalances remain between different regions and sections. We firmly believe that economic growth must be accompanied by improvement in the condition of the poorest segments of society, particularly in the eradication of poverty and hunger. Effective international cooperation must support national strategies towards these objectives without impinging on the policy space required by developing countries to formulate such strategies on the basis of their own requirements and development priorities. In this regard, we welcome the launch of the biennial Development Cooperation Forum, which will provide an opportunity for a comprehensive review and enhancement of implementation of international development cooperation.

We thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive reports on the theme of the Ministerial Review as well as on the overall theme of the high-level segment. We agree that eradication of poverty and hunger requires progress in an array of interlinked areas. We also agree that the linkages between sustained economic growth and reduction in poverty are complex, and unique to each country. There is no 'one size fits all' solution to the problem of drawing up a development strategy. In this regard, the report has correctly noted that each country must retain the flexibility of drawing up its own development strategy, given the particular circumstances and challenges that it faces. Further, as highlighted in Secretary-General's report, with increased interdependence at a global level, external conditions have a direct bearing on national strategies. The report correctly stresses on the urgent need for special efforts in creating an international environment supportive of national efforts.

Mr. President,

Efforts of developing countries in eradicating poverty and hunger must be effectively supported by global partnership involving, *inter alia*, Official Development Assistance, enabling trading conditions that provide for greater market access of goods of developing countries, transfer of technologies at concessional rates, assistance in capacity building developing countries, and improved global governance through greater voice and participation of developing countries in international financial institutions.

ODA continues to constitute an important source of financial resources for developing countries and that targeted public investment, assisted by ODA, is required before private investment led self-sustainable growth can take place. We are concerned that despite commitments by the developed world and the donor countries, ODA actually fell during 2006 and is far lower than the 0.7% of GNI agreed target. In this regard, and as part of the Global Partnership, there is a need for immediate and developing country-specific commitments by the developed countries. In addition, with debt relief having been a significant component of ODA so far, but expected to decline from now on as debt forgiveness has since been implemented to a significant extent by

many developed countries, future ODA flows would require to have a much larger component of new funds and resources even to maintain current ODA levels. It is also important to enhance the stability of such aid flows, with multi-year predictability.

We welcome the Secretary-General's statement that international financial institutions need to adopt concrete measures to improve voice and representation of developing countries. The reform of the Bretton Woods Institutions is essential to maintain their legitimacy in the eyes of their stakeholders. The vote shares patterns should reflect the relative economic position of the countries in the present world economy and the representation of low-income countries should be protected. The UN's role in providing the development dimension in economic policy-making in the BWI needs to be revalidated. In this regard, we believe in the relevance of the ECOSOC, through the UN General Assembly. We urge a greater coordinating role for ECOSOC in the international financial architecture, and stress the need for more effective interaction between ECOSOC and the Bretton Woods Institutions.

While economic growth is a necessary condition for the effective implementation of a country's development strategy, the role of national governments in pursuing targeted policies that focus on the poor and the disadvantaged, particularly towards eradication of poverty and hunger, cannot be over-emphasized. As our Prime Minister stated recently, "growth alone is not enough if it does not produce a flow of benefits that is sufficiently wide-spread. We, therefore, need a growth process that is much more inclusive, and which also ensures access to essential services such as health and education for all sections of the community". It is in this spirit that our current five year plan is titled "Towards faster and more inclusive growth".

The Indian experience has highlighted the importance of specific programmes to address the multifaceted issues that impinge upon the goal of eradication of poverty and hunger. Thus, the 'strategy of inclusive growth' has various elements - enhanced investments in rural infrastructure and agriculture; increased credit availability to farmers and remunerative prices for their crops; programmes to increase rural employment, including the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme which provides 100 days assured employment annually to every rural household; increased public spending on education and health care, including strengthening the mid-day meal programme for school children and offering scholarships to the needy; targeted public investments in backward regions; investing in urban renewal for improving the quality of life for the urban poor; special programmes to socially, economically and educationally empower disadvantaged sections, including women and children; the various Food for Work programmes, the Targeted Public Distribution System which makes food available to every household at an affordable price; the "Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan" or Universal Education programme, etc. We have also tried to adopt innovative and targeted schemes to raise additional resources. A temporary cess on taxes to fund education is an example.

Mr. President,

We believe that a strengthened ECOSOC has a crucial role to play in fostering and promoting international cooperation for implementing the global partnership for development, in order to support the efforts of developing countries in the eradication of poverty and hunger and in achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. We look forward to follow-up by the ECOSOC of progress made in achieving these objectives.

Thank you, Mr. President.

[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

