

STATEMENT BY MR. ARUNA KUMAR VUNDAVALLI, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
AND MEMBER OF THE INDIAN DELEGATION, ON AGENDA ITEM 58:
ERADICATION OF POVERTY AND OTHER DEVELOPMENT ISSUES [A]
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FIRST UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR THE
ERADICATION OF POVERTY [1997-2006] [B] WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT [C]
HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT AT THE SECOND COMMITTEE OF THE 62ND
SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON NOVEMBER 06,
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Madam Chairperson,

We thank the Secretary-General for the reports on the agenda item "Eradication of poverty and other development issues" under consideration today. We associate ourselves with the statement made by the Chair of the Group of 77.

Madam Chairperson,

Eradication of poverty remains the central development priority for developing countries. As the report of the Secretary-General indicates, while some progress has been made towards this objective during the first United Nations decade for eradication of poverty from 1997 to 2006, there is a grim reminder that much more remains to be done. Many parts of the world, particularly sub-Saharan Africa, are not on track to meet the poverty target of the Millennium Development Goals [MDGs]. We must also remember that the MDGs are not an end in themselves, and significant challenges of poverty eradication will remain even after achievement of the MDGs. Economic growth has not been accompanied by employment generation, which is crucial for poverty eradication. Moreover, the international community has not fulfilled its

promises of providing new and additional financing to support efforts of developing countries. The report correctly notes that, in real terms, spending on core development programmes have remained at the level of the early 1990s.

There is no "one-size-fits-all" answer to the complex problems of poverty eradication. Each country must have the policy space to formulate and implement its own development strategy, based on its unique challenges and conditions. Economic growth must be sustained, pro-poor and inclusive. While the private sector is important, the State must play a role in ensuring equity and social justice. In addition, a conducive international environment is essential, which can assist developing countries to implement their strategies through aid, enhanced market access and technology transfer. We welcome the recognition of the impact of the ill-designed structural adjustment policies of the international financial institutions on African countries, most of whom are still suffering the effects. There is an urgent need to reform the international financial architecture, overseen by the United Nations. Greater flexibilities are required in international regimes to ensure primacy of the development dimension.

Madam Chairperson,

As this body has declared in the past, gender equality and empowerment of women have a critical role in the development process, particularly through a multiplier effect. Participation of women in decision-making and policy formulation, improvement in women's literacy, enhancing women's access to productive resources and opportunities, and investing in women's health and nutrition, significantly enhance sustained economic growth and reduce poverty. In this regard, we emphasize the importance of gender sensitivity in formulating and implementing national development strategies, and call for greater financial and technical resources from the international community to assist developing countries.

India is committed to promoting the participation of women in government decision making. We attach great importance to the empowerment of women. We are actively implementing the commitments undertaken in the Beijing Platform for Action. Through amendment of our constitution, we have provided for a minimum of 33% representation of women in local self-government nationwide. This has led to the mobilization of women in rural areas across the country and has brought over one million women at the grassroots level into political decision-making. We have institutionalised gender-sensitive budgeting and are promoting gender responsive legislations. We are also making efforts to mainstream gender in policies and programmes of various Government departments. The Government actively encourages and supports group initiatives in formation of women's self-help groups. Today, there are more than 2 million women self-help groups in the country supporting more than 10 million rural

families. We are also encouraging women entrepreneurs through special assistance schemes.

Madam Chairperson,

Developing countries have a comparative advantage in availability of manpower. However, this human capital can only be utilized effectively for enhancing economic output through proper human resources development. This involves investing, *inter alia*, in health and nutrition, education and vocational training, so that a skilled workforce becomes available. In today's globalized world, the scientific and technological knowledge base of a country's human resource is a key determinant of competitiveness, productivity and level of development. Use of information and communication technology can significantly assist in this regard, through programmes like tele-education. The development of India's information technology sector is a testimony to the importance of creating a skilled workforce through human resource development.

We agree with the Secretary-General that scientific and technological knowledge cannot be simply transferred and applied. It requires a scientific and technical base in the recipient country, along with effective transfer of technology. However, developing countries often lack the resources necessary to make investments in institutions for technical and tertiary education. Moreover, international technology regimes present barriers in the form of technology denial or prohibitive costs. We call upon the international community to provide financial resources and technical assistance to developing countries towards capacity building, effective technology transfer, collaborative research and development, and setting up of training institutions for imparting advanced vocational training. Only then can developing countries fully utilize their human resources to achieve sustained growth.

Thank You.

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