



STATEMENT BY MRS. SUSHMA SWARAJ, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT AND MEMBER OF THE INDIAN DELEGATION, ON AGENDA ITEM 64 [A] & [B] – NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT: PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTATION AND INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT & AGENDA ITEM 47: DECADE TO ROLL BACK MALARIA IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, PARTICULAR IN AFRICA AT THE 62ND SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON OCTOBER 18, 2007

Mr. President,

We thank the Secretary-General for the Fifth consolidated Report on Progress in Implementation and International Support for New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the other reports prepared for this joint debate. We broadly associate ourselves with the statement made by the Chair of the Group of 77. But I would like to deal with some of the issues discussed in the Report.

Mr. President,

First of all, I will talk about Malaria. It is regrettable that Malaria continues to plague several regions of the world, particularly in many parts of Africa. As a former Health Minister of India, I can say with authenticity that this disease affects people of all ages but is particularly dangerous and debilitating in young children and pregnant women. It disproportionately affects poor people and exacerbates the poverty of poor countries and communities by incapacitating the work force, decreasing economic productivity and reducing output. In rural areas, where the transmission season generally coincides with planting and harvesting season, malaria imposes a dual burden on the poor. The human suffering and economic losses caused by malaria are unnecessary as the disease is preventable, treatable and perfectly curable too. The Report talks about mosquito nets and adequate resource flow. That is necessary. But what is more necessary is protecting access to affordable generic medicines, which, I am sorry to say, the present IPR regime does not protect. Therefore, I would like to emphasize that the UN should try to improve this situation. Equally necessary is economic development that historically eliminated malaria from the developed world. For this, capacity building, science and technology and a truly developmental Doha

Round are all necessary. Many essential matters flow from this imperative of economic development.

Mr. President,

The Secretary-General's Report on 'Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace in Africa' states that the last few years have witnessed many positive developments in Africa and that the number of armed conflicts has been significantly reduced. The Secretary-General is right in saying that more action is needed both to strengthen and support Africa's own efforts to bring peace to the continent and to tackle the wider sources of armed conflicts.

In this context, India welcomes the creation of the Peace Building Commission. India is strongly committed to the objectives and work of the PBC, and has contributed to the resources of the Peace Building Fund. The mobilization of resources is the key vehicle by which the international community can assist post-conflict societies in addressing critical issues in peace consolidation, on the basis of national ownership of this process. Hopefully this would bring the Bretton Woods Institutions (BWIs) into the ambit of a larger perspective. It is worth remembering that many African countries where conflicts have broken out were, during the preceding decade, under an IMF programme for 60 to 80% of the time: economic advice given to them on trade, subsidies and agriculture made many reel back into civil conflict. Therefore, the UN has to play a central role in the reform of BWIs, including a much greater voice and participation of developing countries, which would make the BWIs more responsive to their needs, including those of Africa.

India has been one of the oldest, largest and most consistent contributors to UN Peacekeeping missions in Africa. Indian soldiers have been part of the UN Peacekeeping and Observer Missions in more than 10 African countries including the first UN Mission to Congo established in 1960. Presently, there are more than 8,000 Indian personnel on ground in Africa. The Indian soldiers have been recognized for their humanitarian and basic infrastructure projects, including provision of medical, water and vocational training assistance programmes. India has also contributed lady military and police officers to UN Missions in Africa. In a response to Secretary-General's call, India provided the first full female formed police unit for peacekeeping work in Liberia at the beginning of this year. In addition to its normal duties, this unit has been successful in reaching out to the most vulnerable sections of society i.e. women and children.

Mr. President,

Despite positive developments, the Secretary-General reminds us of the serious challenges that lie ahead; challenges posed by poverty, economic development, access to basic education, healthcare and adequate nutrition that are stumbling blocks to unleashing the latent talent of the African peoples. It is in this context that the Report of the Secretary General on NEPAD assumes significance. NEPAD reflects the

commitment of African countries to implementing their own programmes of development and self-reliance, and the commitment of the international community to support these efforts.

The Secretary-General's Report highlights the extensive measures and actions taken by African countries and organizations to implement the objectives of NEPAD. The Report highlights details of achievements of African countries in the areas of infrastructure, agriculture, health, education, environment, information and communication technology, science and technology, gender mainstreaming and civil society involvement as well as the progress of the African Peer Review Mechanism.

While several measures have been initiated by the international community to support NEPAD, and there is indeed a greater understanding and awareness about the special needs of Africa, NEPAD can succeed only if the global partnership delivers in terms of resources. That the total ODA to Africa provided by the Development Assistance Committee (excluding debt relief) declined in real terms in 2005 and stalled in 2006 or that with the continuation of present trends, the Group of Eight will not be on track to meet their commitment of doubling aid to Africa by 2010, cause pessimism. Timely fulfillment of the commitments made by the Group of Eight at the 2005 Gleneagles Summit, as well as those made at the 2007 Heiligendamm Summit is an imperative.

The problem of indebtedness has received the attention of the international community. The Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI) and the HIPC Initiative combined are currently helping African countries through savings in debt servicing. The MDRI will, however, not be fully successful unless donor countries adequately offset the lost debt repayments to the International Development Association and the African Development Fund, thus maintaining their capacity to issue new grants and affordable loans.

As we have seen, external assistance and an optimal enabling international economic environment have to be governed by the logic of economic development. For instance, the Doha Round has to address the problem of tariff escalation so that there is an incentive for Africa to specialize in processing rather than in raw-materials. Consequently, trade that helps development, reform of the international financial architecture, meeting ODA commitments and the like are all essential for the achievement of the objectives of NEPAD. Historically, the invasions of Africa were in search of raw-materials, ivory, gold and diamonds. Unless there is a complete break with this, the difference will be one of degree rather than kind from those who marched in the armies of Cecil Rhodes. The great African writer Chinua Achebe in his "Anthills of the Savannah" has made the point that the most important problem in Africa is not governance but foreign manipulation. This prevents the coming into their own of the "poor and dispossessed" who are "the bruised heart that throbs so painfully at the core of Africa's being".

Mr. President,

India's solidarity with Africa goes back a long time. The Hon'ble Foreign Minister of South Africa, speaking at the informal Plenary of the UN General Assembly on 2nd October 2007 to observe the First International Day of Non-Violence, said that South Africans are proud to claim Mahatma Gandhi as one of their own because it is in South Africa where he developed and fashioned Satyagraha as a tool of liberation.

India's economic cooperation with Africa is undertaken through the contribution to NEPAD, as well as through several bilateral and other projects and programmes. Initiatives such as Team-9 (Techno-Economic Approach for Africa-India Movement), the cooperation with the African Union and the Southern African Development Community and others are in addition to the several bilateral cooperation efforts between India and Africa that cover inter alia infrastructure (including railways), food processing, information and communication technology, pharmaceuticals and small & medium enterprises. Indian companies while contributing to economic growth are encouraged to use the mechanism of joint ventures and employ African managerial and labour talent.

India has been making its contribution to Africa's human resource development efforts through training of personnel under the ITEC programme (with an outlay of one billion dollars) and provision of experts to several African countries. Cooperation through the supply of materials and medicines, including anti-retroviral drugs to fight HIV/AIDS are a part of our overall effort. The Pan-African e-network project is proceeding on schedule. The network is aimed at sharing India's expertise in the fields of healthcare and education with all the countries of Africa and will connect 53 African countries into one network through satellite, fiber optics and wireless links to provide tele-education, tele-medicine and voice and video conference facilities amongst African Heads of State.

In conclusion, I would like to express the hope that with such initiatives, very soon we will see a self-reliant Africa, an economically and technologically vibrant Africa. We wish them all the best.

I thank you, Mr. President.

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