

Commission for Social Development

**Opening Statement by
H.E. Mr. Leslie Kojo Christian
Ambassador
Chairperson of the Commission for Social Development
Permanent Representative of Ghana to the United Nations**

3 February 2010

Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to serve as Chair of the forty-eighth session of the Commission for Social Development, particularly as we commemorate the 15 year anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development. We come together now to renew and reinvigorate the commitments made at Copenhagen “to fight poverty, to create productive jobs and to strengthen the social fabric”.

As you know, the priority theme of the Commission this year is social integration, taking into account its relationship with poverty eradication and full employment and decent work for all. Given that this is the policy cycle of the Commission, we are tasked with developing a policy outcome on social integration.

After much thoughtful consideration and consultation, the Bureau of the Commission has decided that the policy outcome should take the form of a resolution on social integration. A number of factors influenced our decision in this regard.

First, we believe that a resolution on social integration will be an important stride towards realizing the vision of a society for all created at Copenhagen. Such a resolution can help guide Member States as they develop and refine their national policies and programmes to promote social integration in the future.

Second, we feel that a resolution will help to bring greater national and international awareness to the importance of social integration in achieving overall development. Unfortunately, social integration has not received the attention that it deserves over the years, and its crucial role in development has not been fully appreciated or understood.

Third, it has been a dozen years since the Commission last took up social integration as its priority theme. At its thirty-sixth session in 1998, the Commission adopted a set of agreed conclusions on promoting social integration. Although useful, these agreed conclusions do not carry the same political weight as a resolution, nor do they exert significant influence outside of the Commission.

In light of the above, we think that the time is ripe for a resolution on social integration. This year, the international community will be focused on assessing the progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals. Although social integration is not mentioned per se in the MDGs, achievement of these goals is intertwined with the “quest for humane, stable, safe, tolerant and just societies” identified in Copenhagen. A resolution will help to remind the international community of the centrality of social integration to development, and will facilitate greater follow-up and accountability.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am aware that we face a considerable challenge in crafting a resolution on social integration. Since it will be the first resolution on this theme since Copenhagen, we are treading new ground in many respects.

Fortunately, we will have some help in our endeavours. Last fall, the United Nations convened two expert group meetings – one of which was held in my home country of Ghana – that brought together experts from across the globe to discuss and debate the issue of social integration. These meetings stimulated fresh thinking on social integration and its linkages to poverty eradication and employment promotion, and resulted in two sets of independent, action-oriented recommendations. We can use these recommendations to inspire us during our upcoming deliberations.

Distinguished Delegates,

Our task ahead is great, but the opportunity for advancing the goals of social integration as envisaged in Copenhagen is even greater. I urge you to seize this opportunity to adopt, by consensus, the first resolution on social integration that this body has seen in fifteen years.

Thank you.