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## FAILURE NOT AN OPTION ON ROAD TO 2015; ANNUAL 'STOCK-TAKING' DEBATES ON MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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Warning that failure was not an option on the path to achieving the ambitious Millennium Development Goals by the 2015 target year, General Assembly President Srđjan Kerim proposed today the convening of annual debates until 2015 to take stock of global progress and hold all development partners to account.

Addressing the resumed session of the thematic debate titled "Recognizing the achievements, addressing the challenges and getting back on track to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015", he said mutual accusations were useless and mutual accountability essential. "We need to urgently translate political commitments -- made at the highest level -- into results on the ground."

Several Government ministers, speaking on behalf of various regional groups, noted progress in their respective efforts to achieve that goal, but also highlighted the challenges thwarting implementation. For example, Joanne Massiah, Minister for Agriculture, Lands, Marine Resources and Agro Industry of Antigua and Barbuda, said on behalf of the "Group of 77" developing countries and China that the international community was far from making good on the \$50 billion worth of official development assistance it had promised for the attainment of the Millennium targets. Moreover, the money that had already been delivered was heavily reliant on debt cancellation and thus detracted from resources available for achieving the Goals. International financial institutions must create adequate strategies for developing countries, as well as a monitoring mechanism to track and promote implementation by all stakeholders. Developed countries should be evaluated not only on their implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, but also on progress made towards achieving Goal 8 -- developing a global partnership for development.

Ifthekar Ahmed Chowdhury, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh, said on behalf of the Least Developed Countries that, in order to move from rhetoric to action, developed countries must fulfil their development aid commitments, cancel the debts of least developed countries without discrimination and ensure their quota- and duty-free access to markets. Developed nations must also create innovative financial structures to better assist their less developed partners with such challenges as climate change and structural deficiencies, which risked reversing any progress previously made towards attaining the Goals. Many developing countries had already instituted reforms to promote good governance and human rights, but their lack of financial and human resources made it difficult to achieve health-related goals, while the unpredictability of external resources made universal primary education highly unlikely.

Ziga Turk, Slovenia's Minister for Growth, said on behalf of the European Union that its members and the European Commission were trying to better align their development cooperation with the overall object of the Millennium Goals. In 2005, the European Union had committed to devoting 0.56 per cent of gross domestic product to official development assistance by 2010 and to reaching the 0.7 per cent target by 2015. Aid effectiveness was also essential, and it was important for development results to ensure a just division of labour among donors, aid predictability, enhanced use of country systems and mutual accountability. In the past 30 years alone, developing countries had made remarkable,

albeit uneven, improvements in living standards. Those highly encouraging results demonstrated that poverty could be overcome.

Mexico's representative, speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, said development must be a responsibility shared among all countries. It was essential to adhere to the Paris Declaration and to take into account the diverse situation of countries of the global South. More than 40 per cent of the world's poor lived in middle-income countries, and their specific needs must not be forgotten. The Rio Group was doing its part to eliminate the conditions that caused poverty, social exclusion and inequality, and to create favourable environments for socio-economic development. The Group's members were also working to set up joint mechanisms to increase public access to essential public services, such as education and health, and to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment. The Millennium Goals were a useful guide for setting minimum standards, but it was alarming that many countries were not on track to achieve them.

Sweden's representative, speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said the Goals concerning gender equality could not be achieved without broader enjoyment of sexual and reproductive health and rights. The ability of women to control their own fertility and access to reproductive health services was necessary in order significantly to reduce maternal and child mortality rates. Every year, 500,000 women, more than 9 per cent of them in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, died from complications related to pregnancy or childbirth. Access for young men and women to contraceptives, comprehensive sex education and confidential reproductive health services were also crucial to reducing adolescent birth rates. Sexual and reproductive health education and access to related health services were the best way to prevent HIV/AIDS. The Nordic countries had put sexual and reproductive health and rights at the centre of international development cooperation.

Ministers from Albania, Cambodia, Barbados and the United Arab Emirates also made statements, as did a vice-minister from Guatemala and deputy ministers from Ukraine, Sierra Leone, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Egypt.

High-level officials from Colombia, United Kingdom, Nigeria and Burundi also spoke.

Other speakers were the representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Austria, Mali (on behalf of landlocked developing countries), Tonga (on behalf of the Pacific small island developing States), Democratic Republic of Congo (on behalf of the African Group), Pakistan, Jamaica, Philippines, Uganda, India, Australia, Namibia, Brazil, Bhutan, San Marino, Kazakhstan, Morocco, Mauritius, Liechtenstein, Mongolia, Chile, Libya, Iceland, Sri Lanka, France, Indonesia, Netherlands, Israel, Kuwait, Ecuador, Germany, Thailand, Cuba, Ghana, Turkey, Japan, Nicaragua, Peru, Iran, Norway, Canada, Sudan, Malaysia and Tajikistan.

The Assembly will meet again at 10 a.m. tomorrow, Thursday, 3 April, to take action on a draft resolution presented by its Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) and conclude its thematic debate.

#### Background

The General Assembly today resumed its thematic debate entitled "Recognizing the achievements, addressing the challenges and getting back on track to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015" in a plenary session.

Opening the session, the President of the General Assembly, SRGJAN KERIM, said "failure was not an option" and all stakeholders needed to scale up efforts and accelerate progress. Mutual accusations were useless and mutual accountability essential. "We need to urgently translate political commitments -- made at the highest level -- into results on the ground," he stressed. 2008 was the year when concrete results needed to be delivered on the ground, though efforts to implement the Millennium Goals should not stop there. To that

end, the President proposed annual thematic debates on the Millennium Development Goals until 2015, to take stock of progress made and to hold all partners to account.

#### Statements

JOANNE MASSIAH, Minister of Agriculture, Lands, Marine Resources and Agro Industry for Antigua and Barbuda, speaking on behalf of the "Group of 77" developing countries and China, said a lack of sufficient resources was delaying progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Developed and developing countries shared responsibility for achieving those Goals. To date, developing countries had made significant progress, but commitments by developed countries to increase the provision of resources had not yet been fulfilled and the international financial environment was still not transparent, stable or predictable enough.

Official development assistance was indispensable for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, she continued. The international community was far from making good on the \$50 billion worth of assistance it had promised, and money that had already been delivered was heavily reliant on debt cancellation and thus detracted from resources available for achieving the Millennium Goals. To ensure that all developing countries made progress, global economic growth needed to reach the poorest. It was critical for international financial institutions to establish adequate financial strategies for developing countries and to develop a monitoring mechanism to track and promote implementation by all stakeholders, developed countries included. Developed countries should be evaluated not only on their implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, but also on the progress made on Millennium Goal 8, developing a global partnership for development.

ZIGA TURK, Minister of Growth of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the Union's members and European Commission were trying to better align their development cooperation with the overall objective of poverty eradication and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The Union had also committed, again in 2005, to scaling up its aid and collectively contributing 0.56 per cent gross national income to official development assistance by 2010, and to reach the target of 0.7 per cent gross national income by 2015. The Union was currently providing 57 per cent of global official development assistance and invited others to follow suit. However, progress towards the Millennium Development Goals was not just about increasing the volume of official development assistance -- it was also about improving aid effectiveness. Of particular importance was progress on four key aspects of the Paris Declaration of aid effectiveness: division of labour among donors, predictability on aid, enhanced use of country systems and mutual accountability for development results.

Through important, foreign aid alone could not deliver the Millennium Development Goals and could only be a complement to national efforts, he continued. It was also important to remember that all eight Millennium Development Goals were closely interlinked and required a comprehensive approach towards sustainable development. The achievement of poverty eradication depended on the existence of integrated and mutually reinforcing social, economic and environmental national strategies, with particular focus on a pro-poor growth perspective, productive employment and decent work, and social inclusion policies. Learning and education should be at the heart of all development agendas, and the Union's priorities included quality primary education, vocational training and addressing inequalities within holistic national sector plans. Particular attention was devoted to girls' education, children with special needs, safety at school and education in fragile States.

Continuing, he addressed the efforts to reduce child and maternal mortality, improve maternal health and combat HIV/AIDS and infectious diseases. The 2000 goal to reduce maternal mortality ratio by 75 per cent between 1990 and 2015 had been followed in 2006 by the addition of a target for universal access to reproductive health. Despite those

commitments, complications of pregnancy and childbirth were still the leading cause of death among women in developing countries. No region thus far had achieved sufficient declines to reach the Millennium Development Goal 5 target. That issue needed to be prioritized in budgets and in endeavours to overcome the lack of political will. Progress in combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases had been facilitated by a substantive increase in resources from international donors. While additional resources were still needed, it was necessary to continue to help countries to implement strategies based on knowledge; develop comprehensive and multisectoral programmes; and ensure coordination among different stakeholders. Inclusive country-led strategies, based on the "three ones principle", were key.

In conclusion, he said that, in the past 30 years alone, life expectancy had increased by more than 20 years; infant mortality had dropped by half; and primary school enrolment had doubled. Developing countries had achieved remarkable, although uneven, improvements in living standards of their people. Those results were highly encouraging, demonstrating that poverty could be overcome. But the battle was far from over. The year 2008 was a crucial year to make progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Their achievement was still possible in most countries, but only if concerted and well-targeted actions were increased immediately and sustained until 2015.

IFTHEKAR AHMED CHOWDHURY, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh and speaking on behalf of the least developed countries, said, though there had been some progress made in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, the absolute number of poor in the world continued to grow and the group of least developed countries still faced huge structural impediments to development. Climate change and global warming were new challenges and they risked reversing any progress previously made in achieving the Millennium Goals. To ensure progress moving forward, the current discourse needed to be depoliticized and should focus more on the special needs of developing countries, especially the least developed countries.

Running down the list of Goals to be achieved by 2015, he said there was much that still needed to be done. In terms of health, an ongoing lack of financial and human resources made progress difficult. In education, as well, the unpredictability of external resources made the goal of universal primary education highly unlikely. Reform measures to promote good governance and human rights in developing countries were already in place in many countries. However, promises by developed countries of external resources remained elusive and market access remained blocked. To move from rhetoric to action, developed countries should fulfil their official development assistance commitments, cancel the debts of the least developed countries without discrimination, ensure quota free and duty free access to markets for the least developed countries, and establish new financial structures to better assist developing countries on their path to development.

RANKO SKRBIC (Bosnia and Herzegovina) said that, according to a recent multiple-indicator cluster survey, the prevalence of children under the age of five who were underweight was 0.4 per cent in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the coverage for measles vaccine was 75 per cent. Nearly 99 per cent of the population had access to safe drinking water, and 93 per cent were living in households with safe sewage. The prevalence of households in "poor areas" was 15.8 per cent. Nearly 100 per cent of the births were doctor, nurse or midwife-assisted delivery. Nearly 99 per cent of children of primary school age were attending school, and all children who entered the first grade reached grade five. Approximately 34 per cent of young women in Bosnia and Herzegovina knew all three of the main ways to prevent HIV/AIDS transmission, and the rate of infant mortality was declining. Significant efforts had been invested in developing and implementing policies, health-care development strategies and normative legal regulations. There was also a multiparty effort to coordinate the country's health strategies and activities at various levels.

He said the falling natural growth rate was an unfavourable demographic trend that could have significant consequences in the future. Also, the development of democracy and an emphasis on the individual rights of community members would bring about both opportunities and threats. Today's socio-cultural changes had led to the higher level of information to the public and higher demands for the health system, but at the same time undermined the structure of the family and led to an increasing frequency of risky behaviour, such as unhealthy eating habits, reduced physical activity and diverse forms of addiction. Socio-cultural changes were also the major cause of the unfavourable demographic trends. None of the developed societies escaped the trend towards low fertility.

How was it possible that the number of newborns was so low, while studies showed that only 9.4 per cent of women of reproductive age who are either married or living with a partner used any of the modern methods of contraception? he asked. Was it possible that the predominant manner of family planning was abortion? In which cases, while the idea of freedom of the individual was essentially well-intended, one had to think also about how that freedom limited the freedom of others.

MAJLINDA BREGU, Minister of European Integration of Albania, said her country had set up a national strategy for development and European integration, as well as a national plan to implement the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union. At the midway point of the target date for the Millennium Development Goals, it was necessary to take stock of progress thus far in achieving the Goals, as well as to identify future steps to progress further and faster with implementation, nationally and globally. Albania was using the millennium targets not only as a framework, but also as a tool for development. Albania was probably the only case in which the Goals were being used to promote local development, through regional development strategies. The main purpose of the subnational reports was to show how the Millennium Development Goals could be used to build support and momentum from the bottom up, assess local poverty challenges and serve as an engine for comprehensive local development. Albania had integrated the Goals into its National Strategy for Development and Integration.

In 2007, the Albanian economy had demonstrated good growth, at 6 per cent, she said. Macroeconomic stability had been achieved and structural reforms were making the Albanian economy more efficient. The National Strategy aimed to achieve universal adult literacy, nine years of compulsory education and a 90 per cent high-school graduation rate. The 2008 budget for education was 4 per cent of gross domestic product, up from 2.4 per cent in 2004. The Government aimed to set the 2009 education budget at 5 per cent. Investment in higher education had also increased. The National Strategy aimed to reduce maternal mortality significantly by 2015 through health-care sector reforms. The 2008 budget for investment in health care was 60 per cent higher than in past years. Nurses' salaries would double this year and physicians' salaries would be significantly higher.

CHHAY THAN, Minister of Planning of Cambodia, said that, during the last decade, with the strengthening of peace, stability, national unification, democracy and respect for human rights, Cambodia's gross domestic product growth reached an average of 10.6 per cent during 2003 to 2006, and then 10.1 per cent in 2007. To implement the Rome Declaration, the Government had decided to prepare a single National Development Plan for 2006 to 2010 that would serve as a framework for alignment of all official development assistance-supported activities. The Government was strongly committed to achieving the Cambodia Millennium Development Goals by adopting those goals and targets as the key pillars for the country's National Development Policy and Strategy. The present performance in relation to the Goals had been mixed and uneven. There had been significant improvements in poverty rates in the urban areas, especially in Phnom Penh, and more accessible rural areas. There had also been significant reduction in the mortality rates of both infants and children under

five years of age, although the figures remained high. There had also been progress in immunization against major childhood diseases, breastfeeding, and reduction of gender disparities in most areas, especially in primary education, adult literacy and wage employment.

In parallel to those achievements, however, many shortcomings and challenges remained to be overcome for Cambodia to realize the agreed goals and targets, he continued. Those included the high rural poverty rate, currently at 39 per cent, limited progress in achieving universal nine-year basic education, particularly those beyond primary education, and limited access to quality health services, especially with regard to women and maternal health. Cambodia's progress towards the Goals was constrained by a chronic shortage of investment to meet priority requirements. Financial, technical and other support from development partners and the global community was required to complement the Government's pro-Goal national strategy. A collective effort was the key to achieving the Goals and ensuring sustained growth and stability in Cambodia.

DENIS LOWE, Minister of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Urban Development of Barbados, warned that climate change, food insecurity and high energy costs threatened to derail progress already made by some countries in attaining the Millennium Development Goals. His Government believed that the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger was the most critical Millennium Goal. On a national level, recently implemented policies and programmes had already produced positive results. Further improvements in those programmes were expected to include safety nets and structures to empower constituents to contribute more to their own development.

Barbados had made significant progress in the education sector, as well, he continued. Already there was universal access to primary and secondary education, tuition-free post-secondary education, and a strong commitment to achieving universal pre-primary education for children between the ages of three and five. Good health was considered a human right in Barbados and universal access to health care had been in place for many years. However, the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the country continued to be of great concern. He added that the needs of countries that are "MDG-plus" -- countries that had set national targets that were more ambitious than the Millennium Goals -- were often not adequately addressed by the international community. He, therefore, called on countries of the north and south to build stronger development partnerships to help countries reach the benchmarks laid out in the Millennium Goals and beyond.

MAITHA SALEM ALSHAMSÍ, Minister of State of the United Arab Emirates, said that the eradication of poverty and hunger would help reinforce global peace and the maintenance of security. She urged developed countries to fulfil their commitments on official development assistance and debt cancellation or alleviation, while opening up global markets in a just and equitable manner. Developing countries had the responsibility to adopt economic policies that encouraged production and attracted foreign investment and support for the private sector.

On a national level, her Government had made significant progress in achieving the Millennium Goals in a short period of time. The development of a strong economic policy had encouraged outside investment and helped maintain political and social security. It had also contributed to the total eradication of poverty and had raised the average income per capita to the highest level of any country in the Middle East. Free primary education was available to all citizens, child mortality rates had been successfully reduced, and 94 per cent of children had received vaccinations against childhood diseases. Her country also contributed 3.6 per cent of its gross national product for development assistance to developing countries and she welcomed today's debate as an opportunity for all Member States to take stock of what had been achieved so far.

IRYNA KRYUCHKOVA, Deputy Minister of Ukraine, said her country was one of the first countries of the former Soviet Union to sign on to the Millennium Development Goals. The Government had adopted the Millennium Development Goals Ukraine 2005 plus report and the Millennium Development Goals 2007 report. It was important to establish international agreement on the Goals, as well as to have the institutional capacity to monitor them. Ukraine was adapting the Goals to its local needs and had set up several sub-task indicators to do so. Ukraine was working to achieve poverty reduction, environmental conservation, reduced maternal mortality, lower infant mortality and a limit to the spread of HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. It had set long-term timelines for research and monitoring. The Prime Minister had put in place the "Ukraine Breakthrough" programme, a 100-day plan to reduce poverty, close the income gap and improve social standards. It had also launched medium-term programmes to increase Ukraine's competitiveness by 2015, in order to achieve European integration.

The Government also aimed to halve the number of people living on less than \$4.30 daily from 11.9 per cent of the population in 2000 to 5.5 per cent in 2015, she said. Further, it aimed to reduce by one third the number of people living below the poverty line. In the last four years, real income had increased eightfold. The Government had adopted measures to increase the minimum old-age pension to the minimum subsistence level. It was also increasing social services and benefits for families and children, in a bid to reduce income inequalities and raise the living standards of many. It was trying to ensure quality education, including higher education, and to align its education system with the needs of the labour market and with European standards. Efforts were under way to implement the terms of the Kyoto Protocol; increase the number of people with access to clean water; and reduce air pollution. Further, there had been progress in reducing infant mortality. Ukraine had one of the highest levels of HIV/AIDS in Europe. There were 13,800 cases of HIV/AIDS in 2005 and 16,100 cases in 2006. The number of tuberculosis cases fell in 2006, but the situation was still not satisfactory. Ukraine was developing a national programme to address that situation, but it needed international assistance, as well. Also, in 2005, Ukraine's Parliament adopted a gender equality law.

RICHARD KONTEH, Deputy Minister of Finance and Economic Development of Sierra Leone, said that his country, having recently emerged from over 11 years of conflict, ranked at the bottom of the Human Development Index with high levels of poverty, illiteracy, and maternal, child and mortality rates. Despite having improved the levels of democracy and good governance in the country, his Government still had a number of key challenges to tackle in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Among its short- and medium-term priorities were to better use energy as a vehicle for economic growth and development, to provide safe access to water supplies, to revitalize the agricultural sector, and to improve access to health and education.

He recognized the significant role that the private sector could play as a catalyst of growth, but admitted that, currently, the private sector in Sierra Leone was still too weak. Despite that fact, Sierra Leone had made significant progress towards achieving the Millennium Goals, including, among others, reductions in the child mortality rate and improved access to clean water. There were, however, a number of daunting challenges ahead, such as the rapidly increasing price of oil and food commodities, as well as the unpredictable and short-term aid delivered for development. His Government had instituted a number of national plans and measures to get the country back on track for achieving the Millennium Goals, but he stressed that Sierra Leone could not do it alone, as it needed the requisite financial and technical support to achieve its aims.

BOUNKEUT SANGSOMSAK, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lao People's Democratic Republic, said that, since their adoption in 2000, his Government had attached great importance to the effective implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. It had

customized and incorporated them into the national poverty eradication policy, including the five-year national socio-economic development plan, which constituted the Government's strategy to achieve sustainable poverty eradication through accelerated economic growth. That plan gave priority to 47 districts identified as the poorest in the country, with a view to ensuring their progressive integration into the national economy. As a road map in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, the national five-year socio-economic development plan was implemented through 11 programmes, made up of 111 concrete projects to be carried out at the central through the local levels. In carrying out the national poverty eradication strategy, the Government had exerted every effort in addressing the issue of financing. In that regard, it had strongly promoted investment in small and medium enterprises in the rural areas, as well as in areas of national comparative advantage and emerging potential, such as hydropower and ecotourism.

The implementation of the Millennium Development Goals in his country had been steady, he continued. Since the release of the first Millennium Development Goals report in 2004, his country had been successful in sustaining robust economic growth, with real gross domestic product growth of 8 per cent in 2007. The poverty rate had been reduced from 48 per cent in 1990 to 28.7 per cent in 2007, while the net enrolment in primary schools rose from 58 per cent in 1991 to 84 per cent in 2005. Despite that steady growth, however, challenges remained. One such challenge was to sustain the level of economic growth achieved over the previous decade in the face of high oil and food prices. Also, the Government must address the disparity between people living in urban and rural areas, in terms of their ability to reap the benefits of economic growth to improve their livelihoods, including health and education. The international community needed to help his country address specific constraints he had outlined.

RAMZY EZZELDIN RAMZY, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs for International Economic Relations and Cooperation of Egypt, said many developing countries, in recognition of the primary responsibility they had for their own development, had designed and implemented various policies and strategies to improve the living standards of their citizens. However, it was becoming increasingly hard for them to strike a balance between their national policies and international commitments. The efforts of developing countries to eradicate poverty required an enabling and complementary international environment. Currently, the developing world lacked the representation to influence economic decision-making, and the efforts of the United Nations to act on their behalf to help eradicate global poverty were much appreciated.

It had been proven that eradicating poverty could positively influence the achievement of the other Millennium Goals, he continued. Joint international efforts to enhance and build the national capacities of developing countries could also help developing countries make improvements in the education and health care sectors. It was essential that the international community attach greater importance to the challenges faced by developing countries, in the same manner that it had recently attached to such issues as climate change. The role of the United Nations in following up on the implementation of the outcomes of various conferences and summits in the economic and social fields was also essential. Though he expressed support for the current thematic debate, he added that it would have been improved had it directly addressed the global partnership for development, which required both developed and developing countries to make good on their commitments. In conclusion, he stressed the need for a new international consensus for the post-2015 phase, one that would better take into consideration the interests of middle-income countries, where half of the world's poor lived.

CAROLINA RENTERIA, Director-General of the National Planning Department of Colombia, said Colombia was committed to translating the economic growth it had experienced -- 5.3 per cent on average annually in the past five years and 7.5 per cent in 2007 -- into strong

socio-economic benefits for its population. The Millennium Development Goals agenda was an essential part of social and development policies. Colombia aimed to match the Goals with national strategies for reducing poverty and promoting equality. In March 2005, the Government created the National Development Plan 2006-2010. Social investment, which accounted for 56 per cent of investment resources, would be focused on groups and regions with the largest inequity gaps. The Government was making progress in implementing the millennium targets, and would achieve some of them by 2010. For example, extreme poverty had dropped from 21.6 per cent in 2002 to 12 per cent in 2006. More than \$10 billion had been targeted to reduce extreme poverty to 8 per cent by 2010.

In 1996, basic education was offered to 80 per cent of the population, she said. That percentage rose to 96 per cent in 2006. Colombia had invested \$25 billion for the 2007-2010 period to guarantee universal basic education. By 2009, Colombia would achieve universal health-care coverage, she said, adding that \$16.5 billion more would be invested up to 2010 to achieve that goal. Universal health coverage would enable Colombia to improve maternal and child health, as well as treat such priority diseases as HIV/AIDS, dengue fever and malaria. Further, the Government would invest significantly to improve basic housing and sanitation. Colombia had made strides in environmental conservation, reforesting more than 30,000 hectares in recent years and incorporating into its national parks system more than one million hectares. From 2003 to 2006, it had reduced the use of ozone-depleting substances by 44 per cent and aimed to completely eliminate them by 2010.

GARETH THOMAS, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the United Kingdom, said the pace of progress had been too slow and it was time to reignite international attention, enthusiasm and action to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. "We will only achieve the progress we all want if we can increase aid," he warned. The United Kingdom was on track to reach its official development assistance targets, but a concerted effort was now needed across the international community to meet all the pledges made in 2005.

In January of 2008, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom joined the Secretary-General to launch a year of action on the Millennium Development Goals, he explained. His Government was planning to host a meeting in May to showcase how the private sector could support growth and reduce poverty in developing countries and it would also take part in a number of other international conferences on the Millennium Goals throughout the remainder of the year. However, it was imperative that those meetings move beyond words and help set out specific commitments and practical plans for action. "Today, we have the knowledge, we have the technology and we have the wealth to make a difference for millions of people," he said. "We must now demonstrate the political will and to turn our promises into action."

MARIO ROLANDO PIVARAL MUNOZ, Vice Minister for Global and Sectoral Policies of the Secretariat of Planning and Programming of Guatemala, said his country was on track to achieving most of the Millennium Goals by 2015, assuming three specific conditions were met: that inclusive economic growth -- especially in the agriculture sector -- was accelerated and sustained until 2015; that national policies of income redistribution were designed and implemented; and that a high degree of investment was made in coordinated and proven social policies. Only through coordinated action could economic growth be improved, poverty and inequality be eradicated, and employment opportunities enhanced.

Guatemala had achieved important progress in the areas of health, education and institutional development, he said. However, 10 years after signing the Peace Accords, the country still faced challenges to consolidating the rule of law and deepening democracy. It was, therefore, necessary to transform health, education and mortality indicators to reinforce the relevance of democratization. Democracy on an international level should lead to greater access by developing countries to international decision-making structures,

greater access to free trade, as well as access to technology. "In short," he concluded, "we need the conditions that will facilitate the conjugation of countries' internal efforts with a genuine partnership with the principal developed countries."

HAIYA AMINA, Senior Special Assistant to the President of Nigeria, said her country was firmly committed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals and had effectively aligned the Goals with its National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy. That Strategy aimed to reduce poverty and promote pro-poor economic growth. The Government also set a seven-point agenda to address poverty, education and health. While Nigeria was on track to achieve some millennium targets, it still faced daunting challenges to achieve others, including the need for effective intergovernmental collaboration, reliable data and statistics from credible sources, and institutional and human resource capacity. The elimination of Nigeria's debt had freed up \$1 billion annually in debt-servicing costs. The money saved had been put into a Virtual Poverty Fund, used to finance such programmes as the Social Safety Net, a cash transfer scheme aimed to improve the lot of the poor.

Increased productivity in agriculture was necessary to achieve the first Millennium Goal, she continued. Current efforts were under way to improve irrigation, seed technology as well as access to inputs, markets and storage. However, challenges existed, due to the 20 per cent drop in food production at the end of the last harvest because of drought. Further, thanks to the universal basic education programme launched in 1999, Nigeria would most likely achieve universal primary education by 2015. Prospects were good for promoting gender equality in school enrolment. The Government was stepping up efforts to increase girls' school enrolment. It had mandated that women fill 30 per cent of all public-sector posts. Nigeria was also making strides to combat HIV/AIDS. In 2002, Nigeria was the first sub-Saharan African country to provide anti-retroviral therapy to 10,000 adults and 5,000 children with its own resources, reaching 690,000 people in 2006. However, availability and affordability of such drugs was a problem. She urged development partners to scale up efforts to make treatment available, as well as to support Nigeria's overall health-care sector.

ALEXIS BIZIMUNGU, Cabinet Chief for the Vice Minister in charge of Planning for Burundi, said Burundi was recovering from a long socio-economic crisis and, in an effort to fully recover, authorities were now firmly committed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. However, progress had been "slow and modest"; poverty was on the rise, while external investment was on the decline. There had been modest successes, however, such as increased gender parity in the public and private sectors and an increase in school enrolment. The health sector continued to be of great concern and, without significant support from its development partners, Burundi would surely not attain health-care targets set out in the Millennium Goals. HIV/AIDS continued to ravage his country and, despite having set up a national office to deal with the problem, a large proportion of the HIV-infected population was still unable to receive proper treatment.

If current trends continued and the international community continued to delay financial support and debt cancellation for Burundi, it would not achieve any of the Millennium Goals by 2015, he said. Indeed, considering the poor performance of many developing countries in achieving the Millennium Goals, the international community should reassert their commitment to help countries achieve the Millennium Development Goals by moving beyond words and towards action. In particular, world leaders should make good on past commitments to help resolve the basic problem of financing for development, and should step up efforts to establish an integrated strategy for financing for development in the future.

CLAUDE HELLER (Mexico), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, reiterated his determination and commitment to fight the conditions that caused poverty, social exclusion and inequality, as well as to create favourable conditions for socio-economic development to promote more

just societies. Rio Group members were working to set up joint mechanisms to firmly and consistently implement ways to curb poverty and increase access to essential public services, such as education and health. It was also essential to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment. The Millennium Development Goals were a useful guide to set minimum standards. He reaffirmed the Rio Group's commitment to those Goals and he encouraged other Member States to do the same. Achieving poverty eradication and sustainable development was a complex national and international process supported by a broad and genuine commitment to solidarity among Governments worldwide. That process must result in effective, efficient international cooperation to finance the achievement of the Goals. It was alarming that many countries were not on track to achieve the millennium targets by 2015.

Development must be a shared responsibility, with all countries committed to international cooperation, he said. Developed countries must reach the target of earmarking 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product for official development assistance. Coordinated and effective action was also needed. He stressed the usefulness of, and the importance of, following the principles of the Paris Declaration. It was important to take into account the diverse situation of countries in the south and to keep a balanced perspective that guaranteed multilateral and bilateral support for all those that needed it to achieve their respective development goals. Support was necessary, particularly for middle-income countries, he said, stressing that more than 40 per cent of the world's poor lived in those countries. Innovative financing for development was essential to complement existing traditional mechanisms and commitments.

ANDERS LIDÉN ( Sweden), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, said the Millennium Development Goals could not be achieved without broader enjoyment of sexual and reproductive health and rights. Healthy women with the freedom to participate fully in society was a prerequisite for any country to achieving its full potential for sustainable economic and social development. The ability of women to control their own fertility and their access to reproductive health services were necessary to significantly reduce maternal and child mortality rates. Access for young men and women to contraceptives, comprehensive sex education and confidential reproductive health services were crucial to reduce adolescent birth rates. Sexual and reproductive health education and access to reproductive health services were the best guarantee for preventing HIV/AIDS. Everyone must have access to sexual and reproductive health and rights in order to achieve gender equality.

However, much remained to achieve those aims, he said. It was estimated that 70 per cent of the 1.3 billion people living in absolute poverty were women and girls. Two thirds of the world's work was carried out by women and girls earning less than 5 per cent of total global income. Every year, 500,000 women died due to complications related to pregnancy or childbirth. More than 90 per cent of them were in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. One quarter to one half of girls in developing countries become mothers before age 18. Sixty per cent of HIV-positive adults in sub-Saharan Africa were women and 75 per cent of newly infected youth were girls and young women aged 15 to 24. The Nordic countries had put sexual and reproductive health and rights at the centre of international development cooperation. He encouraged all partners to do the same and said he expected the United Nations to lead those efforts.

GERHARD PFANZELTER ( Austria) said his country would spare no efforts to raise the quantity and quality of national aid for developing countries. The eradication of poverty was the key target of the Millennium Goals and determined, pro-poor policies, national strategies for poverty reduction, and political participation were important elements to overall success in that area. A reduction in poverty would help contribute to the maintenance of peace and security, as well. Unfortunately, climate change was exacerbating the challenge of poverty

reduction. Many of the root causes of poverty were closely linked to environmental phenomena and efforts to fight climate change were, therefore, central to the fight against poverty and the attainment of sustainable development.

It was necessary to intensify international cooperation on energy issues, he said, as sustainable energy systems were a prerequisite for the attainment of the Millennium Goals. It was also important to address how climate change affected the security of individuals and vulnerable groups, such as women. Addressing gender-specific aspects of climate change was a requirement for successful climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies, but it could also have a positive effect on broader concerns of development and poverty reduction. "Only those who help quickly, help effectively," he said. Developing a global partnership for development was essential and a test of that success would be the successful implementation of all the Millennium Goals.

AMI DIALLO ( Mali), speaking on behalf of the landlocked developing countries, said progress on the Millennium Goals was uneven due to the disproportionate availability of global resources for development. For example, landlocked developing countries held 4 per cent of the world's population, but accounted for only 0.3 per cent of gross domestic product worldwide. Without easy access to the benefits of globalization, landlocked developing countries encountered enormous obstacles to raising adequate funds for financing development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. As a result, more than two thirds of their populations lived on less than \$2 a day and half of school-age children were unable to attend school.

The international community should, therefore, pay special attention to the needs of landlocked developing countries, she continued. In particular, it should focus support for the Almaty agenda, which was scheduled to go through a midterm review in October 2008. Compounding the already difficult situation of landlocked developing countries was the problem of climate change, which was also addressed positively in the Almaty programme. In conclusion, she reiterated the need for support for the Almaty agenda and for all efforts to help developing countries achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

FEKITAMOELOA 'UTOIKAMANU ( Tonga) on behalf of the Pacific small island developing States, said those States had made some notable progress in specific areas towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. However, at current trends, most of those States faced challenges to achieving all the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. While embracing the primary responsibility for their development, it was also recognized that the States faced common constraints, which made their economies more vulnerable, due to the very nature of their size, remoteness from markets, limited human resource capacity and vulnerability to natural catastrophes and climate change. Those challenges were exacerbated where there had been conflict or civil/political instability. Governance challenges, the impact of global externalities such as rising oil and food prices, domestic migration and labour mobility had also limited the ability of Pacific Governments to implement the necessary policy initiatives to realize significant Millennium Development Goal gains.

The region's leaders recognized that those challenges required the pooling of scarce regional resources of governance and the aligning of policies to strengthen national capacities, he continued. Regional integration and cooperation, therefore, played a vital supporting role in the region. The challenges for the Pacific small island developing States to get back on track to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 were daunting, but not impossible to overcome with an increased level of support from the international community to address the plethora of issues. Those included the need to accelerate economic growth rates to more sustainable levels, strengthen governance systems and address the HIV/AIDS pandemic more effectively. It was also necessary to address education and health challenges, vulnerabilities related to climate change and natural disasters, as well as cross-

cutting issues like gender equality and empowerment of women. Other important steps to reach the Millennium Development Goals in the Pacific included addressing the special needs of the small island developing States, including access to technology, affordable and available medicines and jobs for their growing populations, particularly the young.

ILEKA ATOKI (Democratic Republic of Congo), speaking on behalf of the African Group, said it was disappointing that African countries, in particular the countries of sub-Saharan Africa, were not on track to achieve any of the Millennium Development Goals. "Even the best governed countries on the continent have not been able to make sufficient progress," he said. Time was running out to make much needed investments, and past commitments made by world leaders should be immediately fulfilled and translated into practical plans with systematic follow-through. African countries had a vision of a peaceful and prosperous Africa, internally driven and able to take its rightful place in the global community. Education was key to turning that dream into a reality and, though African countries had made some progress towards the Goal of universal primary school enrolment, they still had a long way to go.

HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria were still pervasive diseases in Africa and more needed to be achieved in those areas, as well, he added. Child mortality rates were still too high and reducing maternal mortality rates was proving complex and challenging, due to the limited availability of information, health care workers and health services. Improving reproductive and maternal health would require quality family planning and a whole range of sexual and reproductive health care that was not currently accessible. Though the World Health Organization (WHO) had responded positively to concerns about human resource challenges in the health care sectors of developing countries, the "brain drain" of educated workers to developed countries was still very high. In closing, he said that global partnerships for development should be strengthened to help developing countries attain the Millennium Development Goals, since it was clear that, currently, African countries were not on track.

MUNIR AKRAM ( Pakistan) said that, while the first seven Millennium Development Goals were very important to developing countries, they all hinged on achieving Goal 8: creating a global partnership for development. While developing countries had done their part in improving governance and creating the requisite macro-environments, unfortunately, the major developed countries had not demonstrated similar alacrity in their efforts to create, or enable the creation of, the partnerships that would support those efforts. Developing financing was often tied to conditionalities and the flow of foreign direct investment was concentrated in a few dynamic development markets, while the wider developing world was starved of investment flows.

He said the most effective cooperation was that which was based on the national needs of concerned countries. The resulting partnership initiatives must be managed and driven by country-level agencies and programmes. The international community had long been seeking the appropriate tool to ensure comprehensive follow-up to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. The best way to come up with such a mechanism was to put to better use the various high-level segments of the Economic and Social Council, especially the newly launched Development Cooperation Forum.

He went on to propose that all relevant United Nations agencies and international financial institutions come together to develop a mechanism to monitor the long called for global development partnership. That initiative should monitor financing, trade and technology areas. Policy decisions taken in each of those areas should be reflected in a matrix prepared by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (**UNCTAD**) to help the international community measure the achievement of specific partnership goals. Finally he stressed that it was important not to lose sight of the other challenges developing countries faced, including rising commodity

prices, unequal trade regimes and ongoing financial crises in the world's largest industrialized economies.

RAYMOND O. WOLFE ( Jamaica) supported the position of the Group of 77 and China, and said that urgent action was required to fully achieve the Millennium Development Goals. There was consensus in the room that the Goals constituted an integral part of the United Nations development agenda dating back to the 1960s. At the midpoint to the achievement of the Goals, reports pointed to mixed progress among the regions in reaching some of them. Significant challenges remained in their implementation. Full and effective implementation of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 remained a national priority for his Government and had been incorporated at various levels into its national development strategies. Successes had been recorded in many areas, including poverty eradication, primary school enrolment, life expectancy and eradication of communicable diseases.

While underscoring the primary responsibility of national Governments for their own development, his delegation believed that success by developing countries hinged largely on assistance received from developed countries, he said. Jamaica encouraged developed partners to fulfil their longstanding commitments to achieve the official development assistance target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income by 2015. Despite numerous pledges made, official development assistance had declined in the last three years. The importance of Millennium Development Goal 8 -- a global partnership for development -- must be emphasized. Among the main challenges that impeded developing countries' progress, he highlighted climate change. It was an open secret that, while industrialized nations were the primary contributors to climate change, the developing world paid the price. The global trade regime should be made more conducive to progress in all developing countries. He noted with great concern the stalemate in the negotiations in the Doha Development Round since 2001. "If our developed partners are truly committed to the development dimensions of the Doha Round, an early and successful conclusion of the negotiations is, indeed, vital," he said. The clock was ticking as the world approached the 2015 benchmark. Additional decisive action was needed now if the Goals were to be accomplished.

HILARIO DAVIDE, JR. ( Philippines) said his country gave top priority to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The policies and strategies in its Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan of 2004 to 2010 were designed to pursue and achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Key players in the country had performed significant roles to help realize them. The Department of Budget and Management had issued policy guidelines and procedures in the preparation of national and local budget proposals emphasizing the importance of funding programmes, projects and activities in support of the Millennium Development Goals. The House of Representatives of the Congress had formulated a Millennium Development Goals legislative agenda prioritizing legislative measures attuned and responsive to early realization of the Goals. At the same time, the Department of Interior and local governments had issued a guide to local government units, so they could better incorporate the Millennium Development Goals in their local development planning and budgeting.

Midway towards 2015, the Philippines had made considerable strides in meeting most of the Goals, he went on. Using the tracking methodology, the country was likely to meet the targets on poverty reduction; nutrition; reducing child mortality; combating HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases; and access to safe drinking water. The correct policy, plans and programmes were in place to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other major diseases. Given appropriate support from the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the country would be able to attain that Millennium Development Goal target. The Philippines, however, had to accelerate efforts to meet the off-track Millennium Development Goal targets on

access to primary education, reduction in maternal mortality and access to reproductive health. On primary education, the country was faced with problems concerning the huge amount of resources needed to construct classrooms, improve and print textbooks, and to train and hire qualified teachers. The Philippines reiterated support for the proposal for wider debt-for-equity arrangements to fund Millennium Development Goals-related programmes and projects. The United Nations needed to spearhead an international campaign to change the concept of debt sustainability from "capacity to pay" to "level of debt", which allowed developing countries like the Philippines to achieve the Goals without increasing debt and where financing the Goals was not obstructed by debt service burdens.

FRANCIS K. BUTAGIRA (Uganda) said that, although his country's 1997 poverty eradication plan predated the Millennium Development Goals, it contained similar targets. The plan had guided the Government's policy and implementation of programmes through sector-wide approaches and a decentralized system of governance. All internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, had been carefully integrated into it. The country's universal primary education plan had effectively doubled primary school enrolment, and currently 7.6 million children were enrolled, 50 per cent of them girls. The remaining challenges included improvement of the quality of education. Uganda was now pursuing universal secondary education. Gender equality, empowerment of women and HIV/AIDS were among cross-cutting issues in the country's poverty eradication plan. The prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS had been reduced from about 20 per cent in 1996 to the current rate of 6.4 per cent. The implementation of the Goal of ensuring access to safe drinking water and sanitation was at 50 per cent and 60 per cent for rural and urban areas, respectively.

Turning to "the bad news", she said Uganda was off-track on Goals 4 and 5, which were unlikely to be met by 2015. Getting back on track required redoubling of national efforts. Even more crucial was effective international aid in support of nationally owned strategies. Among other factors that hindered Uganda's realization of the Millennium Development Goals, she mentioned food import surges as a result of lowering tariffs; the country's heavy dependence on primary commodities; dependence on oil as a source of energy; a heavy external debt burden; and a declining level of official development assistance. Further aid utilization must be nationally determined and oriented towards budget support, rather than project-focused. The United Nations had a key role to play in promoting a global partnership for development.

NIRUPAM SEN (India), describing the Millennium Goals as a quantifiable measure of human dignity and international commitment to sustainable development, said Goal 8, on the international partnership for development, was critical. Concerned that efforts were under way to redefine the Millennium Development Goal framework by adding or revising targets and indicators, India strongly opposed the selective inclusion of commitments made at the 2005 World Summit and attempts to include that meeting's outcome among the Millennium targets. Attempts to transfer targets from Goal 8 to Goal 1 were also troubling. Tinkering with the Millennium Development Goal process, which had practically become international customary law, would only undermine its legitimacy.

Reaching the Goals would require not tampering with the process, but restructuring international trade rules, global financing mechanisms, and partnership initiatives, he continued. Such a refocusing of effort -- "to make those words flesh" -- would require, among other things, the United Nations to harness its awesome convening power, and the international community to combine Millennium Goal initiatives with efforts to address the root causes of hunger and poverty. "We can never make poverty history unless we understand the history of poverty," he said, stressing that the international community must assist the development efforts of developing countries by creating a conducive global environment.

FRANCES LISSON ( Australia) said the Millennium Development Goals had become a unifying force for international action to halve extreme poverty. Australia had promised to provide \$A3.2 billion in aid to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development over the period 2007-2008. Though many donor countries had failed to live up to similar promises, she reassured Member States that the Australian Government had taken the necessary steps to ensure that targets would be reached. Indeed, increasing amounts of official development assistance had been set aside in Australia's national budget through 2011. Those funds would translate into greater investment in aid in key sectors, such as health, education, sanitation and the environment.

Australia was particularly focused on helping developing countries build well-functioning education systems and to improve their health care systems, she continued. However, the need for environmental sustainability in achieving those goals could not be overlooked. Although there had been good progress on improving access to safe drinking water, it was still far behind acceptable levels. The United Nations had an important role to play in delivering development assistance and supporting implementation of national development plans. For its part, Australia was committed to international efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, including the 0.7 per cent target for official development assistance and the full engagement in the partnerships needed to attain those Goals.

KAIRE MUNIONGANDA MBUENDE ( Namibia) said his country had made significant progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, and had met a significant number of targets ahead of time. By the same token, meeting other targets remained a daunting task. The country's effort to meet the Millennium Development Goals formed an integral part of a national process of strengthening policies and mobilizing domestic and external resources towards the long-term development plan, "Vision 2030". National targets and indicators had been developed in order to ensure that the Goals were firmly rooted in the successive five-year development plans and in the milestones of the long-term development vision. Namibia faced a number of challenges that inhibited the early attainment of the Goals, including harsh weather conditions as a result of climate change and increasing world oil prices and the accompanying inflation. Other challenges included the volatility of the international financial markets combined with Namibia's inability to access finance in the international capital markets on concessional terms, the continuous decline in the level of official development and technical assistance and the brain drain phenomenon.

Getting back on track to achieve the Goals by 2015 required deliberate action to make the international environment conducive to development, he stated. The Doha trade negotiations needed to produce positive results, with development as the central pillar, and efforts to adapt to the effects of climate change needed to be supported through finance and transfer of technology. The General Assembly should also adopt a resolution mandating that the United Nations system address the development needs of middle-income developing countries in a comprehensive manner, by, among others, targeting those sectors that were critical to the attainment of the Goals. In addition, there was need for coherence between the activities of international economic and financial institutions and the United Nations system in support of development.

MARIA LUIZA RIBEIRO VIOTTI ( Brazil) said the Millennium Goals were not meant to replace the other commitments that Member States had undertaken during the cycle of United Nations-backed international conferences and summits of the 1990s. The Goals offered measurable benchmarks that could help the international community mobilize, guide and coordinate necessary national and global efforts to ensure that those commitments were honoured. Brazil had fully incorporated the Millennium Goals into its national policies and had even established additional and more demanding objectives. It had already halved the proportion of people living on less than \$1 a day and hoped to reduce that number further.

She said her country had also achieved the Goal of halving the number of those suffering from hunger, with the overall aim of eradicating it fully by 2015. In addition, education indicators showed continued progress towards both universal completion of public schooling and gender equality. Brazil had also made globally recognized progress in combating the spread of HIV/AIDS since the introduction, in 1996, of its National Programme for Sexually Transmitted Diseases/AIDS.

Looking ahead, the Government believed it would achieve all the Millennium targets, she said. At the same time, Brazil was helping other developing countries in their efforts to meet the Goals, either through direct financing and support to technical cooperation projects, or by making resources available to multilateral funds and programmes. Still, it was high time to address issues that were seriously challenging some countries' efforts, including distortions in the production of and trade in agricultural goods caused by the "scandalous" levels of export subsidies in much of the developed world.

DAW PENJO ( Bhutan) said his country had successfully held its first parliamentary elections last week. The formation of the new Parliament and subsequent adoption of the first written Constitution would affirm Bhutan's transition into a democratic constitutional monarchy. Fully committed to achieving the Millennium Goals, the country had been making concerted efforts to alleviate poverty through improved access to roads, health, education, electricity and microfinance services. While on track towards achieving most of the Goals, Bhutan needed to give immediate attention to achieving gender equality at the tertiary level, bringing down the unemployment rate and reducing the risks of HIV/AIDS.

Warning that the grave effects of climate change would make the task of meeting the Millennium Goals more difficult, he said the phenomenon had an adverse impact on agriculture, which was the mainstay of 79 per cent of Bhutan's population. There was also the threat of floods. Urgent steps were needed to help the poorest countries adopt climate change strategies to reduce the vulnerability of their populations and improve their adaptive capacity.

He said his country continued to face the demographic constraint of a small population subsisting on a fragile ecosystem within the physical constraints of being mountainous and landlocked. Extensive capital investments in infrastructure and intensive capacity-building were required to ensure a smooth transition to a self-reliant economy. Resource scarcity continued to pose a challenge and Bhutan would need to invest around \$2.5 billion between 2006 and 2015 to successfully implement the Goals. All Government efforts would continue to be people-centred. It was extremely important that the first democratically elected Government succeed in all spheres of social, political and economic life.

DANIELE D. BODINI ( San Marino) said that exploding population growth, armed conflict, climate change and unrelenting diseases, as well as major financial and economic debacles, were undermining the development goals of developing countries. The developed countries' official development assistance aggregate contribution was still lagging to the tune of a projected \$40 billion by 2010. Several receiving countries had not perfected their national development policies and they needed more transparency and good governance to optimize results and attract larger public and private contributions. Even small developed countries like San Marino must play a part in enhancing the development process. Small steps could go far if the international community reaffirmed its political commitment and engaged at all levels, with the active participation of civil society and the private sector.

San Marino had engaged in a full-fledged campaign to combat violence against women in the context of the Council of Europe, he said, adding that the country also continued to be concerned about the situation of children worldwide. While many developing countries would be able to meet the 2015 deadline for reducing child mortality, many more would not. While commending the work to stop tuberculosis, San Marino was aware that tuberculosis,

HIV/AIDS and malaria -- preventable and treatable diseases -- were still among the major causes of mortality, especially in children and women. San Marino had contributed to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) programme aimed at curbing the spread of HIV infection in Africa. Interventions for specific causes could generate immediate and lasting benefits. In conjunction with the private sector, San Marino supported UNICEF programmes on youth activities in the field of social development and public awareness of children's rights.

BYRGANYM AITIMOVA (Kazakhstan) said that, while there were encouraging signs that poverty was declining worldwide and access to education and health care was improving, many countries remained caught in the poverty trap, lacking capacity, often dependent on a single commodity and vulnerable to external shocks. With that in mind, achieving the Millennium Development Goals would require a multisectoral approach led by the United Nations. Efforts to revitalize both the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council would ensure comprehensive follow-up to the outcomes of the Organization's major conferences and summits in the economic and social fields.

As the United Nations stepped up its efforts, developing countries needed to build and sustain momentum by outlining and implementing national development strategies that would accelerate progress, as called for by the 2005 World Summit. Developing countries must also pay particular attention in creating policies and programmes aimed at generating decent jobs, especially for women and youth, which was a critical element of poverty eradication efforts.

Special attention would have to be given to landlocked countries like Kazakhstan, which faced enormous constraints, including high trade transaction costs, she said. That situation was made more challenging by the fact that most landlocked developing countries did not belong to the World Trade Organization, ensuring that they were even further isolated from major international trade flows. That said, the upcoming Midterm Review of the Almaty Programme of Action was critically important and provided the international community with an excellent opportunity to reaffirm its commitments to landlocked countries.

RAJA GHANNAM (Morocco), supporting the position of the Group of 77 and the African Group, said the adoption of the Millennium Goals had been a catalyst in mobilizing resources to combat poverty around the world. Tangible progress had been achieved in many regions, except Africa, which would be unable to realize all the Goals, despite its political will, determination, political, economic and social reforms, and efforts to promote good governance and the rule of law. In spite of the promises made to increase assistance to developing countries, many donors had not met their official development assistance commitments. The commitment to double assistance to Africa had not been realized and efforts to provide debt relief had benefited only a handful of countries. Multilateral trade negotiations remained blocked and the promises of the Doha Round had not been fulfilled.

As recognized at Monterrey, development remained a national responsibility, but the contribution of developed countries was essential, she continued. In that connection, it was particularly important to implement Goal 8. Donors were called upon to implement their commitments in the areas of official development assistance, debt relief and access to markets, technology transfer and capacity-building. International organizations and agencies also had an important role to play, as poor countries could not meet those challenges without international cooperation. The contribution of South-South cooperation was also valuable.

For its part, Morocco's national budget allocations for regional integration had increased from 39 per cent in 1993 to more than 47 per cent in 2002 and 55 per cent in 2005, she said. Morocco had launched a national human development strategy and was pursuing a participatory, transparent and democratic approach. The 2008 budget gave new impetus to

human development, focusing on education and training, employment promotion and the provision of services to vulnerable populations.

SOMDUTH SOBORUN ( Mauritius) said that, while the overall socio-economic development picture appeared to be improving for many developing countries, there was still no denying that most of sub-Saharan Africa was seriously lagging behind in achieving the Millennium targets. The still rising number of people living in poverty was expected to hit some 350 million by 2015, the very target year for achieving the Goals. At the same time, skyrocketing oil prices were creating economic havoc in the least developed countries and other regions of the developing world. Fuel bills were eating up their respective national budgets to the extent that very little was left for other development priorities.

The effects of climate change were also hampering the efforts of developing countries to achieve sustainable development, he said. Floods and droughts, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, were occurring at an unheard of frequency and scale, undermining agricultural production and all but scuttling efforts to bring about the much heralded "green revolution" that would be essential to feeding people in the affected regions. Another serious challenge was the exploitation of natural resources and developing countries by foreign mining and extraction companies.

Unless the international community honoured the commitments made in the Millennium Declaration, as well as the Monterrey Consensus and the 2005 World Summit Outcome, particularly meeting official development assistance targets, there was but a faint chance that developing countries could make significant progress towards achieving the Goals. Mauritius hoped the upcoming review of the Monterrey Consensus and the Assembly's high-level meeting on Africa's development would help not only to put the developing world on the path to sustainable development, but also to fast track the commitments and pledges made in the past.

CHRISTIAN WENAWESER ( Liechtenstein) said the commitments undertaken as part of the Millennium Development Goals were intrinsically enmeshed with other important agreed commitments, including those in the areas of peace and collective security, human rights and the rule of law, and strengthening the United Nations. For development to succeed in the medium and long term, good governance in the broadest sense was a sine qua non and, for that reason, Liechtenstein had decided to treat the promotion of good governance as a priority in multilateral development cooperation. It attached great importance to achieving the Millennium Goals, consistently increasing official development assistance towards the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income.

He said the promotion of basic food and health, as well as basic education and vocational training, particularly in rural and structurally weak areas, were at the core of Liechtenstein's development cooperation. New legislation had put different development actors in charge of public outreach, binding them to provide regular information on the focus areas, organization and objectives of the country's humanitarian and development cooperation. For example, its Development Service was currently organizing a "Vision for Africa" campaign. Liechtenstein was also positioning itself as an active agent in the field of microfinance.

Liechtenstein shared the opinion that strong economic growth, while not the only condition, was essential to generating resources to achieve the Millennium Goals, he continued. The increasingly important role that some developing countries now played in the global economy went hand in hand with new responsibilities. It was only natural that some of them enhance their contribution to global development. South-South cooperation should be taken into consideration when looking at the current architecture of international cooperation.

ENKHTSETSEG OCHIR (Mongolia) said the clearest message emerging from the panel discussions that had kicked off the two-day Millennium Development Goals review yesterday was that, if the international community was serious about achieving those targets, the

commitments made under the global partnership for development must be honoured in good faith, with both developed and developing countries living up to their commitments. While developing countries were making every effort to formulate and implement sound policies to ensure sustainable socio-economic development and mobilize domestic resources to that end, it was up to the developed world to support their efforts by providing sufficient development financing, including official development assistance, in a timely manner.

Stressing the importance of identifying and making use of innovative financing sources, she welcomed proposals to launch an international 2008-2015 programme of action to complement national efforts to achieve the Millennium Goals with supportive global programmes and policies. Those measures should be aimed at expanding opportunities for developing countries. Indeed, concentrating global efforts on a specific Millennium Goals objective each year of that proposed programme would be an excellent way to ensure that all countries, especially those seriously lagging in some areas, got back on track.

HERALDO MUÑOZ (Chile) said his country had attained most of the Millennium Goals and was redoubling its efforts to achieve them all. It had also set ambitious national targets and increased social spending to make comprehensive gains in such areas as education and health care. At the same time, Chile recognized that, unless the international community fulfilled its commitments, millions of people might be left with nothing but empty promises when 2015 arrived. The developed world must meet its commitment to provide 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product for official development assistance.

He said his country's experience had shown that it was possible to move from words to action in a relatively short time, especially through its partnership in the international drug purchase facility UNITAID. The Government of Chile was readily available to share its experiences in improving education and health. The country was also willing to listen to others and believed that opportunities to share experiences were vitally important to a joint global effort to achieve the aims of the Millennium Declaration.

OMAR MUBARAK (Libya), noting that official development assistance had declined significantly amid deepening income inequality between developed and developing countries due to inequitable financial and trade schemes, stressed that the international partnership for development, based on the Millennium Declaration and the Monterrey Consensus, must be made real, particularly by improving the level and quality of official development assistance. Furthermore, the global trade and financial systems must be overhauled and the international community must demonstrate the political will to address real needs, especially in Africa, without imposing conditions.

He said middle-income countries, particularly those relying on a single commodity for income, but for whom the Millennium Goals were within reach, required sustained support and should be encouraged to create new mechanisms to underpin their economic growth and development, increase the effectiveness of social spending and improve health care and education. They must also be empowered to gain access to technological advances and new information and communications technology.

No Libyan citizen could be termed "poor" or "hungry", because the country had adopted policies to subsidize food staples, which it provided at affordable prices to those on limited incomes, he said. Meanwhile, the restructuring of many economic sectors, along with the adoption of a new legal framework, was boosting economic performance. Libya was eager to support the efforts of the least developed countries to achieve the Goals, particularly those of ending poverty and combating disease. To that end, it had established, among other programmes, the Gaddafi Strategic Project for Children, Young People and Women in Africa, with the aim of helping to eliminate poverty and alleviate suffering on the continent.

HJALMAR W. HANNESSON (Iceland) said sustained economic growth was a necessary premise for generating resources for the fight against poverty and hunger, and noted that

the current economic downturn was particularly worrying in that regard. However, growth was not a sufficient precondition for poverty eradication. What was needed was a comprehensive approach to development that would generate pro-poor growth to benefit all segments of society. Iceland's development policy focused on the poorest of the poor, and the greatest part of its bilateral official development assistance targeted the needs of the least developed countries.

Food security had been an important aspect of Iceland's development cooperation, particularly in the fisheries sector, he said. The country had also increased its emphasis on food security through increased support for the World Food Programme (WFP). In the area of education, it was necessary not only to help developing countries facilitate access and enrolment at all levels, but also to give sufficient attention to such important education results as literacy. Education was key to success, a belief that was the cornerstone of Iceland's national and international development policies.

Besides hosting United Nations University fisheries and geothermal training programmes, Iceland had also provided support for the education, health and economic activities of women, he said. It also supported WFP school-feeding programmes and its 2007 and 2008 contributions would provide 45,000 schoolchildren in Malawi and Uganda with nutritious daily meals. The Icelandic International Development Agency focused on supporting the health sector in its partner countries. Iceland also supported such multilateral efforts as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) campaign against fistula.

PRASAD KARIYAWASAM ( Sri Lanka) said the Millennium Goals had been integrated into his country's national development strategies, including the 10-year development framework for 2007-2016. Sri Lanka was well positioned to meet the Goals before 2015 in the areas of universal primary school enrolment, gender equality in primary and secondary school enrolment, reducing maternal and child mortality and several other health and social indicators.

He said that, despite those achievements and the country's recent transition from a low- to a middle-income country, Sri Lanka still faced significant challenges in several areas, including poverty eradication, achieving environmentally sustainable development, reducing unemployment and mitigating the social costs of migration and brain drain. Achieving the Millennium Goals in a sustainable manner was linked to overcoming regional disparities, including uneven distribution of wealth.

The destruction caused by the Indian Ocean tsunami had been a serious setback, he said. The campaign of terror by a separatist terrorist group was also a major challenge to national well-being. As a result of terrorism, several conflict-affected regions had lagged behind, and service sectors like tourism had been affected throughout the country. In that context, the Government was making every effort, working with development partners, to build national capacities to address those challenges. Action was being taken to promote equity and inclusion, to implement pro-poor policies favouring local aspirations and indigenous methods, as well as local entrepreneurship. While combating terrorism, the Government had taken steps to ensure just and lasting peace in the north and east of the country through socio-political means.

JEAN-MAURICE RIPERT ( France) said the Millennium Development Goals had helped to mobilize widespread public-sector, private-sector and non-governmental support to help eliminate poverty and contribute to a higher level of development worldwide. Significant progress had already been achieved in many sectors, but the "global tally" was mixed and uneven. Unless efforts were sufficiently stepped up, the gaps between developed and developing countries would continue to grow.

He said achieving the Millennium Goals would require the full commitment of the entire international community in a global partnership for development that would include Governments, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and local actors. The Goals would not be achieved through a uniform strategy, but rather through actions responding specifically to the specific development needs of every region of the world. The Goals were not by themselves factors for development, but rather indicators to help orient international development efforts.

Those indicators could not be considered individually, but seen instead as a comprehensive package, where improvements in the health sector, for example, positively influenced other sectors, as well, he said. For the Millennium Goals to be sustainable, the broader conditions for development must be established, such as the institutionalization of the rule of law, good governance and human rights standards. Finally, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals was directly linked to the environmental situation and the devastating effects of climate change. The two should, therefore, be considered hand in hand.

ADIYATWIDI ADIWOSO (Indonesia) said that attaining the Millennium Goals was vital for all nations, because poverty and hunger did not respect national boundaries. Some regions had made good progress in realizing that global social contract, but the inability of others to achieve the Goals meant there was a need to redouble international efforts, as well as refine and strengthen strategies to ensure achievement of the Goals. All countries should adopt a pro-growth, pro-poor and pro-job development strategy. That would require policies promoting good governance, legal protection of investors, sound economic practices and the growth of infrastructure.

Calling on developed countries to support national efforts by being reliable development partners, he said they could do that through free and fair trade, by increasing and ensuring official development assistance and foreign direct investment, and by sharing technology with the developing countries in a way that struck a balance between social responsibility and respect for intellectual property rights. Indonesia was pursuing the Goals on the basis of economic growth with social equity. As a result, the economy had grown 6.3 per cent last year.

He said that, in the last few months, Indonesia had witnessed high food and energy prices and, like many others, found itself struggling to cope with the enormous pressure exerted by those changes. There was now a fear that the long-term impacts of those trends would severely limit the capability, especially of developing countries, to achieve the Goals by 2015. There would be more poverty, increasing conflicts and greater instability in many regions as a result of those unrelenting economic pressures. In response to that challenge, effective global partnerships must become the norm and weaker nations should be able to draw on the strength of more advanced ones.

FRANK MAJOOR (Netherlands) said he wished to focus on the Millennium Goal relating to maternal health, which was particularly off track. One woman still died every minute from pregnancy-related causes, with 99 per cent of such deaths, or more than 536,000, occurring in the poorest countries. About 13 per cent of maternal mortality worldwide was due to unsafe abortions and, in some countries, it might be even more than 30 per cent. Maternal mortality could be cut by nearly three quarters by improving women's access to comprehensive reproductive health services, which included preventing or managing abortion-related complications. At the 2005 World Summit, the international community had agreed that universal access to reproductive health should be achieved by 2015. The recent inclusion of that target in the Millennium Development Goals monitoring framework had been long overdue and meant a very important recognition of that issue.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights were a delicate matter, often surrounded by stigma and taboos, he said. That might explain the lack of political will in some countries to

really tackle that issue. An excellent example of clear political will and concrete action was the Maputo Plan of Action, a policy framework for sexual and reproductive health and actions to achieve universal access to reproductive health. Development assistance for maternal and newborn health was estimated at only \$530 million in 2004. To get the additional \$5.5 billion needed to achieve Millennium Goals 4 and 5, donor funding would need to increase by more than 10 times, which represented a small fraction of global gross national product and total development aid. The Netherlands had declared equal rights and opportunities for women and girls, as well as sexual and reproductive health and rights, as top priorities in its development cooperation programme, having allocated an additional \$200 million to Goals 3 and 5.

ILAN FLUSS ( Israel) said there was much to learn from countries that were clearly on track to achieve the Millennium Goals. Further progress would require increased efforts in the areas of agriculture, food production, technology, capacity-building and training. The Goals were not isolated variables, but "interconnected pieces of the same puzzle", and progress in one area had direct benefit in others. Member States should share agricultural technologies for development, as those could prove beneficial to regions suffering from climate change and other harsh conditions. As part of Israel's contribution to addressing climate change, it had recently hosted a workshop for policymakers in the fields of desertification and land management.

Describing capacity-building was a critical factor in improving health and education services, he said his country's "Tipat Chalav" health programme -- literally translated as "a drop of milk" -- had been particularly successful. It focused on preventative care and providing additional training and technologies to resident doctors. Israel had only recently made the transition from a developing nation to a developed one and was thus uniquely placed to identify with the development process.

Intergovernmental discussion and international development policies were important, but it was imperative that they be translated into actual, effective actions and measures to elevate the quality of life for the poor, he said. Israel would soon become a member of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), an important step, since the Government believed that development was a partnership with shared obligations and responsibilities. Caring and giving was both an obligation and a duty and, through it, the international community could bring justice and equality to all.

JASEM AL-NAJEM ( Kuwait) said that, while the adoption of the Millennium Goals had been a turning point at the United Nations, unfortunately more than half of the world's population still suffered from hunger and disease, surviving on less than \$2 daily. It was essential to address the serious rise in food prices, in addition to climate change and increasing drought and desertification. Additional efforts were needed to develop the agricultural sectors of developing countries. International trade in the age of globalization also required further attention, including technical assistance.

Achieving poverty eradication and hunger eradication goals showed the importance of their links to other Millennium targets, he said. Kuwait had already eliminated serious hunger and poverty, and reduced child and infant mortality, as well as malaria, HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases. The country had financed projects in health, transport, communications, education, social development and the environment. It had provided more than \$100 million in aid to other nations. Kuwait also contributed to reducing the debt burden of developing countries within the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank frameworks. It devoted 1.4 per cent of its gross domestic product to official development assistance and, last year, it had given \$300 million to the Islamic Development Bank to eliminate poverty in Africa. Kuwait had allocated \$150 million to support environmental research within the Fund created at a recent summit in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

MARIA FERNANDA ESPINOSA ( Ecuador) said she doubted the Millennium Goals would be attained by 2015, because industrialized countries had not complied with their official development assistance pledges. The gap between rich and poor countries was increasing rapidly owing to trade conditions, restrictions on development and lack of political will in the Doha Round negotiations. Ecuador was undergoing a "Citizen Revolution" and its National Development Plan 2007-2010 went beyond the Millennium Goals to include the creation of a more equitable society, guaranteeing stable jobs, access to water, clean air and soil, promotion of a sustainable economy and support for ethnic diversity. Ecuador strove for a good living for all in harmony with the environment.

Noting that climate change had become a key obstacle to the attainment of the Millennium Goals, she said her country had therefore proposed to implement the Yasuni ITT Initiative , which was a compromise to leave its largest oil reserves unexploited, thereby preventing the emission of some 100 million tons of carbon dioxide. As a result, Ecuador would lose approximately \$720 million in yearly earnings for the next 25 years. Willing to make that sacrifice, Ecuador required international co-responsibility and minimum compensation for its environmentally beneficial actions. An increase in international cooperation, compliance with the Monterrey mandates, the strengthening of South-South and triangular cooperation and active participation by middle-income countries in the international sphere would be among the key facts necessary to achieve the Millennium Goals.

MARTIN NEY ( Germany) said his country was fully committed to supporting the worldwide fight against poverty through the achievement of the Millennium Goals and other global development agreements. Germany was pursuing those efforts within the framework of the European Union, which had also set broader concrete targets that had been translated into the European Union-Barcelona commitments. Within the Group of Eight (G-8) industrialized nations, the German Government had initiated in 1999 the enhancement of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative. More recently, at the G-8 Summit it had hosted in Heiligendamm, Germany had rallied support for the achievement of the Millennium Goals, with a special focus on Africa. To that end, the G-8 partners had invited major emerging economies to cooperate more closely on solutions, especially achieving sustainable development and poverty eradication in Africa.

He said reducing poverty and hunger remained one of the guiding principles of his country's development policy initiatives. Germany was fully aware in that regard that national and multilateral efforts must be strengthened in order to achieve substantive poverty reduction. Germany backed all relevant education targets and fast-track initiatives, and targeted the development of vocational training and higher education, as well as education for sustainable development. As for the Millennium Declaration's health targets, last September, Germany had hosted a successful meeting on replenishing the Global Fund to Fight Malaria, Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. Germany and the Fund had also conceived the "Debt2Health" initiative, under which creditors were obliged to forego repayment of a portion of sovereign debt on the condition that the beneficiary country invested an agreed amount in the health sector through a Fund-approved programme.

CHIRACHAI PUNKRASIN ( Thailand) said his country had incorporated all the Millennium Goals into its national development agenda and had made remarkable progress in meeting most of them well in advance of the 2015 target date, while also introducing a set of Millennium Goals-plus targets. Thailand had reduced poverty from 42.2 per cent in 1990 to 9.6 per cent in 2006. The percentage of Thais living under the food poverty line had fallen to 2.2 per cent in 2002, and the prevalence of underweight children under age 5 had dropped from 18.6 per cent in the early 1990s to 8.5 per cent in the early 2000s. Thailand had also made good progress in increasing school enrolment and retention. On health care and major diseases, new infections had dropped by more than 80 per cent since 1991 and the country was well on target to achieve its malaria targets. It had greatly reduced the

number of new HIV infections and was reaching out to share its expertise with other countries in the Asia-Pacific and other regions needing cooperation and support.

Universal health care coverage played an important role in child mortality and maternal health, he said, noting that more than 75 per cent of his country's population had health care coverage. The current National Economic and Social Development Plan included strategies for environmental conservation. Last year, the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), had launched the Millennium Development Goals Carbon Facility, which enabled the private sector and entrepreneurs to play a direct role in addressing climate change. It also provided resources for investment in technology that cut carbon emissions. Microcredit facilities, such as village funds supported "One Village One Product" schemes in rural and agricultural areas. Small- and medium-sized enterprises and people's banks had helped promote small businesses, creating more jobs and decent incomes for the poor.

RODRIGO MALMIERCA DIAZ ( Cuba) said that, if the aim of halving the number of people living in extreme poverty and suffering hunger by 2015 was achieved, some 500 million human beings would still be affected, because, ironically, enough food was produced nowadays to feed everyone. Today's boys and girls could be provided with elementary education with a minimum of the resources drained from the developing world to repay the shameful external debt, which had already been paid several times over. A tiny fraction of the trillion dollars squandered on arms and a renunciation of greed by pharmaceutical corporations could curb the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. What was needed today was a change in the senseless and unsustainable production and consumption patterns of industrialized nations.

He said it was curious how panels stressed recommendations for the Governments of developing countries while those responsible for the current unjust international economic order avoided talking about their own commitments at all costs. If developed countries really had the political will to honour their historical responsibility, they could end their protectionist policies and subsidies for agricultural, fish and forest products.

The political will of the Cuban authorities to eliminate the ills inherited from neo-colonialism had not been defeated, notwithstanding almost 50 years of blockades, aggressions and non-stop slander, he said. Cuba had also maintained its duty to help brotherly peoples of the South by providing services in 96 countries and welcoming students from 129 countries. Not only the Millennium Goals, but the whole United Nations development agenda could be achieved well before 2015 if only egoism and the hunt for profits at all cost on the part of those who controlled the world's wealth were put aside.

LESLIE KOJO CHRISTIAN ( Ghana) said debt cancellation and increased international aid had helped put more than 20 million young African children into schools and helped reduce the number of people living in extreme poverty. Ghana's economy had benefited from increased growth, underpinned by an anti-inflationary monetary policy and fiscal consolidation. Despite such dramatic progress, however, the end of poverty was not imminent. In many countries, only modest gains had been made towards achieving the Millennium Goals, and current indicators suggested that, by 2015, some 720 million people would still be living on the threshold of extreme poverty. Each country bore the primary responsibility for its own development and was required to promote good governance and sound economic policies effectively to attract both domestic and external investment.

However, in a globalized and interdependent world, external conditions and policies had a direct bearing on the effectiveness of a country's development strategies, he said. Key to success in achieving the Millennium Goals was the strengthening of a global partnership, whereby international policies complemented national efforts and the talents of non-governmental organizations, business, religious groups and politicians were harnessed

equally. International trade carried enormous potential for reducing poverty worldwide, but the current global trading system discriminated against developing countries and hindered the participation of poorer countries in the global economy. The international community should pay greater attention to the international financial markets and the global aid architecture to ensure that developing countries could access private capital cheaply. All Governments should fulfil their Millennium pledges, so as to not miss out on a historic opportunity to end poverty.

FAZLI ?ORMAN ( Turkey) said his country was making good progress towards achieving the Millennium Goals, but some still needed particular attention. Turkey had already adapted its 2007-2013 National Development Plan in line with the Millennium targets and, although it was a developing country, it felt the need to do its part in helping others to attain the Goals, as well. Turkey participated actively in almost all international efforts in that regard, and had increased its official development assistance from \$600 million in 2005 to \$715 million, or 0.18 per cent of gross domestic product, in 2006. The Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency was carrying out several projects worldwide and had 22 field offices in various regions. It had funded \$15 million projects in the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.

He said his country had pledged \$5 million for small- and medium-scale regional development projects in the least developed countries during the July 2007 Ministerial Conference on Least Developed Countries held in Istanbul. Turkey had allocated \$50 million to African countries for projects in the health, education and economic development fields over a five-year period. Improving the living conditions of the more than 600 million people living in least developed countries was a litmus test for "making poverty history". As UNDP's 2007-2008 Human Development Report rightly warned, the international community must focus on the wide-ranging negative implications of climate change for the attainment of the Millennium targets.

YUKIO TAKASU ( Japan) said that, despite the decline in extreme poverty in East and South Asia and progress in primary education enrolment and access to HIV/AIDS treatment, other goals were not being met, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. The "bottom billion", living on less than \$1 a day, must be helped through the empowerment of the individual and the consolidation of peace. The concept of human security must be embraced by protecting and empowering every individual and building safe and healthy communities. Progress must be measured by the extent to which individuals were able to realize their full potential.

He said his country would host TICAD IV [Tokyo International Conference on African Development] in May and the G-8 Hokkaido-Toyako Summit in July. Through those initiatives, Japan would take up development issues, in particular health, water and education, from the perspective of human security. The country would promote a comprehensive approach to global health based on its own experience. Strengthening health systems and retaining trained personnel was the key to effectively addressing health challenges.

Efforts in that area could not be shouldered by the public sector alone, he stressed, noting that Japan was working to formulate a framework for action with the participation of all relevant stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector. Water, the basis of all life, was also related to conflict, poverty, health and gender. The international community must take comprehensive action on water and sanitation, and promote conservation and recycling by sharing technology. For effective water management, cooperation between central and local governments and public-private partnerships was indispensable.

Education provided the basis for a society to develop its human resources and for individuals to realize their full potential, he said. In order to achieve education for all, Japan would continue its efforts to expand high-quality basic education. It would make technical

and vocational education and secondary and higher education available to people with high aspirations. A multisectoral approach was important in maximizing the overarching impact of investment in education on every aspect of social and national development.

MARIA RUBIALES DE CHAMORRO ( Nicaragua) said extreme poverty in many countries across the globe continued to be of great concern and much more would need to be done to ensure the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. The Government of Nicaragua had overcome decades of neglect and was currently in the process of implementing a national development plan that went well beyond the targets laid out in the Millennium Declaration. Central to that plan was the establishment of a democratic system that was truly citizen-based and allowed residents to participate fully in their own governance, to the point where the country would be run through the joint management of citizens and Government structures.

Turning to the many successes Nicaragua had already achieved in the employment, health and education sectors, she pointed to declining national poverty rates resulting from increased employment and development in the agricultural sector. In particular, the Government had achieved significant success through loan programmes that benefited vulnerable groups such as women. Education played a critical role in that success, since investment in education was the catalyst for success in other areas.

Nicaragua was also well on its way to providing free health care for all citizens and had already mobilized 35,000 health care workers for a mass immunization campaign, she said. The Government had also instituted a ground-breaking health-care programme that allowed it to exchange weaponry left over from the wars of the 1980s for new medical equipment. However, national efforts alone were not enough. In order to achieve the Millennium Goals, a common effort was required. World leaders must fulfil their promises of assistance to developing countries and ensure the proper follow-up on all efforts.

GONZALO GUILLEN BEKER ( Peru) said his country had been striving to grow its economy and, in the past six years, it had achieved sustained annual economic growth rates of 5 per cent, which meant a 23 per cent increase in gross domestic product per capita. The favourable external environment, characterized by high prices for export products, had contributed significantly to an increase in and diversification of Peru's exports, particularly agricultural, chemical and textile products. The country had taken the first step in the right direction, but greater resources by themselves would not guarantee an end to poverty and social exclusion. Inequality had not diminished. The State had a fundamental role in distributing the benefits of growth into social programmes.

State actions could not be made indiscriminately and in an unplanned manner, he said. The Government had made it a priority to ensure the appropriate coordination as well as short- and long-term plans to alleviate poverty. Peru had adopted a public budget with result indicators and goals set until the year 2011. It was also working to implement general policies to generate good jobs. The number of firms that employed 10 or more people had grown by 9 per cent, generating 600,000 jobs, and a new general labour law had been adopted. Peru had devised a national strategy to make the population aware of the risks of climate change, so that the country could improve its competitiveness while, at the same time, responsibly handling sustainable development. Multilateral development assistance had focused chiefly on global growth rather than specific reductions of inequality, and the drop in outside resources for development had negatively affected Peru and other middle-income countries.

JAVAD AMIN-MANSOUR ( Iran) said the gap between rich and poor was widening, and millions of people worldwide were still unable to escape the poverty trap. Social justice and equality for all remained an elusive ideal and, alarmingly, only 58 countries in East Asia, the

Pacific and Eastern Europe were on track to meet the Millennium Goals. Iran was fully committed to eradicating poverty and hunger at both the national and international levels.

He said his country was also fully committed to ensuring universal primary education and was well on its way to achieving that target by 2015. Success in the education sector had been achieved through the strengthening of the private sector's role in establishing and managing education systems. Unfortunately, similar success had not yet been achieved at the international level, and much more remained to be done before universal primary education targets would be achieved.

Turning to health-related Millennium Goals, he said his country had successfully reduced child and maternal mortality rates and was now able to provide a minimum of care for the vast majority of its population. Once again, however, similar progress had not been achieved at the international level. A favourable international environment that promoted sound macroeconomic policies and improved market access for agricultural products from developing countries would help them meet the Millennium targets by 2015. The strong economic growth achieved in some countries in the past few years should be maintained through appropriate measures. Official development assistance was one of the main components of financing for development, and developed countries should meet their commitments as soon as possible.

JOHAN L. L?VALD ( Norway) said the Millennium Goals were interlinked, and failure to recognize the multidimensional causes and effects of poverty could hamper progress. National efforts supported by international cooperation had proven to be a successful approach to development, but current efforts needed to be scaled up. Development assistance must be doubled and supported by a conducive international framework and improved national governance.

Though great progress had been made in the health care sectors of many countries, there was a real danger that the current appalling child and maternal mortality rates would continue beyond 2015, he said. For its part, Norway was committed to increasing its financial support for the child and maternal health Millennium Goals with an additional \$1 billion over the next 10 years.

Though school enrolment rates were on the rise, external financial support for providing universal primary education was declining, he said. Furthermore, national commitments to reduce poverty and hunger must be given even greater prominence in national development and poverty reduction strategies. It was discouraging that only five countries had reached the 0.7 per cent official development assistance target. The United Nations system had a critical role to play in development and should improve national capacities for service delivery, infrastructure development, policy planning and monitoring.

JOHN MCNEE ( Canada) said progress made in achieving the Millennium Development Goals should be measured not just in terms of spending, but also in terms of concrete results, sustainability and effectiveness on the ground. Canada was committed to increasing its overall assistance levels and enhancing the focus, efficiency and accountability of international assistance efforts. To that end, the recommendations of the United Nations High-Level Panel on System-wide Coherence would help reinforce more effective the delivery of development assistance.

He said that, in order successfully to achieve the Millennium Goals, it was important for Member States to ensure the mobilization of domestic resources for development, to create enabling environments that could attract foreign direct investment, to use official development assistance effectively, to use international trade as an engine for development and to address external debt. Innovative mechanisms were required to make the rapid advances needed to achieve development goals and discussions should include all development actors, including civil society and women.

Democratic governance and peace and security were also essential to ensuring progress, he said. For its part, Canada was committed to doubling its assistance to Africa from the 2003-2004 levels, while increasing bilateral aid for education. Those concrete commitments and results should serve as an example to other developed countries and help reassure developing countries of international support for their efforts.

ABDALMAHMOOD ABDALHALEEM MOHAMAD ( Sudan) said that, despite encouraging progress in governance and economic management and the rise in economic growth, the magnitude of Africa's special needs was daunting. Extreme poverty, conflicts, environmental degradation and the lack of health care and sanitation continued to blight the lives of millions of Africans. Malaria, AIDS and tuberculosis were responsible for more than 4 million deaths annually.

He said his country was committed to achieving the Millennium targets and had incorporated them into its Constitution, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the ongoing process of developing the country's national strategic five-year plan. Sudan had issued its first interim unified Millennium Development Goals report in December 2004 and was currently working on a follow-up report, to be issued in May 2009. The country had also made remarkable efforts to create a domestic environment conducive to socio-economic development, he said, including efforts to bring peace as a prerequisite for development.

Solid rules and guidance for home-grown good governance and political, social and economic reforms had been made, he said. Following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the Government had striven to bring about peace and development. The 2007-2031 Quarter Century Strategy and national medium-term programmes were carefully designed to attain high, sustained economic growth with gradual poverty reduction and decentralization. Sound economic management and prudent macroeconomic policies, in addition to oil revenues, had contributed to double-digit economic growth in 2008 and substantial flows of foreign direct investments.

ZAINOL RAHIM ZAINUDDIN ( Malaysia) said that, in order to get back on track to achieving the Millennium Goals by 2015, the international community -- rich and poor alike -- must address the deficits in terms of implementation, coherence and consistency. As for implementation deficits, developed countries had yet to fulfil their official development assistance commitments and address such issues as access to markets and generic drugs. The core issue of the implementation deficit was simply a lack of political will, while the coherence deficit resulted from a plethora of rules, policies and approaches, conflicting socio-economic goals and a volatile external economic situation. The consistency deficit arose from a discrepancy between what was expected of the developing and developed worlds. What was good for the goose must at least be good for the gander.

At the most fundamental level, sustained economic growth was about breaking the vicious cycles of underdevelopment and transforming them into virtuous cycles of progress. That required direct interventions by Governments, assisted by the international community and facilitated by an enabling international environment. Free-market approaches were not sufficient and the international community must be fully engaged, subject to the principle of national ownership. Malaysia endorsed fully the need for greater partnership and cooperation in meeting the Millennium Goals, simply because human development was a shared responsibility. Tremendous progress had been made in the knowledge and practice of development policies. It was crucial to pool that knowledge and practice into a coherent framework that required a multifaceted approach in meeting the Millennium Goals.

SIRODJIDIN ASLOV ( Tajikistan) said the Millennium Development Goals could only be achieved through the concerted efforts of the entire international community, sufficient development assistance, successful completion of the Doha Round and taking into account the needs of countries in special situations, such as landlocked developing States. In 2005,

Tajikistan had begun a long-term socio-economic development programme and a national strategy for development until 2015, in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals. It defined priorities and aimed to achieve stable economic growth, provide services to all people and reduce poverty. In addition to the national strategy, there were State, regional and municipal strategies, including the medium-term strategy for reducing poverty during the 2007-2009 period. Half of the State budget was oriented to the social sector, primarily the education and health care fields.

The Government was also aiming to reform the national education system, he said. It had a 2006-2015 national strategy for education reform and a similar strategy to achieve the Millennium education targets. State financing of the social sector was limited by the scale of growth in the country's real economy. Tajikistan had great potential for economic expansion. It had great reserves of hydro-energy resources and fresh water, minerals, favourable conditions for tourism development, raw materials for industrial use and favourable conditions for producing food crops. However, there were great challenges, including the unforeseen negative winter weather conditions of the past year. An energy crisis had resulted from the negative weather patterns, resulting in damages amounting to more than \$850 million. There was a need for speedy development of the country's hydro-energy reserves and for effective water and energy cooperation in Central Asia.