



STATEMENT BY MRS. SUTAPA MAJUMDAR, DIRECTOR, PLANNING COMMISSION OF INDIA, ON FOLLOW-UP TO THE WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE 24TH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY – PRIORITY THEME: SOCIAL INTEGRATION AT THE 48TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ON FEBRUARY 05, 2010

Mr Chairman,

Let me begin by conveying on behalf of the delegation of India, our warmest felicitations to you on your election and also to other members of the Bureau. I assure you of my delegation's full cooperation and support in guiding the deliberations of this Commission. We would like to thank the Secretary General for his various reports to this Commission. We associate ourselves with the statement made by the delegation of Yemen on behalf of G-77.

Mr Chairman,

It has been 15 years since world leaders met in Copenhagen in 1995 for the World Summit for Social Development and agreed on the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. The cornerstone of the Declaration was the commitment of countries to social development by taking appropriate actions to address the three mutually reinforcing and interdependent pillars, namely, poverty eradication; productive and decent employment for all; and social integration through inclusive growth.

In fact, realisation of these commitments is very essential for the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

Mr Chairman,

This year's priority theme of 'social integration' in the Commission for Social Development has provided the right opportunity to Member States to re-examine their own national development programmes from a 'social integration' perspective.

Mr Chairman,

In India, we are presently implementing the 11th Five Year Plan covering the period 2007-12. The key focus of the Plan is inclusive growth. Our endeavor is to ensure that the gains of economic growth reach all sections of our population. In this context our special efforts to ensure that rural India, where the vast majority of our huge population lives, derives direct benefit from the growth dividend. We are also paying special attention on gender equity issues and for the inclusion of vulnerable and marginalised sections of society in our development efforts.

As a result, in addition to setting up of a target for growth, the 11th Plan also identifies 26 measurable indices of performance relating to poverty, education, health, women and children that will reflect social integration achieved through development policies and programmes. There are targets which could be monitored to cover the multi-dimensional economic and social objectives of inclusive growth. Furthermore, to ensure efficient and timely implementation of the accompanying projects and programmes, these targets are disaggregated at the level of the States which implement many of the programmes.

Mr Chairman,

The strategy for achieving faster growth with greater inclusiveness involves several interrelated components. These are: (i) a continuation of the policies of economic reform which have created a buoyant and competitive private sector, (ii) a revival in agricultural growth which is the most important single factor affecting rural prosperity, (iii) improved access to essential services in health and education (including skill development) especially for the poor, which is essential to ensure inclusiveness and also to support rapid growth, (iv) a special thrust on infrastructure development which is a critical area for accelerating growth, (v) environmental sustainability which is becoming increasingly important, (vi) special attention to the needs of disadvantaged groups, and (vii) good governance at all levels: centre, state, and local.

Mr Chairman,

A demand-driven revolutionary instrument of empowerment of breaking down social inequalities and ensuring social dignity is essential. In order to ensure this, grassroots empowerment has been a major effort. One of our flagship programmes in this effort, which is also perhaps the world's largest work programme, is the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, which ensures 100 days employment to every rural household and improves wage levels.

Mr Chairman,

Education is a key to ensuring greater inclusivity that demands an educated labour force for achieving faster growth. In this context, the ongoing effort of the Eleventh Plan is to strengthen elementary education. The infrastructure for primary schools has been almost completed under the *Sarva Siksha Abhiyan*. Focus is now on quality and the expansion of infrastructure for secondary education.

The Eleventh Plan proposes a five-fold agenda for gender equity. This includes economic empowerment; social empowerment; political empowerment; strengthening mechanisms for effective implementation of women-related legislations; and augmenting delivery mechanisms for mainstreaming gender.

Mr Chairman,

Policies and strategies are being designed to achieve social development, in order to ensure that all social groups, especially the vulnerable ones are not left behind. We have developed specific programmes for such groups, which include economically and socially backward community, youth, elderly and persons with disability.

Mr Chairman,

Social integration is essential for fostering a stable, safe, harmonious peaceful and just society. Social integration should not be construed as achieving uniformity, but to understand and respect diversity and to promote equal opportunity and participation of all in order to create a "society for all". Our ultimate objective should be broad based improvement in the quality of life of all people.

Social Development has to be coherent and people centric. No 'one size fits all' approach can succeed. Each country has to devise its own comprehensive national policies and programme, depending on their level of social integration of various vulnerable groups as well as socio-economic development of its people. Mere existence of normative frameworks will not reduce discrimination, cultural biases and violence if they are not complemented by policy measures with strict enforcement.

Mr Chairman,

As we celebrate the 15th anniversary of Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, let me join all the other Member States in reaffirming our commitment to continue to implement it by creating an enabling environment by pursuing policies of social justice, social development, economic growth and sustainable development for all.

I thank you, Mr Chairman.

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