



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Cuba, Ambassador Ileana Nuñez Mordoche on the priority item: promotion of full employment and decent work for all, 46th session of the Commission for Social Development. New York, 7 February 2008.

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me at the outset to wish you and your Bureau much success in the works of the current session of the Commission, and to support the statement of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of G-77 and China.

Mr. Chairman,

At the World Summit for Social Development, the Heads of State and Government recognized the urgent need to address the serious social problems affecting the world to reduce the uncertainty in the human beings' lives.

More than a decade after such historic Summit, the Secretary-General's report included in document E/CN.5/2008/4 states that notwithstanding some progress, 1.5 billion working-age people in the world were unemployed or underemployed as at late 2006, including 200 million unemployed and 1.3 billion poor working in non-productive jobs.

The report acknowledges that economic growth has not been linked to employment growth in the formal sector. Current data show that between 50 and 70% of workers in developing countries have informal jobs. Just to mention the case of Latin America, 70% of the jobs created since 1980 have been informal. The situation is much more complicated if we take into consideration that 80% of the world population remains without social protection.

Mr. Chairman,

The unjust international economic order based on unsustainable neoliberal globalization is the cause of such ills. The artificial economy of financial speculation that has turned the world into a giant casino threatens our future. As a result, economic crises unleash, financial bubbles burst, mass migrations will not stop, the climate changes, the victims of preventable diseases increase and political and social instability is the rule and not the exception.

Meanwhile, a small group of wealthy nations enjoy and spread unsustainable consumption patterns, keep protectionist mechanisms while demanding indiscriminate opening of our markets, do not fulfill the official development assistance and keep high interest for the external debt which are an obstacle for our countries progress, including the goal to achieve full employment.

Mr. Chairman,

In Cuba, despite the tightening of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States, social and economic perspectives are increasing. Since the triumph of the Cuban Revolution, nobody is abandoned or left on its own and the social expenditure is harmonized with the economic growth as a comprehensive development strategy.

As at the end of 2007 the unemployment rate dropped to 1.9%, the lowest ever, thus full employment was achieved along with a 7.5% economic growth. 100% of the population enjoys social, universal and supportive protection. For several years now salaries, pensions and retirement funds have been raised. While at the same time, women earn same salaries for same jobs.

Through free education for all and diverse social programmes, we have trained and provided jobs to teachers, nurses, art instructors, scientists, etc. A novel initiative has been the creation of "study-as-work" as a new concept of employment. At the international level, as at the academic year 2006-2007, 50 171 students from 129 countries and 4 overseas territories have graduated, as a modes contribution to the formation of human resources in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean.

Mr. Chairman,

Today it is an undisputable truth that the eradication of poverty does not depend only on a country's economic growth. Both international and national factors are essential for the creation of a general macroeconomic environment that helps to eradicate poverty and contributes to attain full employment and productive work.

Thus, it is pressing to meet the commitments made in Copenhagen and show unconditioned solidarity to address the socio-economic problems affecting mainly the countries of the South.

One of this Commission's mandates is to follow-up on those commitments. Unfortunately, we have seen in the last few years how a certain group of countries are selfishly trying to push issues linked to the social development agenda to the background. It will be such countries responsibility not to fulfill their commitments made at the level of Heads of State.

In light of those attempts, the countries of the South have the responsibility to remain united fighting for the just demands of millions of human beings who hope for a better and equal world for all.

Thank you.