



**FINAL VERSION**

**Statement**

**by**

**Anwarul K. Chowdhury  
United Nations Under-Secretary-General  
and  
High Representative for the Least Developed Countries  
Landlocked Developing Countries and  
Small Island Developing States**

**at the**

**ECOSOC Meeting**

**to commemorate**

**International Human Solidarity Day**

**The United Nations, New York**

**15 December 2006**

It gives me great pleasure to join you all on this special occasion of immense significance. This observance of the International Human Solidarity Day comes as we are reaching the end of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty and provides us with an opportunity to reflect on the need for solidarity in the fight against poverty. As the Secretary-General has recently stated, "Without a measure of solidarity, no society can be truly stable. It is not realistic to think that some people can go on deriving great benefits from globalization while billions of others are left in, or thrown into, abject poverty. We have to give all our fellow human beings at least a chance to share in our prosperity." This is the very essence of human solidarity – an equal opportunity to all to share the benefits of global prosperity. Human solidarity becomes meaningless if much of the world remains under extreme poverty.

The finest expression of human solidarity has been manifested through the creation of the United Nations that provides the platform to work together to make the world a better place to live. All our lofty Charter objectives to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, or to live in larger freedom or to enjoy greater standards of life can only be achieved through genuine and expressed cooperation and solidarity. Solidarity has a respectable foundation in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Human solidarity finds a very clear and strong affirmation in the Declaration on the Right to Development adopted by the UN General assembly two decades ago this month in 1986. It confirms that equality of opportunity for development is a prerogative both of nations and of individuals who make up nations. It also strongly underlines the need for all states to share responsibility, thereby offering a kind of legal basis for solidarity. In the present architecture and context of international cooperation, I would add that the sharing of responsibility should not only be confined to states, rather it should encompass all other stakeholders too. Also it is important to bear in mind that the right to development goes beyond mere cooperation and emphasizes mutuality of obligation.

The concept of solidarity assumes a particular prominence in the context of fast-paced process of ever-expanding globalization and the grim fight against poverty and growing inequality. Also, cooperation is indispensable for the realization of internationally agreed goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. As a matter of fact, Goal 8 by focusing on international cooperation for development presents a true expression to the need for global solidarity.

In the Millennium Declaration, world leaders emphasized that "global challenges must be managed in a way that distributes the costs and burdens fairly in accordance with basic principles of equity and social justice. Those who benefit least deserve help from those who benefit most." At a ceremony at the

United Nations Headquarters last month to launch International Human Solidarity Day, Nobel laureate Lech Walesa, said that “the idea of solidarity on a global scale can transform the contemporary world. It’s the only logical opportunity to meet today’s challenges.” I couldn’t agree more.

As an advocate and mobilizer of international support, the UN Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries, and Small Island Developing States is fully committed to engaging the international community in redressing the plight of these most vulnerable groups of countries. By underscoring the importance of addressing the special needs of these countries, the Goal 8 of MDGs revalidates the significance of human solidarity in coming forward to lend support to them.

While national development is primarily their own responsibility, the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS would not be able to achieve much without the support of the global community. The progress of these nations is dependent on all development partners, particularly those in a position to help and assist, whether developed or developing.

There are opportunities to enhance international cooperation in support of the more vulnerable members of the international community. Development aid is a concrete example, as it opens up possibilities for communities realize their potential and share in the world’s prosperity.

Increasing and strengthening the effectiveness of aid and innovatively broadening sources of development finance would further enhance international cooperation for the benefit of the neediest. Examples of novel ways of generating financial support for the neediest nations include the international solidarity contribution on airline tickets that some nations have initiated and, as I have proposed at the last ECOSOC substantive session, ten-cents-a-barrel by all major oil producing countries for infrastructure development in the LDCs. The World Solidarity Fund established by the United Nations has the potential of giving a real face to the concept of human solidarity that we are all highlighting in our observance this morning.

South-South cooperation is a powerful vehicle for developing countries to support each other on the basis of shared development objectives. Tunisia’s support – out of its own remarkable experience - to a number of LDCs in setting up national solidarity funds for grassroots level development projects is noteworthy in this context. Mr. President, you elaborated so well your esteemed country’s achievements in this regard and I had the privilege and pleasure of observing that personally two years ago.

Debt cancellation is another opportunity for resources to be freed for poverty reduction. While a lot has been achieved in this regard over the last few years, the debt burden remains a major obstacle to the development efforts of

the poorest countries. I strongly believe the solution is to cancel all debt for all LDCs. Fairer trade rules and meaningful market access are just as important.

On this International Human Solidarity Day, I take this opportunity to call on the international community to come forward with greater political will and vigour to help the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS achieve the goals and targets of their respective Programmes of Action. We will continue to reach out to all entities and especially the development partners, Bretton Woods and other international financial institutions, civil society, the private sector and the media in the days and months ahead so that purposeful initiatives – arising from our common sense of solidarity, responsibility and partnership – are taken on behalf of these most vulnerable countries of the world.

\*\*\*\*\*