

14 October 2004

**Chairman' Summary of the general debate of the Second Committee
59th session of the General Assembly
4-6 October 2004**

During the general debate, a total of 71 speakers took the floor. Many more participated in the Questions & Answers sessions. Overall, it was a rich and broad debate that put forward a range of concrete new proposals.

The backdrop of the debate was the slowing global economic recovery. Mr. José Antonio Ocampo, USG for DESA, framed his introductory statement around the global economic outlook. He highlighted several factors at the origin of the recent slowdown in the global recovery and addressed their implications for the development goals. In an innovation this year, the floor was then opened for an informal and lively Question & Answer session, which helped us in better understand the various views on this issue. This new format was broadly welcomed.

Following are some of the main issues highlighted during the debate.

Combined with a renewed support of multilateralism by smaller countries, there was strong articulation by the most marginalized countries of their concerns and perspectives.

It emerged from the debate that the follow-up process for the International Conference on Financing for Development, follow-up to the Brazil-Chile-France and Spain Initiative for "Action against Hunger and Poverty," preparations for the 2005 High-Level event, preparations for the Barbados+10 and the 2004 Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR) would require special attention of the Committee.

Strong commitment was expressed to the implementation of the Millenium Development Goals and of the overarching goal of poverty reduction. There was also a broad consensus on the need for the Second Committee to promote concrete measures during this session to achieve progress towards the MDGs.

However, the continued imbalance in the distribution of the benefits of globalization, the widening income gap between and within countries, worsening economic conditions in several countries, weak employment generation and the related adverse effects on the environment were highlighted as major obstacles towards the achievement of the MDGs.

In this context, it was emphasized that the 2005 High Level Event must be effective in pushing implementation and it should give new impetus to the realization of the MDGs. Several delegations called for a special focus on development. It was also emphasized that the Meeting should have a negotiated consensus outcome.

With globalization, the movement of people across borders has increased and it is critical to address the issue of migration in a comprehensive manner. Hence, several speakers welcomed the General Assembly's decision to convene a high-level dialogue on migration in 2006 and Peru's initiative to host an international conference of developing countries with important migration flows next year.

Speakers emphasized the need to strengthen the FfD follow-up process and keep it focused on achieving results in all areas of the Monterrey Consensus. Many recent initiatives and studies on Innovative Sources of Financing need to be carefully examined by the Second Committee so as to decide during the 2005 Event which of them could be implemented. The initiative undertaken by Brazil, Chile, France and Spain "Action against Hunger and Poverty", which strives to devise and implement viable financing mechanisms received broad support and there were many calls for undertaking measures to promote its implementation.

While welcoming the recent agreement reached at WTO on a framework for future negotiations, the need for greater market access, Special Differential and Preferential Treatment and removal of subsidies and other harmful barriers as envisioned in the Doha Agenda was repeatedly emphasized.

In addition to renewed calls for aid flows to rise well above current levels, in line with the Monterrey commitments, there were also broad consensus on the urgent need for new efforts on debt relief, including debt cancellation to the poorest countries and a new HIPC framework. Measures in this respect should not detract resources devoted to their development. It was stressed that all these actions must be part of a coherent overall approach in support of development.

Many speakers underlined that the International Meeting to review the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action, to be held in Mauritius, should lead to a renewed political and financial commitment in support of the sustainable development of Small Island Developing States. The ratification of the Kyoto Protocol by Russia was also welcomed.

Many delegations highlighted the situation of middle-income countries and the need to address their particular development constraints, through strengthened international cooperation and trade liberalization.

There was also a call for a more comprehensive and innovative approach to conflict prevention, resolution and post-conflict development, inspired by the engaging address by Prof. Collier. It was observed that such a comprehensive approach would be essential for the realization of the development goals.

Finally, during this general debate, the Committee received reports on the outcomes of the annual meetings of the Development Committee and the International Monetary and Finance Committee. The interactive dialogue with the representatives of the World Bank and the IMF led to interesting discussions.