

Statement by

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High-level Segment: General Debate
UN Economic and Social Council Substantive Session
1 July 2010

Mr. President,
Ministers,
Ambassadors,
Distinguished delegates,
Civil society representatives,
Ladies and gentleman,

I am very pleased to contribute today to our general debate on behalf of the Czech Republic.

The Czech Republic is committed to the Millennium Development Goals agenda. Their achievement, in spite of the global economic crisis, is a long term priority of the Czech development cooperation and the most important guideline for the definition of the Czech development strategy. The Czech Republic contributed approximately 224 million USD for the official development cooperation in 2009.

The Czech Republic has also recently confirmed its determination by the principles codified in the new Act on Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid and also in the new National Concept of Development Cooperation for 2010 - 2017. The new Concept determines among its priorities relevant sectors as environment, agriculture, social and economical development and support to democracy, human rights and social transformation.

We are convinced that our endeavours on MDGs should be balanced and focused on best practices and lessons learned, and also on challenges and opportunities leading to a way forward by 2015. We should avoid our MDGs debate to focus on ODA levels only. We are convinced that successful achievement of MDGs is not possible without an effective partnership and ownership of the respective partner countries; it is not possible only on the basis of development cooperation and financial flows coming from the advanced countries. An indispensable condition for reaching the MDG targets rests with the partner countries themselves: in their own good governance, rule of law, solid public

administration, ownership in elaboration of regular MDGs assessment reviews with updated needs, action-oriented national strategies, bottom-up approach and home grown innovations.

We would like to stress on the importance of transition experience, as it was recently confirmed by the "European Transition Compendium". We are convinced, however, that the experience from transition towards democratically governed society can be used even more widely in the EU development policy. Support to democracy and defence of human rights are important areas of the Czech policy towards developing and transition countries highlighting especially on the need for establishing and strengthening of democratic institutions, the rule of law, civil society and the principles of good governance.

We gather at the occasion of the UN Economic and Social Council, which stated the gender equalities and women's empowerment as a crosscutting topic of our debates this year. The Czech Republic highlights the importance of gender equality and further action to identify and address gender stereotypes and all forms of discrimination of women and girls. We support full participation of women in decision-making processes in all sectors - political, economical, judiciary, management of resources, peace processes, in academia and media.

The need to strengthen our involvement was raised in particular in the context of combating violence against women. We believe that it is not only a pre-requisite for many MDGs areas across sectors, including health, education, employment and law enforcement, but for all complexity of social and human development. An important synergy exists between economical, social and political empowerment of women and the fights against violence against them. Educated and economically independent women with social and legal status equal to that of men are less likely to become victims and are more likely to use the tools to gain protection when needed. Elimination of all forms of violence against women must remain at the core of the fights against discrimination against women.

With only five years left until the 2015 deadline to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, the high-level summit planned for September this year is an important opportunity to 2010 to boost progress towards the MDGs and to reach consensus on the ways and means how to achieve them by 2015. In this regard, the Czech Republic appreciates the active engagement of the Secretary-General and welcomes his recent report "Keeping the promise". We agree with the Secretary-General that the achievement of the MDGs still remains feasible with adequate commitment, policies, resources and effort.

Thank you for your attention.