



PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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## STATEMENT

BY

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AMBASSADOR/DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

AT THE

47<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
ON THE PRIORITY THEME: SOCIAL INTEGRATION

NEW YORK, 5<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2009



**Madam Chairperson,**

On behalf of the Nigerian delegation, I wish to congratulate you and other members of the bureau on your election to steer the 47<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on Social Development. Let me assure you of the cooperation and support of my delegation.

Nigeria fully aligns itself with the statements made by Dr. Richard Nchabi Kamwi, Minister of Health and Social Services of the Republic of Namibia and Abdalmahmood Abdalheleem Mohamad, Ambassador/Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations, on behalf of the African Union and the Group of 77 and China respectively.

**Madam Chairperson,**

We are gathered here at a time when the global social development agenda faces serious challenges. For many countries, the hope of translating social policies into concrete actions has become bleaker than ever. In fact, it is increasingly becoming certain that the little gains made in the past, are likely to be negated, if concrete efforts are not made to forestall such. The situation is even more worrisome as it has been compounded by the current global crises, which are undermining the capacity of many to move towards achieving their socio-economic objectives and the MDGs. The implementation of the Copenhagen commitments, the attainment of internationally agreed goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are also not left out of this depressing picture. We welcome the increasing focus on 'Social Integration' as a major pillar of the Copenhagen Social Summit, and its adoption as the theme for the 2009 – 2010 cycle of the Commission for Social Development.

**Madam Chairperson,**

The path towards creating a sustainable social order and a safe society for all would involve the promotion and protection of human rights, promotion of the rule of law, democratic governance and fostering social inclusiveness through the eradication of discriminations and other forms of violence and inequalities, which perpetuate social exclusion. The road to achieving these would require concrete efforts and partnerships, including the civil society and the private sector.

As we focus on social integration, given its relationship to poverty eradication and full employment and decent work for all, my delegation shares the view that social integration is both a goal and a process that can advance social development and economic development. In all these, the role of youths, women and girls, persons with disabilities, the aged and the family, which constitute a pivotal institution for social inclusion and development, cannot be over emphasized. These groups of people and other vulnerable and marginalized persons in our societies, including persons living with HIV/AIDS, continue to bear the greater burden of social exclusion.

The ever-complex impact of globalization has continued to fuel new forms of marginalization and inequalities, including migration and threats to traditional family structures. It is therefore, important to set up workable social policies that can address these as well as other traditional challenges to social integration including poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and gender inequality. It is equally important that as we evolve new policy initiatives in pursuit of these ideals, our development strategies must remain people centred both at the national and international levels.

**Madam Chairperson,**

Fully convinced of the need for a people-centered approach to all development strategies, the Nigerian government has put in place the necessary framework for policy initiatives and implementation in the area of social development. These include the establishment of a separate Ministry for youth development. On ageing, a draft national policy on ageing, which provides for broad-based and inclusive issues for mainstreaming ageing in national development, has been initiated. With respect to matters of the family, a draft national framework and plan of action on the family has been developed. The document makes provision for safety nets to protect vulnerable and needy families and to strengthen them by harnessing their energies and potentials for self-sustenance and advancement.

In addition, the seven-point agenda of the current administration lays emphasis on wealth creation, qualitative education and employment generation. Food security is another important aspect of this policy framework geared towards providing food and jobs for the citizens. To ensure this, the government has guaranteed a minimum price of produce for farmers. The government has also opened up access to credit facilities through the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN). The government is also making efforts towards improving access to primary and health care delivery for rural dwellers.

**Madam Chairperson,**

My delegation particularly takes note with concern that the situation of youths remains precarious, particularly in developing countries. The challenges and threats facing this social group are numerous and daunting but are surely not insurmountable. Sadly, youths in developing countries continue to be most vulnerable to contracting the dreaded HIV/AIDS disease, not necessarily as a result of their youthfulness but due to lack of necessary empowerment to enable them live decent and dignified lives. It should also be highlighted that if the problems of the youths are not properly addressed, they will constitute an additional burden for the ageing group.

Madam Chairperson, let me conclude these remarks by reiterating that the implementation of the Copenhagen commitments and the internationally agreed goals, including the MDGs are mutually reinforcing. Indeed, the international community must continue to assist national and regional efforts through capacity building and technical assistance as such efforts would go a long way in attaining the long-term objective of social integration.

**I Thank You.**