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## Third Committee

### Summary record of the 4th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 3 October 2006, at 3 p.m.

*Chairman:* Mr. Al-Bayati . . . . . (Republic of Iraq)

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.*

**Agenda item 60: Social development** (*continued*)

- (a) **Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly** (*continued*) (A/61/99)
- (b) **Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family** (*continued*)
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- (d) **Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing** (*continued*) (A/61/167)

1. **Ms. Faye** (Senegal) said that social development was the only way to combat poverty and to resolve employment issues facing young people. Many programmes for the aged, the disabled, women and children had been put in place in Senegal and traditional ways of carrying out development policy had been questioned. The National Programme to combat poverty paid particular attention to vulnerable groups and to the rational use of natural resources.

2. Since problems of food and security were related to other problems such as poor access to clean drinking water, health problems and low labour productivity, a strategic framework for food security had been developed which linked food security, the environment and the fight against poverty. Improving food security was a project which spanned numerous sectors and concerns, including women's issues, agriculture, human resources and rural infrastructure.

3. In order to combat poverty effectively, good governance was required. Thus, Senegal had taken measures to combat corruption, increase transparency, disseminate information about correct procurement procedures and improve public finance practices. Lastly, she stressed the need to integrate disabled persons into society, provide social protection and opportunities for socio-economic and educational advancement to vulnerable groups and ensure respect for their rights.

4. **Ms. Asmady** (Indonesia), referring to the Secretary-General's report (A/61/99), noted that progress on implementing the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development had been uneven, with some indicators, such as school enrolment and infant mortality, indicating a deceleration of progress in those areas. In order to combat poverty effectively, free and fair trade practices and foreign direct investment were necessary. Indonesia had had very positive experience with small and medium-sized enterprises, which contributed significantly to the country's GDP and to job creation. Accordingly, the Central Bank of Indonesia had set aside nearly \$6.5 billion to stimulate the growth of small and medium enterprises.

5. Indonesia's anti-poverty strategy involved the creation of an effective social safety net to include human resources development, infrastructure-building and food security. Programmes in the social sector would improve access to and quality of education, health, family planning and other services. In helping the disabled, Indonesia would be guided by the international Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Its Government provided income support to older persons in six provinces and such assistance might be extended to other provinces in the near future.

6. **Mr. Chaderton Matos** (the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that the eradication of poverty was a moral imperative. Poverty was a violation of human rights. The response to poverty must be based on the principles of social inclusion and equal rights for all. Social development involved a better distribution of wealth and went beyond representative democracy to participatory democracy.

7. UNESCO had declared his country free of illiteracy in 2005. It guaranteed medical assistance free of charge 24 hours a day to 17 million people. Over 100 types of medication were available free of charge at clinics, including medication for HIV/AIDS. Cuba had provided doctors for programmes in Venezuela. The Venezuelan Government also provided free eye operations, 56,000 of which had been performed in 2005. There were plans to extend such projects to other countries in Latin America, and people from other Latin American countries came to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for eye treatment. Millions of people benefited from Government food programmes and job training.

8. It was necessary to look at the root causes of poverty and to help countries achieve social development goals by eliminating the overwhelming burden of external debt. Under President Hugo Chavez, the Government had overcome illiteracy, with assistance from Cuba, increased school enrolment and provided basic education through the sixth grade for people who had been excluded from the formal education sector. Education was a weapon for freedom.

9. Social development was an element of Venezuelan foreign policy. That point of view was promoted in the hemisphere through the *Social Charter of the Americas* and through a Venezuelan alternative approach to trade called ALBA based on relations of cooperation, sovereignty and solidarity to build alliances, encourage economic growth, promote social inclusion and overcome inequality. That mechanism served to develop a sovereign public policy and sovereign control of natural resources to alleviate the sufferings of Latin and Caribbean peoples in the areas of social justice, social development and democracy.

10. **Mr. Giorgio** (Eritrea) said that in the last decade or so, poverty eradication had become very much a part of the international development agenda. However, unless the fight for poverty eradication was intensified and coordinated globally and nationally, many countries would fail to cut poverty in half by the target year of 2015. Eritrea was committed to the goals of the World Summit for Social Development and the creation of a more equitable social system focusing on the concerns of vulnerable groups. Eritrea was making serious efforts to rehabilitate the economic, social and physical infrastructure of the country and was guided by principles of equity and equality in its delivery of social services nationwide.

11. It was important that Governments be given the opportunity to determine home-grown poverty reduction strategies reflecting specific conditions and priorities in each country. In Eritrea, all able-bodied persons, particularly young people, were mobilized in a national programme, allowing development to be broad based and participatory. The link between literacy and development was clear. Eritrea's long-standing commitment to adult literacy had been recognized by the *UNESCO 2002 International Reading Association Literacy Award*. The country had increased literacy training completion rates from 33 per cent to 68 per cent between 1993 and 2000, created reading materials

in eight Eritrean languages and linked literacy, skills training and demobilization of soldiers.

12. Issues of persons with disabilities were a priority for the Government of Eritrea, whose policy objectives included ensuring greater integration of persons with disabilities into society and providing access to health and rehabilitation services, education, job training and economic opportunities. Eritrea welcomed the adoption of the draft Comprehensive Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by the Ad Hoc Committee, and hoped for its adoption at the current session of the General Assembly.

13. **Ms. Johns** (Jamaica), speaking as Youth Ambassador, expressed her appreciation of General Assembly resolution 60/2, which encouraged youth participation in national delegations and had enabled her to address the Committee, in accordance with the tenet of the Jamaica National Youth Policy that all youth had the right to participate in decision-making that affected their well-being. Several United Nations measures sought to address the deterioration of the status of youth worldwide, who faced growing levels of unemployment, poverty and epidemics. While overall conditions had improved in the past decade, there was overwhelming evidence that more needed to be done. Accordingly, the World Youth Report 2005 had outlined 10 priority areas targeted by the General Assembly for the social development of youth, which included poverty, unemployment and health.

14. Although Jamaica, with help from a number of United Nations assistance programmes, had achieved a gradual reduction of the percentage of young people living in poverty, 20 per cent were still living in conditions of poverty as of 1998. Unemployment had many adverse social effects, poverty being the harshest. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) could play a greater role by facilitating large-scale microcredit financing exclusively for young entrepreneurs, which would reinforce entrepreneurial behaviour and self-sufficiency.

15. Jamaican youth continued to be affected by the scourge of HIV/AIDS, with an estimated 10,000 young people in the 15-24 age group infected. It was evident that the virus could have a devastating effect on any society, let alone small island developing States like her own, decimating the youth labour force. Jamaica had adopted a five-pronged approach to the problem, which included HIV/STI surveillance, treatment and

care. She was grateful for the assistance that her country had received from the United Nations system in combating HIV/AIDS, Goal 6 of the Millennium Development Goals, to which her country was fully committed. Another negative aspect of the disease was discrimination against infected youth, especially in the workplace, which could not but swell the ranks of unemployed young people. In conclusion, she underscored the importance of the unity symbolized by the United Nations and said that her country would assign the highest priority to the promotion of social progress, justice and enhancement of the human condition, based on the full participation of all.

16. **Mr. Otte** (Netherlands) said that his work as a youth representative of his country had sent him, among other places, to the slums of Hyderabad, where his first-hand look at poverty had impressed upon him the fact that Dutch youth were much more privileged than their peers in the slums. Injustice caused by social, political and economic inequality was widespread; it crossed borders and affected all people.

17. While young people in the Netherlands had the opportunity to attend school and could not hold a proper job before the age of 16, some 218 million under-age children in the developing world were obliged to work to support their families and simply could not go to school. While the Internet provided young people in the developed countries with an excellent opportunity for cultural interaction, the only advanced technology seen by young people trapped in war-torn regions was the weapons that disrupted their lives. Young people were the world's biggest stakeholders, but many had no say in national and international decision-making. The United Nations had the power to do something about inequality in education and political participation and should also focus on the impact of new technology on armed conflict. Social exclusion, discrimination and inequality could be overcome if the focus was placed on the humanity shared by everyone, regardless of racial, social, economic or political differences. Solidarity was one of the eight elements of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace.

18. He drew attention to three projects based on solidarity and humanity: the MV Foundation, dedicated to eliminating child labour and establishing universal primary education in Andhra Pradesh in southern India; the UNICEF-supported Return to Happiness programme, in which young volunteers — themselves

often survivors — gave therapeutic support to young people coping with loss due to conflicts or natural disasters in many countries of the world; and the participation of youth delegations to conferences and meetings. Accordingly, he urged Member States to fulfil their political, social and economic commitment to bring about a world founded on equality and shared humanity. They must abolish the age discrepancy between ILO Convention No. 138 and Goal 2 of the Millennium Development Goals; launch a proactive campaign to provide young people with opportunities for decent and meaningful work, making them less likely to join disruptive factions; and bring a Youth Delegate to the General Assembly.

19. **Mr. Baja** (Philippines) said that poverty involved not only economic and social exclusion, but also the denial of human rights. There was a need to further integrate economic and social goals and policies, since focusing on economic goals alone could lead to greater social disparities, polarization and exclusion. While the multidimensional nature of poverty was more widely acknowledged, recognition of the links between its social aspects and the macroeconomic architecture had not really been reflected in policies. In that connection, his Government was intensifying implementation of the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan 2004-2010. Its more focused and integrated action strategies included promoting livelihood, strengthening education, attaining fiscal stability, decentralized development and achieving sustained national harmony.

20. The developing countries were grateful to those developed countries that had honoured their commitment to allocate 0.7 per cent of their gross domestic product (GDP) to that cause. In that context, he encouraged them, as well as the international financial institutions, to consider the innovative Philippine proposal of “debt-for-equity in Millennium Development Goals projects”, which, far from seeking debt forgiveness, cancellation, moratoriums or discounts, merely invited creditor countries, multilateral institutions and large commercial banks voluntarily to plough back into the debtor countries' economies 50 per cent of an agreed portion of debt service payments due to them in the form of equities and channelled to appropriate projects of their choice. He also advocated continued discussion of the way in which remittances could best serve as an engine of sustainable development, a topic raised at the recent

High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development.

21. His Government implemented plans and programmes for the empowerment, protection and equal participation of vulnerable groups. In that context, he welcomed the recently concluded negotiations of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and hoped that the ensuing Convention would be scrupulously implemented, especially in the developing countries, home to the majority of the world's disabled, who were among the poorest of the poor. International cooperation was needed to ensure that such persons enjoyed the fruits of development.

22. Stressing the importance of providing decent and productive jobs, he said his country had focused on the plight of its youth, employing the four major strategies of employment generation, preservation, facilitation and enhancement. Young people had access to capacity-building programmes in a variety of areas, including employment opportunities and skills enhancement for economic empowerment. An enabling environment was indeed crucial to equity and social development, and enhanced partnerships among Governments, civil society and the private sector had greatly contributed to progress in that regard. Accordingly, he urged the international community to continue to work collectively on the ethical, social, political and economic imperatives of eradicating poverty.

23. **Mr. Newang** (Nepal) thanked the international community for its moral support and assistance that had enabled Nepal to undertake the transformation to a multiparty democratic polity and the restoration of democracy and economic and social development, as a result of the success of the People's Movement in April 2006.

24. With more than 85 per cent of Nepalese living in rural areas, the national development plan focused on improving the well-being of inhabitants of rural and remote areas. However, population growth, poverty, inadequate infrastructure development and primitive industrial development posed daunting challenges. In addition, in the past decade the people of Nepal had been exposed to violence and armed conflict, destruction of development infrastructure and public

property, and the suppression and violation of human rights, the brunt of which had been felt by women, children, youth and the elderly.

25. The Government, committed to the successful conclusion of the peace process through dialogue and to the holding of free and fair elections as soon as possible, would be implementing development policies and programmes to enhance poor people's quality of life and promote the inclusion of deprived communities, regions and ethnic groups with a view to eradicating social injustice. It had adopted a policy of decentralization to enable local authorities to formulate, implement and monitor development programmes. It also attached great importance to partnership with civil society and non-governmental organizations and was committed to ensuring 33 per cent participation of women at all decision-making levels.

26. The integration of economic and social policies should focus on poverty eradication. It would be helpful if there were greater access to markets in the developed countries for products from the developing countries so that the latter could achieve sustained economic growth and mitigate the negative effects of globalization. His delegation called for a coherent and concerted approach by the international community to social development. He welcomed the finalization of the draft international convention on the rights of persons with disabilities and urged implementation of the Madrid Political Declaration and International Plan of Action on Ageing; the gender dimension should also be taken into account when the problems of older persons were addressed.

27. Nepal was fully committed to implementing all the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals and the Brussels Programme of Action. He, therefore, urged the international community to step up its financial and technical assistance to the least developed countries in the light of their special needs and situations, such as those emerging from conflicts, land-locked developing States and small island developing States.

28. **Mr. Muburi-Muita** (Kenya) appealed to the development partners and the international community to work in partnership with Africa to address the challenges facing the continent. His country had implemented policies and programmes to address social problems, including through an economic

recovery strategy for wealth and employment creation for the period 2003-2007 and the implementation of a free and compulsory primary education system, which put Kenya on course for achieving the goal of universal, free compulsory education by the target date. Health services were also subsidized, particularly for HIV/AIDS-related illnesses, malaria and maternal and child health care.

29. Steps had also been taken to address challenges in the agricultural sector, the main source of income in sub-Saharan Africa, employing as it did 90 per cent of the rural population. In order to address the many hindrances to agricultural development, a national Roads Board and district road committees had been established to improve the rural transport infrastructure. A second window coffee auction now enabled coffee farmers to sell their produce directly to buyers. The Agricultural Finance Corporation had been revived and enhanced to provide credit, and a mechanism in the Ministry of Agriculture provided revived extension services to farmers. Development partners were encouraged to help fund such measures, and developed countries were called upon to increase market access for Kenyan products.

30. In the area of health, the Government had created institutional frameworks and structures to arrest the spread of pandemics and alleviate their effects. The prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS had been reduced from 14 per cent to 6.1 per cent in 15 years, and infected persons now had increased access to retroviral drugs, voluntary counselling and testing centres and so on. A roll-back malaria strategy aimed to reduce the level of infection by 30 per cent and sustain that level until 2010. But international support through funding, capacity-building and equipment in the form of contributions to the Global Fund was sorely needed. A Ministry for Youth Affairs had been established to assist young people, who accounted for 60 per cent of the population, as well as a Youth Fund to finance programmes for youth employment opportunities. But all those measures were not sufficient to reduce poverty without trade liberalization and access to the markets of the developed countries, while resources had been mobilized to fund social development, including through enhanced tax and revenue collection, accelerated war on corruption, and reallocation of funds from other sectors, they were not enough.

31. **Ms. Laohaphan** (Thailand) said that, at the end of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication

of Poverty, poverty had declined in absolute terms, but progress in eliminating it had been slow and uneven. Member States must redouble their efforts and keep their promises, as more than enough pledges and targets had failed to yield results. Thailand remained committed to partnerships for development, whether in the form of South-South cooperation, or in the form of trilateral cooperation with developed countries and international agencies. The United Nations played an important role in improving policy coherence and coordination.

32. Aid alone would not suffice to help countries emerge from the poverty trap. They must be given equal opportunities to use trade to achieve that goal. The Doha Round of international trade negotiations, which must be continued, would have an important influence on social development at national and international levels. Moreover, economic growth was not enough to combat poverty. In fact, it could sometimes worsen poverty. The international community must address both actual and perceived economic inequality between and within countries to ensure that economic benefits were distributed evenly to all sectors of society. Success in the pursuit of peace and security, development and human rights depended on success in that endeavour, particularly as perceived injustice had led to resentment and violence in many parts of the world.

33. For development to be truly sustainable and equitable, people must be placed at the centre of economic and social development policy. Empowerment was a key concern, but had not been given enough priority in international development cooperation. The United Nations and international agencies should mainstream it into their policies and programmes at the national, regional and international levels. As employment and the ability to earn a decent living were an important source of empowerment and dignity, the Ministerial Declaration on Employment Generation and Decent Work adopted at the 2006 session of the Economic and Social Council should be implemented fully and effectively. Achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all was critical to the development of a healthy society and to making globalization more humane and equitable.

34. Empowerment was needed not just at the individual and group level, but also at the community and national level. Literacy and education were important to unlocking human potential. Thailand

therefore supported implementation of the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012), urged international agencies to ensure closer coordination and coherence with other initiatives sharing the same goal, such as Education for All and the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, and supported the integration of those initiatives into broader efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals.

35. Acknowledging that its society had become one of the many that were ageing, Thailand had taken steps to mainstream that issue into national development plans and programmes through legislation and plans of action. It had also worked closely with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to study the impact of HIV/AIDS on the economic, social, health and emotional status of older persons. It looked forward to the first five-year review of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. The historic agreement reached on the text of an International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities would ensure that the rights and dignity of over 600 million people had the same recognition as the rights and dignity of others, enabling them to become active agents for the development of their countries.

36. **Mr. Gadirov** (Azerbaijan) said that, although poverty eradication had been a focus of the international community's attention, progress in that regard had been uneven. Any approach to the issue must satisfy people's essential needs, be sustainable, and be matched by national strategies which could address development-related problems.

37. Azerbaijan's own measures had increased gross domestic product growth substantially even between 2005 and 2006, producing a rise in living standards. However, as economic growth alone could not eliminate poverty, measures had been introduced to use the fruits of such growth for sustainable social development and to even out income distribution. The attention of the Government remained focused on meeting social needs and financing the development of the oil industry. In the previous year, with both incomes and the minimum wage considerably higher than before and with inflation relatively low, the Government had increased its expenditure on social protection by 29 per cent and poverty had fallen by the same degree.

38. To eradicate poverty and secure sustainable social development, many policies must be developed and implemented. They included full and productive employment, giving women and young people better access to financial resources, increasing State investment in health and education services and special measures for the vulnerable. In that connection, his delegation welcomed the conclusion of negotiations on an International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which would improve the perception of those individuals, especially women and children, and protect their rights. Between 1995 and 2006, Azerbaijan had improved the legal foundation of its measures to strengthen the social protection and integration into society of persons with disabilities and provide employment and vocational, medical and social support. Job quotas had been established for the disabled and for other vulnerable groups, as they were the most exposed to the harsh consequences of the market.

39. As the State Statistical Committee, the United Nations Development Programme and the International Labour Organization had determined that 69 per cent of the unemployed in Azerbaijan were under 35, youth unemployment was a particular focus for the Government. Long-term unemployment was a serious problem for the refugees and internally displaced persons who were victims of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Like other countries in Europe, Azerbaijan was confronted with an ageing population. It must defend the rights of older people and improve social protection for them. In that connection, the review of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing should reinforce cooperation in approaching such issues.

40. **Mr. Pekarchuk** (Ukraine), said that the review by the Commission for Social Development of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, along with the outcomes of the 1995 World Summit for Social Development and the 2005 World Summit, would provide important food for thought for the General Assembly at its current session.

41. Eradicating poverty was a top concern for the Government of Ukraine, which was translating international policy into national programmes, including recent legislative initiatives. The August 2006 National Unity Pact, signed by the members of the coalition Government, recognized the threat of social disintegration and the fact that poverty must be

tackled by examining its root causes. While Governments must take primary responsibility for policies in that regard, they could form partnerships with the private sector and international organizations. Accordingly, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Ukraine for 2006 to 2010 had put forward a “prosperity against poverty” approach. Ukraine acknowledged that there was much work still to do, and was determined to build a knowledge-based economy to serve the needs of development.

42. **Ms. Farfán** (El Salvador) said that El Salvador had established a País Seguro (“safe country”) plan focusing on health, education, housing and consolidation of society and the family. It was fully consistent with the outcome of the 1995 World Summit for Social Development, gave priority to public investment, generating employment opportunities, combating poverty and improving basic services, and aimed to foster human capital and equity between all Salvadorans.

43. Recognizing that poverty led not only to precarious living conditions, but also to economic and environmental vulnerability and marginalization from the political process, El Salvador undertook to expand participation in implementing international commitments, including those of the World Summit for Social Development, and the Millennium Development Goals. Its policies regarding poverty, health and education focused on integrated local development. In a break from past practice, services centred on the family rather than the individual, as it was families, and more accurately women, who made decisions about access to basic services. Moreover, the family setting was the appropriate place to tackle the factors which tended to perpetuate poverty from generation to generation.

44. The 14th conference of First Ladies and representatives of the Heads of State and Government of the Americas, which would be held in El Salvador in 2007, would take up the issue of older persons and review progress in the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. In the recent past, El Salvador had also hosted a forum on rehabilitation for young people who were at risk or had been in trouble with the law, as part of its approach to the social, economic, cultural and security consequences of youth gang activity. It welcomed the conclusion of negotiations on an International

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which it hoped to ratify rapidly.

45. Having adopted a people-centred development focus, El Salvador recognized the complexity of poverty and the fact that income was not the only issue involved; there were others, including nutrition, housing, social exclusion, vulnerability, education, opportunities for decent employment, health and participation in society. It remained committed to international efforts to eradicate poverty.

46. **Mr. Alsubeihi** (Yemen) said that the Secretary-General, in his report on implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development (A/61/99), had highlighted the many costs of failing to carry out the commitments made at the Summit. Yemen reiterated its commitment to working with civil society, the private sector and international organizations to further development. The international community could not live up to the expectations of people without forming a partnership between developed and developing countries. There could be no development for all without equality of opportunity, which required consideration of the circumstances and debt burdens of developing countries, along with wider market access and elimination of tariffs. Developing countries must commit themselves to good governance, combat corruption and make rational use of development assistance.

47. Acknowledging that social development could not be achieved without economic development, Yemen had established a poverty-eradication strategy based on health and education, and had established an anti-corruption committee. To encourage those involved in agriculture and fisheries, it was providing access to credit. Also acknowledging the link between education and development, it had worked with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), as part of the United Nations Literacy Decade, to improve education, school curriculums and school equipment. Its legislation guaranteed access to education for all, with compulsory attendance throughout primary school. By 2005, 60 per cent of the population had access to health care, compared to the previous rate of 38 per cent. The Government had also focused on implementing the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, and had established a fund to provide pensions. It welcomed the agreement on an International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.



48. **Ms. Kafanabo** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that in the light of the uneven progress made in achieving the goals set out at the 1995 World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, namely vis-à-vis the three core issues of poverty eradication, full employment and social integration, more concerted efforts needed to be made towards implementing the Copenhagen Programme of Action. In that regard, she welcomed the Secretary-General's recommendations contained in his report on follow-up to the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (A/61/99).

49. To meet the goals set out under the Copenhagen Programme of Action since its adoption, her Government had undertaken a number of measures, such as the implementation of its 2004-2010 National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty, which addressed social issues such as employment, youth, gender and HIV/AIDS and incorporated good governance and accountability measures. She wished to thank the United Nations system and development partners for their support in the implementation of that strategy.

50. The Government had taken measures to assist youth in facing unemployment and underemployment, an issue that was particularly relevant in rural areas, such as through a programme to encourage youth to form economic ventures through microcredit support, intensifying their vocational training and helping them to form savings and credit associations. To ensure that microcredit was an effective tool to reduce poverty, it was important to accurately assess borrowers' different credit needs and ensure that informal ownership of land could be taken into account to secure loans. In that regard, the Government had initiated a programme to promote and formalize extra-legal economic activities with a view to providing equal opportunities for all Tanzanian citizens and empower them for self-development. The Government's aim was to address income and poverty issues through economic growth at the grass-roots level. To address the employment issue for all its citizens, the Government had reviewed its labour policies and laws and put in place an employment strategy to create one million jobs by 2010.

51. With regard to ageing, the Government was committed to implementing the Madrid Plan of Action, had put in place a policy on ageing, and had

incorporated relevant issues in its National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty. Its biggest challenge was to provide social protection for older persons, whose lives were further constrained by having to care for those struck by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, including children whose parents had lost their lives to the disease. Her Government welcomed the draft convention on the protection and promotion of the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities, and had put in place a policy for persons with disabilities which emphasized the mainstreaming of relevant issues in all programmes and policies.

52. To address the increase in the illiteracy rate, the Government had set up an adult and informal education strategy, in partnership with civil society, to ensure that out-of-school children, youth and adults and especially girls, women, disadvantaged groups and nomads, had access to quality basic learning opportunities. Her Government recognized the role that civil society played in helping it to implement social development programmes. Many challenges were still ahead in realizing the goals of the World Summit for Social Development, and concerted efforts to honour the commitments made were critical.

53. **Mr. Al-Thani** (Qatar) said that Qatar was committed to the promotion of social justice and the preservation of traditional and universal values. His Government had various policies, programmes and legislation in place to ensure social development for its people, thus enhancing the status of women, children, youth, the elderly, the family and persons with disabilities. There was a strong spirit of civic community in Qatar, which the Government complemented through comprehensive services in universal quality education and primary health care.

54. Implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action at all levels was crucial. However, that objective had been somewhat eclipsed over the past years. An inclusive "society for all" had been set out as an aim of the World Summit for Social Development. In that regard, while discussion on two core issues — poverty eradication and employment — had been prominent in several forums, the third core issue of social integration needed to be further addressed, especially in the Third Committee and the Commission for Social Development. Social integration needed to be assessed in terms of modalities, methods and magnitude, and should be the subject of more intense global dialogue, as should the

issues of social cohesion and development. In that regard, his delegation would welcome efforts by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in developing regional and subregional perspectives on social integration.

55. His country welcomed the recommendations made by the Director General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) vis-à-vis the International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade. With regard to follow-up on the Second World Assembly on Ageing, he supported the commendable work of the Division for Social Policy and Development and its Programme on Ageing in particular, which should focus on national capacity-building. In that regard, enhancing the technical assistance capabilities of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in the context of implementing the Madrid Plan of Action was imperative. Lastly, he welcomed that agreement had been reached on the text of the draft convention on the rights of persons with disabilities and looked forward to its adoption by the General Assembly.

56. **Mr. Sadykov** (Kazakhstan) said that social development issues should continue to be priority items on the agenda of the main bodies of the United Nations. The full realization of development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals, could only be possible through a firm commitment by Member States to a global partnership for development at the international and regional levels. Kazakhstan had consistently implemented the decisions taken at Copenhagen, Madrid and other international conferences on social development and remained committed to the timely achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by carrying out a long-term strategy of its own.

57. Economic growth alone was not enough to alleviate poverty; economic policies needed to focus on social equity in order to ensure quality growth and equal distribution of benefits. Accordingly, Kazakhstan had been increasing its social spending in line with its economic growth, primarily in health care, education and employment, with the aim of raising its population's living standard. The country had a series of national programmes to eliminate poverty, such as the programme on the development of agricultural territories and the programme on poverty eradication, which had reduced the number of persons with incomes below the subsistence minimum by half. Furthermore,

the Government was focusing particular attention on developing the private sector and facilitating access to microfinancing, to ensure productive employment and decent work. It also had a National Youth Programme for 2006-2007 to tackle the country's high youth unemployment rate, and a package of measures for the social protection of students.

58. Kazakhstan had also instituted a number of measures to provide education for its population, including compulsory primary education which covered 99.5 per cent of its population. The country was now focusing on improving the quality of education, through free higher education and vocational training and education loans. The Kazakh Government had pension system reforms under way to improve the accrual system, and had instituted compulsory individual health insurance to improve the quality of life of the elderly. The average pensions had been doubled in the last five years.

59. Kazakhstan welcomed the completion of work on the draft convention on the protection and promotion of the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities, had adopted a law on the social protection of persons with disabilities in 2005, and was implementing a national programme on rehabilitation of persons with disabilities for 2006-2008. In conclusion, he called for Member States and specialized United Nations agencies to take coordinated actions to carry out their obligations vis-à-vis the Millennium Development Goals and other social development instruments.

60. **Mr. Nsemi** (Congo) said that ten years after the World Summit for Social Development, socio-economic disparities remained between rich and developing countries. Efforts to eradicate poverty had generally been slow, imbalanced, and sometimes, inexistent, as had unfortunately been the case in sub-Saharan Africa. Additional efforts were needed at all levels in order to fulfil the objectives for the current decade. To that end, poverty reduction was a cornerstone of his country's development policy, as evidenced through the social objectives set out in its development priorities. Furthermore, with the support of development partners, his country had drawn up a detailed programme for 2004-2009, in line with the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP).

61. The Government had increased its budget investment in activities to alleviate poverty, and efforts had been made to lift the State out of its social debt, in

order to provide assistance to the working population and improve the domestic debt situation in general. To help improve the quality of life for Congolese citizens, more than 1,000 social housing units were being built, and a housing bank and national housing fund had been established to facilitate middle-income citizens' access to housing. To tackle the youth unemployment situation, which was of particular concern, the Government had set up an intersectoral committee to foster employment, involving the public and private sectors as well as civil society. That had led to the creation of more than 30,000 jobs over the past three years. With the help of international financial institutions, his Government had worked towards the reintegration of young ex-combatants, helping to reintegrate more than 7,000 youths through a national programme. He expressed his Government's appreciation for the funding received from the World Bank and the European Union in that regard.

62. In the light of the expanding phenomenon of poverty in his country and in Africa, a phenomenon which, in particular, affected women in rural areas, the Government faced the challenge of adapting its infrastructures, ensuring adequate management of human resources and access to global markets, as well as contending with the impact of HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other diseases. In order to address the Congolese farming sector's inability to meet the population's food needs, due to the low level of investment and the lack of affordable technologies, the Government had developed a number of initiatives under a special programme for food security, and had created a fund to boost farming activities and developed a microfinancing scheme. Nevertheless, more efforts still needed to be deployed to help the country overcome its heavy debt burden, lack of domestic savings, and low level of foreign direct investment, namely in non-oil sectors. The Copenhagen commitments and Millennium Development Goals could only be achieved through concerted efforts by all countries, rich and poor. His country would continue to play its part in those efforts.

63. **Ms. Abubakar** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that her delegation supported the report submitted by the Secretary-General, which included a review of the uneven progress made by States in reducing poverty. The eradication of poverty, still a major obstacle to the achievement of social development goals, required national strategies developed through combined

national and international efforts. Her country was greatly concerned at the slow rate of development in some countries and called on the international community to live up to the promises made within the framework of official development assistance and to increase effective multilateral cooperation. It expressed its deep regret over the failure to arrive at positive findings in the review of the United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) that had taken place during the forty-fourth session of the Commission for Social Development.

64. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya had provided financing, in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization, to numerous development projects for Africa, including several within the framework of the food security programme, and had expressed its willingness to extend those projects to additional African countries. It had also launched the Al-Qadhafi project for African youth, children and women in cooperation with the international organizations concerned.

65. Libya reaffirmed its full commitment to the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, a commitment that involved a series of measures and economic and social policies aimed at optimal utilization of the Jamahiriya's human resources and a balanced improvement in social and economic conditions for both individuals and society, based on full participation in decision-making. The country's development plans accorded extreme importance to youth and education and to social and health services, provided free of charge to widows, the disabled and other vulnerable groups. In its current budget, moreover, several billion dollars had been appropriated for loans to young persons to set up small businesses or build private homes.

66. Lastly, her country greatly valued the efforts made towards the drafting of a comprehensive convention on the protection of the rights of disabled persons and hoped that the General Assembly would adopt the draft during the current session. It urged all States to take the convention as a basis for adopting policies for the social inclusion of persons with special needs.

67. **Mr. Adekanye** (Nigeria) said that the implementation of the World Summit for Social Development and the outcome of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly was vital for

countries to achieve social development and eradicate poverty. In that regard, his Government had placed the three core issues of the eradication of poverty, the promotion of full employment and the fostering of social integration at the heart of its national action plan. It had developed the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy, which focused on reorienting values, reducing poverty, creating wealth and generating employment.

68. Other measures included assistance to farmers, improving education for children, improving health-care delivery, reform of the pension scheme, and laws and programmes to empower women, children, the disabled and the elderly. The introduction of universal primary education had dramatically increased the number of young people with basic skills, and steps had been taken to raise the adult literacy level. In that regard, his delegation was grateful to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for its support to the country's national educational plan.

69. Turning to the matter of the welfare of persons with disabilities in Nigeria, he pointed out that social welfare departments had been established in all relevant ministries at the federal and state levels. Nigeria would continue to do its utmost to involve people with disabilities in relevant national policies at all levels of government and integrate the promotion and protection of their human rights into national plans and programmes. He welcomed the international community's resolve to strengthen global partnerships, and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in particular, and hoped that support to NEPAD would be continued and that the commitment to support the African Union's initiative for all children to have access to complete, free and compulsory primary education by 2015 would be translated into action. He looked forward to active participation with other delegations in achieving the targets set at the World Summit for Social Development.

*The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.*