

Statement by H.E. Ambassador Raymond Wolfe, Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the UN during the Thematic Debate on the MDGs, 2 April 008: "Recognising the achievements, addressing the challenges and getting back on track to achieve the MDGs by 2015".

Introduction

Mr. President,

My delegation welcomes the opportunity to participate in this thematic debate on the Millennium Development Goals as it offers us, the United Nations family, a unique opportunity to undertake a stocktaking exercise of the progress achieved so far and the steps to be taken to realize full attainment of these goals.

Jamaica aligns itself with the Statements delivered by Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. We also welcome the Statements delivered by Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, the Prime Minister of Finland and the Foreign Minister of Mali which underline the urgent action required by the global community to fully achieve the MDGs.

Historical perspective

Mr. President,

I believe that there is consensus in this room that the realization of the MDGs constitutes an integral part of the United Nations Development agenda. We can also readily agree that the Millennium Development Goals are not a new agenda. The goals have all, at various junctures during the life of this venerable Organisation, been at the forefront of the UN development agenda dating back to the 1960s when the General Assembly declared the first "United Nations Development Decade". Every decade since then, until the 1990s, has been declared UN Development Decades.

Despite the best efforts of the UN, the gap between developed and developing countries has widened, prospects for substantial social and economic growth in developing countries has deteriorated and their position in international trade has weakened considerably owing to major changes in global trading arrangements in an ever-evolving global economy including globalization. The MDGs therefore form a critical component of the UN's efforts to refocus global attention on the advancement of the development prospects of the world's poorest.

National efforts

Mr. President,

At the mid-point to the achievement of the MDGs, reports point to mixed progress among some regions in reaching some of the goals. While there have been visible gains, significant challenges remain in their overall implementation.

The full and effective implementation of the MDGs by 2015 remains a national priority for the Government of Jamaica. Accordingly, the Goals have been incorporated at various levels into our national development strategies. We have recorded successes in many areas including poverty eradication, primary school enrolment, life expectancy and eradication of communicable diseases including malaria. While Jamaica is on track to meet the goals within the specified time-frame, we continue to work with our partners towards building on this foundation.

Global context

In this context, while underscoring the primary responsibility of national governments for their own development, my delegation is of the view that success by developing countries hinges largely on assistance received from developed countries. Concomitantly, we need to achieve qualitative and meaningful progress in the collective efforts to develop a genuine global partnership for development.

Jamaica therefore encourages our developed partners to fulfill their longstanding commitments to achieve the Official Development Assistance (ODA) target of 0.7% of gross national income (GNI) by 2015. Despite commitments made in Monterrey in 2002 pledges made by the G8 in 2005 to double aid to Africa by 2010 and by the EU (also in 2005) to allocate 0.7% of GNI to ODA by 2015, we note with deep concern that ODA has declined in the last three years. The Goals, while distinct, are intricately related; hence, achievement of one makes progress in other areas possible. The importance of MDG8 - global partnership for development - must therefore be emphasized.

Major challenges

Mr. President,

A myriad of challenges impede the progress of developing countries in realizing the MDGs. I will highlight two which my delegation deems to be of crucial importance. During the recently concluded thematic debate on Climate Change, several delegations including Jamaica, pointed to the causal link between climate change and the efforts of developing countries in their pursuit of sustainable development and the achievement of global development benchmarks such as the Millennium Development Goals. It is an open secret that whilst industrialized nations are the primary contributors to climate

change, the developing world pays the price. Tackling climate change and the achievement of the MDGs can no longer be construed as separate agendas but rather two sides of the same coin. Efforts to address both should therefore be mutually reinforcing.

International trade, as we all agree Mr. President, is an engine for development. In order for the developing world to maximize the benefits which can be accrued from participating in international trade, including poverty eradication and job and wealth creation, the global trade regime should be made more conducive to progress in ALL developing countries. In this regard, we observe with great concern the stalemate in the negotiations in the Doha Development Round since 2001. If our developed partners are truly committed to the development dimensions of the Doha round, an early and successful conclusion of the negotiations is indeed vital.

Conclusion

Mr. President,

My delegation is currently examining the recently released Report of the Secretary-General concerning improving the delivery of the mandates of development-related activities, which outlines proposals to strengthen the UN's capacity to deliver its mandates on development. We agree with the SG that "a stronger UN needs a stronger development pillar". Therefore, efforts to address the lopsided and lacklustre approach to addressing activities pertaining to the three pillars are most welcome. However, this is just one of the many steps in the long journey that the UN will need to undertake to effectively bolster the development pillar.

Mr. President,

The clock is ticking as we approach the 2015 benchmark. Additional decisive and concerted action is needed now if our goals are to be accomplished. We have a political, moral and ethical obligation to redouble our efforts; the future generations are relying on us.

I thank you Mr. President.