

**Informal Summary
High-Level Segment
of the Economic and Social Council in 2007**

National Voluntary Presentations of Bangladesh, Barbados, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Ethiopia, and Ghana

Palais des Nations, Geneva, 3 July 2007

BACKGROUND

The 2005 World Summit mandated the United Nations Economic and Social Council to undertake an annual ministerial-level substantive review of progress in the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals (IADGs), including the MDGs. In the ensuing resolution 61/16, the General Assembly recommended that such reviews provide an opportunity for countries to make national voluntary presentations. Six countries volunteered to make presentations at the first Annual Ministerial Review held during the 2007 substantive session of ECOSOC in Geneva.

NATIONAL VOLUNTARY PRESENTATIONS

National voluntary presentations took place on 3 July 2007 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. Ministers from *Bangladesh, Barbados, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Ethiopia, and Ghana* made the presentations. All sessions were chaired by H.E. Ambassador **Dalius Čekuolis**, President of the Economic and Social Council and moderated by Mr. **James Rubin**, World Affairs Commentator, Sky News. Representatives from civil society and the private sector participated in some of the presentations.

At the mid-point of the 2015 target date for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), voluntary national presentations provided a timely forum for rich discussions based on countries' actual experiences in implementing policies towards meeting internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In the presentations, countries highlighted policies, successes, and initiatives, which would merit scaling up or could be replicated in other countries, regions, and globally. Challenges confronting both developing and developed countries in the pursuit of the full achievement of the MDGs and the broader IADGs by 2015 were also discussed.

The presentations addressed five broad themes:

- Key features of the national development strategy and its relationship with the IADGs, including the MDGs;
- Progress made in the implementation of the national development strategy, including analyses of policies employed;

- Key strategic successes, challenges and lessons-learned from the scale-up of initiatives to implement the national development strategy, including IADGs/MDGs, and projects and programmes which have not only been successful in the country but have been or could be replicated elsewhere;
- Assessment of the financing needed to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs at the county-level, and covering funding gaps through increased domestic resource mobilization;
- Support of the international community for the national development strategy, improving aid effectiveness, and predictability of other types of support to country's effort.

KEY POLICY MESSAGES

The key policy messages that emerged from the presentations and discussion include:

1. *Country-owned national development strategy* is essential to provide focus and direction for pursuing the IADGs at the country-level.
2. *Global partnership*. Domestic efforts need to be supported by the international community that has the obligation to fully address the MDG8 'Global Partnership for Development.'
3. *Social dimensions of poverty*. Development strategies should be people-centered, addressing the multidimensional nature of poverty, especially social deprivations. Institutional frameworks should be strengthened and geared towards providing social services, removing the threat of marginalization, and empowering the poor.
4. *Acceleration of implementation*. National strategies are working, although not on the scale required. There is a need to accelerate implementation by scaling up effective policies and programmes and fuelling innovation.
5. *Good governance* at all levels, including the fight against corruption, is a cornerstone of eradicating poverty. Corruption has national aspects, but it also has international dimensions, which requires North-South cooperation in order to be eliminated.
6. *Participation of stakeholders* in the formulation and implementation of national development strategies is critical for the sustainability of the development process. Governments should keep, maintain and enhance public-private-civil society partnerships to mobilize all the potential for development.

7. *ODA allocation.* The international community should evaluate the allocation of the totality of aid, not only multilateral aid but also bi-lateral aid in order to redress imbalances in ODA flows. A determining factor in allocating ODA should be the needs of national plans and strategies. Good policies should be supported, but there should be other considerations, such as in the case of fragile states.
8. *Middle-income countries and graduating LDCs.* There was a strong message that positive performance should not be penalized. The international community should provide appropriately necessary access to ODA and to increase and improve ODA for middle-income countries, particularly in the areas of technical cooperation and budgetary assistance. The smooth process of graduation should be a shared responsibility with the international community.
9. *Pro-poor markets and trade.* There is a need to take advantage of market and trade opportunities to fight poverty. This should be pursued through policies which are pro-poor, ensure that liberalization leads to employment creation, and address a more even distribution of the benefits of trade. The Doha Development Round should be put back on track.
10. *Pro-poor policies and programmes.* Economic growth is a prerequisite for eradicating poverty and hunger, but there is a need to ensure that economic policies give greater attention to social outcomes, promoting a broad-based, pro-poor and pro-development economic growth. Programmes should be targeted to enable people to take advantage of economic opportunities, including through micro-credit, women's empowerment, and investments and innovations with special attention to agriculture and rural development.
11. *Peace and development* are inextricably interdependent. There is a need to integrate post conflict countries in the global economy to increase the chances of sustained peace and long term development. Regional frameworks could be used to this end.
12. *Climate change.* SIDS and LDCs, in particular, are vulnerable to natural disasters and the consequences of climate change. There is an urgent need to further integrate climate change and environmental sustainability into poverty reduction strategies and support the implementation of adaptation policies. The Programme of Action for Sustainable Development of SIDS should be fully realized.
13. *National Voluntary Presentations of ECOSOC* should continue to provide a forum for countries to participate and share experiences. OECD/DAC countries, as well as emerging donors should present national plans also for review by ECOSOC.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

In the keynote address, **H.E. Mr. Jean-Louis Schiltz** of Luxembourg stated that globally, there was clear and encouraging progress towards the realization of the Millennium Development Goals, but sub-Saharan Africa did not share in this positive trend. In sub-Saharan Africa, the majority of people live on less than a dollar a day, where gaining access to drinking water was the most difficult, and where HIV/AIDS rampant. All should persevere and increase efforts, both in terms of financial contributions and partnerships. It was high time to put the Doha Development Round of the World Trade Organization back on track. With regard to the effectiveness of aid, the question was whether the international community had lived up to its past commitments. Since the Millennium Summit, new means for mobilizing resources for development had been explored and developed, in particular new sources for financing, as well as private sources, aid for trade initiatives, and others. They should not, however, be a substitute to aid for development, which is central for the implementation of the partnership for development.

BANGLADESH

Presenters: H.E. The Honourable Dr. **Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury**, Foreign Advisor (Foreign Minister); Mr. **Hamidur Rashid**, Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Mr. Md. **Motaher Hussain**, Chargé d'Affaires a.i., Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the United Nations in Geneva

Bangladesh has made substantial progress in reducing poverty – from 58.8 per cent in 1990 to 40 per cent in 2005. The decline is the outcome of the highest priority that Bangladesh government attaches to poverty reduction and implementation of the home-grown Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRSP). PRSP incorporates the poverty reduction targets outlined in the MDGs.

Key lessons-learned are that stability and good governance are prerequisites for sustainable poverty reduction. Combating poverty requires a holistic, multi-pronged approach. Increased agricultural productivity, access to education, migration and microfinance also have a critical role.

Key challenges are the need to secure new investments and innovations in agriculture to further boost productivity in order to maintain food security and reduce poverty. It will remain a challenge to maintain a steady job growth in the urban sector to absorb the increasing flow of migrating rural poor. The country will have to identify and promote new thrust sectors to sustain the progress in achieving MDG-1 targets by 2015. The ready-made garments (RMG) industry - the country's foremost export sector - has experienced impressive success and growth in recent years. But the future of this important sector will rely heavily on its ability to compete with other garments producing countries. It will also depend on the outcome of the Doha Development Round, in the areas of special and differential treatment. It will also remain a challenge

to pursue a pro-poor trade policy, especially to ensure that liberalization leads to job-growth, both in traded and non-traded sectors. Another formidable challenge is the adverse consequences of global warming.

MDG-1 recognizes the critical linkages between poverty and hunger. It is well accepted that hunger and under nutrition can trap people into an endless cycle of poverty that passes on to their children. It is the so called “hunger-low productivity-extreme poverty trap.” Reduction of hunger and ensuing food security are *sine qua non* for faster growth and sustainable poverty reduction.

Question & Answer Session

In responding to the question by the moderator on corruption and transparency, **Bangladesh** said that every developing country is responsible for its own development, but with the partnership with the international community. In Bangladesh, a very strong anti-corruption commission had been established. These new institutions should sustain and ensure that there would be a mind change in the institutional behaviour.

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) said that 700 million people in absolute poverty still live in Asia, that is, even more than in Africa. Without the Asia-Pacific success on the Millennium Development Goals, global success could not be achieved. The experience of Bangladesh shows how a country can propel itself economically and make significant progress in many areas, including on girls’ education, child health, and empowerment of women. It shows that the poor, if given opportunities, could become an engine for socio-economic improvement. Bangladesh itself was now poised to reach new heights in its quest to become a poverty-free society. In terms of textiles, there was a need for more market access from the developed countries. **Angola** asked where the funds for financing of programmes on poverty eradication came from. In Africa, the countries tend to turn to donor countries and have limited success in getting funds. Countries need the ownership of their development programmes since they are better placed to judge their own situation.

In response to question regarding the availability of funds, **Bangladesh** said that one of its core goals is to reduce its dependence on official development aid, and it is on its way to succeed. This is the result of a public-private civil society partnership to mobilise development. Bangladesh has been through a societal transformation, and in particular, microcredit has contributed to the country’s evolution. Women’s empowerment is another tool for development. The social security net was cast wide to catch those who required it. Bangladesh has a large diaspora, and this is sending back considerable remittances.

BARBADOS

Presenters: H.E. Mr. **Trevor Prescod**, Minister of Social Transformation; H.E. Mr. **Christopher Hackett**, Permanent Representative of Barbados to the United Nations in

New York; and Ms. **Ruth Blackman**, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Social Transformation

Barbados had achieved most of the MDG targets and the Government remained committed to the concept and vision of the UN's global development agenda in pursuing an MDG-plus mandate. The international community should continue to support the needs of strategies and programmes of countries which were going beyond the MDGs.

The nature of poverty in Barbados is complex and multi-dimensional. The country's development strategy is people-centred, with social capital being its greatest productive source. Barbados had sought to strengthen the institutional framework required for the delivery of social services, removing the threat of marginalization, and empower the poor. This strengthening of the institutional framework had resulted in the establishment of additional agencies in the social services sector, which were given specific mandates to eradicate poverty.

Barbados has an innovative good governance model: a unique tripartite social partnership agreement, which brought Government, civil society and the private sector together to address local economic and social issues. At the regional level, the Government is working through several regional frameworks, including the *Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME)* that are helping to strengthen regional integration and partnerships in the social, health and environmental sectors. The Government is also working with regional partners to understand the multidimensional nature of poverty or "social deprivation" in the country through the *Support to Poverty Reduction and Assessment in the Caribbean (SPARC)* initiative and the *Country Poverty Assessment (CPA)*.

A direct concern is the high dependence of the economy on tourism, which is already beginning to feel the impacts of climate change, particularly with the threatened coral reefs. Population growth is also creating vulnerability for the tourist industry. As a small economy, Barbados is facing the problem of lack of funds. Having graduated to the status of a middle-income developing country, Barbados no longer has access to a range of funding mechanisms. The international community should provide appropriately equitable access to ODA and to increase and improve ODA for middle-income countries, particularly in the areas of technical cooperation and budgetary assistance.

The MDGs will only be achieved if the 'Global Partnership for Development' (MDG-8) is fully addressed. For example, few significant achievements are being made in the *Barbados Programme of Action for Sustainable Development* of SIDS since its adoption in 1994 and review in 2005. The global community should recognize the needs of developing countries and regions and should take into full account their unique characteristics when working towards solutions to their problems.

Question & Answer Session

If the stated goals on HIV/AIDS were fully implemented, with funding and drugs provided, **Moderator** asked what difference would this make in the Caribbean, and if the developed world provided the drugs, money and expertise, how many lives would be saved and changed.

With regard to the question of a supposed total implementation of HIV/AIDS programmes, **Barbados** responded that certainly the mortality rate would be reduced. But the direct concern of the country was that it had an economy resting on tourism. As a small economy, Barbados was faced with exhausted funds. Not only the concerns of the national population but also the tourist industry needed to be addressed.

Guinea-Bissau emphasised that poverty is not only the lack of wealth, but also the lack of opportunities and of participation in the democratic management of a country. It is necessary to increase official development aid, but above all the beneficiary countries should be empowered and helped to emerge from a dependency, following the example of Bangladesh. True democracy and partnership between the governing and the governed inevitably leads to substantial and tangible progress. The presentations showed that there is a way out, provided that countries assume their own responsibilities. It should be ensured that corruption will not be tolerated. Innovation and realism are a necessary prerequisite to good development. In the early 1990s, Barbados decided not to join the International Monetary Fund; Guinea-Bissau asked what the consequences of this decision were. They also wondered what the result of the global compact between public and private sectors in reducing poverty was. Being a small island itself, **Cape Verde** said that it fully understood the constraints faced by SIDS. Cape Verde raised two questions: concerning human capital flight, how it could be managed, and regarding HIV/AIDS, the single largest threat to Barbados, how the situation should be addressed and if there was a regional framework in this regard. The **United States** observed that the Millennium Development Goal Six on combating HIV/AIDS appeared to be the only one which Barbados might not achieve. This is sensitive, as it requires a change in behaviour. It is clear that every country needs adequate resources to fund HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention. They asked how this issue was approached by the Government. The **United Kingdom** said that climate change has been identified as an emerging challenge and a potential threat to economic prospects in the future. He wondered what the countries have in mind when they suggested that climate change needs to be addressed with international assistance.

With regards to the question on HIV/AIDS, **Barbados** agreed that it has cultural dimensions which had so far contributed towards the resolution of this problem. Climate change requires urgent action. On the implementation of adaptation policies, countries like Barbados need support from the international community. Bangladesh was deeply concerned about the issue, and expressed its will to work with the European Union and the United Kingdom. The sea level rise contributes to degradation of natural resources, which negatively impacts on tourism. In this context, assistance and support are required, particularly with regards to beach erosion. The highest level of social partnership between the Government and labour was established in the 1990s, and was

a success in stabilising the economy, in particular with regards to linking wages and productivity. The country consistently drew on resources from civil society, including the private sector. The national sustainable development policy was formulated after true and meaningful participation of all stakeholders. This participatory approach was used to formulate national policy at various junctures. The lack of consistent funding to non-governmental organisations was underlined. On the issue of the flight of human capital, Barbados explained that it has only happened with regards to teachers and nurses. Cooperation with other countries helped replace those who left the country, a phenomenon touching many people with tertiary education.

ETHIOPIA

Presenters: H.E. Mr. **Ato Mekonnen Manyazewal**, State Minister of Finance and Economic Development; and Mr. **Getachew Adam**, Head, Development Planning and Research Department

Since the early 1990s, Ethiopia's overall development policy was to fight and ultimately eradicate poverty. Central to this effort is a strategy that involves building capacity at district and regional levels, the empowerment of women, human development, education and health.

Ethiopia's Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) is the primary vehicle for achieving the MDGs. To date, two PRSs have been formulated, the *Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Programme* (SDPRP) and the *Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty* (PASDEP). The implementation of both strategies is associated with positive trends in macroeconomic and socio-economic indicators. Growth is led by the agricultural sector but complemented by strong performance in the manufacturing, construction and service sectors.

Three sets of policy measures are contributing to progress: (a) in the area of agriculture, measures include research, design and operationalisation of growth corridors, and export promotion; (b) in the area of education, measures include promotion of universal free primary education, community control over schools and resources, upgrading teacher training, enhancing the English language curriculum, and emphasising information technology, computers, and television in teaching across the country; (c) in the area of infrastructure, focus is especially on providing for roads, energy, water and sanitation.

The key challenges are rising inflationary pressures; growing income inequality particularly in the urban areas; HIV/AIDS; a decline in the quality of education and; limited resources particularly for resource-intensive interventions in the area of infrastructure development. Addressing these development challenges requires scaling up of both human and financial resources.

Question & Answer Session

Moderator asked to what extent security affected poverty in Ethiopia. **Benin** wondered how the regional dimension is taken into account, especially with such porous borders. **Guinea-Bissau** stressed that governments must concentrate efforts on eradicating poverty so that the population can survive. It would be good if countries could share both their achievements and their failures so that these will not be repeated elsewhere. He also asked how the problem of hunger due to the extreme climatic conditions has been tackled by Ethiopia, and what were the consequences of the political climate on their policy-making. **Madagascar**, noting the high GDP growth rate, asked which sectors' activities have allowed such growth and if it has been achieved through fiscal measures. **The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)** stressed that the key factors of economic growth are Ethiopia's continuity in its policy-making, political leadership in strategy making, capacity-building in management and the private sector. He noted that the ODA flows were the lowest in Africa and the diaspora played an active role, and highlighted the development of the country's international relations. He underscored that there have been both national and international efforts.

In response to the question on the issue of security, **Ethiopia** confirmed that security indeed has an impact on poverty, but the country made it clear that its primary objective is to fight poverty. Ethiopia uses frameworks such as the African Union. On the issue of famine, Ethiopia explained that the main focus is on agriculture, technology research, and providing knowledge to farmers. Three development agents are present in each locality. They also encourage farmers to produce for market rather than private consumption. As to the question of the source of the growth, Ethiopia has achieved it mainly by developing the manufacturing sector and the construction sector as well as by improving taxation.

GHANA

Presenters: H.E. Professor **George Gyan-Baffour**, Deputy Minister of Finance and Economic Planning; and Ms. **Regina Adutwun**, Director-General, National Development Planning Commission

Ghana had launched an Economic Recovery Programme followed by a Structural Adjustment Programme. Despite progress made under both, the economy had basically remained the same: small, open and highly dependent on external inflows and economic growth remained stagnant at below 5 %. These placed severe limitation on Ghana's capacity to address the high level of poverty.

The Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS I) was formulated and implemented over the period 2003-2005. The strategy treated the MDGs as the long term minimum objective for socio-economic development and influenced the determination of the country's strategic priorities. Key successes between 2000 and 2006 were the significant increases in investments in the social sector in support of health, education, water and sanitation and special programmes targeted at women, and children which

contributed to substantial progress towards the MDGs. Poverty was significantly reduced from 51.7 % in 1991/92 to 26.5 % in 2006. This places Ghana on the road to achieving MDG 1 before 2015.

Key lessons-learned are that country-owned national development strategy is essential to provide focus and direction; linking national strategy to budget ensures that resources are properly targeted towards the implementation of national priorities; strengthening the partnership between government and its development partners promotes mutual trust and contributes to increase in financial and technical support; and broad-based progress on reforms *can* lead to rapid increases in economic growth and sustained poverty reduction. Based on the positive results of the implementation of the GPRS I, Ghana formulated GPRS II for 2006-2009 which integrates the UN development agenda. It is anchored on four main pillars: continued macroeconomic stability, private sector competitiveness, vigorous human resource development, and good governance.

The key challenge is to attain a minimum GDP growth of 8 per cent. Achieving an accelerated growth, with employment creation and poverty reduction, will require massive investments in priority sectors of the economy and scaling up of resources to maintain the momentum of growth and the achievement of the MDGs.

Question & Answer Session

Brazil shared their own experience in achieving a sustainable development by ensuring a scale of services and establishing institutional models to effectively tackle the issue of poverty and inequality. In 2006, Brazil approved a law on food security which established the right to food to all citizens. Beyond the financial resources, infrastructure needed to be provided as well as secure and comprehensive social services. It was important in this regard for all countries to build models and management policies to eradicate poverty and hunger. The **United Kingdom** said that multilateral aid organizations are likely to have 'scientific' models of ways in which aid should be allocated. Bilateral aid may be over influenced by historical context. The UK works on how to allocate aid in the most effective way. Popular opinion is also important and needs to be taken into consideration. There is scope for the international community as a whole to think about how the totality of aid is allocated, not just multilateral aid but also bi-lateral aid. ECOSOC DCF could be a place to have this discussion. **Guinea-Bissau** asked about market economy. Ghana departed from a regulated economy to a liberal economy. Its successes flowed from this openness, which better addresses the necessity of investment. Efforts have also been made towards achieving good governance. The budget deficit, however, still remains. Ghana invested quite early on in education that enabled people to share knowledge. **Benin** added that Ghana's success is also due to the long term efforts. Benin and Togo are currently facing an energy crisis. How would Ghana address such a crisis and if it happened, would their objective for 2007-2009 be adversely affected? **ECA** stated that Ghana is one of the first success stories in Africa. Their stable neighbouring environment helped, since it allowed it to trade with Nigeria. Overseas development

assistance and international aid also benefited Ghana. **Germany** emphasised that they have been working in development cooperation for 25 years. He profusely praised the role of ECOSOC in providing developing countries with the opportunity to participate and share their experiences so that it will benefit others. He asked about the factors that contributed to Ghana's growth in the agricultural area. **Madagascar** suggested that Ghana should share its method of monetary policy and the way they dealt with inflation and tax revenues. He further asked how Ghana would achieve the MDGs without the closure of the financing gap. **Pakistan** commented that the IADGs/MDGs could only be achieved through both national plans and global partnership. He noted that no developed country had agreed to submit their plans for peer review by ECOSOC. Next year, there should be equity: four developing and four developed countries should present their plans. He pointed out that there is a relationship between the level of governance and the support that countries receive, and that corruption and capital flights could be better addressed if the recipients were more willing to cooperate. On the question of ODA allocation, they should be determined not by the donors but by the needs of the national plans and strategies of developing countries. While good policies should be rewarded, fragile states posed a specific problem. **Guinea** asked about the country's indebtedness. Inflation dropped significantly from 40 to 10%, but it is still high compared to the level desired by the IMF. He therefore asked whether Ghana is still a lead country in the area. The **United Kingdom** agreed that donors could also be reviewed at the Annual Ministerial Review, but that this should not be restricted to OECD/DAC members: it should be extended to emerging donors.

Ghana responded that the country's aim is to reach single digit inflation by the end of the year through monetary policy. In response to the question on the allocation of aid, Ghana emphasized that budgetary support by donors needs to be transparent and accountable. The bank of Ghana is an independent institution, and there is no interference of the Ministry of Finance. On the question of assisting neighbouring countries, they put forward that a monetary zone allow a better cooperation; the only barrier is that of language, which needs to be overcome. With regard to the success behind the agricultural growth, they asserted that their main source of growth is coco production. With provision of free screens of insecticides, coco production jumped up. In terms of other crops, the area under irrigation increased from 1.4 % in 2000 to nearly 12% at present.

CAMBODIA

Presenter: H.E. Mr. **Chhay Than**, Senior Minister for Planning

Cambodia (RGC) mentioned at the outset that the context of peace and stability enjoyed today was necessary to its development. The average growth has now reached approximately 9.4% per annum and inflation has been kept low at 3%.

Cambodia was aiming to achieve the MDGs and therefore had set up the Cambodia Millennium Development Goals (CMDGs), reflecting realities in the country. It aims to

make rapid progress towards achieving the CMDGs and other socio-economic goals: social cohesion, culture, education, literacy, better health, and to eliminate inequalities, hunger, exclusion and vulnerability. To implement the Rome Declaration, the RGC Action Plan on Harmonization and Alignment was endorsed. An important feature is the RGC's commitment to prepare a single NSDP (National Strategic Development Plan), an overarching document, containing RGC's priorities and strategies to reduce poverty.

Economic growth is driven by urban sectors, which is the main cause of increasing inequality between the urban and rural poor. Rural development is, therefore, a key priority. In order to develop social infrastructure in rural areas in the medium term, the government will have to make major investments. Natural resources, in particular land, are important and can be effectively used for poverty reduction in the rural area. Concerned about the concentration of land in the hand of a few, the Government is providing poor people with land.

Cambodia is committed to basic values, such as good governance. They also want to pursue judicial reform, public administration reform and devolution of powers. They furthermore aim to promote sustainable development and develop the legal framework, as well as macroeconomic stability, infrastructure, promote the private sector and provide essential social services.

A key challenge is to pursue a growth strategy that is pro-poor. There is need for pro-poor growth policies and investment in sectors where the poor are concentrated and can find decent employment. In addition, there is a need to translate growth into increased government revenue, which should be allocated to social protection programmes. Other challenges are mainly financial, due to the chronic shortage of investment funds. This is why assistance from donors, external aid, and a better access to the international market is critical.

Question & Answer Session

During the discussions, **Japan** indicated that they had provided significant amount of aid to both Bangladesh and Cambodia. Furthermore, Japan will host the Tokyo International Conference on Africa (TICAD), the focus of which will be human security and climate change. **ESCAP** emphasised that Cambodia is also one of the 14 LDCs together with Bangladesh in ESCAP region. Cambodia sets an example in reducing HIV/AIDS amongst adults. Their programmes and policies are being reproduced in other countries. There is still a need for ODA to finance infrastructure and human resources development and to encourage greater focus on the private sector. **Guinea-Bissau** congratulated Cambodia for having been able to survive the horrendous events of its history and for playing a major role in its sub-region. It is an important example for other developing countries.

CAPE VERDE

Presenters: H.E. Mr. **Victor Borges**, Minister of Foreign Affairs; H.E. Ms. **Fatima Veiga**, Permanent Representative to the UN in New York; Ms. **Myriam Vieira**, Expert from the Directorate-General of International Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The challenge **Cape Verde** faced was the increasing cost resulting from its insularity and small size (limited natural resources) as well as the volcanic nature of the island, which makes it very expensive to build infrastructure. The climate (desertification and rainfall) also presents a problem, although the location is an advantage for tourism. Cape Verde is highly dependent upon external sources of income, but development since its independence has been steady, and it successfully managed its democratic transition. The GDP growth is over 5 % on average, and inflation has been kept under control.

Cape Verde had developed a strategy to achieve the MDGs by assuming its responsibilities at the national level. Although there is no food crisis, Cape Verde faces difficulties with access to food, due to the lack of arable land. In terms of macroeconomic policies, the gap between poor and rich people is increasing and the evolution has been negative between 1989 and 2002. Action has been taken by the Government, localities and NGOs in the social area: education, dwelling, agricultural production, fishing.

Major achievements include a better access to safe drinking water, health services, dwelling and energy, as well as the improvement in gender equality, but the main goal remains to be poverty reduction and the improvement of the quality of life.

The main challenge is that of graduation from the list of LDCs. In order to graduate from the LDC status, Cape Verde has to alleviate poverty and inequalities, master the financing of development, and have access to the markets of developed countries. Coherence and consistency are needed to achieve this goal. It was emphasized that Cape Verde should not be penalized for its positive achievements: 'one should not cut resources to a plane when it is taking off'.

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Luxembourg underlined their major partnership with Cape Verde and assured that they would not cut the resources. They determine every 4-5 years the priority sectors where they want to work in order to facilitate the ownership. Their primary objective is to set up a highly comprehensive system for Cape Verde to help young people to have a job. **Mauritania** stressed on the success of Cape Verde in terms of good governance and emphasized a link between good governance and development results, a study which should be intensified so as to open new options for sustainable development. **Benin** pointed out that Cape Verde is an inspiration for all LDCs that it is graduating from the list of LDCs. In terms of ECOSOC, Benin expressed the idea that Cape Verde should come back in 2-3 years to report on the experience which it has had with graduating

from LDC list. **Guinea-Bissau** stated that ‘When a satellite is in orbit then you do not want to stop the fuel’, meaning that without assistance, the project cannot be sustained. He then posed the question of clandestine emigration and stressed that support from their European partners would be needed. **Namibia** shared their mixed feeling of the presentation, because of Cape Verde’s temptation to play down the progress made. This success is, however, due to the determination of the government and the people of Cape Verde and has to be recognized, since it acknowledges the triumph of the human spirit. Challenges still remain - climate change and above all sustainability of the present level attained. **South Africa** said these examples on how aid works and “*Can do attitude*” are demonstrative of how all developing countries that volunteered for review took on the primary responsibility for their own development. He added that the global challenges should be addressed in future AMR. This is not a peer review, hence the reluctance of some states to participate is not necessary. **Netherlands** expressed their agreement with South Africa’s point on global partnership, although it was pleased with the new innovation in the HLS of ECOSOC. It stressed that they were allocating aid to 4 countries out of the 6 which participated. They pointed to the Progress Report on global partnership 2nd report. It also would welcome the participation of new donors in the debate. Netherlands assured it would not leave Cape Verde alone despite its graduation. **Brazil** asked what the importance of international aid in Cape Verde is, and how it was used, as well as what its international aid needs would be in the future. They also asked what impact the success would have on emigration. **Barbados** expressed their concern whether commitments made by donors still hold after graduation. The **United States** said this had been a remarkably serious presentation of the challenges and achievements of Cape Verde, and there was much that was admirable that has been done. With regard to graduation, that was an area that the United Nations and the international community has perhaps not handled very well. The point was that there was no wish to punish countries for success. Many attractive policies had been put in place, and it was hoped the transition would be smooth, and take place over time and not abruptly as though it were the result of a statistical achievement. Perhaps in this area the international community did not do enough to find alternative resources, such as aid-for-trade or other investment promotion projects. Development resources were different in that there was a need to look both at the needs and at effectiveness. **Portugal** assured that they would continue to support Cape Verde in the future.

In response to questions and comments, **Cape Verde** noted that the country still faces a lot of problems and challenges. On the issue of graduation, it is a challenge for the Cape Verdian government – the UN needs to re-examine how to best deal with the graduation process and getting it right is a shared responsibility. In addition, support of the international community is needed. In response to the question regarding the importance of international assistance, it was noted that the 90% ODA is due to external finance, and concessions have played an important role in Cape Verde’s development. In response to a comment that there should be evolution of external resources away from ODA through graduation, Cape Verde stated that graduation gives the country the opportunity to obtain different external resources and to attract private investment, although this will require much more public expenditure in the first place.

CONCLUSIONS

The national presentations by the Ministers of Bangladesh, Barbados, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Ethiopia and Ghana became an occasion for knowledge sharing and information exchange. They infused new meaning to the Council's mandate to advance and assess the implementation of the IADGs/MDGs, turning them into mechanisms to strengthen accountability for the realization of the agreed goals. The policy messages and ideas which emerged are intended to reverberate beyond the ECOSOC Chamber and enrich the development efforts of individual countries, regions, and international partners.

The creative new format, the "hands on", concrete approach and the highly interactive and candid exchanges were especially welcomed by many member states. Inspired by the thought-provoking presentations, several countries – including developed countries – volunteered for the next review. It will be a further step forward if next year ECOSOC can ensure presentations from countries at different stages of development and different perspectives.