

Mr. President,

It is with pleasure that I participate in these discussions of the high-level segment of the United Nations Economic and Social Council. I find the theme quite appropriate and relevant in our unfolding knowledge-based society.

The importance of human resources development to the achievement of growth and development in the new economy is fundamental. In this regard, my delegation has taken note of the Secretary-General's report on the subject, which brought together various strands of policy goals for meeting the challenges, particularly the ones relating to human resources development in the areas of health and education.

Without doubt, and as the descriptive report of the Secretary-General affirms, the challenges to development, particularly extreme poverty in a greater part of our world, are well chronicled; equally so the solutions required to mitigate them. Globally, regionally and nationally, fine blue prints exist to address these challenges. What has been lacking so far is the political will and financial resources required to faithfully implement agreed commitments.

Mr. President,

On our part, and even as we are confronted by constrained domestic resources, Ghana will continue to mobilise all available resources, and to allocate significant portions of the national budget to the two key social sectors of health and education; investments in public goods with long gestation periods, but which are critical to unlocking our potentials for growth and development. The Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy gives high priority to health, education; and the infrastructure required for growth. We are fully committed to discharging our responsibilities in the areas of rule of law, good governance and poverty reduction.

The international community's responsibility is quite significant. It is a responsibility which is important to creating the desired facilitative global environment, based on agreed commitments such as those deriving from the recent Doha Ministerial Meeting of the World Trade Organization and the Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development.

In this regard, complementary international action is required not only for quick and massive influx of external financial and technical support, but equally important is engagement over the medium to long term to ensure that developing countries can absorb the necessary policy actions,

on a sustainable basis. This requires simultaneous engagement on concerns such as market access and relief from unsustainable external debts. These concerns affect our national capacities to mobilise and deploy domestic resources to meet the developmental goals, as they relate to human resources development in the areas of education and health.

We are thus distressed by rising levels of farm subsidies in Europe and North America, even as our countries are being encouraged to adopt liberal market reforms. These subsidies impede market access, result in dumping in our market and adversely impact our capacity for human resources development.

Mr. President,

Ghana welcomes the Action Plan recently adopted in Canada by the Group of Eight industrialised countries on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which commits these better resourced countries to undertake mutually reinforcing actions to help Africa accelerate growth and make lasting gains against poverty. Such a commitment no doubt will be significant to ensuring human resources development on the continent.

In conclusion, I wish to affirm that Ghana's resolve to develop its human resource base is firm; a position that is further strengthened by its commitment to fulfilling the objectives of NEPAD. We look forward to further implementation of the commitments of the World Education Forum and to the adoption of the Ministerial Declaration of this high-level segment of ECOSOC.

I thank you.