

Mr. President,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me first of all to congratulate both you and the members of the Bureau on your election. Having visited Croatia some days ago, another small European State, gave me the great pleasure to see that its Ambassador to the United Nations, my dear friend Ivan Simonovic, is presiding the ECOSOC during this year. My thanks go, too, to the Secretary General and the Secretariat for drawing up the back-up reports and preparing the round table meetings, which have enabled us to improve the focus of our contributions to the debate.

Mr. President,

Once more Andorra is present to the High-level segment of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. This morning I have had the pleasure to co-chair a Ministerial round table on food security for human resources development. In this century marked by the Internet and Globalization, there are still some human beings that daily face the pangs of hunger. It is a shameful fact that in this century characterized by a civilization of leisure and where in man is exploring space, many amongst us live in deplorable conditions.

These recent years, through the special sessions of the General Assembly and international conferences, our governments have had the opportunity of acquiring an overall view of the process of development. A development, which certainly has many sides and requires us to concentrate deeply on its main motor, which is human resources. For this reason the debate of the high-level segment in our substantive session seems to me to be even more relevant since it affords us a unique opportunity to renew our efforts and adopt new approaches to improve the development of human resources and consequently improve their contribution to the process of development.

It is a fact that the employment of human resources, particularly in the fields of health and education, greatly influences the level of development. First of all, health and education are the main parameters of human capital. The level of investment in education and in health has a direct impact on the level of human capital and, in the long term, on the general level of development. Indeed, poor levels of health and above all pandemics such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis have a devastating effect on the level of development. In the same way, a good educational level enhances human development, reduces inequalities and, in the long term, attenuates poverty.

Nevertheless, it is important to stress that investment in health and education must be sustained in a complementary manner. The most obvious example is the impact which health has on the educational sector, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa where the HIV/AIDS pandemic has wrought havoc among teaching staff. Also, it has been noted that the level of education of mothers directly affects the well being of their children in reducing malnutrition and the mortality rate; it increases the level of family income in the long term.

These examples underline the synergy that exists between health and education and their correlation with the level of development. National social and economic policies must take into account the complexity of such synergy.

Mr. President,

The efforts of national policies in the fields of health and education, must also receive the firm support of the international community, in particular through international co-operation both in the field of research and in that of the financing of development. This fact was stressed at the Monterrey Conference.

In the health field, we welcome the setting up of the world fund to fight against HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, because this may enable the drawing up of solid strategies and plans to fight against these diseases. Andorra contributes to this fund. Elsewhere we hope to see a strengthening of efforts to reduce the infant mortality rate, which is still worryingly high.

In the field of education, we welcome the setting up by the G8 of a working group charged with examining the steps to be taken to achieve the aims adopted at Dakar. We hope there will be a follow up of the objectives set during the 27th special session of the General Assembly on children, particularly with regard to the education of girls. In this regard, my government is examining a practical and effective way in which it can co-operate in specific programs aimed at improving the access of girls to education in developing countries. With regard to the financing of education and, as underlined in the Secretary General's report E/2002/46, partly thanks to the HIPC debt initiative, public expenditure on education by 18 African countries should increase from about 2.5 billion dollars in 1999 to an annual average of 3.4 billion dollars in 2001 and 2002.

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As the last point in my contribution I should like to mention the constant threat of armed conflicts to the total achievement of the synergy of the development of human resources and their contribution to the process of development. It is a fact that in a situation of armed conflicts or post-conflict, investments in the health and educational fields are not only scarce but also fail to achieve their objectives. This is why the prevention of conflicts is the prior condition for the good working of policies aimed at human resources and their contribution to the process of development in general.

My Government, born of several centuries of peace and democracy, has always believed that one of the pillars in the struggle against conflicts is the culture of peace. Children must be educated in the respect for peace, they have to be familiarized with human rights and, above all, their schooling has to be guaranteed by keeping them away from conflicts. We have to support the ideals of the young population towards peace in order to promote a culture that adds value to human rights and that rejects intolerance. We have to reinforce the international institutions that ensure peace and that promote human rights. The day before yesterday the Statute of the International Criminal Court entered into force. Andorra, member of the like-minded countries, had strongly contributed to the

drafting of the preamble of the Statute of Rome. We have to be deeply committed to its work to the prevention of crimes against humanity.

Mr. President,

Last year, during the High-level segment of ECOSOC, which took place in Geneva, the Principality of Andorra renewed its commitment to the process of development. Since then, we have created within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a new general department for development cooperation. This new direction will allow us to better coordinate and to increase in a progressive manner our contributions. The small European States, like my country are aware of their duty of solidarity towards the important causes of humanity: it is the will of Andorra to be present in this gathering full of ideas and help in favor of the process of development. I would like to thank the United Nations for its valuable networks and programs that enable us to better guide our contribution.

Thank you, Mr. President.