



# General Assembly

Sixty-fourth session

Official Records

Distr.: General  
20 October 2009

Original: English

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## Third Committee

### Summary record of the 2nd meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 5 October 2009, at 3 p.m.

*Chairman:* Mr. Penke ..... (Latvia)

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.*

**Agenda item 61: Social development** (*continued*)  
(A/64/180, A/64/65)

- (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/64/157, A/64/158 and A/64/158/Corr.1)
- (b) **Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family** (*continued*) (A/64/61-E/2009/3, A/64/132, A/64/132/Corr.1 and A/64/134)
- (c) **Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing** (*continued*) (A/64/127)

1. **Mr. Sammis** (United States of America) said that his country was actively committed to poverty eradication, full employment and social integration. Its values compelled it to reduce poverty, disease and hunger; to eliminate the preventable deaths of mothers and children; and to build self-sufficiency in agriculture, health and education. Along with the Group of Eight, Group of Twenty and General Assembly, his Government would focus on reversing the unemployment caused by the global financial crisis.

2. Many of his Government's current domestic priorities reflected those of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. A Middle Class Task Force had been established, bringing together representatives of labour, business and civil society. Legislative and policy proposals were being developed in order to benefit working families in the areas of childcare, care for the elderly, health care, costs of higher education and jobs for the future. With regard to ageing, the goal was to enable older citizens to live independently at home for as long as possible. Lastly, the United States had signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; its Senate would now take swift action to ratify it.

3. **Mr. Kim Byonghun** (Republic of Korea) said that socially and economically marginalized groups were hardest hit by the global financial crisis, climate change and volatile food and energy prices. It would not be possible to overcome the crisis without also promoting social protection. In particular, access to

education must be improved in order to end the vicious circle of chronic poverty. Decent work opportunities should also be created. As was the case in many other countries, the labour market in the Republic of Korea was shifting towards more casual employment. The Government had introduced a law for the protection of casual workers in 2007, and was acting to strengthen the social safety net.

4. Persons with disabilities faced particular challenges to social integration. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was helping to ensure that such rights were an entitlement, and not a matter of good will. His country had become a party to the Convention and had enacted the appropriate domestic legislation.

5. The ageing of the world's population raised a range of challenges involving income security, pensions, life-long education and social welfare systems. Society should not only care for older persons, but also respect their experience and enable them to participate fully in society. His Government had introduced a policy to address the issue, and would continue to implement the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.

6. **Ms. Choi Su-hi** (Republic of Korea), speaking as a youth delegate, said that society had a duty to guide young people. Action should be taken to increase the participation of youth in the decision-making process. In her country, that aim was achieved through such organizations as the Youth Special Congress, which comprised youth representatives from across the country. Young persons should be given the opportunity to influence policy through information and communication technology.

7. Young persons should be encouraged to participate in social activities such as volunteer work, which would make them better aware of social problems and better integrated into the community. With that end in mind, her Government maintained a reliable online database on volunteer networks and information. Youth participation in the labour market should also be promoted. The Government had announced a career competence programme for undergraduate job seekers, which would build on cooperation between academia and industry. Work experience training and international internships also received financial support. The Ministry of Labour was organizing a campaign to uphold labour rights through

counselling and education with a view to creating better conditions for young workers.

8. **Ms. Heyvaert** (Brazil) said the commitments made at the Copenhagen Summit and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly were all the more relevant in view of the current economic and financial crisis. The Brazilian Government had not reduced social spending. On the contrary, it had increased the budget and widened the scope of existing social development programmes. The “Bolsa Família” programme had been consolidated, and continued to support around 11 million families. An associated programme maintained a network of social assistance centres in over 1,600 municipalities.

9. Brazil had one of the largest youth populations in the world, and young persons were disproportionately affected by unemployment and violent deaths. A Government programme, which was currently being expanded, had enrolled over two million youth in primary school, vocational training and community activities.

10. The report of the Secretary-General on follow-up to the second world assembly on ageing (A/64/127) showed that the rights of older persons were not sufficiently addressed by existing human rights instruments. Older persons in every country were affected by discrimination, abuse, neglect and violence. The rights of younger and older persons were not mutually exclusive. Brazil fully recognized the need to improve international standards with regard to older persons, and supported initiatives to strengthen the monitoring and enforcement of their rights.

11. **Mr. Jomaa** (Tunisia) said that the food, fuel and financial crisis made it necessary to determine a new form of international solidarity and to strengthen international social and economic cooperation. Tunisia’s approach to global development was focused on humanity, which was both the means and the end of wealth creation. Social development was fundamental to the creation of a modern society in which all social classes enjoyed equal opportunities. That vision had led to major achievements in Tunisia over the previous decade.

12. His Government called for a World Youth Assembly in 2010 to be held under the auspices of the United Nations, which would provide an opportunity for young persons to express their views and also make them better aware of their responsibility to consolidate

peace, security and stability throughout the world. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international agreements contained universal values that were shared by all cultures, including tolerance, mutual respect and the rejection of violence and extremism. The world needed to instil those values in its youth, who represented its future.

13. **Mr. Borg** (Malta) said that Malta had always recognized the contribution of older persons to society. The Madrid International Plan of Action demonstrated that there was a broad international consensus with regard to policy goals and strategies to promote the health and well-being of older persons. The implementation of the Plan could be strengthened if the rights of older persons were recognized as one of its themes.

14. It was important to train personnel in order to meet the needs of older persons. The International Institute on Ageing, which was based in Malta, had trained 3,937 students from 137 countries since its inauguration in 1988. Its main objective was to fulfil the training needs of developing countries while acting as a catalyst for the exchange of information. The Institute had also conducted 56 training programmes in various countries intended for policymakers, educators and professionals from the developing world. The Institute deserved to be recognized and supported by all Member States.

15. In 2008, over 21 per cent of his country’s population was aged over 59. That percentage was expected to increase to 33 per cent in 2050. Total Government expenditure on retirement pensions had increased by 12 per cent as compared to 2007, and accounted for nearly half of the total Government expenditure on social benefits. Malta therefore looked forward to working to strengthen health care, in particular by enabling older people to live independently for as long as possible.

16. **Mr. Tun** (Myanmar) regretted that more than a decade after the World Summit for Social Development and at the midway point to the Millennium Development Goals target date of 2015, the development gap had become more pronounced. Despite economic growth in some countries and reductions in poverty levels in such countries as China and India, the report on the World Social Situation 2009 (A/64/158) showed that poverty levels in other developing countries had increased. The global

financial and economic crisis threatened to undo the modest gains made to date in reducing poverty levels, to the detriment of the most vulnerable: children, the aged, persons with disabilities and those who suffered from social exclusion.

17. The global economic crisis threatened the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and would increase unemployment, poverty and social exclusion. He welcomed the decision by the Commission for Social Development to make social integration a priority theme. Poverty eradication was an important factor for social integration, which was a prerequisite for a stable society. The search for solutions to promote social integration must, however, take into account the specific situation of individual countries.

18. Despite the global economic downturn his Government continued to work to achieve the Millennium Development Goals through its national development plan, which focussed on balanced development of both rural and urban areas. Significant progress towards social development had been made in such areas as primary education, health care and the environment. The current five-year plan would also expand the agricultural, livestock, fisheries and industrial sectors.

19. In the education sector, the primary enrolment rate had reached 97.84 per cent, e-education was being promoted and the use of computers in secondary schools and universities was growing. In the health sector the national plan to deal with HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis had stemmed the spread of those diseases. Much progress had likewise been made to improve maternal and child health care through reproductive health and related programmes, for example immunization.

20. His Government continued to work to improve the socio-economic conditions and well-being of the population despite the unilateral imposition of sanctions and withdrawal of investment, which hindered efforts to increase employment and build a better and more prosperous society, thereby inflicting undue hardship on workers and their families. Sanctions had no moral basis because they hindered development and interfered in the domestic jurisdiction of Myanmar. They were indiscriminate and a form of violence and could not therefore be regarded as a tool for promoting human rights and democracy.

21. Much remained to be done to fulfil the hopes and expectations raised by the World Summit for Social Development. While national governments bore primary responsibility for social development, international organizations, NGOs and the private sector must play their parts and developed and developing countries must likewise work together to implement the outcomes of the Summit.

22. **Ms. Bonkougou** (Burkina Faso) said that the report on the World Social Situation 2009 (A/64/158) highlighted the lack of progress towards the goal of poverty reduction. In most developing countries, with the exception of East Asia and the Pacific, recent economic growth had not led to a decrease in poverty. In African developing countries in particular, most of the population still did not have enough food or access to drinking water and basic education and health care. The Millennium Development Goal target of halving by 2015 the proportion of people who suffered from hunger was, however, still within reach. She called on the international community to continue its efforts to support countries suffering from extreme poverty, for example by implementing the outcomes of the Global Microcredit Summit in 2006. She also underscored the need for developing countries to implement more effective policies aimed at promoting investment, North-South and South-South cooperation and food security.

23. Her Government continued to support the Organization's focus on the family. It had established a general directorate for family and related services within the Ministry for Social Affairs, and family issues were taken into account in all development efforts. It celebrated the International Day of Families and promoted the socio-economic development of the family, which had the added effect of helping improve the situation of women and children.

24. Her Government attached great importance to the rights of disabled persons and had ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in July 2009. With a view to implementing the provisions of the Convention, the Ministry for Social Action and the Ministry for the Promotion of Human Rights had established programmes to promote the rights of disabled persons. The national employment policy specifically covered disabled persons. She called for greater integration of the needs of persons with disabilities into development programmes, in

particular with regard to the Millennium Development Goals.

25. While progress had been made to improve the situation of youth in such areas as health, education, drug abuse and reintegration following armed conflict and to include the needs of girls and young women in particular in international development efforts, the economic crisis, HIV/AIDS, unemployment and other factors continued to affect young people. Her Government had adopted a national employment policy and established the National Employment Agency to combat unemployment. The Ministry responsible for youth had launched two projects to promote the socio-professional integration of young graduates and also established a job training programme for the period 2006-2010 which would provide training to 50,000 young people. Those projects complemented existing measures to assist young people in the areas of job training and apprenticeships, employment and entrepreneurship.

26. Her Government placed special emphasis on dialogue with young people. The National Youth Forum, launched in 2005, had become a permanent forum for promoting the involvement of young people in development. She hoped that the concerns of young people would be fully taken into account in the implementation of the Copenhagen Programme of Action so that their talent could be developed and harnessed for development.

27. **Mr. Ateş** (Turkey), speaking as his country's youth delegate, said that climate change and global warming constituted one of the most significant threats ever to have faced humanity. The ice formation at the summit of Mount Ağrı, Turkey's tallest mountain, had melted by five metres over the previous 20 years. The water level of Lake Van, the country's largest lake, had decreased by three metres over the previous 12 years. In September 2009, Istanbul had been hit by the worst flooding in several decades, which had cost the lives of over 30 people. Turkey's youth therefore wished to see a successful outcome to the forthcoming negotiations on climate change in Copenhagen.

28. The consequences of the economic and financial crisis had been felt throughout the world. All States should take action to alleviate the effects of the crisis on youth, older persons and disabled persons. Turkey's youth remained committed to the Millennium Development Goals, democracy and human rights.

Over the previous decade, the country had been undergoing an intense process of political reforms to improve living standards, and young persons had played a prominent part.

29. Increasing global interdependence and mobility made it necessary for cultures and civilizations to better understand one another. Along with Spain, Turkey was a co-sponsor of the Alliance of Civilizations initiative with which over 80 countries were associated. Turkish youth fully supported that initiative, and was prepared to work with the youth of other countries to promote mutual understanding.

30. **Mr. Al-Nasser** (Qatar) said that his country had embarked on a revolutionary programme of sustainable, people-centred development. There had been a vast expansion in social services and institutional mechanisms had been put in place to respond to the challenges facing various social groups.

31. The report of the Secretary-General on follow-up to the tenth anniversary of the international year of the family (A/64/134) rightly highlighted the need to integrate a family perspective into social protection and to invest in intergenerational solidarity. In cooperation with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), the Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development had organized an expert group meeting on the topic in April 2009, the outcomes of which had contributed to the Secretary-General's report. The connection between family support and social protection was enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which stated that the family was the natural and fundamental group unit of society and was entitled to protection by society and the State. Social protection and intergenerational solidarity could help address the effects of the economic and financial crisis.

32. Doha had also hosted the 2004 International Conference on the Family, which had led to the adoption of the Doha Declaration. Qatar had sponsored two recent General Assembly resolutions on the family, and was preparing to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2014.

33. **Mr. Benmehidi** (Algeria) said that the current economic and food crises were hindering economic growth, job creation and poverty reduction and threatened progress towards the internationally agreed social and economic development goals. The World

Food Programme (WFP), for example, had estimated that the number of persons suffering from chronic hunger would surpass the 1 billion mark in 2009, and the World Bank had predicted that 50 million people would be added to the ranks of the unemployed.

34. The poorest countries would be disproportionately affected by the crises, unable to meet their basic needs or provide themselves with a decent standard of living. The gap between rich and poor continued to widen while globalization had had relatively little positive effect on the developing countries. The response to the crisis must preserve and create jobs in order to protect the incomes and well-being of so many. The international community must also act in a coordinated manner to meet its commitments in the area of official development assistance (ODA).

35. At the midway point to the target date for the realization of the Millennium Development Goals the current crisis made it seem increasingly likely that the Goals would not be achieved, in particular in the developing countries. The international community must redouble its efforts to meet the Goals, and also place special emphasis on the agricultural sector and rural areas, where unemployment rates were high and social services were virtually non-existent.

36. Sustainable development would not be possible without a determined effort to promote public health, in particular at a time of increased international mobility. The spread of such illnesses as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and swine flu and the risk of pandemics underscored the need for international cooperation for the prevention and treatment of such illnesses that disproportionately affected the poor.

37. One fifth of the world population was between 15 and 24; the international community must promote policies, institutions and norms to promote the interests of young people, ensure their integration into society, prevent them from turning to crime, violence or drug abuse and educate them about sexually transmitted diseases. Greater attention must likewise be devoted to the elderly and persons with disabilities in development policies, with a view to ending their marginalization.

38. Africa faced the greatest challenges to social development in such areas as poverty, employment, health care and education. He welcomed the African Union's approach to those problems centred on

sustainable social development appropriate for African societies and based on the values of social justice and the eradication of poverty and hunger. International support would, however, continue to be essential in meeting development objectives.

39. His Government was committed to allocating significant resources to economic stimulus, as well as to its economic growth programme and special programmes to develop its plateau and southern regions, which had led to significant progress over the preceding 10 years. Between 1999 and 2007 per capita gross domestic product had increased by an annual average of 12 per cent while the unemployment rate had dropped from 29.3 per cent to 11.8 per cent and was expected to be less than 10 per cent in 2009-2010. Adjustment of civil service salaries and public sector agreements between employers and employees had greatly increased purchasing power. The minimum wage had doubled over the preceding 10 years.

40. Increased prosperity had led to investment in education, health, housing and transportation. More than 4,300 educational establishments had been opened; school canteens had been opened for lunch to assist poor and middle class children; grants had been made available for needy children; transportation was provided for isolated areas; and school kits were provided to children.

41. In the health sector more than 800 hospitals and local clinics had been opened between 2005 and 2009 and the number of hospital beds per thousand population had increased from 1.16 to 1.94. During the previous decade the number of trained medical personnel had increased by 70 per cent and more specialized medical personnel had been sent to the interior of the country, in particular the plateau and southern areas.

42. **Mr. Kihl** (Norway), speaking as a youth delegate, said that young Norwegians strongly believed that the single biggest threat to humanity was the condition of the planet and the environment. Climate change affected everyone, but disproportionately affected those who struggled the most in their daily lives and was disproportionately caused by those who enjoyed the most advantages and had the economic capacity to solve the climate crisis. Those who bore the greatest responsibility in causing climate change likewise bore the greatest responsibility in addressing that challenge.

It was unjust to leave the burden of dealing with climate change to future generations.

43. The basic human rights taken for granted by the privileged were not enjoyed by all. The poor had limited opportunities and reduced ability to shape their own lives and increase their well-being due to the harsh living conditions brought about by climate change, which made clean water less accessible and harvests and soil poorer and increased the likelihood of conflict over scant resources. Conflict situations made the most vulnerable groups, women and children, even more vulnerable.

44. By 2030, 60 per cent of the world's population would be children and youths. Young people were not only the future, however; they were also the present and their voices must be heard as decisions were taken that would affect the future. The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) had predicted that in the future millions of people would become climate refugees, yet their suffering could be avoided because the knowledge, resources and technology needed to eradicate poverty and hunger and bridge the gap between the advantaged and disadvantaged existed. The Millennium Development Goals had been adopted for that purpose and combating climate change would contribute to their realization.

45. The time had come to act. Member States must meet their MDG objectives, include young people in decision-making processes that affected society and prioritize the needs of the poor and the most vulnerable to climate change. All Member States should join with his delegation at the forthcoming Copenhagen Conference and make a firm commitment to limiting global warming to less than two degrees Celsius. World leaders must not disappoint the young people of the world; they must take sound decisions about the planet's and humanity's shared future.

46. **Mr. Niemi** (Finland), speaking as a youth delegate, said that the long period of economic growth and peace since the Second World War had helped to make the current generation of young people more educated and internationally oriented, yet the Millennium Development Goals of universal primary education and eradication of extreme poverty were far from achieved. The current economic and environmental crises gave many young people the impression that they were losing control of their own

destinies. He therefore welcomed the growing number of youth delegates at the General Assembly because genuine participation by youth was a prerequisite for building a more sustainable future.

47. Some 40 per cent of young Finns believed climate change created by humans was a source of insecurity, more than twice the percentage concerned about international terrorism, in a country not greatly affected by climate change and with resources to deal with it. He wondered how young people in a less privileged situation must feel.

48. Youth organizations should be involved in high-level efforts to reach agreements on climate change and played a vital role in influencing young people's attitudes towards climate change at the national and regional levels. Targets for emissions reductions and other measures should be implemented not only in industry but in schools and everyday life. In Finland for example, in the context of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Eco-Schools programme, 15 per cent of all day-care centres and educational institutions would be recognized for their sustainable development activities. Future generations should not be required to sacrifice their prosperity or well-being; change must therefore start with the current generation.

49. The number of young people affected by domestic, ethnic or other types of violence was alarming. Youth were the most affected group in conflict situations caused by the decisions of others but could and should play a valuable role in preventing crisis and building bridges between groups in conflict. The recommendation in the report of the Secretary-General on Implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth: progress and constraints with respect to the well-being of youth and their role in civil society (A/64/61-E/2009/3), under target 2.1 concerning armed conflict and the establishment of mechanisms of youth governance, participation and advocacy in post-conflict situations, should be expanded to include conflict prevention.

50. Freedom was a dialogue based on equality. It was therefore important to involve young people in decisions affecting their future. Failure to do so would result in frustration, disillusionment and possibly conflict, further hindering the building of a better future.

51. **Mr. Abdelaziz** (Egypt) recalled that the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development called for the establishment of a society for all. Social integration, full employment and the eradication of poverty were interdependent goals. All segments of society should participate in decision-making, irrespective of gender, age, disability, race or creed. Social integration should be accompanied by economic integration, the elimination of disease and the provision of basic education and health services. However, developing countries were struggling to achieve the Millennium Development Goals in an unfavourable economic context. Individuals in every society had suffered social alienation as a result of the crisis.

52. National Governments should enact policies to address those challenges. In particular, the rights of migrants must be safeguarded. Many migrants were isolated in their host societies, and had suffered attacks as a result of their beliefs, cultural and ethnic characteristics, and even their religion. They were often unfairly accused of failing to seek full integration into those societies. Yet migration from one country to another benefited both. Host countries must therefore respect the identity of migrants, while the latter should comply with the laws and social structure of their host country.

53. The Egyptian Government maintained a social solidarity fund for the poor, and worked to incorporate a social dimension in development plans. In particular, it had extended low-interest loans to small-scale projects for women, young persons and newlyweds. Egypt had taken part in the conference of African Ministers in Namibia in October 2008 on the theme "Towards a sustainable development agenda". A series of meetings of the League of Arab States, most recently in Cairo in December 2008, had also tackled the issue with a view to formulating a joint Arab programme. At a pivotal time, all Member States of the United Nations should set aside their differences and work towards the shared goal of social integration.

54. **Mr. Rakovskiy** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation fully supported the internationally agreed development goals and stressed that the current crises affecting people everywhere must not be allowed to derail their realization. The Commission for Social Development should be strengthened as the global coordinating body for cooperation, including in such key areas as the elderly, youth, persons with disabilities

and the family. Investments in the social sphere and promotion of the rights of citizens were investments in the stability and prosperity of societies and the sustainability of national economies and helped develop human potential. That was the central theme of his Government's long-term blueprint for socio-economic development up to the year 2020.

55. The current crisis had not distracted his Government from its commitment to making the Russian Federation a world leader in promoting the well-being of its population in all circumstances. The moral health of society was a particular concern, and his Government believed it had a particular obligation to protect the vulnerable, including young people, the elderly and persons with disabilities, and to promote social and economic development that reflected the priorities defined by the United Nations.

56. Its priorities relating to youth reflected the content of the World Programme of Action for Youth. The year 2009 had been declared the Year for Youth and programmes were being implemented to provide youth with vocational training and job opportunities and to promote morality, a healthy lifestyle and the values of tolerance, peace and mutual understanding among peoples.

57. Pensioners represented approximately 20 per cent of the population and his Government was implementing the outcomes of the Second United Nations World Assembly on Ageing with a view in particular to helping the elderly deal with the problems of everyday life and guaranteeing them access to health care and the ability to participate actively in society. Pension reform had also been undertaken to increase and index pensions, despite the crisis, which had resulted in a 46 per cent increase in pension levels.

58. A five-year programme for the period 2006-2010 had been implemented to assist the 9 per cent of citizens with disabilities by increasing their employment opportunities and promoting accessibility in public places and buildings as well as in their homes. A Council for Disability Affairs had been established made up of representatives of parliamentarians, the agencies concerned and organizations of persons with disabilities. The Russian Federation had signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2008 and would soon ratify it. His Government was likewise committed to strengthening the family and had launched a long-term



programme to promote family values. Grants and child benefits were provided to families, especially large families. Such efforts were being expanded in spite of the economic crisis. A State award had also been established to recognize outstanding examples of family life and promote family values.

59. He hoped that the current crisis would spur the international community to overcome the negative trend in social development. His delegation would continue to work with the Organization and other Member States to respond to the crisis while also ensuring continued social development in the post-crisis world.

60. **Mr. Sweep** (Netherlands), speaking as a youth delegate, stressed the importance of education for guaranteeing children a better future. Non-classroom activities, including sport and leisure activities, encouraged school attendance and added to children's enjoyment of school. He cited such examples as a school where attendance had increased by more than 40 per cent after sports and a daily meal were offered to the students; and a young slum boy who attended school, thereby increasing his chances of a better life, simply because he could then play on the school football team.

61. The importance of sport in young people's lives was greatly underestimated and young people everywhere should have the opportunity to benefit from sport, which involved not only physical activity but also learning to work as a team and building self-confidence. He had been involved personally in leading a project to take young people to South Africa to organize sports activities and had seen first hand the positive effect on the participants' self-confidence.

62. Sport combined with education appealed to young people and empowered them, helping them gain knowledge and social and physical skills in an easily accessible programme adapted to their lifestyle. Sport could help achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and should be offered along with formal classroom education in schools. The international community should encourage investment in youth through education and sport, a game-winning combination.

63. **Mr. Ali** (Malaysia) said that achievement of the outcomes of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly remained hostage to the current global

economic and financial instability and the increased cost of food and fuel, which delayed and at times even derailed Governments' social development efforts. Furthermore, financial liberalization and the use of public funds to bail out private corporations had not been accompanied by safeguards to ensure corporate and market responsibility and discipline.

64. The Third Committee must underscore the importance of ensuring that social development objectives were not neglected despite the current economic climate. On the contrary, the international community should reaffirm its broader political social development goals, in particular with regard to enhanced cooperation, transfer of technology and expertise and official development assistance (ODA). The structure of the global financial and economic environment should be reformed to make it fair and equitable and strike a balance between the roles of Governments and the private sector as well as regulatory and market-driven approaches.

65. In focusing on such specific issues as employment, decent work for all and the needs of vulnerable groups, the Organization should re-examine the one dollar a day benchmark for poverty, take into account the need to provide essential social services and evaluate the structural determinants of wealth and income distribution. A full review of the effects of the financial, fuel and food crises must likewise be undertaken. Policies in many countries continued to be based on emergency responses; as the second year of the crisis approached, the appropriate United Nations agencies should provide Member States with an assessment of its long-term effects.

66. Turning to the issue of youth, he recalled that Malaysia's Youth Development Policy had provided a framework for youth programmes since 1985, focusing on such areas as empowerment, human resource development, leadership and entrepreneurship. The Youth Association and Youth Development Act of 2007 was aimed at promoting the development of youth through education, research and resource development. It had established a National Youth Consultative Council and the Malaysian Institute for Research in Youth Development.

67. With regard to ageing, he noted that discussion of the issue tended to revolve around whether the current social development approach or a rights-based approach, which would imply the creation of an

international legal instrument, would be most effective, although the two were not mutually exclusive. More information on the current status of the rights of older persons should, however, be provided before the international community would be ready to act in regard to a legal instrument.

68. While the proportion of Malaysia's population in the older person category was not as high as in some developed countries, the population was ageing rapidly and the proportion of older persons would increase to 9.8 per cent of the population by 2020. His Government had adopted a multi-disciplinary approach to promoting programmes and community care aimed at helping the elderly lead independent and active lives. His delegation would be happy to share its experience with the Organization and Member States.

69. **Ms. Banzon-Abalos** (Philippines) said that the lack of progress towards poverty eradication and development had been exacerbated by the global economic and food crises and disasters, threatening to derail efforts to achieve development goals. The report on the World Social Situation 2009 (A/64/158) showed that aggregate global income had increased, but that growth had occurred in a handful of large countries while many developing countries had not experienced growth. More must be done to address that inequity, and she welcomed some countries' innovative efforts to both combat poverty and address inequality through the use of microcredit, conditional cash transfers and asset reform and management. More sharing of successful strategies among countries would strengthen poverty reduction and development programmes.

70. Widening inequality hindered social integration by increasing disparities among population groups. Targeted measures to improve social protection for the most disadvantaged should therefore cover basic areas, including health and employment. Since the global economic crisis would continue for the near future, Governments should strengthen social protection, not only as a temporary emergency response but also in terms of long-term social security policy.

71. She noted that 10 per cent of the world's population had a disability. The forthcoming 2010 review of progress made towards the Millennium Development Goals would provide an opportunity to integrate the needs of persons with disabilities into that framework. Delegations must support the draft resolution on mainstreaming disability into the MDGs

process and actively advocate for disabled persons in MDG-related programmes and discussions and ensure promotion of the rights of disabled persons at the national level.

72. **Ms. Hulmanova** (Slovakia), speaking as a youth delegate, said that while youth was a time of great expectations and personal development, harsh reality meant that young people in many regions afflicted by such problems as conflict, poverty or inadequate health care were struggling just to survive, leaving little room for optimism about the future. It was essential to make youth partners in efforts to meet their needs and develop their potential, for example by providing them with educational and employment opportunities or increasing the disappointingly low number of youth delegates at the General Assembly.

73. Young people could be serious partners with Governments; in Bratislava for example a youth programme to match young job-seekers and businesses had become an effective instrument to promote dialogue between those two groups and increase employment. Other projects offered free training in ethical business practices. Unemployment figures, especially in developing countries, often failed to account for the large numbers of young people forced to turn to informal, low-paying and often hazardous employment. That was especially grave because decent work provided young people with an opportunity to develop, acquire self-confidence and maximize their potential and their contribution to society.

74. Unemployment had devastating consequences for youth, their families and their communities. Unless the MDG target of developing and implementing strategies for decent and productive work for youth was achieved, a new generation would grow up feeling it had no stake in society. Strategies in that regard must be comprehensive and prepare young people for the labour market as well as prepare the labour market for young people; they also required adequate funding. Education must be more closely linked to the needs of the labour market and greater attention paid to the important role that could be played by non-formal education.

75. Young people had proven themselves to be valuable development partners. Investing in them was one of the best possible decisions for the future. Harnessing their potential would lead to a new wave of

participation and creativity and facilitate the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

76. **Ms. Veraghtert** (Belgium), speaking as a youth delegate, said that while the World Programme of Action for Youth identified the full and effective participation of youth in the life of society and in decision-making as a priority, the fact that only 11 per cent of countries had sent youth delegates to the General Assembly showed that much remained to be done. Youth wanted to be actively involved at all political levels, from local to international. To that end, formal structures, including student councils, municipal and regional youth councils and international structures such as in the European Union, must be established to foster real dialogue and effective cooperation and participation. The European Union's structured dialogue process, for example, involved young people in the development of policies concerning them.

77. New information and communications technologies offered young people an opportunity to make themselves heard and participate in political life. Accordingly, Member States should ensure free access to those technologies and information. In order to be able to take full advantage of such structures and new technologies young people must be provided with opportunities for both formal and non-formal education. Education should not only transmit knowledge and train youth in the new technologies but also encourage critical thinking.

78. The creativity and energy of youth were assets that had not been eroded by the economic crisis. While increased participation by youth might be considered by delegates to be an additional right granted to young people, young people considered it to be their civic duty.

*The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.*