



STATEMENT BY HON'BLE MR. BHARTRUHARI MAHATAB, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT AND MEMBER OF THE INDIAN DELEGATION ON AGENDA ITEM 93: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OUTCOME OF THE WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, AGENDA ITEM 94: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY AND AGENDA ITEM 95: FOLLOW-UP TO THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF OLDER PERSONS: SOCIAL WORLD ASSEMBLY ON AGEING AT THE 3RD COMMITTEE OF THE 59TH SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON OCTOBER 5, 2004

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the delegation of India, I wish to convey to you as well as other members of the Bureau our felicitations on your election. I would like to assure you of my delegation's cooperation in the deliberations and the work of this Committee.

My delegation appreciates the statement made by the Under Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs to the Third Committee yesterday.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Qatar in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of 77, under these agenda items.

We wish to thank the Secretary-General for the reports under the agenda items, in particular for the analytical approach to the report on the Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the 24th Special Session of the General Assembly. Two issues raised by the report relate to the work of the Commission for Social Development, which has the primary responsibility to review the implementation of the commitments made at the World Summit for Social Development in 1995 and reiterated at the 24th Special Session of the General Assembly in 2000. The report asserts that the work of the Commission has not been pursued substantively in the Economic and Social Council. This issue merits attention. The role of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council is an important one, as it provides a forum for focused deliberations on issues of particular significance. We are in agreement with the view that the work of the Commission can contribute more directly to policy development by the Economic and Social Council. In this context, we also note that the work of the intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations, in particular that of the functional commissions of ECOSOC, can only be meaningful if such work is recognised and the outcomes utilised by national Governments.

The report also comments on the uneven progress towards the achievement of the main goals of the Summit – identified as the reduction of poverty and elimination of extreme poverty, and creation of full employment and integration in stable, safe and just societies. One of the reasons for the gap between intention and action has been correctly diagnosed to be inadequate capacity of national governments to adopt and implement appropriate social policies. The only means to address this problem is through capacity-building in developing countries. For this, international cooperation continues to be a key and essential element. We urge the Division of Social Policy to undertake in its reports an analytical assessment on the critical nature of greater international assistance for the successful achievement of social development objectives in developing countries. However, other reasons are some of the policies encouraged by the international financial institutions and the lack of progress in the WTO negotiations on commodities. This reinforces the need for reform of IFIs and the strengthening of the oversight role of the Economic and Social Council.

Mr. Chairman,

This brings me to the next issue. The report of the Secretary-General makes a reference to the social aspects of globalisation. Unfortunately, however, we find no reference in this context to the recommendations of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalisation, co-Chaired by the President of Finland and the President of Tanzania. The report entitled ‘A fair Globalisation: creating opportunities for all’, has come up with a series of recommendations on making the process of globalisation a fair and inclusive one, based on universal shared values, and respect for human rights and individual dignity. The principal recommendations of the report on a focus on people, a democratic and effective States, sustainable development, productive and equitable markets, fair rules, solidarity, greater accountability, stronger partnerships and an effective UN-centred multilateral system are worthy of consideration by the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, and the Commission for Social Development. We would urge these bodies to give careful consideration to the recommendations of the report in order to develop the broadest possible agreement among member States around the key recommendations of the report.

Mr. Chairman,

The impact of the developmental strategy pursued by India over the last two decades on the social sector, as measured in indicators such as alleviation of poverty, demographics, education and health, has shown significant improvements. There is, however, recognition of the need to accelerate efforts to effect improvements in the quality of life through increasing the availability of public services and developing and expanding economic and social opportunities, including, in particular, those for productive and gainful employment. India recognises that there is a wide scope for strengthening public-private partnerships in the delivery of services, and for greater involvement of indigenous non-governmental organisations for implementation of programmes in the social sector.

While literacy rates in India have increased from 18 percent in 1951 to 65 percent in 2001, education has been identified as a key area of vulnerability that needs to be addressed. Elementary education is now a Fundamental Right in India. Towards this end, the Government proposes to raise public spending on education, collectively at the federal and state levels, to at least 6 percent of the GDP, as well as to set up a National Commission on Education to allocate

resources and monitor programmes. The Government proposes to increase public spending on health, another basic area of vulnerability, in the coming years; with emphasis on primary health care and on the national scheme for health insurance for poor families.

Mr. Chairman,

The report on the current state of literacy in the world is indeed alarming – with close to a billion of the worlds’ people being illiterate. The commitments made in the context of the end of the United Nations Literacy Decade in 2012 and those for the Education-For-All deadline of 2015, need to be acted upon without any further delay. India remains committed to working with other members of the international community to achieve the targets and commitments set in this very crucial sector.

Mr. Chairman,

The Second World Assembly on Ageing in 2002 brought the attention of the international community to an area that had not received adequate consideration in discussions at the global level. The adoption of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing was important for stimulating action, both at the national and at the international levels, to address the situation of the older persons. The United Nations estimates that while today one in every ten persons is above 60 years, by the year 2050 this will increase to one in every five. The Secretary General's report provides a thorough overview of action that has been taken; as well the imperatives that need to be dealt with in addressing the needs of an ageing population. The work of United Nations agencies as well as civil society, in particular non-governmental organisations, in providing support and backstopping to the efforts of the national Governments in caring for its ageing population is extremely important.

Mr. Chairman,

We shall be observing next year the tenth anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development. The need to assess and address the gaps in the commitments made and results achieved assumes urgency, as does the need to put *people* at the centre of development and the focus of all our efforts as the World Summit for Social Development had envisaged.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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