



Statement by Mr. A. Gopinathan, Acting Permanent Representative at the informal thematic consultations of the General Assembly on The report of the Secretary-General entitled “In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all” (A/59/2005) (On Cluster I Issues : Freedom from want) on April 26, 2005

Mr. Facilitator,

We thank the Facilitators for convening these consultations and affording Member States the opportunity for an exchange of views on Cluster I: “Freedom from want” of the March 21 report of the UN Secretary-General. We associate ourselves with the statement made by Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77.

Mr. Facilitator,

Development needs to be recognised as an end in itself, without having to view it through the prism of security. Without addressing the development problems besetting the vast majority of UN membership, security in its full sense cannot be achieved either. Countries must necessarily determine their own priorities based on their individual situations. Developing countries must have the “*policy space*” to determine their development plans and priorities. There can be no ‘one size fits all’ approach.

Enhancing international co-operation for advancing the development agenda is imperative. The development agenda needs to be an inclusive one, going beyond the Millennium Development Goals [MDGs] and the Monterrey Consensus, and encompassing the outcomes of other major UN conferences and summits. We recall here the outcomes of the meetings held in Brussels, Almaty and Mauritius which sought to address respectively the specific concerns of the least developed, the landlocked and the Small Island Developing States, recognised as groups of vulnerable countries needing special attention. These conferences were held after the Millennium Summit, and in our view, the 2005 summit should pay particular attention to the effective implementation of these outcomes through a clear agreement and express commitments on provision of financial resources, technology requirements and capacity-building.

The report of the Secretary-General fails, in our view, to delineate the role of the UN and the UN system in advancing the development agenda, particularly in

the areas of trade, money and finance, debt and technology. The report appears to have resigned itself to the idea that decisions on these issues are made elsewhere and that the UN has no role to play in this respect. We disagree respectfully. We believe that the 2005 summit provides us with an opportunity to restore the primacy of the UN in dealing with the development agenda and that it should lead to an outcome that demonstrates how the UN has retrieved the development agenda and regained the role of providing policy guidance to other bodies dealing with development issues. Further, the outcome should outline how different parts of the UN system can contribute to advancing the development agenda.

The second South Summit being held in Doha, Qatar, in June will help the developing countries to advance, in a spirit of cooperation and solidarity, the development agenda in the UN and the UN system.

The report fails to make any reference to systemic issues with regard to the architecture of the international financial, monetary and trade institutions and their decision-making structures and procedures. There is no mention of the action required to redress structural inequities in terms of systemic imbalances in the areas of trade, finance and money and technology that severely impact development prospects of developing countries. There is an urgent need to address the *democratic deficit* in the governance of Bretton Woods Institutions to enhance legitimacy, transparency, accountability and ownership of the decision-making process. Progress since Monterrey has been limited to, and distracted by, peripheral issues. This needs to be approached through structural reforms aimed at redistribution of the voting power amongst member countries. Decisions to enhance the participation and voice of the developing countries in international institutions must be made and implemented sooner rather than later.

Mr. Facilitator,

Inadequacy of resources is the single-most constraint faced by the developing countries in their struggle for the eradication of poverty and raising the standards of living of their people. Mobilising domestic resources, efforts at attracting foreign investments and diversifying exports and other means have so far proved insufficient in comparison to their resource-requirements for achieving MDGs and their own development targets.

We endorse the report's recommendation that developed countries that have not already done so establish time-tables to achieve the target of 0.7% of GNI for ODA by no later than 2015. An increasing portion of the recent increase in ODA has taken the form of expenditures on emergency relief in countries deemed critical for reasons of security. The attention to geo-politically significant countries seems to be crowding out assistance to countries that need the most critical help in achieving the MDGs. We sympathise with the situations in the post-conflict societies. However, the resources needed to meet the MDGs have to be over and above such aid to post-conflict situations. As aid can be instrumental in expediting the process of capacity-building, absorptive capacity of recipient countries should not be cited as a reason for slowing the scaling up of aid. There is also inadequate attention paid in the report to the need for improvement in physical and social infrastructure in the developing countries, critical for overall growth, for which ODA is essential.

There is an urgent need for all development partners to fulfil their respective commitments towards the MDGs. It is perhaps the absence of sufficient progress in infusing adequate amounts of additional ODA to meet the MDGs that has prompted the search for various innovative financing mechanisms. There may be merit in front-loading the aid flow for attainment of MDGs. However, it should be ensured that after the front-loading period, ODA does not fall below a pre-committed level. The resources from innovative sources of financing should be treated as additional resources, complementing ODA, and not as a substitute for it.

Mr. Facilitator,

If ODA would help achieving the MDGs, trade would help in sustaining the gains. Achievement of MDGs critically hinges on realisation of the development dimensions of the Doha Round of trade talks. A major reform of agricultural trade and subsidies policies in developed countries is needed so that agriculture can become an engine of growth and poverty reduction in developing countries. Liberalisation of services sectors to facilitate exports and removal of service provision restrictions will be essential to enable countries to reap the benefits of their comparative advantages. Rigid visa restrictions continue to obstruct the free movement of people in services from the developing countries. Developing countries need greater protection for their biodiversity resources and fair recompense for their exploitation by others.

We welcome the Secretary-General's call to conclude the Doha Round of trade negotiations by 2006. Improved market access, including lowering of tariff and non-tariff barriers, for all exports from developing countries to the markets of developed countries will remain central to such outcomes, and, therefore, to the achievement of the MDGs. The September summit must provide political guidance to the Hong Kong Ministerial meeting of WTO with regard to meeting aspirations of the developing countries.

We support the extension of further debt relief to HIPC countries and low income countries facing problems of inadequate resources for financing MDGs. Debt restructuring for low income countries in general, and HIPC countries in particular, could look beyond debt write-offs by focussing on stepping up investment opportunities in these countries. We need to recognise that the issue of debt sustainability for low income countries is important, given their higher vulnerability to shocks and high dependence on official concessional aid. Further, debt sustainability should not be only for the purpose of attaining the MDGs.

Mr. Facilitator,

The goal of protection of the global environment needs to be balanced with the development aspirations of the developing nations. Equitable access to natural resources is seriously hampered by the unsustainable patterns of production and consumption in the developed world. The developed countries must shoulder the main responsibility for preventing and reversing environmental degradation. It is equally important to provide access to developing countries to environmentally

sound technologies on preferential terms and to support developing countries in human and institutional capacity building to adapt and induct these technologies.

The Secretary-General has ignored the central objective of the Framework Convention on Climate Change in his recommendations with regard to the phenomenon. Nowhere does the Convention recognise a category of “large emitters”. We find the creation of such a category by the Secretary-General to be unwarranted. The Convention lays down that equity will be a fundamental consideration in dealing with climate change. It would not be possible for us to consider or entertain recommendations from the Secretary-General that are not informed and underpinned by equity and other principles enshrined in the Convention.

Having suffered the devastating Tsunami last December, we support the need for worldwide early warning systems for all natural hazards, especially in the Indian Ocean region. And given the level of existing capacity in many developing countries, we would recommend that the focus should be on the creation and enhancement of national capacities where necessary.

Recent advances in science and technology provide unparalleled instrumentality to combat age-old problems of poverty, ignorance and disease. Access to both new and appropriate technologies and to the cutting-edge areas of science and technology needs to be expanded greatly amongst developing countries. Advances in bio-technology can promote revolutionary changes in agriculture and healthcare systems. New and renewable sources of energy can provide a more secure energy environment. Similarly, imaginative strategies of human resources development based on information and communication technology can greatly accelerate the pace of social and economic development. We, therefore, support the report’s recommendations on enhanced access to technology and its transfer from the developed to the developing countries.

We support the Secretary-General’s recommendation for launching a series of “*quick win*” initiatives. These initiatives could be considered indicative and the list could be modified appropriately and in accordance with the priorities of individual countries. We would emphasise that such initiatives should be in keeping with national priorities and that the process must necessarily have national ownership.

We agree on the need for the international community to urgently provide resources for an expanded and comprehensive response to HIV/AIDS. However, malaria can kill faster than HIV/AIDS, while tuberculosis and other diseases continue to be deadly killers in many developing countries. As pointed out by the Secretary-General in his recent reports, the proportion of total population assistance for family planning services has suffered a serious decline from 1995 to 2003. While endorsing the need for increased funding for HIV/AIDS, we would emphasise the need to recognise the continuing need for funding for other deadly diseases as well as for family planning and reproductive health services.

Given India’s long-term association with and commitment to Africa, we welcome the clear recognition given by the Secretary-General on the need to urgently address the special needs of Africa. On our part, we have undertaken

several initiatives in partnership with Africa. We hope to see commitments for concrete and implementable decisions in support of the priorities of NEPAD. The September summit should result in substantial outcomes that would enable Member States from sub-Saharan Africa to accelerate their efforts in achieving MDGs and their own development goals. The international community owes this to Africa and should not fail to meet this challenge.

Mr. Facilitator,

The September summit gives us an opportunity to put development back on the centre-stage of the global agenda, restore the primacy of the UN in dealing with development and endow the UN with the authority to guide the work of other institutions in the areas of trade, money and finance, debt and technology. Let us rise to the occasion and demonstrate that we are up to these tasks.

Thank you, Mr. Facilitator.

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