

## 10 Session of the Committee for Development Policy

### Statement by Mr. Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs to the 10th Session of the Committee for Development Policy New York, 17 March 2008

*17 March 2008, New York*

I am very pleased to join you today, at this 10th Session of the Committee for Development Policy.

I would like, first, to share with you some thoughts on the role of this Committee in the work of the United Nations on development. Then, I will reflect briefly on some of the issues before you this week.

One of the greatest assets that the United Nations has to contribute to development is the wealth of policy consensus and commitments already produced. The United Nations Development Agenda reflects the outcomes of nearly two decades of UN conferences and summits on economic, social and environmental issues. Its successful implementation requires a combination of national efforts and international cooperation.

I see the work of this expert Committee as an important element in this overall effort to advance the UN Development Agenda and achieve the internationally agreed development goals.

The 2005 World Summit underscored the need for strategic integration of the implementation process, and for capacity to identify and address, in a timely manner, trends impacting on development prospects. And it put the Economic and Social Council at the centre of this implementation drive at the global level.

But this does not mean the Council alone. For the Council to succeed – particularly in the new functions assigned to it by the 2005 Summit – it must engage the entire ECOSOC system of functional commissions and expert bodies.

This creates an opportunity for the Committee to revitalize its role as an advisory body of ECOSOC, especially in bringing new and emerging issues to the global development agenda.

If we are to be effective in our pursuit of development for all, the United Nations must continue evolving a more integrated vision of development processes and strategies. We need critical thinking and alternative ideas on how to step up implementation and how to tackle threats to development progress.

One major way to further integrate this Committee's views with the work of the Council is through the Annual Ministerial Review. The first AMR, last year, focused on "Strengthening efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger, including through the global partnership for development". The Committee participated in the high-level segment of the Council session and the roundtable discussion on the same theme. This participation was an important step in the right direction.

This year, the AMR will focus on "Implementation of internationally agreed goals and commitments related to sustainable development". To that end, the Committee organized an expert group meeting last November on climate change and sustainable development. I was there, with the members of the ECOSOC Bureau as well as representatives from Member States who participated as chairs and panelists in the various sessions. I hope to see more of this sort of fruitful collaboration between the Council and the Committee in the future.

This should be facilitated by the Council's recent adoption of a multi-year programme of work. This means the Committee can start well in advance to prepare its input to the Council on the topic of the 2009 AMR – global public health.

Let me turn now to the topics on your agenda this session: climate change, financial turmoil, and your work on the list of least developed countries (LDCs).

Climate change is an undeniable fact and attributable to human activities. It is not just an environmental issue; it has social and economic implications. An effective response demands the involvement of a variety of sectors, and needs to be firmly integrated in the broader sustainable development agenda. It is very important that the adaptation to the effects of climate change be made fully consistent with the goals of poverty reduction and equitable human development.

Addressing the adverse consequences of climate change is a long-term effort. Without a doubt, the Committee has much work ahead in this area in the coming years. My Department, DESA, has made the integration of climate change into its work a priority. And I welcome the contribution and views of the Committee to our analytical work in this area.

I am pleased to see that the Committee will also focus its attention this week on the current financial turmoil. There is a clear and urgent need to consider and propose alternative mechanisms for liquidity provision in the context of external shocks. We are very concerned that the downturn in the US may affect the rest of the world.

My own country, China, may not feel the heat that much and may, in fact, be more concerned that it is, perhaps, growing too fast. But even somewhat slower growth in China could affect the poorest countries strongly, for instance, if it were to lower the high commodity prices that are now supporting their economic growth.

This session should generate some good, practical ideas on how the poorest countries can be better protected against the instability of world markets.

I would like to congratulate the Committee on its efforts regarding the designation of LDCs and in developing procedures and guidelines for inclusion to, and graduation from, the list, as well as follow-up actions. I can assure you, this work on the identification of LDCs is highly regarded by ECOSOC and by the international community.

In my view, it is encouraging to know, especially for Cape Verde, that the Committee will be discussing procedures to detect any signs of deterioration in the development progress of graduated countries, due to the eventual phase out of benefits. In this regard, the provisions of the General Assembly resolution on smooth transition should be recalled and support measures by the international community should not be abruptly interrupted.

Let me close by saying that, in the past, the Committee for Development Policy has been very important for the work of the United Nations. It has come up with ideas that have defined our development agenda. We are counting on you and your expertise to assist us in delivering on this agenda. You can help us and, more importantly, the Economic and Social Council, to think ahead on what we need to do next, what we need to do better, what we need to do differently.

I have full confidence that this Committee will be instrumental in bringing innovative ideas to the Council. We at the UN are here to translate those ideas for governments and practitioners. All of us are here to serve.

Thank you.

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