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Statement by

H.E. João Gomes Cravinho
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Portugal
on behalf of the European Union

Annual Ministerial Review
“Strengthening efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger, including through
the global partnership for development”

(item 2 (b))

Geneva, 4 July, 2007

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EU Statement

Annual Ministerial Review “Strengthening efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger, including through the global partnership for development” (item 2 (b))

Mr. President,
Distinguished colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Armenia align themselves with this declaration.

It is a great honour for me to take the floor at this first Annual Ministerial Review (AMR). This meeting, along with the Development Cooperation Forum that will be launched tomorrow, represent the two new functions given to the Economic and Social Council by our Heads of States and Government during the 2005 World Summit as a vehicle to step up efforts to bring the international community on track in meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) by 2015.

The AMR is an important step towards the full realization of the global partnership for development. The objective of the meeting is to provide a global high-level forum where a systematic review of progress is made in the implementation of the United Nations development agenda and offering a platform for an exchange of lessons learned and successful practices and approaches. In this regard, we congratulate the six countries that made voluntary national presentations yesterday.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank, on behalf of the European Union, the Secretary General Report for his report “Strengthening efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger including through the global partnership for development”. We consider this first AMR extremely timely as it assesses progress made in the implementation of the crucial and cross-cutting MDG 1 on the reduction of poverty and hunger. In this context, we look forward to the adoption of a balanced and action-oriented Ministerial Declaration on this key theme.

* *Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.*

The EU reaffirms its strong commitment to the MDGs, recognizing that development, peace and security and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. The EU remains committed to support developing countries in implementing comprehensive national strategies to achieve the internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the MDGs.

Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger is one of the greatest challenges of our times and the UN global conferences and summits have, since the 1990's, put clear commitments to address this challenge at the centre of national, regional and international sustainable development efforts.

Poverty eradication is a goal that can only be achieved if other objectives are also accomplished, and vice versa. In a broad sense, its fulfilment depends on the existence of an integrated social, economic and environmental strategy to achieve sustainable development with a particular focus on a pro-poor growth perspective. The commitment to fight poverty must be attended in a whole-of-government approach centred in policy coherence and tailored to the specific needs of each community, society and region. National development strategies, and related action plans, should include the goals of poverty and hunger eradication and be developed from a broad and participatory planning process at the local and national levels in an ownership perspective.

The EU is committed to the eradication of poverty and hunger and looks to the comprehensive approach to eradicate poverty as laid out in the Copenhagen Programme of Action as a solid basis on how to move forward. Its policy to fight poverty is based on four main themes: to facilitate participation in employment and access by all to resources, rights, goods and services; to prevent the risk of exclusion; to help the most vulnerable; and to mobilize all relevant bodies.

Mr. President,

Economic growth is a driving force in poverty reduction. However, income growth in itself is insufficient to ensure poverty eradication. Experience shows that good governance, and pro-poor choices and protecting the environment are a prerequisite to reducing poverty. It is essential that development policies be defined in a way that they remove the barriers to the participation of the poor in the national economy, including by increasing access to land, labour markets, technology, information, credit, insurance and business services. This access should be facilitated through social inclusion measures, namely the investment in basic social services for all, social protection and infrastructure, which have significant importance to the poor.

A sound strategy to ensure environmental sustainability needs to be part of a poverty-focused development strategy. Development strategies addressed at improving living conditions for individuals and ensuring economic growth face increasing threats linked to environmental degradation and other adverse effects of climate change. These threats affect the poorest earliest and more severely as vulnerable countries often have inadequate means and limited capacities to adapt to such effects. The EU considers that the scale and urgency of the long-term challenges of climate change immediate global action through the appropriate multilateral mechanisms.

Eradicating poverty is also dependent upon improved health systems, especially for the achievement of the goal of universal access to reproductive health by 2015, as set out at the International Conference on Population and Development and reaffirmed in the World Summit Outcome (WSO), and the goal of universal access to comprehensive HIV/AIDS prevention programmes, treatment, care and support by 2010 also adopted in the WSO. In what regards the fight against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the EU will increase its support to the Global Fund, through the European Commission budget, in the struggle against these three endemic diseases, for the triennium 2007-2010, in the amount of 400 million of Euros, complemented by the significant contributions of our members states.

Dealing with poverty also means taking into consideration the area of education. The goal of all children complete primary education by 2015 needs to be urgently addressed, bearing in mind that 77 million children are out of school today, including 44 million girls. At the current rate of progress, at least 75 countries, mainly in Sub-Saharan Africa, will not achieve the MDG 2. In this sense, the EU is committed to accelerate progress towards this MDG 2, through contributions from our member states and European Commission, including through the EC commitment of 1.7 billion Euros to Education from the 10th European Development Fund (2007 – 2010) and from the EC budget. In addition, the EC committed 22 Million Euros for the Education for All Fast Track Initiative (EfA FTI).

The goals of productive employment and decent work for all are also essential. This can be attained through the creation of better instruments for supporting and investing in and monitoring sustainable growth, creating full employment and decent work for all. In the European context, this issue is of paramount importance. In December of 2006 European Ministers adopted Conclusions on Decent Work for All that promote the decent work agenda throughout Europe. This European Consensus includes a commitment to advance Policy Coherence for Development and Decent Work, as a part of the EU Development Policy, and has been developed in line with the latest ILO and UN initiative for more coherence in the policies of international agencies. Moreover, strategies in this area have to be developed in a way that promotes jobs' creation and growth in those sectors where poverty is much more visible.

One of those sectors is agriculture. In this sense, the EU agreed with the African Union, under the Strategy for Africa adopted in December 2005, to establish joint strategies to tackle the challenges of agriculture and environment, particularly in terms of addressing concerns such as land degradation, desertification and agricultural productivity. Also, we would like to highlight the EC Communication on Advancing Agriculture in Africa to be presented in the next months.

Hunger is one of most troubling dimensions of poverty. The 2006 FAO Report on *State of Food Security in the World: Eradicating World hunger – taking stock ten years after the World Food Summit* shows us that sub-Saharan Africa continues to be the most affected region of the world in terms of prevalence of undernourishment. It also reveals to us that hunger is much more concentrated in rural areas and is one of the causes of rural exodus. In this sense, the EU reiterates the commitments made at the 1996 World Food Summit in order to reduce by half by 2015 the number of undernourished people, including the Declaration that was adopted in the High Level meeting of the world leaders for action against hunger and poverty which took place on September 2004, and commits itself to develop the necessary means to support Least Developed Countries (LDC), particularly those in Africa, to overcome this food crisis. In this sense, the EC adopted a global humanitarian aid plan, which

aims to fight malnutrition in the Sahel Region. This Aid plan is comprised of an extra support of 25 million euros and complements long term development aid already provided by EC to tackle the roots causes of malnutrition.

Mr. President,

To achieve the MDGs, namely MDG1, we all need to work together, recipient and donor countries as well as the international community at large, to implement global partnership. The EU remains fully committed to support developing countries efforts including through the reduction of trade barriers and increases in Official Development Assistance in a coherent way as underlined in the Monterrey Consensus. In addition, we highlight the significant effort underway to implement and further develop new and innovative sources of finance, including by a number of European countries.

On the foundation of shared responsibility and partnership, the EU has taken effective measures to reach our commitment as donors. The Union has collectively surpassed the 2006 ODA target of 0,39% of GNI, set in 2005 before the World Summit Outcome. The Union has set new ambitious targets for 2010 and 2015, including new levels for Africa. The Union is currently providing 57% of global ODA and is committed to reaching the target of 0,7% of GNI by 2015.

The EU is also strongly committed to the Paris Declaration on Aid Harmonization and increasing aid effectiveness, and determined to make progress toward the internationally agreed goals and targets, including the Millennium Development Goals and those deriving from the UN summits such as Monterrey and Johannesburg, as well as related processes such as the Doha Development Agenda.

The *European Consensus on Development Policy* committed three major European institutions and Member States for their bilateral development policies to a common set of objectives, values, principles and means for development. The Development Policy Statement builds on the strong consensus that currently exists on the MDGs and puts poverty eradication at the centre. Also, it emphasizes that combating poverty will only be successful if equal importance is given to investing in people, protecting natural resources, securing rural livelihoods and investing in wealth creation. Also at the EU level, Ministers have considered the application of a voluntary Code of Conduct on Division of Labour in Development Policy. Ministers agreed that the increased complementarity of donor actions, together with a better division of labour among donors, would strengthen the ownership of actions by partner countries, as well as their capacity to take over responsibly for coordinating donor activities.

Mr. President,

Although the efforts of the international community at large are an important catalytic factor in promoting sustainable development in developing countries, the primary responsibility for development lies with developing countries themselves. Good governance, transparency, fight against corruption, the rule of law and more equal social development, including gender equality, are crucial elements that should be pursued by developing countries.

In conclusion, we are determined to do our share, together with our partners, to help fulfill to objectives of MDG 1, along with the other internationally agreed development goals, of eradicating poverty and hunger. Global Partnerships are undoubtedly fundamental in order to pursue this goal. The EU is firmly committed to this and reiterates the importance of this Annual Ministerial Review in such an important issue for development cooperation as it is the eradication of poverty and hunger.

Thank you.
