



**INTERVENTION OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF A.E.C.I. (SPAIN)**  
**ROUNDTABLE: “POVERTY ERADICATION – MAKING IT HAPPEN”**

**HL SEGMENT OF ECOSOC (4-7-07)**

After having listened very attentively to the interventions of the previous speakers, I cannot avoid the feeling that it's my turn to speak right down to earth as they've done and to answer a simple question: what has Spain done to “make it happen”?. That is, instead of putting forward any brave new theory on development, I'll try to show you how we are trying to turn statements into facts in my country.

**Let me begin by saying that, if you want your public Administration to work hard on development cooperation, the push has to come from above. It must be the commitment of the government and I'm glad to say that this is Spain's case. A solid and effective international development policy has become a fundamental and essential part of Spain's foreign policy.** This development policy is committed to the eradication of poverty, the improvement in levels of education and health, fostering productive infrastructure, economic growth, and job creation, as well as the promotion of good government, democracy, and human rights. There are two main reasons that explain this commitment:

- Spain firmly believes that the eradication of poverty and the promotion of sustained development is **a moral and ethical obligation**. The situation of deep inequality, poverty and lack of basic resources, to which a large proportion of the world population is subject, represents a violation of human dignity. That is why it is a duty for all governments to work intensively to ensure that every man and women in developing countries enjoy a full life, in which they can exercise their rights in a real and effective way.
- The eradication of poverty is also a goal that we all must pursue if we want to build **a safer and more peaceful world**.

This commitment has led us to align ourselves with the rest of the international community, and especially the UN, in its efforts to eradicate poverty. But you have first to agree with the rest on what poverty is. Along with the UNDP, we believe that poverty has a multidimensional nature. It touches various aspects of human capacity: economic (income, living resources, decent work), human (health, education), political (democratic governance, rights, power), socio-cultural (status, dignity) and protection (insecurity, risk, vulnerability). Moreover, it is essential to integrate the perspective of gender to reduce poverty in all its dimensions, while keeping the balance of natural resources is fundamental if poverty-reduction is aimed to be made lasting.

This view of poverty, as it can be seen, is linked with the Millennium Development Goals, and is also found in the origins of the notion of sustainable human development promoted by the UN Development Program. It entails a process of



enlargement of personal capabilities and opportunities, in other words, the “empowerment” of persons and institutions.

So, knowing that we have a strong mandate from the government for fighting poverty, understood in the same sense the international community does, we got down to work. In a nutshell, we have taken four big steps; building on consensus, increasing our ODA flows, improving the quality of our aid, and favouring multilateralism.

The first thing we realized is that there is no development policy worth its name that does not have its roots in the consensus and participation of all the players. The whole Spanish development policy is founded on the consensus among all relevant **stakeholders** that have a role in the planning and implementation of this policy:

- The Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation; Economy; Trade; or Defence
- The Regional and local authorities, which earmark an increasing amount of resources to development
- The civil society, including the NGOs.

That means that all the relevant documents on Spain’s development policy have been agreed upon all the stakeholders. So, our main strategic paper, the Spanish Master Plan for International Cooperation 2005-08 is approved by the government, with the unanimous backing of everyone involved in cooperation and supported by the Parliament.

Consequently, Spain’s development policy represents a **true state policy**.

**Secondly**, when we say to make eradicating poverty our aim, we realize that we have to make the obligations it entails also ours. As you well know the international consensus demand a surge in the flows of ODA to developing countries. That increase must come, obviously, from additional funds, simply put, from new money and not from re-directing the financial flows. For us, this is critical so that the poverty still present in many of the so-called Middle Income Countries is included in this is fight.

And this is what we’ve been doing since 2004. That year, Spain’s aid reached 0.25% of its GDP, and in **2007**, it will attain **0.42%**. In only three years, Spain’s aid will have doubled, from almost 2 billion euros in 2004 to **4.2 billion in 2007**. The Government is committed to reach 0.5 in 2008, which will represent more than 5 billion euros.

Nevertheless, Spain believes that an increase in the amount of ODA flows is not enough, and we have sought to go further. That is why Spain, together with Algeria, Brazil, Chile, France and Germany, has worked in the framework of the **Action Against Hunger and Poverty**, an initiative aimed at finding new alternative sources of financing for development, that may complement ODA and therefore contribute to fill the gap between current commitments in terms of ODA and financing needs in developing countries.



In the framework of this Action Against Hunger and Poverty, Spain has firmly supported the “**International Financing Facility for Immunization**”, that seeks to obtain additional resources for massive immunization against deadly diseases for children in many developing countries. Furthermore, Spain is studying mechanisms to turn the enormous flow of **migrants’ remittances** into a tool and engine for development in the recipient communities, through easier and cheaper channels to send these flows, as well as public resources to support and complement them.

**Thirdly**, we are deeply committed to improve the quality of our aid. To borrow from a well-known commercial, ODA without quality is nothing. In this respect, Spain has enhanced the quality of its aid by:

- a) Improving its instruments of planning and evaluation;
- b) building on the principles of ownership, complementarity, harmonisation and alignment, that is sticking to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.
- c) resorting to new instruments of cooperation,
- d) and promoting policy coherence.

a) Spain has strengthened its instruments of **planning and evaluation** of development policies, so that we can maximize our efforts and be more predictable and effective. It took some revamping of our system, in particular, boosting the policy planning department. The result has been a set of documents in which we find where and how we should spend our funds.

b) Secondly, Spain has also sought to improve aid **effectiveness, as spelt out in the Paris Declaration**, built from the principle of “**ownership**” of partner countries in their own process of development, which inspire the Millennium Development Goals. For that, you need to listen to them. We have arranged a system of joint commissions with every recipient country so that we agree with them upon the objectives and strategic lines to be pursued in common.

We are also working on **deeper harmonization and complementarity among donors**, whether they are States or international organisations, through the permanent dialogue with other donors and local governments and institutions. We have instructed our field offices to start joint programming with the European Commission.

c) We’ve also been refining our instruments. Starting from scratch in 2004, we have built quite a large pool of **new instruments of cooperation**, such as sector-wide approaches and participation in public-private alliances. In addition to that, we have enhanced our approach to NGOs to count on them as full time partners and not just as recipient of public money.

d) Furthermore, we have tackled the issue of **policy coherence**. Development aid is just one chapter within the set of public policies adopted by the developed countries, which have an impact on the developing countries’ capacity to attain the path of sustained development. In fact, some of these policies, like trade, or debt, may have effects of as much importance, or more, in the developing countries than aid itself. It means little to have a committed and quality development aid



policy if other public decisions run in the opposite direction, limiting the opportunities for progress in the countries of the South. That is why the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation ensures the coordination of the bodies in the General State Administration that work in those spheres of activity affecting policy coherence. Furthermore, the coordination among different ministries is ensured by Spain's Interministerial International Cooperation Commission.

Policy coherence is envisaged in MDG 8, which includes specific targets related to debt or trade. In this respect, Spain has paid attention particularly to the problems related to **debt sustainability** and, besides its commitment towards the HIPC Initiative, Spain is supporting specific initiatives on change of debt for cooperation projects and programmes, in the fields of education, infrastructure and environment, particularly with Latin America. Spain has already signed this sort of agreements with Costa Rica and Ecuador.

As far as **trade** is concerned, this is an essential tool for developing countries to obtain basic resources on their path towards self-sustained growth. Therefore, Spain, in the framework of the European Union Trade Policy, supports those efforts aimed at making headway in the Doha development agenda, which should bring significant benefits to developing countries.

**Last but not least**, Spain's development policy is now deeply founded on **active multilateralism**. We believe international development organizations, especially those of the UN family, are very well equipped to lead the fight against poverty. So, the logical conclusion is: "let's support them and let's make ourselves be heard". In other words, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation is promoting **Spain's active role in the multilateral organisations that work in the field of development**, and encouraging **Spain's active involvement in the international development agenda that is debated and decided in the framework of multilateral bodies**.

Moreover, Spain's has extraordinarily increased its **voluntary contributions** to multilateral bodies, as well as its **contributions to multilateral funds**. In this respect, Spain is actively supporting the United Nations system, having signed agreements with different bodies which belong to the UN family, such as the UNDP, UNICEF, FAO or UNIFEM and keeping regular contacts with them. It is worth mentioning the **Spain-UNDP Fund**, aimed at supporting the achievement of the MDGs, which will be financed by 528 Million euros from 2007 to 2009.

**In conclusion**, this has been our experience and remains our path to take effective measures to eradicate poverty, hand in hand with the international community. Spain has been working, and will continue to work, to attain the objective of sustained development and eradication of poverty. Spain has taken on its part of responsibility in this fight. We believe that poverty eradication is possible. As the former UN Secretary General said, we are the first generation that has the knowledge and means to make progress in the fight against poverty, and that is precisely what inspires Spain's work day after day.

Thank you very much.