

Commission for Social Development

Introductory Statement

By Donald Lee
Chief, Social Perspective on Development Branch
Division for Social Policy and Development

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Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

I have the honour to introduce agenda item 3 entitled “Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly”.

First, I would like to draw the attention of the Commission to the Report of the Secretary-General on “**Implementation of the resolution on promoting social integration**” contained in document E/CN.5/2011/2.

The report has been prepared in response to ECOSOC resolution 2010/12 on social integration. The report provides an overview of current national priorities, policies and programmes towards social integration in different regions, taking into consideration its relation with poverty eradication. It focuses on social protection, employment and group-specific interventions, as well as broad-based participation, as effective tools in advancing social integration.

Through a review of the examples of effective interventions to promote social integration, the report demonstrates that, at the national level, many comprehensive and cross-sectoral approaches to social integration have been undertaken through poverty eradication and other measures. The report observes that despite some limitations and remaining challenges, inclusive national development strategies and appropriate policies and strategies have proven to be effective in advancing social integration and social development. The report underlines the importance of further exchange of successful national experiences and lessons learned in this area. It concludes with a set of recommendations for further actions.

Mr. Chairman,

I will now turn to the report of the Secretary-General on “**Social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development**” contained in document E/CN.5/2011/4.

This report examines progress in implementing various initiatives and activities of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development. The report notes that, ten years after the launch of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development, the continent continues to face important development challenges. While overall progress has been rather slow, uneven, and sometimes fragile, fundamental changes and substantial progress are underway in social, economic, political, and infrastructure areas in individual countries as well as at the continental level.

Significant investments in anti-poverty programmes and in other social areas, as well as high rates of growth in recent years prior to the global financial and economic crisis, have brought about reductions in the proportion of people living in extreme poverty. However, the absolute number of poor people actually increased during this period. This means that African economies must grow at a much faster rate for a sustained period, and that this growth must be job rich, inclusive and pro-poor.

Notable gains have also been achieved in several key areas in a number of countries. For example, women's representation in decision-making and gender parity in education has increased; child mortality rates have declined, and school enrolment and attendance rates have risen sharply in those countries that have abolished user fees. A number of countries have also successfully emerged from conflict and are pursuing inclusive and sustainable development goals that are underpinned by stronger peacebuilding and consolidation efforts.

Despite these gains, however, the report notes that the global financial and economic crisis has affected the implementation and attainment of the NEPAD priorities.

The report concludes by emphasizing the need for African governments to strengthen their efforts to mobilize domestic resources and for donor countries to deliver on their aid commitments, particularly those targeting productive sectors, to help poor countries weather the shocks caused by the global economic crisis.

Mr. Chairman,

Next, I would like to draw the Commission's attention to item 3 (a), which is the priority theme entitled "poverty eradication" and the report of the Secretary-General contained in document E/CN.5/2011/3.

This report has been prepared in response to Economic and Social Council resolution 2010/10 of 22 July 2010, in which the Council decided that the priority theme for the 2011-2012 review and policy cycle would be "Poverty eradication, taking into account its interrelationship with social integration and full employment and decent work for all."

The report presents current poverty trends and provides an overview of the main challenges to poverty eradication. It notes that sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth with increases in productive employment has brought about fast poverty declines in some countries. In many others, however, economic change has not resulted in more work, income security or social protection for all. Increasing inequalities have limited the effectiveness of economic growth in reducing poverty. The burden of conflict, weather-related disasters and other impacts of climate change has added to the lack of economic opportunities in affected countries.

In assessing the main policy challenges to poverty eradication, the report emphasizes the importance of raising social expenditures and building social protection programmes, where they are not available. It also notes that in countries where economic growth has taken place with gains in agricultural productivity, especially among small-holders, most progress has been made in reducing both rural and urban poverty. The report underscores that social policy can more effectively address the conditions that cause and perpetuate poverty when it is an integral part of a broader development strategy. In other words, measures to improve access to social protection and social services will have a limited impact on poverty and vulnerability if they are not complemented by broader interventions that address discrimination, access to resources and their redistribution.

Mr. Chairman,

May I now draw the Committee's attention to item 3 (b) of the provisional agenda on "Review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups."

First, I would like to draw the Committee's attention to the Report of the Secretary-General on the "**Implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth: United Nations system coordination and collaboration related to youth**" contained in document A/66/61-E/2011/3.

The report, as its title suggests, reviews the mechanisms for coordination and collaboration of relevant United Nations entities in their work related to youth.

The report finds that collaboration within the United Nations system on youth-related matters has expanded significantly in recent years. This increased collaboration has resulted in the adoption of more strategic approaches to promoting youth development and an increase in joint programme delivery by the United Nations system. Yet, to fully reap the benefits of inter-agency coordination, much remains to be done.

The report highlights selected examples of effective collaboration on youth at the global, regional and country levels and briefly discusses steps to further increase coordination among relevant United Nations entities. It also provides an overview of prominent examples of coordination and collaboration taking place within the United Nations system at the global level, notably the Inter-Agency Network on Youth development. The report also reviews coordination and collaboration at the regional level and presents information on activities that have been undertaken at the country level.

Looking forward, the report provides several recommendations for the consideration of the General Assembly. First, that it call upon the relevant organizations of the United Nations system to further increase coordination and collaboration in their work related to youth. Second, that it call upon the regional coordination mechanisms of the United Nations to adopt and/or implement regional inter-agency action plans in support of Member States' efforts to develop holistic and integrated youth policies based on the World Programme of Action, and, third, that it call upon relevant organizations of the United Nations system to further develop inclusive and accessible mechanisms for youth participation in inter-agency initiatives on youth development.

Mr. Chairman,

I would now like to draw the Commission's attention to the report of the Secretary-General entitled "**Modalities of the second review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002**" contained in document E/CN.5/2011/7.

The report provides further details on the modalities of the second review and appraisal process following ECOSOC resolution 2010/4 that endorsed the theme of "Full Implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing: social situation, well-being and dignity, development and the full realization of all human rights for older persons". The report also offers a proposed timeline for the process.

In addition, the report offers an initial overview of activities being undertaken by both the UN system and civil society in preparation for the review and appraisal process that starts this year. Importantly, the report points to lessons learned from the first review and appraisal process. It also points to the potential challenges that must be addressed during the second appraisal process to ensure the increased participation of Member States and the greater involvement by civil society actors in the bottom-up participatory approach as endorsed by the Commission for Social Development.

The report concludes with a number of recommendations and requests the Commission to take decisions on these issues during this session.

Mr. Chairman,

I would now like to turn to the Secretary-General's report on "**Follow-up to the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family and beyond**" contained in document A/66/62-E/2011/4.

The Report highlights national efforts in implementing family-focused social policies, including cash transfers, social protection and intergenerational programmes as well as work-life balance provisions. It notes that, notwithstanding national efforts, at the international level the family is appreciated but not prioritized in development efforts. The report argues for a greater recognition of the role of families in development and better support for families in performing their caring, educating and nurturing functions.

The Report also provides an overview of commitments relating to families made by the international community over the years, as included in human rights instruments and outcomes of major UN conferences and summits. The overview includes family-relevant policy recommendations in the areas of gender equality, reconciling work and family responsibilities, as well as housing, work, health and education.

Noting that the objectives of the International Year of Families and its follow-up processes continue to guide national and international activities to benefit families worldwide, the report proposes the following major themes to guide the preparations for the twentieth anniversary: “Poverty eradication: confronting family poverty and social exclusion”; “Full employment and decent work: ensuring work-family balance”; and “Social integration: advancing social integration and intergenerational solidarity within families and communities.”

The report concludes that the overall objectives of the twentieth anniversary need to focus on how best to support families in their functions, share good practices on family policies, review challenges faced by families and to recommend solutions. The report suggests that regional meetings be convened to support and facilitate the achievement of these objectives.

Mr. Chairman,

Finally, under agenda item 3(b) is the report of the Special Rapporteur on Disability of the Commission for Social Development on “**Monitoring of the implementation of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities**” contained in document E/CN.5/2011/9.

Mr. Shuaib Chalklen, the Special Rapporteur on Disability of the Commission for Social Development, will present his report to the 49th session of the Commission in 11 February 2011.

Mr. Chairman,

Lastly, I turn to agenda item 3(c) entitled “**Emerging Issues**”. This year’s theme is “Social Protection”. A note by the Secretariat contained in document E/CN.5/2011/8 has been prepared to facilitate consideration of this item. Furthermore, a panel discussion on this item is scheduled for Monday, 14 February 2011.

The note by the Secretariat highlights the importance of social protection and its affordability, and it discusses the impacts of the crisis on social protection programmes. The note shows that countries that have successfully cut income poverty, reduced inequality and improved social conditions on a broad scale have developed comprehensive social protection policies covering a majority of the population. It also emphasizes that a basic set of essential social transfers and services, or social protection floor, is affordable, even in the poorest countries. In assessing the impact of the crisis, the note warns that the move from stimulus measures to fiscal austerity that is underway in many countries, even where economic and employment growth have not yet recovered, may result in further increases in unemployment, poverty and inequality. The note ends by proposing some questions for the discussion that will take place during this session.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my presentation of reports before the Commission under agenda item 3.

Thank you.