



STATEMENT BY MR. SAMIK LAHIRI, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT AND MEMBER OF INDIAN DELEGATION ON AGENDA ITEM 38(A) & (B): NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT: PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTATION AND INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT AND AGENDA ITEM 46: 2001-2010: DECADE TO ROLL BACK MALARA IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY AFRICA AT 59TH SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON OCTOBER 18, 2004

Mr. President,

We thank the Secretary-General for his second consolidated report on the progress in the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development [NEPAD], and for the report on the implementation of recommendations contained in his report on the causes of conflict and promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. We also thank him for his report on 2001-10: Decade to roll back Malaria in developing countries, particularly in Africa. We also associate ourselves with the statement made by the distinguished Representative of Qatar on behalf of the G-77.

Mr. President,

Official Development Assistance [ODA] to Africa in 2002 had reached \$ 22.23 billion and according to preliminary data, developed countries increased ODA by 3.9 % in real terms between the years 2002 and 2003. The need for further effort to increase ODA to Africa has been highlighted in the Secretary-General's report. ODA is important for the low-income countries, especially the Least Developed Countries [LDCs] and the Highly-Indebted Poor Countries [HIPC] among them, in their efforts to achieve the targets of the Millennium Development Goals [MDGs]. The possibility of increased funding for the HIPC initiative which emerged out of the G-8 Summit in June 2004 is a welcome development.

Mr President,

We have consistently held that Africa knows its own problems best as well as the solutions to those problems. The African countries have demonstrated their commitment to advancing the implementation of NEPAD by earmarking financial allocations to selected sectoral priorities. Africa needs support for the solutions that it has identified. The Secretary-General has highlighted the need for further practical

expression of the support by the development partners of Africa for the efforts of the African countries. Significant additional outlays are called for.

Mr. President,

India's commitment to Africa's development is born out of the deep historical bond that exists between the peoples of India and Africa. Not only has India been trading with Africa for centuries, we shared the pains of colonialism together. The Father of our Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, drew his initial inspiration for India's freedom struggle from the continent of Africa. Today, as in the past, we remain committed to work together with African countries as partners for the progress and prosperity of the peoples of Africa as well as for strengthening the forces of democracy and stability.

Our commitment to Africa's development has been reflected through concrete contributions made in a number of areas. Indian soldiers have contributed to African security through the UN peace-keeping operations. India has been contributing in the area of human resource development through training of personnel and provision of experts to several African countries. India has been extending co-operation to several countries in the form of supplies of food-grains, and sugar and medicines, including anti-retroviral drugs to fight HIV/AIDS. India provided nearly 100,000 tons of food aid last year to African countries adversely affected by drought. Cooperation between India and Africa today covers diverse areas, ranging from development of infrastructure such as railways to Information and Communication Technologies.

India has proposed a connectivity mission among the African nations - electronic-connectivity and knowledge-connectivity, enabling economic- connectivity of the region. For this, a programme to connect all the 53 nations of the African Union by a satellite and Fibre optic network is envisaged. Apart from providing effective communication and connectivity among the nations, the same link will support tele-education, tele-medicine, e-governance, e-commerce, info-tainment, resource-mapping and meteorological services. This network will give rural connectivity to the African Union - an effective way to use space technology to provide democratic access and empowerment. India has decided to provide a seamless and integrated satellite, fibre optics and wireless network connecting 53 African countries for the range of e-services. This will connect 5 universities, 53 learning centres; 10 Super specialty hospitals and 53 patient-end locations in rural areas. This will cost about \$50 Million dollars for installation, initial operation and maintenance for 3 years. It will be in position within the next three years time and all the African nations participating in this network would be able to reap the full benefits.

India has developed closer and institutionalised engagements with the African Union and the Southern African Development Community and NEPAD. The Government of India announced a contribution of US \$ 200 million for engagement with NEPAD projects, in a combination of concessional loans and credits, including a grant element for training, provision of consultants and preparation of project feasibility studies. To give further impetus to India's relations with Western Africa, a new group has been formed, called TEAM-9 (Techno-Economic Approach for Africa-India Movement). A symbol of South-South Cooperation, TEAM-9 aims at transfer of technology to the West African countries, involving sharing of various types of expertise, intellectual and physical resources as well as economic opportunities for promoting welfare growth and

prosperity of the people. It would also involve providing opportunities for education and training in crucial sectors.

Mr. President,

The gloomy picture of armed conflict and civil strife in Africa has changed dramatically and positively over the past six years. We share the satisfaction and sense of optimism of the African nations themselves on this development, particularly over the Secretary-General's observation that most African countries today enjoy a relatively stable political condition, are governed by democratically-elected regimes, and are concentrating their efforts on economic reconstruction, combating poverty and underdevelopment. We are sympathetic to the needs for immediate peace dividends in the post-conflict recovery phase, which would help in a better appreciation of the benefits of peace. We are, therefore, concerned to note the slow progress in poverty reduction, despite the great effort made by African countries to implement NEPAD and create an enabling environment for economic growth and sustainable development. The worsening conditions for young people owing to high unemployment are a potential threat to peace and stability. These challenges need to be faced urgently to consolidate the gains achieved in the immediate post- conflict period.

The funding Facility set up by India, Brazil and South Africa [IBSA] on the margins of the 58th session of the United Nations General Assembly, as an initiative complementary to other ongoing efforts of the international community for combating poverty and hunger, has made its own contribution by recently launching the first project to be financed by the IBSA Fund, in support of agriculture and livestock development in Guinea-Bissau. The project encompasses activities aimed at the eradication of poverty and hunger, as a contribution to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. The IBSA Facility has, thus, begun its contribution to Africa and to enhancing South-South Cooperation.

Mr. President,

It is unfortunate that malaria continues to plague several regions of the world, particularly many parts of Africa, even after almost a century-long campaign against this disease, killing over a million people a year, including 700,000 children. The fight against Malaria has been made more difficult by the emergence of strains with resistance towards available effective and affordable anti-malarial medicines and insecticides. Such resistance has now reached unacceptably high levels in Africa and multi-drug resistant malaria strain has been widely prevalent in South-East Asia and South America.

Diseases like Malaria and HIV/AIDS incapacitate the work force, decrease economic productivity and reduce output. In African countries, malarial infection has been estimated to be responsible for slowing down economic growth by about 1.3% per year. In rural areas where the malaria transmission season generally coincides with the planting or harvesting season, this imposes a dual burden on the poor - they not only lose wages but also need to spend their meagre resources on medical treatment and health-care. The human suffering and economic losses caused by malaria are unnecessary as the disease is preventable, treatable and curable.

Although financial investments have increased rapidly over the past few years, only about one quarter of the amount needed to effectively combat malaria in Africa alone is currently available. Allocation of sufficient resources is imperative in the context of the MDG targets to be achieved by the affected countries.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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